The participants met with varying degrees of success, and 20 wrote about how the day went on the Griot Institute’s blog (http://griot.blogs.bucknell.edu). One participant, a first-year student, found it to be “extremely challenging,” and had to turn on his computer after lunch. Another student, though, described the day as “a spa day for the mind and body” and said that the experience helped her to realize her lost passion for reading.

Others felt changed by the experience as well. One faculty member described “a shift” in the way she thinks about technology and how she is now committed to turn off the computer every evening at a reasonable time to read a book that expands her world beyond what she would normally study. Several participants talked about the “dancing part” coming after the reading, in how they continued to think about and process what they had read for days afterwards. Another interpreted the challenge as trying to do her academic reading in the same way as she would do her pleasure reading. She discovered that without the distractions of a computer to take notes and to search the text, she could engage with the text in a deeper and more meaningful way. A student echoed this sentiment: “By attempting this challenge, I got to go back to a period of time where my favorite thing to do was sit in a treehouse and read for hours. ...I also realized that if you read just for the pleasure, you remember more ... than if you force yourself to struggle through the reading.”

One of the participants, in her blog, cites a recent New York Times article, “Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction,” which claims that the “lure of these technologies ... is particularly powerful for young people,” and the risk is that “developing brains can become more easily habituated ... to constantly switching tasks and less able to sustain attention.” She concludes, “the Dancing Mind Challenge was timely indeed, and needs to go nationwide!”