

By Susan Foster

Google™ and Evil

that will eventually modify our cognitive behaviour. He observes, “Our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged.... We can expect ... that the circuits woven by our use of the Net will be different from those woven by our reading of books and other printed works.” Scary stuff. And yet, the readiness with which our teaching colleagues encourage the use of general search engines is testament to this trend.

We are encouraging our students to become, in Carr’s words, “pancake people” for whom immediacy supersedes depth. Time-pressed society does not encourage or reward students to think deeply; a sign of this is the phenomenon of rubric evaluation where one “ticks” off achievement rather than assesses the merit of work. Critical and higher level thinking

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The plethora of data available to students has become, ironically, an obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge.

skills and Bloom’s Taxonomy continue to be the pedagogical backbone of teacher education and yet the influences of both are increasingly challenged. Expediency over effort seems to be the unspoken mantra, accompanied by the hand wringing over the increase of plagiarism and lack of academic integrity.

What to do? The answer is twofold. First, the assumption that the classroom teacher is adept at navigating the Internet and locating credible information must be confronted as unreliable. It is therefore the job of teacher-librarians to teach not only students, but also their teachers in order to increase overall web-literacy as well as to facilitate research. Second, teacher-librarians must continue to engage in active collaboration with the classroom teachers to produce assignments that are authentic, meaningful and feasible.

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