

# Navigating the Internet for Learning Purposes: BCRLG Lecture Series

By Tracie Smith

Around 30 people from academic libraries in Victoria and on Vancouver Island attended the December 1, 2010 BCRLG Lecture Series, which was held in McPherson Library at the University of Victoria.

The speaker, Dr. Malinda Desjarlais, Assistant Professor in Psychology from UNBC, spoke to us about her research into those factors that influence decision-making when novices navigate the Internet for learning and information seeking purposes. Dr. Desjarlais used an eye tracker with undergraduate students to track their gaze during navigation of web pages about how tropical storms develop. In exploring learner and task characteristics, she considered prior knowledge, motivation, self-regulatory skills, attentional control, and short-term memory capacity and assessed how these factors act as supports for novices when learning from the Internet. Her use of an eye tracker revealed differences in the selection of and attention to information within a web page, variability in information navigation characteristics, and shifts in

navigation strategies. She has extended this research by exploring differences in novices' Internet navigations related to achievement.

The active question period following Dr. Desjarlais's presentation concentrated on ideas for design and application of library web pages in order to encourage student learning. Malinda commented afterwards that she enjoys talking to librarians as their questions more often address the practical applications of research.

The BCRLG Lecture Series holds several talks over the academic year. Further information about upcoming talks and archived presentations of previous talks can be found at the BCRLG Lecture Series blog: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/bcrlglectures/>. The Lecture Series Coordinators are always interested in speaker ideas.

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