medium, we end up with a different brain, says Michael Merzenich, a pioneer of the field of neuroplasticity. That means our online habits continue to reverberate in the workings of our brain cells even when we're not at a computer. We're exercising the neural circuits devoted to skimming and multitasking while ignoring those used for reading and thinking deeply.

Passage 2

Critics of new media sometimes use science itself to press their case, citing research that shows how "experience can change the brain." But cognitive neuroscientists roll their eyes at such talk. Yes, every time we learn a fact or skill the wiring of the brain changes; it's not as if the information is stored in the pancreas. But the existence of neural plasticity does not mean the brain is a blob of clay pounded into shape by experience.

Experience does not revamp the basic information-processing capacities of the brain. Speed-reading programs have long claimed to do just that, but the verdict was rendered by Woody Allen after he read Leo Tolstoy's famously long novel *War and Peace* in one sitting: "It was about Russia." Genuine multitasking, too, has been exposed as a myth, not just by laboratory studies but by the familiar sight of an SUV undulating between lanes as the driver cuts deals on his cell phone.

Moreover, the effects of experience are highly specific to the experiences themselves. If you train people to do one thing (recognize shapes, solve math puzzles, find hidden words), they get better at doing that thing, but almost nothing else. Music doesn't make you better at math, conjugating Latin doesn't make you more logical, brain-training games don't make you smarter. Accomplished people don't bulk up their brains with intellectual calisthenics; they immerse themselves in their fields. Novelists read lots of novels, scientists read lots of science.

The effects of consuming electronic media are likely to be far more limited than the panic implies. Media critics write as if the brain takes on the qualities of whatever it consumes, the informational equivalent of "you are what you eat." As with ancient peoples who believed that eating fierce animals made them fierce, they assume that watching quick cuts in rock videos turns your mental life into quick cuts or that reading bullet points and online postings turns your thoughts into bullet points and online postings.

22

The author of Passage 1 indicates which of the following about the use of screen-based technologies?

A) It should be thoroughly studied.
B) It makes the brain increasingly rigid.
C) It has some positive effects.
D) It should be widely encouraged.

23

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

A) Lines 3-4 ("Certain . . . Net")
B) Lines 23-25 ("But . . . smarter")
C) Lines 25-29 ("In a . . . ability")
D) Lines 29-31 ("She . . . others")

24

The author of Passage 1 indicates that becoming adept at using the Internet can

A) make people complacent about their health.
B) undermine the ability to think deeply.
C) increase people's social contacts.
D) improve people's self-confidence.

25

As used in line 40, "plastic" most nearly means

A) creative.
B) artificial.
C) malleable.
D) sculptural.

CONTINUE

26

The author of Passage 2 refers to the novel *War and Peace* primarily to suggest that Woody Allen

A) did not like Tolstoy's writing style.

B) could not comprehend the novel by speed-reading it.

C) had become quite skilled at multitasking.

D) regretted having read such a long novel.

27

According to the author of Passage 2, what do novelists and scientists have in common?

A) They take risks when they pursue knowledge.

B) They are eager to improve their minds.

C) They are curious about other subjects.

D) They become absorbed in their own fields.

28

The analogy in the final sentence of Passage 2 has primarily which effect?

A) It uses ornate language to illustrate a difficult concept.

B) It employs humor to soften a severe opinion of human behavior.

C) It alludes to the past to evoke a nostalgic response.

D) It criticizes the view of a particular group.

29

The main purpose of each passage is to

A) compare brain function in those who play games on the Internet and those who browse on it.

B) report on the problem-solving skills of individuals with varying levels of Internet experience.

C) take a position on increasing financial support for studies related to technology and intelligence.

D) make an argument about the effects of electronic media use on the brain.

30

Which choice best describes the relationship between the two passages?

A) Passage 2 relates first-hand experiences that contrast with the clinical approach in Passage 1.

B) Passage 2 critiques the conclusions drawn from the research discussed in Passage 1.

C) Passage 2 takes a high-level view of a result that Passage 1 examines in depth.

D) Passage 2 predicts the negative reactions that the findings discussed in Passage 1 might produce.

31

On which of the following points would the authors of both passages most likely agree?

A) Computer-savvy children tend to demonstrate better hand-eye coordination than do their parents.

B) Those who criticize consumers of electronic media tend to overreact in their criticism.

C) Improved visual-spatial skills do not generalize to improved skills in other areas.

D) Internet users are unlikely to prefer reading onscreen text to reading actual books.

32

Which choice provides the best evidence that the author of Passage 2 would agree to some extent with the claim attributed to Michael Merzenich in lines 41-43, Passage 1?

A) Lines 51-53 ("Critics . . . brain")

B) Lines 54-56 ("Yes . . . changes")

C) Lines 57-59 ("But . . . experience")

D) Lines 83-84 ("Media . . . consumes")

CONTINUE