

Introduction
statement, "people
don't read anymore"
(markoff), which



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Introduction

Reading is one of the main activities that promote educational process. During the course of study, starting with school, students should muster a quality reading in order to be able to acquire knowledge and necessary professional skills. Moreover, quality reading is essential for school, as well as college students who have to deal with a lot of different information on various topics. In order to be able to develop critical and analytical reading, analyze a lot of information, students should possess skills of quality reading. With the rise of the academic standards, the demands for college students' efficiency and quality also rose.

However, while all these changes occurred during the last ten years, there is increasing concern about the decline of the literacy skills, especially reading, which based on studies conducted during the first half of the decade. The scholars see the reason of the decline of literacy skills in the fast development of the Internet which attracts more attention of the college students' audience and prevents them from reading literature. The growing

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rates of the Internet involvement and other shifts from conventional activities are the main reasons of the literacy decline. A 2004 report from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) caused much debate over the web with its provocative title, 'Reading at Risk'.

The figures it presented became a matter of concern: "the 10 percentage point decline in literary reading represents a loss of 20 million potential readers" (ix). The study was taken seriously enough for Apple's Steve Jobs to make his quasi-legendary statement, "People don't read anymore" (Markoff), which caused further uproar regarding the issue. Similar results have been observed in other studies, one of which commented on the decline in literacy skills among college students. "Only 31 percent of college graduates can read a complex book and extrapolate from it" (Romano). A follow-up study was later conducted by the NEA, which reported the same results with more emphasis and specificity (Gifford). Thus, the coming of the 21st century signaled the peak of the information age.

In just the brief span of ten years, great changes and additions to traditional and alternative media have transpired, including the Internet, which has dramatically risen in popularity, use and scope worldwide. In this light, the changes in the society have created new demands and alternative lifestyles that influence the educational process as well. Thesis: In the focus of this paper is the question on the role of the Internet in the development of the reading skills and how it can be used to develop the college students' skills of quality reading in order to expand their minds and improve their academic performance.

Main body

Reading is an activity that expands the mind, and enriches experience. The fact that reading in today's society is limited to its mundane functional use says a lot about the quality of information received.

In the past, books have offered reliable and quality information which have led to great strides in the various fields of society. Literature in print, as well, has helped fashion creativity for many generations. While this paper does not contest the fact that information travels quicker through the internet, and that there are credible sources out there, it does state that quality and reliability of information is significantly lower than it was about a decade ago. There are many more facets to this issue, too many, in fact, that the scope of this paper cannot possibly accommodate everything.

One of the core questions of this paper is: is the internet a sufficient source of literacy skills for today's generation? Even Web proponents are unsure of this matter. Some interesting studies, which are beyond the scope of this paper, suggest that too much exposure from the internet can have significant effects on thought processes, of course, literacy skills included (Carr). While it is true that a great deal of the reading activity used to focus on books is now spent on social networks and hypertext. In this light, another problem should be discovered: do students get the same amount of information and the same quality of text from such sources? Information found on the internet is extremely pliable; to prove this, most universities and academies have banned Wikipedia as a source for research materials. This fact alone is a solid case against relying on information found over the web. But the facts are not always generalized, and there are some counter-
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arguments to the issue of this alleged decline in reading skills, counter-data as well.

The most popular one would be that the decline is not one regarding literacy skills per se, but one of reading literature and books in general. The introduction of new forms of media gave way to new interests and sub-cultures, which in turn took its toll on old forms of entertainment, like reading. "...It is unrealistic to expect all children to read " To Kill a Mockingbird" or " Pride and Prejudice" for fun," reasons New York Times' Rich. "...Those who prefer staring at a television or mashing buttons on a game console... can still benefit from reading on the Internet" (Rich 1). Web proponents in this issue of literacy stress the importance of viewing the Internet as a modern substitute for books. Cohen & Cowan (5) suggested that we view the matter of literacy, not as static, but as an ever-changing process, and that hypertext and hypermedia can facilitate for reading just as much.

Another article argued along the same lines, saying that books during the Enlightenment were like today's internet in a sense, where information " depended more on the exchange of ideas than it did on solitary, deep-focus reading" (Johnson). That evolution is also possible for the issue of literacy is plausible, to say the least.

Recommendations

A good decision would be to make a hobby out of reading, not just for practical use, but for entertainment as well. It is common knowledge that the element of fun makes for a significant impact in information comprehension

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and retention. By making a habit out of reading, it can be possible to expand college students' intellectual personal and cultural horizons.

“ Literature is a cultural manifestation, is the aesthetic reflection of life and times, is the essence of culture and civilization” (Yonghong 2). Literature is an ideal reading material in that it encompasses a wide range of topics, and often deals with multiple subjects, ideologies or social issues at once. One read through the book, ‘ Lord of the Flies’ for example, can give the reader plenty of venues for interpretations, theoretical applications and whatnot. However, while encouraging student reading literature, teachers should take into consideration their interests. Teachers should understand that the Internet is the first source of information for every student. Thus, giving a particular academic assignment, teachers should provide their students with reliable Internet sources to be used.

Thus, it will be possible to base reading activities on the students' interests which can be a valuable contribution to the development of quality reading skills with college students.

Conclusion

The adage, ‘ TV rots the mind’ clearly applies to a range of other activities to date. This does not mean that we become ‘ literary puritans’ in any sense, but that we should not neglect the value of quality reading, and the practice of reading in general. These words ring true after all this time: “ The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go” (Dr.

Seuss). One thing should also be mentioned. Teachers should not forget about the Internet and its role in the development of the quality reading and literacy with college students. The appropriate and wise usage of reliable Internet sources should become one of the major means of encouraging college students read literature.

Bibliography

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