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As noted in the readings, people talk about the "digital divide" in many different ways. How would you describe the "digital divide"? What do you see as the most serious, problematic aspects of the "digital divide"?

Before reading these articles I would have defined the digital divide as lack of access to new technologies. After reading these I realize that this is not even close to a complete definition. As the Warschauer points out it is not so much a divide as a continuum in which societies, communities, social groups, and family groups exist at varying degrees. As a society we have to realize that there are many factors in technological fluency. A community that has ample access to computers may still be on the low end of the digital divide continuum. This was illustrated through the example of the small town in Ireland that was given ample funding to provide its community with computer access. In their budget they had not figured money in for training and social planning, so most of the technology was lost on people who were not able to use it comfortably or at all.

The key to breaking down the barriers of digital divide lies in experience, authenticity, and access to training and information (as was illustrated in the Shaw & Shaw, and Resnick, Rusk, and Cooke articles). Although neither of these environments were formal learning environments the people in these communities learned a lot. The key was that they were able to use technologies in ways that were meaningful for them. Participants were able to work in ways they were comfortable with and if they wanted to learn more they had access to those who could answer their questions. This is a true example of social constructivist learning.

Now I would define the digital divide as a continuum in which communities have varying social structures which affect their comfort, access, and support in using and exploring new technologies in ways that are authentic to them.