

The Copy and Paste Generation:  
The Affects of Entertainment and Social Technology

By Dr. Thomas Doyal

Our world is quite different today than it as was even 20 years ago. It has drastically changed in the way we consume information and communicate with each other. This shift in communication patterns is directly attributable to the “advances” in much of our technology.

We are privy to a glut of constant stimulation. 600 cable channels, iPods, Tevo, direct TV, movies and music on-demand, 24-7 internet access..... Much of this change has had its roots in our entertainment and has moved in to the way we communicate with each other and receive our information on a daily basis.

There is a growing need for instant gratification. It is affecting the way we “consume” information. Newspapers and magazines are scrambling to get on-line as their “readership” declines. This shift is developing a tension between the use of 2 dimensional (words on a page) material and the students in today’s classroom. Our method of teaching and the materials we develop need to address this growing tension.

If our youth are used to simply skimming the surface of written material and relying on the “copy and paste” method of production, we will soon have a society of citizens ill-prepared to think deeply, use inquiry, think analytically and problem solve.

The genie is out of the bottle. We can't shut down the processes our students are consumed by. We need to find a way to capture these media and use them in our attempt to teach.

As we endeavor to resolve this conflict and ease this tension, we need to enhance our curriculum, use the media our students use and co-opt it for our purposes.