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UWP 007

Synthesis Final Draft

In 1988, the Pacific Northwest tree octopus was discovered. Google search will show you many different links with all the information about the cephalopod. Cool huh? Except for the fact that it's not true. Nowadays, fraudulent information is so easy to post online since almost everyone has access to the internet. Many times, people do not question the information that is posted because they are unable to discredit the information since it sounds so believable to them. This octopus hoax above was created to prove this point exactly; current literacy skills have caused an increased misinformed audience. Authors Carillo, Gioia, and Bunn have identified that the issue with internet literacy stems from education systems within the curriculum that have undervalued the importance of reading, causing underdeveloped critical thinking skills.

Present day literacy curriculum starts with teaching students the basics of reading, definitions of words and what they mean when they are put together. From there, once the student gets the hang of it, not much other effort is put into the further development of students' reading skills. Teachers begin to focus on assignments that involve reading, but the act of reading outside of the classroom isn't really encouraged. According to Dana Gioia's "On the Importance of Reading", the amount of readers in the United States has declined significantly with less than half of the population participating in the activity, causing literacy skills to decline considerably, especially in the adult population (2006). Reading is seen as a trivial task that doesn't have much importance to it other than getting information out of it. Teachers usually assign the texts necessary for the task at hand. No questions are asked and all the students are required to do is identify an argument, summarize it, or other types of writing assignments. With practicing reading in this manner, students fail to develop the ability to question writers' credibility or overall purpose for writing the text.

Considering how reading is not valued highly, it is no surprise that the connection between reading and writing has not been identified and implemented into curriculum. Writing is currently deemed to have a higher value and a more important skill to learn/strengthen. But that is another flaw in the system. Reading comprehension is crucial in order to make good writers; without having such skills and practice in reading, they're analysis, summarizing, and other writing abilities begin to suffer as a result of lack of teaching. (Carillo, 2017). The connection between reading and writing being maintained allows for students to develop their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking has a textbook definition of "the analysis of available facts, evidence, observations, and arguments to form a judgment." Having this ability allows for students to begin to form questions and these questions allow for there to be room to allow error and the possibility of identifying some truths and lies. Furthermore, reading expands the vocabulary and allows students to be able to improve their communication skills in order to voice their opinions when they realize that something does not appear to be correct. Writing is a form of communication and an extensive process. There is a lot of thought and questions that need to be addressed before actually completing the task. Because of this, writing is also seen as a trivial task to complete. There is too much time, effort, and thought that needs to be put into the practice. But that is the whole point of writing. That you must use your brain in order to think

about what is being asked of you and what you are reading if any sources are involved (Strong, 2003). There is so much analysis that must be done in order to form ideas for writing and other forms of communication. These are only developed from the teaching that reading and writing are something that are connected. And must be developed together in order for there to be a strong sense of understanding. Schools that fail to include this into their curriculum, fail to understand that their students do not gain the necessary knowledge and confidence in their reading and writing abilities. Therefore, they are discouraged to continue the practice of both and literacy skills drop as soon as they leave school and the classroom.

The importance of internet literacy is to ensure that internet users are aware that not everything that is posted online can be deemed a credible source for information. But also, for adults to be informed appropriately and understand any news that involves the analysis of different perspectives. The development of critical thinking skills and appropriate literacy skills would help society fix current world issues when the public is more educated about how drastic the consequences of the matter are. Currently, only a few voices are able to communicate the importance of these problems, but they are being ignored due to being outnumbered by those who choose to not listen. They have such important information to distribute but no one is able to understand them as many view their points as something that has “nothing to do with them”. Little does the public know that we are currently in a time crunch against so many factors that may change our world for the worse. But how would we know? As we shamelessly scroll through our social media, silencing the notification that we received from the News app about the fact that women will lose their rights to their bodily autonomy. Or how Earth as we know it may change drastically in the next 3-5 years if no changes are made to better the environment and stop global warming. We view ourselves as people with no voice because we don't know how to put it into words or perspective. We can't understand because we were never taught and only a small fraction are capable of teaching themselves to understand the importance of knowledge. Therefore, I believe that school curriculum should change to emphasize the importance of reading in order to improve the critical thinking skills necessary to solve and understand the world problems that so drastically need to be addressed.

References

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