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Old Communication, New Literacies: Social Network Sites as Social Learning Resources FREE

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Abstract

This study examined the role of a social network site (SNS) in the lives of 11 high school teenagers from low-income families in the U.S. We conducted interviews, talk-alouds and content analysis of MySpace profiles. Qualitative analysis of these data revealed three themes. First, SNSs facilitated emotional support, helped maintain relationships, and provided a platform for self-presentation. Second, students used their online social network to fulfill essential social learning functions. Third, within their SNS, students engaged in a complex array of communicative and creative endeavors. In several instances, students' use of social network sites demonstrated the new literacy practices currently being discussed within education reform efforts. Based on our findings, we suggest additional directions for related research and educational practices.

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