Reading Questions for Turkle, Bruchman, Rheingold and Kort.

Drawing on Turkle, Bruchman, Reinhold and Kort analyze what affordances of virtual communities “give people a chance to express multiple and often unexplored aspects of self, to play with their identities and try out new ones.” Turkle (p12.) Explain and provide examples of how these affordances work. How do MUSES and MUD environments compare to R.L. (real life)?

What according to the authors are the benefits and risks of simulation environments like the MUSE? (Discuss various aspects such as: exploring several sides of the self, role playing, word play (e.g. bowls of spaghetti that "squirm uneasily" if someone mentions the word "hungry"), distance, yet intimacy. Do you agree?

Rheingold (p147) claims that "Literate people think differently from people in non-literate or post-literate cultures, and they think of themselves differently." What differences do you think are possible results of the use of cyber-environments such as the MUSE? (be sure to support your points with examples from the readings)

Drawing of Turkle’s example of her “French lessons,” explain why she argues that with networking, computers allows us to ‘walk through the looking glass.’” How did the very abstract postmodern assumptions become real to Turkle herself? Why does she claim that “the mechanical engines of computers have been grounding the radically non-mechanical philosophy of postmodernism? (p17) (hint: how does hypertext illuminate Derrida’s?)

Given that virtual reality is not real life (RL), what does Bruckman mean by the term experience when she states (p. 27): "Being able to experience rather than merely observe the differences in virtual reality helps people to understand the phenomena in real life." How might virtual reality play a role in providing powerful educational experiences?