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This long-winded narration comes to the conclusion that I still don’t know anything. Enjoy.

Where and how do I get my information? My personal learning environment is a mixture of real life and virtual reality, and proves to be microcosm of my life, in that I have varying degrees of control over my life. I sometimes have problems connecting with or talking to people. I can be polite and make conversation, but I struggle with it. Much of what is represented on my PLE desk is what connects me with other people and how those connections really are meaningful in my life. Also, sorry about the bad jokes that are thrown in here. I like to keep it light.

In the real world, I get my information from a few different places. Here, I have few options on what I get to shut out. I go to class, complete my readings and homework, and am expected to know and understand the text and participate in discussions with my peers. Class can be challenging for me because I don’t speak up unless I have something valuable to add, and I get nervous that maybe I don’t participate too much. In fact, I usually sit there and listen to what everyone says and decide in my head whether I agree or disagree. Not talking doesn’t mean I’m not participating, it just means I’m engaging differently.

For the most part, I have a say with whom I surround myself. I was born into my family, but I’m lucky enough to love and respect them. I get to pick my friends (you can pick your friends and you can pick your nose, but you can’t pick your friend’s nose, am I right), and they have had probably the most significant impact on my life. I’ve been best friends with the same person since 6th grade, and she and her family have helped shape me into the person I am today. My classmates, though I do not get to choose them, have also shaped me. Through listening to their views, I’ve been able to more deeply explore my own opinions, prejudices, and beliefs.

Physical objects are an interesting matter (get it). I chose very specific things to place on my desk for this assignment. First up is the infamous “analrapist” cup, which is a completely inappropriate joke, but also a reference to “Arrested Development”, a television show I’ve spent a lot of time with. Whenever I’m stressed, sick, or just not feeling 100%, I turn on an episode of that show and it brings me at least part of the way back. Next is the notebook. Like AD, drawing helps me calm down. Having a creative outlet is important to me, no matter how skilled I am at it. Then, Bananagrams found its way onto my desk! What an impractical place to play that game. Nevertheless, board games are a great opportunity to get to know people, especially if you don’t mind losing.

Finally, the books. I love the books. Unfortunately, I’ve been so inundated with reading for my classes that I haven’t been able to read anything new since winter break. Books give me the chance to choose the exact escape that I want. If I don’t care about where a story is going, I can toss the book aside and grab a new one. My desk has *I Am America and So Can You, Pawnee: The Greatest Town in America,* *Les Miserables,* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.* I chose these books because they were around, but they were around because I took the time to pack them up and bring them with me to Oregon, so I suppose they’re important to me.

Now we venture into the virtual world, represented by my laptop. As evidenced by the most visited sites, I split my time between social media endeavors and school-related websites. Of course, the internet is also where some of my readings are housed, so there is a strange tension between what I need to do and what I want to do with my time online. But the internet is also where I can easily pick and choose what I absorb. On social media, I get to ignore what I don’t want to see. I can “unfriend” or “ignore” or “block” anything I come across that bothers me. Social media keeps me connected to my friends and family, and I have the privilege of deciding who gets to show up on my feeds. I can also find cute puppies on YouTube, which is an important part of my life.

Also in the realm of digital life, I often keep my “to-do” list front and center. I use my physical planner, but sometimes I forget to pull it out and check it. Knowing that I will most likely open my computer frequently throughout the day, having a Word document with my tasks helps me remain on top of things. Speaking of Microsoft Word, it’s a tool that helps me brainstorm. I love pen and paper, but Word allows me to move things around easily without making my thoughts look too messy and I can delete things I stop liking.

My PLE is a constant back-and-forth between physical and virtual worlds and I seem to move between them seamlessly. Part of this is because they are so integrated with each other. For example, I keep in touch with my friends through the internet when we are apart and I can read my homework assignments online. Basically, my personal learning environment is a mess. There isn’t much strategy. It’s haphazard and immersive. But it works.