It is a reminder of the choices that have followed the students through the semester: computer or homework? Immediate gratification or investing in the future?

"How can you have a discussion in class?"

To Ms. Blondel, the exercise in group reading represents a regression in American education and an indictment of technology. The reason she has to do it, she says, is about the Vietnam War.

Hands-On Technology

Still, Vishal's passion for film reinforces for Mr. Reilly, the principal, that the way to reach these students is on their own terms.

"I click and something happens," he says, explaining that, by comparison, reading a book or doing homework is less exciting. "I guess it goes back to the immediate gratification."

Mr. Reilly says that the audio class provides solid vocational training and can get students interested in other subjects.

With a video camera recording his words, Vishal talks about the film "Lost Highway," a surreal David Lynch movie. "I worked on it for two months," he says. "This is the point at which he felt comfortable."

He says he sometimes wishes that his parents would force him to quit playing and study, because he finds it depressing," his mother says. Besides, she adds, "he's been making an effort to do his homework."

"I know I can read a book, but then I'm up and checking Facebook," he says, adding: "Facebook is amazing because it feels like you're doing something and you're not doing anything. It's the absence of doing something, but you feel gratified anyway."

It was not always this way. As a child, Vishal had a tendency to procrastinate, but nothing like this. Something changed him.

Several recent studies show that young people tend to use home computers for entertainment, not learning, and that this can hurt school performance, particularly in subjects like English. One study found that students who use social networking sites more than once a day have lower test scores than those who use them less frequently. The findings were published in the journal "Computers in Human Behavior." By all rights, Vishal, a bright 17-year-old, should already have finished the book, 

"Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction"

By

Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction

"Editing, editing, editing"

On YouTube, "you can get a whole story in six minutes," he explains. "A book takes so long. I prefer the immediate gratification."

Several teachers call Vishal one of their brightest students, and they wonder why things are not adding up. Last semester, his grade point average was 2.3 after a D-plus that appears next to any article. Visit

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On the day of an English exam, Mr. Reilly sat in on a couple of classes and found that students were using their computers to listen to music or play games while they were supposed to be doing homework.

For some, the amplification is intense. Allison Miller, 14, sends and receives 27,000 texts in a month, her fingers clicking at a blistering pace as she carries on as many patterns of activity. But only when the rats take a break from their exploration do they process those patterns in a way that seems to create a persistent memory.

The principal, David Reilly, 37, a former musician who says he sympathizes when young people feel disenfranchised, is determined to engage these 21st-century

On the point at which he felt comfortable. He says he sometimes wishes that his parents would force him to quit playing and study, because he finds it

He acts as his family's tech-support expert, helping his father, Satendra, a lab manager, retrieve lost documents on the computer, and his mother, Indra, a security

Mr. Reilly, the principal, says their choices tend to reflect their personalities. Social butterflies tend to be heavy texters and Facebook users. Students who are less social might escape into games, while drifters or those prone to procrastination, like Vishal, might

The technology has created on campuses a new set of social types — not the thespian and the jock but the texter and gamer, Facebook addict and YouTube potato.

"I'm doing Facebook, YouTube, having a conversation or two with a friend, listening to music at the same time. I'm doing a million things at once, like a lot of people

Harry Potter

At Woodside, as elsewhere, students' use of technology is not uniform. Mr. Reilly, the principal, says their choices tend to reflect their personalities. Social butterflies are using the Internet, watching TV or using some other form of media either "most" (31 percent) or "some" (25 percent) of the time that they are doing homework.

But this proficiency comes at a cost: she blames multitasking for the three B's on her recent progress report.

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For some, the amplification is intense. Allison Miller, 14,

The woman sits in a cemetery at dusk, sobbing. Behind her, silhouetted and translucent, a man kneels, then fades away, a ghost.

"I'm doing Facebook, YouTube, having a conversation or two with a friend, listening to music at the same time. I'm doing a million things at once, like a lot of people

"If you've grown up processing multiple media, that's exactly the mode you're going to fall into when put in that environment — you develop a need for that

..."He's got a perfect temperament for doing this," his mother says, "although he's got a terrible attention span." And he's got a terrible attention span, all right. Vishal admits to being "bored, restless, depressed," his mother says. Besides, she adds, "he's been making an effort to do his homework."

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Reading journal “Growing up digital, wired for distraction” by Matt Richtel, Vishal, 17 years old wasn’t able to complete his summer homework due to technology. Reading journal 3 - “Growing up Digital, Wired for Distraction” by Matt Richtel. 

“Growing up Digital, Wired for Distraction” by Matt Richtel. University, LaGuardia Community College. Course, English As A Second Language IV (ESL 99). Academic year. Growing up in the digital information era, the Net Generation has a crazy passion for the new social media communicating platforms—cell phones, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The concerned parents are beset with worries that their kids’ digital immersion has obviously led to their habitual distraction, which will directly make an adverse effect on their learning. Vishal Singh, the hero of this article, is surely an exact example of the Digital Natives, who are really lured by the digital realm. He’s totally indulged in making music digital videos and talented in filmmaking, seeming