20.5: Concluding Thoughts

Not all students are as tech savvy as Dakota and Madison, and everyone finds some tools more useful than others. Hopefully this chapter has given you some ideas and encouraged you to experiment with social media tools on your next writing assignment. The key thing to remember about these tools is their social nature—instead of working alone, you will be part of a vast network of other writers. Many of these writers will happily share their ideas or research with you, and many others might enjoy or benefit from seeing your work. In any case, remember to treat others with respect and follow any posted rules of conduct. Be friendly, polite, and helpful to others, even if you know you will never meet them in person.

Learning to write as a group can be a daunting and frustrating process, but social media tools can make a difference. Madison and Dakota were both hard working students who wanted to earn an A on their project. You may have a group member or two who cares much less about success. Social media tools like Google Docs can track individual contributions, so at the end of the process you will have a record of who did what. Sometimes, just being able to see what the other group members are doing (as well as receiving regular updates via email) is enough to spur a deadweight partner into action. If all else fails, though, at least you will have solid proof of your partner’s lack of effort.

When you are done with your project, you might want to consider sharing your work with others. A simple way to do that would be to share your Google Doc with the world, so that other students (or anyone else) can find and read it. Zotero will let you share your research. Indeed, almost every tool we discussed in this chapter has a sharing feature. Although it’s possible to keep everything private, or just between you and your group members, sharing your work is a good way to enrich the community and make new friends.

There are new social media tools, features, and concepts being developed every day, and chances are that by the time you read this chapter, many things will have changed. However, you shouldn’t let that fact prevent you from experimenting with new tools or seeking ways to enhance or simplify your writing. Take the time to learn about new tools.
and be willing to experiment with them.