



# River Valley Current

October 31, 2017 No. 490

*"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."  
Anne of Green Gables*

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Tuesday, Oct 31

Grades 1-3 – Halloween Harvest Festival  
Grades 4-8 – Ancestor's Day

#### Wednesday, Nov 1

Día de Los Muertos Grade School Celebration

#### Thursday, Nov 2

Middle School Reading Group 7-8:00 pm

#### Saturday, Nov 4

5th Grade workday

### Looking Ahead

#### Friday, Nov 10

Lantern Walk – EC, Grades 1 & 2 4:45 pm

#### Saturday, Nov 11

RVWS Open House 10:00 am

#### Thursday, Nov 16

EC Parent Enrichment Evening

#### Monday-Tuesday, Nov 20-21

Parent-Teacher Conferences – No School

#### Wednesday-Thursday, Nov 22-24

Thanksgiving Break – No School

#### How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org  
lc@rivervalleyschool.org  
bot@rivervalleyschool.org  
pc@rivervalleyschool.org

### The Parent Handbook is LIVE

This year's RVWS Parent Handbook is now available on our website in the Parent Resources section. In case you don't have the password, it will be included in the email that accompanies the Current.

## Lantern Walk – Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 4:45 pm

On Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, Early Childhood, First and Second grade children will be celebrating Martinmas with an annual Lantern Walk.

Celebrating St. Martin's Day (Martinmas), or Laternelaufen, is a tradition preserved in Waldorf schools everywhere. Tied to the legend of St. Martin, a French soldier who gave half his coat to warm a beggar in need, the event includes walking through the school grounds along a path lit by luminaries, singing songs and carrying lanterns the children have made in school.

The Lantern Walk is hushed (aside from the singing), and reverent, but not at all somber. It is a beautiful procession of lights at dusk symbolizing the turn of the season and the carrying of inner light into the darker months of the year.

## Martinmas Coat Drive

As part of River Valley's celebration of the legend of Saint Martin we will once again be sponsoring our Annual Martinmas Coat Drive. Please consider donating your gently used coats and jackets. Our art teacher Sharon Ferguson is organizing the drive through the not-for-profit organization, One Warm Coat. The coats received will benefit Community Services for Children in Allentown (<http://www.cscinc.org>).

New or gently used women's, men's and children's coats are all welcome. **Children's sizes 0-5 are especially needed.**

A drop box will be located in the school lobby from **November 1st -18th to receive your generous donations!**

Thank you Sharon for helping to create this wonderful way for RVWS to support to our greater community!

**See inside for wonderful pictures of Friday's Fall Assembly.**

## RVWS Open House – Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

Our Fall All-School Open House is on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. This is an important outreach event, and we are hoping to show off our supportive community to prospective families. Here are answers to some questions which may arise in considering your attendance:

### My child already attends River Valley- why should I come to the Open House?

The annual Open House at River Valley is a wonderful opportunity to see the school from a new perspective. The entire faculty will be there to show their classrooms and speak about the Waldorf curriculum. You will also see and hear from some of our amazing alumni and their parents about how Waldorf education has influenced their lives.

*(Continued on next page.)*

If you are a parent of a young child, the Open House gives you a chance to learn more about what happens in the grades, speak with grade school faculty members, and share experiences with parents of older children.

If your child is in the grade school, the Open House is a great way to learn about what is ahead in future years: learn about how science is taught in the middle school, inquire about literature in the higher grades, or find out about fine arts.

If your child is in middle school, the Open House is a great time to speak to parents with high schoolers about how their Waldorf child adjusted to a mainstream school or find out which of the surrounding private high schools have best suited other Waldorf families.

**Ok, that sounds interesting; I'll attend the Open House. Why are you asking me to bring a friend?**

90% of families who choose Waldorf education for their children do so because they learned about Waldorf from a friend or family member. The recommendations of our community members are the best resource we have to grow a strong school. Attending the Open House is a wonderful way to show your support for River Valley. Bringing a friend is icing on the (vegan, gluten-free, all-organic) cake!

**Will there be snacks?**

Of course! What better way to mingle than with a cup of coffee and a cookie?

We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

River Valley Waldorf School Admin Team

## From Administration

As a follow-up to Kim John Payne's recent visit we want to let you know about this free webinar that he is hosting on Thursday:

**Free Live Webinar with Kim John Payne - The Digital Age: Neuroscience, Attachment and Parenting**

Attend a special free live training, for parents, educators, and therapists happening this week on **Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 pm** on The Digital Age: Neuroscience, Attachment and Parenting: What can neuroscience and Attachment therapy tell us about raising the next generation, featuring Diane Poole Heller, Ph.D. and Kim John Payne, M.Ed.

Here's are a few of the topics that Diane and Kim will explore in the upcoming webinar:

How technology can sabotage the process of bonding and attunement and even act as a digital surrogate to real connection. This fundamentally changes the way we parent and teach.

- How we can help our children with their technology addictions.
- How to watch and ensure healthy developmental foundations in the digital age (and the negative ramifications when this is not the case).
- They'll talk about...
- What the effects are of new technologies on children's brains, and what the research is showing us
- Supporting parents to develop better insights and discernment about what is healthy digital usage at what age and what is just plain harmful
- Navigating this new world where devices can readily disrupt attachment bonding in a family
- How to bring greater joy, more connection, and more love into children's and families' lives

Family Dynamics: Often it is the parents' technology use that drives loss of Attachment.

Kim John Payne, a trainer to over 230 private and public schools, has been a school counselor, educator, researcher, and a family counselor for twenty-seven years. He is the author of the best selling book *Simplicity Parenting* and *The Soul of Discipline: The Simplicity Parenting Approach to Warm, Firm, and Calm Guidance - From Toddlers to Teens*.

Diane Poole Heller is an international expert and trainer in the field of Adult Attachment Theory, trauma resolution, and integrative healing techniques. She has an upcoming audio book with *Sounds True: Healing Your Attachment Wounds: How to Create Deep and Lasting intimate Relationships*. She also created the video *Surviving Columbine*, which was featured on CNN.

The webinar will be live so you will also be able to ask questions. Space is limited. Sign up here:

<http://dianepooleheller.pages.ontraport.net/parenting-dk>

## **Back to the Future: Waldorf Education, Now More than Ever An Evening with Jack Petrash**

Waldorf School of Princeton, 1062 Cherry Hill Road, Princeton, Thursday., Nov. 16, 7 p.m.. Hagens Hall. Tickets: \$10 Online /\$15 at the Door

Waldorf Education has been around for nearly 100 years, which begs the question: "Do these educational principles still work?" Compared with mainstream classrooms' smart boards and laptops, beeswax, knitting, and handmade books may evoke another era; however, it is precisely because of our time-tested approach that Waldorf Education prepares students to be divergent thinkers who see more than one answer to a problem, and are capable of seeing the questions no one else is asking. And contemporary educators, neuroscientists, and economists are backing this perspective.

Jack Petrash has been a class teacher at the Washington Waldorf School for over thirty years. He has taken four classes on the extended journey from grade one to grade eight. Jack is also the founder and director of the Nova Institute, an organization that works to build a bridge between mainstream education and Waldorf Education. He is the author of *Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out* and his TEDx talk, "Preparing Children for the Journey," has been seen by many parents and teachers in Waldorf communities in North America. He is the author of *Covering Home: Lessons on Fathering from the Game of Baseball* and *Navigating the Terrain of Childhood: A Guide to Meaningful Parenting and Heartfelt Discipline*

## **Safety at Dismissal Time**

When you pick up your children at dismissal time please make sure you keep them with you. If you would like to visit with other families and have the children play, go to the front playground or the lawn in front of the garden and enjoy yourselves. The area in front of the school is not the spot for socializing at this time of day. Buses and cars are pulling in and out. Adults milling about, children playing, climbing and running creates a sense of chaos and the bus drivers feel very unsafe. Even one accident would be too many! We love our vibrant community and all of the fun that goes along with it, so please make sure the fun takes place in a safe location. Thank you.

## **Calendar Update**

The evening performance of the Shepherds Play has been moved from Tuesday, 12/19 to Monday 12/18. The two performances will be on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm and Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am.

## **Open House Lawn Signs**

Open House lawn signs are available in the lobby. Take one home to let your neighbors know about our school! Postcards and flyers are also available if you would like to leave one at your local coffee shop, yoga studio, lunch spot, etc.

## **Waldorf in Puerto Rico: Escuela Micael**

AWSNA is asking each family in an accredited AWSNA school to give a small donation (\$10 or less) simply to help Escuela Micael keep its doors open and continue to offer Waldorf education until such time that their communities can stabilize. Imagine all the good...

<https://www.gofundme.com/shym9p-escuela-micael-hurricane-maria>

## **Fall High School Open Houses**

The following is a list of upcoming open houses hosted by schools where RVWS alums have enrolled after graduating.

### **Abington Friends School**

Our Fall Open House will be on Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00a.m. (Election Day) Attend an Open House to meet your admission representative, hear from Head of School, Rich Nourie, and interact with current students, parents and faculty. The Saturday event is more robust in information. The Weekday event is so that you can also see classes in action. Register for one or both events.

*(Continued on next page.)*

### **Kimberton Waldorf School**

Wednesday, November 8, 2017, 8:30 to 10:30am

Discover the High School: The High School at Kimberton provides a rich, rigorous, academic experience for students in grades 9 through 12. We will visit each grade during main lesson to experience a bit of our academically diverse high school curriculum. We will have an opportunity to hear about some of the unique experiences that our students participate in, including international exchange, outdoor education, social service, college counseling, vocational practicum and electives. Please contact [admissions@kimberton.org](mailto:admissions@kimberton.org)

### **The Lotus School of Liberal Arts**

November 7, 2017 @ 5:30-7:30 pm (Re-scheduled)

Come visit our unique high school and see what a mindfulness-based education looks like.

So many of our clients and students have difficulty listening with kindness to those they disagree with. They even have difficulty listening to themselves! Find out how a brief and daily practice in yoga, martial arts, or mindfulness help all of us settle down and listen with an open mind and heart. In these contentious times, a little extra listening can make a big difference.

*The Lotus School of Liberal Arts invites you join in this interesting and important discussion with its principal, Peter Ryan, M.Sc, a longtime teacher and psychotherapist. Peter holds three black belts in Zen Sword and brings a wealth of practical skill to the challenges of working with young people.*

## **From LC**

### **After School and Weekend Excursions**

Occasionally River Valley sponsors or in some way supports a parent organized outing or club such as one-time excursions open to parents and children, or weekly clubs like Ski Club. We ask that each excursion or club proposal be brought to the Admin Team for review at least one month prior to the starting date.

Thank you!

## **From the Faculty**

### **What the Children are Learning:**

First Grade – Arithmetic

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – House Building

Fourth Grade – Local Geography

Fifth Grade –Geometry

Sixth Grade – Minerology

Seventh Grade – Age of Exploration

Eighth Grade – Geometry

### **Parent Reading Group This Week**

On Thursday, November 2nd, the parent reading group will meet from 7-8 pm, open to anyone interested in a deeper understanding of adolescent development. We will review Chapters 6-9 in Betty Staley 's book *Between Form and Freedom*.

### **Dia Los Muertos Celebration**

Thank you to of the parents who stepped up to volunteer their services to make this year our biggest celebration of Día Los Muertos yet. Thank you to Karen Jacobs who made 100 “calavera” (skull) sugar cookies and 60 homemade burgundy beeswax candles. Thank you to Liz Davachi and Felicia Holtz for helping us decorate the calavera cookies with icing. And thank you Erika Chick for volunteering to make 13 loaves of “pan de muertos” sweet bread for each grade to enjoy following the celebration.

If you'd like to be present for the celebration Wednesday, Nov 1st and/or help 6th, 7th and 8th grade paint their faces please contact Profesora Workman directly at the following email address: [mworkman@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:mworkman@rivervalleyschool.org)

## **A letter of Gratitude from the GoFundMe site of the Santiago Family:**

Dear Friends,

The past month has been literally and figuratively a dark and scary one, for my family and for my island. For me it has been a mixture of frustration, resignation and guilt. I have resigned myself to the fact that I cannot and should not go to be with my family in their time of need because it would not help. On the contrary, it would deteriorate the situation and add to their bad conditions. I feel a great deal of frustration by not being able to do anything to help. Above all, I feel extremely guilty for being privileged with all the amenities I have. Not an hour goes by without me thinking of how lucky I am for just being where I am, nor an hour goes by without me thinking about how uncomfortable my whole family and island are.

You have radically changed all of this my friends. Starting with old high school friends that not only helped me locate my mother but even visited with her and sent me a video...to my colleagues from my River Valley Waldorf School who thought a fundraiser would allow me to do what I alone could not do and to everyone who contributed. By acquiring these generators and delivering them to my family you are literally bringing light into their homes and comfort to their daily life. You have provided light, but more important, you have shown your love.

There is something else you have done for me, my friends; you have shown me that the true source of light comes from the warm heart of friendship. My wonderful, warm and giving community has brought the gift of light into my life. It took a catastrophe of two hurricanes in as many weeks to remind me of the goodness that lives in my friends. It made me realize the amazing blessing I have in my neighbors, my friends and my community. There are no words to describe the gratitude I feel, deep inside, for having all of you in my life. I could only attempt to repay this debt by committing to do for others what you have done for me, shown me your love.

Thank you,  
Euclides

## **From Parent Council**

### **Winter Fair**

#### **River Valley's Parent Artisan Market**

At this year's Winter Fair we would like to host an artisan market featuring the parents and families of River Valley. If you are a crafter/artist with inventory or believe you would like to participate with 10+ items, please contact ivy Berrocal at: 201-694-5166 [Karunagoddess@gmail.com](mailto:Karunagoddess@gmail.com)

### **Parent Choir**

Rehearsals for our Winter Fair performance begin this Sunday!

The full schedule is below. All are welcome—no experience necessary. Really. Please join us!!

To be added to the mailing list, email [andywander@yahoo.com](mailto:andywander@yahoo.com). Questions? Look for Kira Willey or email [kirawilley@rcn.com](mailto:kirawilley@rcn.com).

Sunday, Nov. 5, 3 PM, Sunday, Nov. 12, 3 PM, (tentative) Saturday, Nov. 18, 3 PM, Sunday, Dec. 3, 3 PM

## **From the Community**

### **From the Artyard in Frenchtown**

#### **An Evening with Photojournalist, Cinematographer, and Survivor Jared Moossy.**

Saturday, Nov. 4th, 8:00 PM

Screening of his films Witness: Libya, A Lucky Man, and Chester, PA. Conversation with Moossy after the screenings

#### **Music Workshop in the Art of Improvisation with Karl Berger and Ingrid Sertso.** A hands-on two-day event.

Saturday, Nov 11<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, Nov 12<sup>th</sup>. Price: \$75 for both days (Price does not include meals )

#### **A Celebration of Cantastoria and Cranky by Artists and Musicians from all over the USA**

Friday, Nov 17th - 7:30 PM – An Entertaining Illustrated History of Cantastoria (Lecture)

Saturday, Nov 18th- 7:30 PM - A Raucous Evening of Banners and Cranks

Sunday, Nov 19th- 2:00 PM - Banners and Cranks for kids & their grown-ups.

For more information go to: [artyard.org](http://artyard.org).

Artyard, 62A Trenton Ave. Frenchtown, NJ 08825

### **Essential Oil Class Friday, November 10th 9-10 am in the All Purpose Room**

Jamie Iapalucci, (Teddy Kent's mom. Grade 1) will be hosting an essential oils class on Friday morning November 10th after the grade school assembly. Jamie helped many River Valley teachers add oils, diffusers and plant-based Thieves oil cleaners to their classrooms this year and now she is offering an essential oils class to our community of parents.

The class will be an intimate gathering where you can see, smell and try Young Living Therapeutic Grade Essential Oils while learning how they will add to your family's natural wellness routines. Come learn all about Essential Oils, including how they work and how to easily and safely get started using them in your home for natural wellness and emotional support. Jamie is available at [naturalandglamorous@gmail.com](mailto:naturalandglamorous@gmail.com) if you should have any questions prior to the class.

Thank You!! Jamie at Natural & Glamorous

### **Thanksgiving Turkey Orders**

Our very own Joanna and Marc Michini (parents of Clover in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade), owners of Purely Farm are taking orders for natural, pasture-raised turkeys for Thanksgiving. To place your order, go to: <http://mailchi.mp/8d88a948c13a/order-your-thanksgiving-turkey-today?e=fd4c11af3d>.

### **Show Your Love for Frenchtown Park!**

The Borough of Frenchtown is asking its extended community - all who love and enjoy "creek" park - to consider making a donation towards our improvement project. The community has put together a wonderful design that updates our park and keeps some of our favorite older playground pieces. Thanks to a generous matching grant from the Fargo Family Foundation, your gift will be doubled. If we can raise \$7,500 by the end of October, they will give us \$7,500!

Can you make a gift today? Donations of all sizes are needed and appreciated. Gifts of \$1,000+ will receive a bench plaque. Just four benches remain for this special recognition for your family or loved one! Give online: <https://www.youcaring.com/boroughoffrenchtown-920009> Or send a check payable to "Borough of Frenchtown" with "Park Fundraiser" in the memo to: Borough of Frenchtown, 29 Second St, Frenchtown, NJ 08825 Questions? Contact Holly Low at [holly.k.low@gmail.com](mailto:holly.k.low@gmail.com) or 732-233-4136.

### **Spiritual Science and Technology Retreat**

December 1-3, 2017, Threefold Educational Center, Chestnut Ridge, NY

This event is for anyone with a strong connection to anthroposophy who is actively engaged inwardly or outwardly with the issue of technology. The retreat's objectives are:

- Deepening our understanding of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual scientific ideas about technology and human and earthly evolution.
- Sharing perspectives, experiences, and research questions concerning technology with each other.
- Considering how individuals in the various practical fields of anthroposophy can collaborate together, and with other like-minded people from various backgrounds to contribute to the ethical use and development of technology for the betterment of humanity.
- Sharing ideas and plans for future technology related activities and events.

Schedule: The retreat begins with registration at 4:00pm on Friday, December 1, and ends at 12:30pm on Sunday, December 3. A pre-retreat meeting for First Class members of the School of Spiritual Science on the topic of technology will take place at 2:00pm on Friday, December 1.

Fee: Sliding scale, \$75 to \$125 (includes dinner on Friday, lunch and dinner on Saturday, and snacks). **REGISTRATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 15.** For a full description of the retreat, and to register, please go to: <http://www.threefold.org/events/tickets.aspx>

## Agatha Christie's "The Hollow" – at Solebury School

RVWS Alumni in the cast: Teva Skovronek (2014), Safwa Ozair (2016), Ava Smith (2016), Dominique Wander (2016)  
November 2, 3, 4 & 5 – tickets on sale now: <https://solebury-school.ticketleap.com/>

These shows sell out quickly! Check your calendar and purchase your tickets.

An unhappy game of romantic follow-the-leader explodes into murder one weekend at The Hollow, home of Sir Henry and Lucy Angkatell, arguably Christie's finest comic grande dame. Dr. Cristow, the Harley Street lothario, is at the center of the trouble when, assembled in one place, we find his dull but devoted wife Gerda, his mistress and prominent sculptor Henrietta and his former lover and Hollywood film star Veronica. Also visiting are Edward and Midge whose romantic assertions are likewise thrown into the mix. As the list of romantic associations grow so does the list of potential suspects when Cristow is shot dead. Nearly everyone has a motive but only one of them did the deed. (The play was adapted by Agatha Christie from her novel of the same title, The Hollow.)

## Lenape Chamber Ensemble Concert in the Round

For children ages 4-12, featuring music by Bach, Telemann and Couperin. Refreshments and Instruments demonstrations.

Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 10-11 am at Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium, 700 Butler Avenue at State Street and Rt. 611, Doylestown, PA 18901.  
Children: \$2, Adults Free.

## Lenape Chamber Ensemble

Friday, November 3, 8:15 pm, Upper Tinicum Lutheran Church, 188 Upper Tinicum Church Rd., UBE  
Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 3 pm, Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium (See above for address.) Music by Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, and Couperin

Adults \$18, Students and Seniors \$15, Children \$5

For information: 610-294-9361 or  
[www.lenapechamberensemble.org](http://www.lenapechamberensemble.org)

## The Lotus School of Liberal Arts Open House and a free workshop led by Dr. Nancy Lubow

Tuesday, November 7, 5:30-7:30 pm  
BRAINsmART Therapies Workshop - A 'cross modal' Creative Arts Problem-Solving Approach for Students and Educators

BRAINsmART is an arts-based approach to learning and healing the mind, emotions and body.

The principles of a cross modal creative arts approach are organized around the principle that 'creativity integrates the brain and heals the mind'. This workshop will help participants link the four different perceptual modalities: auditory, visual, kinesthetic and verbal to couple the learning experience with creative-receptive states of being. These skills are the tools students need to redirect scattered attention and chaotic emotions into the visual-spatial world of the right brain. This process not only improves attention and focus, but increases cognitive ability, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance.

## 2017-2018 HOLY NIGHTS JOURNALS AVAILABLE

During this darkest time of the year, when the outer world appears to sleep, our inner life awakens. Working with the Holy Nights, or "Time Between the Years" as it is sometimes called, is a potent way to connect more deeply with your awakening True Self. We're pleased to let you know about a Holy Nights journal called the Sacred Nights of Winter. For those interested in deepening your soul life and opening to the grace and love available during the holiday season, this journal may be a very helpful tool. You'll receive a discount when you order by November 12th.

[www.KimMarieCoaching.com/SacredNights](http://www.KimMarieCoaching.com/SacredNights) You may direct any questions about the journal to [Kim@KimMarieCoaching.com](mailto:Kim@KimMarieCoaching.com). We hope you find this resource helpful in bringing joy, peace and reflection to your Holy Nights and the holiday season.

## Two European Tours with Waldorf/Anthroposophical Themes

Offered by Sarnia Guiton of Sophia Services

### In Search of Knights Templar in Portugal - 4/21-5/5

The Knights Templar are well known for their activities in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Middle Ages following the First Crusade. Their demise in 1307 is also well known. What is not so well known is the belief that their activities in Portugal, working with Bernard of Clairvaux and Portuguese Templar Kings over several generations, formed a Kingdom of Conscience with laws that are echoed in Rudolf Steiner's Threefold Social Order.

### In Search of the Future in Hungary, Romania & Bulgaria 7/28-8/20

Anthroposophy was planted in these Eastern European countries early in the last century. Communism kept it underground prompting it to grow strong roots. At the end of that era, it grew strong and firm above ground and blossomed with joy that it could now be free. We have known none of that in the West. On this tour we will explore what has been happening anthroposophically in Eastern Europe in the last 25 years, and if we have anything to contribute or to bring back home from our experience.

For more information, see the school bulletin board.

**From Businessinsider.com via Waldorf Today**

## **A New Study Shows that Students Learn More Effectively from Print Textbooks than Screens**

By Patricia A. Alexander and Lauren M. Singer

Today's students see themselves as digital natives, the first generation to grow up surrounded by technology like smartphones, tablets and e-readers.

Teachers, parents and policymakers certainly acknowledge the growing influence of technology and have responded in kind. We've seen more investment in classroom technologies, with students now equipped with school-issued iPads and access to e-textbooks.

In 2009, California passed a law requiring that all college textbooks be available in electronic form by 2020; in 2011, Florida lawmakers passed legislation requiring public schools to convert their textbooks to digital versions.

Given this trend, teachers, students, parents and policymakers might assume that students' familiarity and preference for technology translates into better learning outcomes. But we've found that's not necessarily true.

As researchers in learning and text comprehension, our recent work has focused on the differences between reading print and digital media. While new forms of classroom technology like digital textbooks are more accessible and portable, it would be wrong to assume that students will automatically be better served by digital reading simply because they prefer it.

Speed – at a cost

Our work has revealed a significant discrepancy. Students said they preferred and performed better when reading on screens. But their actual performance tended to suffer.

For example, from our review of research done since 1992, we found that students were able to better comprehend information in print for texts that were more than a page in length. This appears to be related to the disruptive effect that scrolling has on comprehension. We were also surprised to learn that few researchers tested different levels of comprehension or documented reading time in their studies of printed and digital texts.

To explore these patterns further, we conducted three studies that explored college students' ability to comprehend information on paper and from screens.

Students first rated their medium preferences. After reading two passages, one online and one in print, these students then completed three tasks: Describe the main idea of the texts, list key points covered in the readings and provide any other relevant content they could recall. When they were done, we asked them to judge their comprehension performance.

Across the studies, the texts differed in length, and we collected varying data (e.g., reading time). Nonetheless, some key findings emerged that shed new light on the differences between reading printed and digital content:

- Students overwhelmingly preferred to read digitally.
- Reading was significantly faster online than in print.
- Students judged their comprehension as better online than in print.
- Paradoxically, overall comprehension was better for print versus digital reading.

The medium didn't matter for general questions (like understanding the main idea of the text).

But when it came to specific questions, comprehension was significantly better when participants read printed texts.

Placing print in perspective

From these findings, there are some lessons that can be conveyed to policymakers, teachers, parents and students about print's place in an increasingly digital world.

*(Continued on next page.)*

### **1. Consider the purpose**

We all read for many reasons. Sometimes we're looking for an answer to a very specific question. Other times, we want to browse a newspaper for today's headlines.

As we're about to pick up an article or text in a printed or digital format, we should keep in mind why we're reading. There's likely to be a difference in which medium works best for which purpose.

In other words, there's no "one medium fits all" approach.

### **2. Analyze the task**

One of the most consistent findings from our research is that, for some tasks, medium doesn't seem to matter. If all students are being asked to do is to understand and remember the big idea or gist of what they're reading, there's no benefit in selecting one medium over another.

But when the reading assignment demands more engagement or deeper comprehension, students may be better off reading print. Teachers could make students aware that their ability to comprehend the assignment may be influenced by the medium they choose. This awareness could lessen the discrepancy we witnessed in students' judgments of their performance vis-à-vis how they actually performed.

### **3. Slow it down**

In our third experiment, we were able to create meaningful profiles of college students based on the way they read and comprehended from printed and digital texts.

Among those profiles, we found a select group of undergraduates who actually comprehended better when they moved from print to digital. What distinguished this atypical group was that they actually read slower when the text was on the computer than when it was in a book. In other words, they didn't take the ease of engaging with the digital text for granted. Using this select group as a model, students could possibly be taught or directed to fight the tendency to glide through online texts.

### **4. Something that can't be measured**

There may be economic and environmental reasons to go paperless. But there's clearly something important that would be lost with print's demise.

In our academic lives, we have books and articles that we regularly return to. The dog-eared pages of these treasured readings contain lines of text etched with questions or reflections. It's difficult to imagine a similar level of engagement with a digital text. There should probably always be a place for print in students' academic lives – no matter how technologically savvy they become.

Of course, we realize that the march toward online reading will continue unabated. And we don't want to downplay the many conveniences of online texts, which include breadth and speed of access.

Rather, our goal is simply to remind today's digital natives – and those who shape their educational experiences – that there are significant costs and consequences to discounting the printed word's value for learning and academic development.

## Fall Assembly

*Special Thanks to Tiffany Robinson for the beautiful photos of this musical evening*



