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Midterm Assessment

To say that I have not completely changed my conceptualization of what social media really is and how it impacts the world would be a falsehood. Initially, my understanding of social media was what most people would envision when asked to define it—platforms where people can interact with one another digitally, and where the depths of its impact do not go farther than simple surface-level engagements. Through the ideas and concepts that I have learned thus far, this has completely changed. One such catalyst for this change was understanding the idea of connected learning, which can be best defined as a method of learning where an individual can pursue their passions and gain knowledge through informal engagements. Currently, all of this Is exceptionally facilitated through the digital space, which allows people to interact with one another across the world through physical distances, as well as metaphysical ones such as differing cultures, ethnicities, and economic standings. It Is because of this concept that my definition of social media has greatly shifted.

With that being said however, when being asked whether or not social media is supporting meaningful connections or superficial ones, my answer is simply this: it depends on the individual. One way or another, the digital space molds our behaviors and interactions, and can more often than not dictate the way we act and communicate with others. This is defined as digital culture, and just like culture in the physical world, how one navigates within it is impacted most by one’s knowledge of it. This knowledge is known as digital literacy, and as I have defined in an earlier discussion post, it is “the ability/skill of an individual to utilize various modes of communication to not only consume content but to also create it.” The only way that we can ensure that social media is being used to it’s best potential is to develop its user’s digital literacy. The more people are able to understand what it is they’re actually consuming, as well as the impact of what they are creating, they more they can better navigate the digital space in a more meaningful manner versus simply skimming over its potential.

Thus far, my experience in this course has been largely positive. I’ve been able to see social media in a new light in a way that lets me engage with it better than I have before. As I’ve previously mentioned, I loved learning about how the idea of connected learning is greatly supporting people’s ability to explore their passions with one another through deep interactions. I’ve actually been able to find my own communities to engage within as well, which was largely motivated by this understanding. I haven’t found any of the concepts or activities particularly challenging, however the assignments where I had to record my voice or record a video was a little out of my comfort zone since I find it much easier to get my thoughts out through writing. But it was good for me to be able to enhance this skill, seeing as how being able to communicate my thoughts and ideas is essential in my profession. In fact, I would actually say that I would have liked more video/audio related assignments since I enjoy finding things that step me out of my comfort zone. Other than that, however, I’ve really enjoyed everything that we have learned so far and I’m excited to see what’s next.