

# CORE CONNECTIONS:

## EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR EDUCATORS



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# CORE CONNECTIONS

## EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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# Welcome

BETHANY LOCKHART JOHNSON  
@LOCKHARTEDU  
KINDERGARTEN TEACHER  
DOWNEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Core Connections*!

The end of the school year is usually brimming with opportunities for reflection. We linger in the hallway with colleagues, and we celebrate milestones with students as we highlight learning and growth. We don't have to create opportunities for reflection; they are happening all around us.

When we started this school year, we could not have imagined this ending, but now that it has come, we can pause to consider what has made this time of distance learning possible. Whether you and your students transitioned seamlessly into online learning or you floundered like I did before you found your footing, this time is worth reflection and even celebration.

As you dive into this latest issue of *Core Connections* and read others' reflections on this time of distance learning, I invite you to use this time for your own reflection. Which elements from the classroom community built over the first six months of the school year translated to the last three spent in distance learning? What did you need to support the social and emotional needs of your students? Of yourself? What mattered most?

This issue invites those opportunities for reflection and hopefully serves as a thought partner during this time. As we give ourselves permission to reimagine what the end of the year looks like, we can also reimagine what our summer might look like. If professional learning feels right during this summer, Student Achievement Partners has that, too, with virtual learning to build on your understanding and fortify you for the upcoming school year.

The things we needed when distance learning first began started to look different as the return to campus date was pushed out further and further. Our return to school in the fall will likely be just as unrecognizable. Though many uncertainties remain, however, one thing remains constant: these virtual opportunities will address real needs and will encourage you as you support and lift up your students.

Happy reading (and reflecting),  
Bethany Lockhart Johnson



# Welcome

AMY BRIGGS  
@AMYBRIGGS10  
PRESIDENT  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PARTNERS



Dear Core Advocates,

For years, I've had the privilege of seeing, time and again, educators rise to whatever challenge has been placed in their path. The past few months have seen new challenges—big ones—that left all of us feeling overwhelmed and, at times, scared for our students, our families, and ourselves.

Throughout this spring, I've been inspired by countless stories of your ingenuity and dedication, even in uncertain times. Every story of your focus on each student, each family, and the content that matters most—despite very different and often difficult learning environments—is a lesson and an inspiration. In this edition of *Core Connections*, you'll be able to read some of these stories from your colleagues, and maybe even find a new idea you want to try with your students as we forge a path ahead, together.

Student Achievement Partners remains committed to our mission of supporting your work. We'll continue to share free resources and professional learning opportunities, and provide instructional support and guidance that matches the needs you share.

Keep giving us your strong opinions, advocating ferociously on behalf of your students, and sharing what works (and doesn't!) with your colleagues across the nation. And we'll keep doing everything we can to support you.

With gratitude,

Amy Briggs  
President, Student Achievement Partners





# LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE DURING COVID-19

## OPEN P-TECH'S SKILLS PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS



Times are tough. We all know this because we have all been part of it for months—along with our students and children. The global pandemic has served up an intense professional development experience on digital learning skills.

either. Uncertainty remains in various areas about what will—or could—happen with school reopening. Some institutions will reopen; some will remain closed, and all will make changes based on what we have experienced.

Many teachers have been learning on the fly how to facilitate engaging and sustainable online learning. Students have been learning a new way to “go to school” without actually going anywhere. Everyone has been navigating an unfamiliar sea of technology, including finding access to the right devices, enough bandwidth, private space, and flattering lighting. For educators, this is all on top of trying to move mountains to ensure that students of all circumstances have the opportunity to learn the content required to progress to the next grade.

We must make changes because this time will not be the last time.

The COVID-19 crisis resulted in a scramble to deploy alternate teaching approaches. It also created a serious gap in terms of the student enrichment activities and instructional opportunities that supplement the core curriculum. Work-based learning, vocational education, and enrichment opportunities have been sidelined. Just like most sports have been canceled, many of the part-time and summer jobs and internships that build skills not taught in class are on pause.

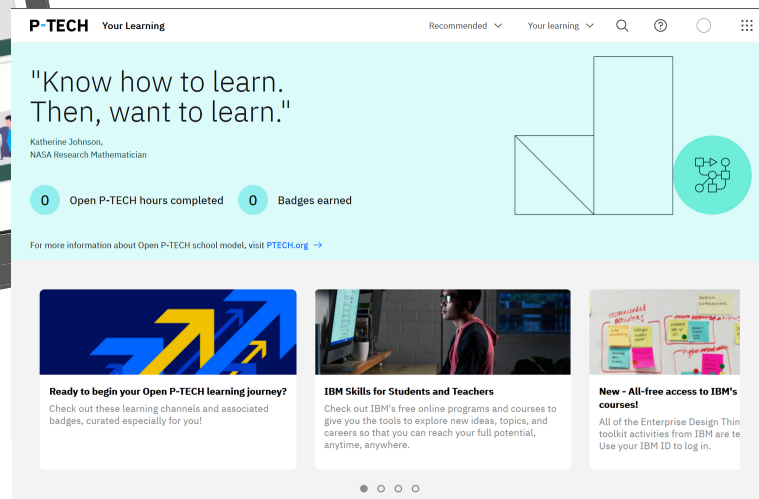
We are not yet done,





This matters because these initial work experiences and in-school enrichment opportunities bridge the classroom and workplace for many students. They provide an early window into what the world of work can look like and begin to introduce needed professional skills.

If the role of education is to prepare people for their futures, what do we do during times where just meeting basic core standards is so challenging? How do we become more resilient so that we can use the time we do have in different, powerful ways—rather than just trying to achieve some percentage of “the way it used to be”? How do we find easy-to-implement tools that can close this enrichment and future-skills gap for students and educators alike?



The prospect of the impending end of the official (and remote) school year, followed by a summer still spent at a distance for the vast majority of students and teachers, offers an opportunity for future-focused digital enrichment.

IBM's Open P-TECH can help you take advantage of this opportunity. Open P-TECH ([open.ptech.org](https://open.ptech.org)) is a digital learning platform built to introduce students and their educators to the technical and professional skills of the future. IBM recently opened the platform to anyone seeking introductory exposure to emerging technologies and the careers of the present and very-near future. It's designed for students and teachers. It's free.

What does this mean? It means that students and teachers have access to a new world of learning to explore leading-edge technology positioned in an age-appropriate way.

For example, students in a computer science class could dip their toes into the artificial intelligence (AI) waters by building a working chatbot. Other students could learn life (and potential future career) skills by exploring cybersecurity issues.



A class working on a group project could learn how design thinking approaches can help them create better outcomes.

AI, cybersecurity, and design thinking are topics that hardly any school is going to be able to include as part of their core curriculum, particularly between now and the start of the next school year. With Open P-TECH, they—plus other topics like Blockchain or data science—can be blended into a virtual classroom experience to link the core curriculum with some career exposure and preparation.

Career exposure is a big deal. With technology changing so rapidly, many adults—including teachers—are unaware of what the cutting-edge jobs are. Many students have not yet formed the personal networks that might expose them to these opportunities. Open P-TECH provides a way for students to explore these new possible careers and the skills they include. Students who are hooked by the content can dig deeper, perhaps earning a digital badge that would give their resume a boost and help them land a future job interview.

"Hands-on experience" with cutting-edge technology does not need to rely on internships for the privileged few. It also should not wait until after college. How can students choose the right course of study if they have never been exposed to the possibilities offered by the modern economy?

Digital learning is just not a COVID-19 stopgap solution. It matters to us at IBM because we believe that 100% of all jobs will change in some way as a result of emerging technology over the next decade. We need to ensure that current students—particularly those in high school—are exposed to these technologies in meaningful, engaging ways. Our goal is to build their foundational skills and knowledge of how to work with technology no matter what their career ambitions may be.

If you work with students, consider blending content from platforms such as Open P-TECH into your curricula because:

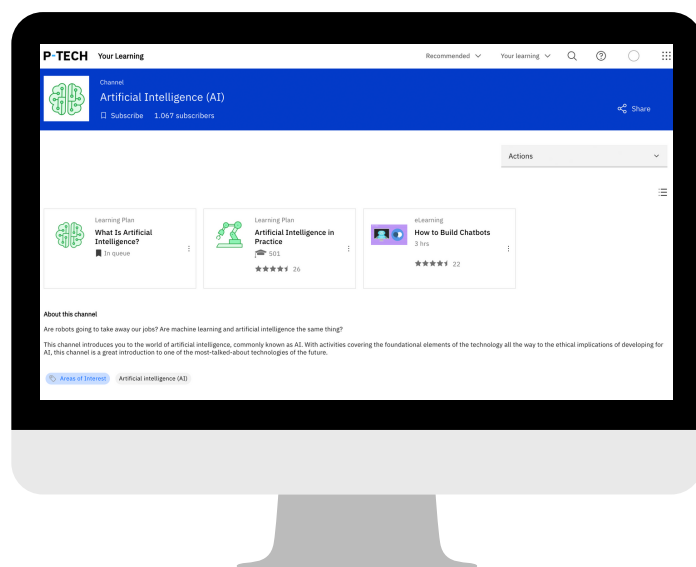
- It is relevant to many possible careers.
- It is within the reach of your students' abilities.
- It is online.
- It is free.
- It is interesting.
- It helps students prepare for work now and later.
- This is a time we can experiment with new ways of doing things.

Times are tough, but let us be open to exploring the good as we deal with the bad.

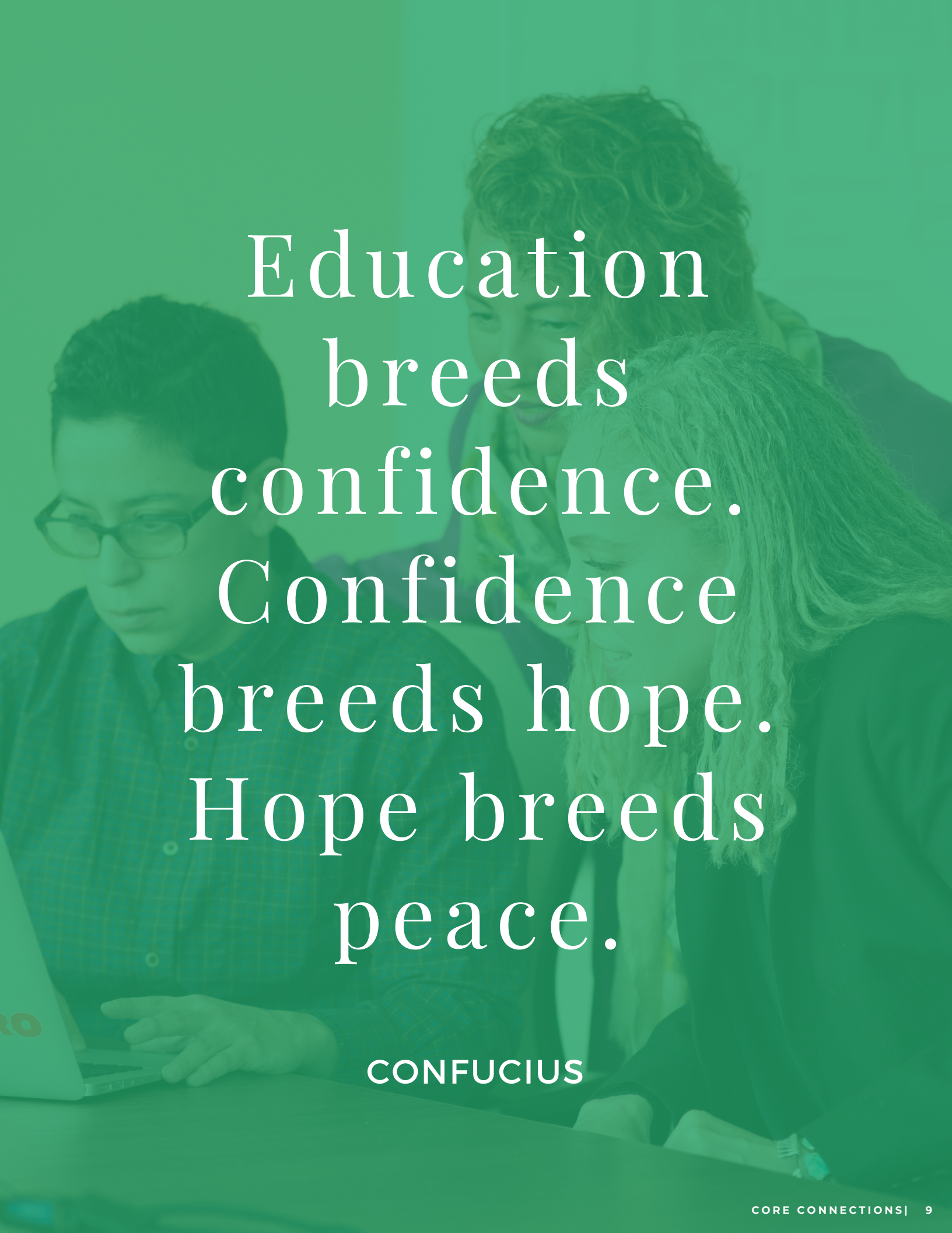
Some of the same value students receive from school clubs or outside work experience can be replicated by blending the new wave of online content into their classroom experience with the help of curious and creative teachers.

Whatever happens next, it is important to recognize that this challenging time is also a moment of exploration that can lead to new, helpful future directions. Give Open P-TECH a look. Try something out. Let us know the results of your experimentation!

Visit [open.ptech.org](https://open.ptech.org) to sign up for a free account. If you'd like administrative access to register your students, contact us at [ptechadv@us.ibm.com](mailto:ptechadv@us.ibm.com), and someone will be in touch within 48 hours.







Education  
breeds  
confidence.  
Confidence  
breeds hope.  
Hope breeds  
peace.

CONFUCIUS

## EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVE

# Making Lessons Infinite

Use remote learning to its full potential to meet the needs of all students. Give our students with learning disabilities and struggling learners the infinite resources they need.

*By: Alisha Black, 7th grade ELA & Social Studies Special Education Teacher*



### Enhanced Classroom Experience

It's my second year as a special education teacher and I feel unstoppable. I have figured out the best practice with my co-teacher, purchased an iPad Pro and, of course, the Apple Pencil to match. I know what you're thinking: the iPad Pro and Apple Pencil--extremely pricey! But it was the best teaching assistant on the market. I was able to walk around the classroom, present my slide show, write on the board, play videos, and record my lessons all at the same time. My students were engaged, and all were showing growth. I was actually meeting my goals for this year, especially with my SPED students. The year was going shockingly great, beyond my expectations.

Suddenly, COVID-19 hits, throwing a wrench into my second year of teaching. All I could think was, how do I support my students and

continue best practices through a computer?

### YouTube is my Best Friend

After giving three virtual lessons and noticing my students were not comprehending anything, I felt defeated as a teacher. I truly felt bad and even went as far as to ignore them for an entire day; I had no answers. After pondering my thoughts and figuring out a plan, I came to the conclusion that I would become a YouTube star. I felt this was the best way to give support to my parents and students. By Week 2, I created a simple YouTube channel, strictly for my students. On this channel, there are my teacher-modeled lessons that are pre-recorded using that lovely investment, the iPad Pro and Apple Pencil. I've downloaded and used the Explain EDU app, Screen-O-Matic, and iMovie to make edits. Together, these tools recreate my classroom experience, just virtually.

For each lesson that required a new skill and/or analyzing of text, I've created a video to simulate the I Do, We Do, You Do model from the classroom. The videos show me physically writing on a worksheet, using all types of graphics and different colored pens for labeling, to make things clear for students to understand. In addition, students hear me verbalizing aloud how I am answering questions, my thought process that will guide them for the You Do model on their own. The key thing to do is think of all the possible mistakes or misconceptions a student will make during the lesson and address these possibilities in the video. This makes it more realistic, and students can make the proper connections or corrections within their work.

### But Wait, There's More.

Now that the videos are endless, how can you utilize this product for virtual FaceTime meetings to take it to the next level? I have used this device to share my screen and show my students in real time how to answer questions, give examples, and break down lessons. Students are able to have their assignments open on the screen and can view my demonstration at the same time while asking clarifying questions. To make things better, you can record the entire session and upload it to Google Classroom or email it to students who were not able to log into the meeting. It just gets better!





## So what makes this infinite?

With the teacher-created videos (see example [here](#)), students are able to replay, pause, or stop the lesson, which gives them the ability to control their learning. Students are working at their own pace, versus in the classroom trying to understand the teacher's model while only hearing it once or twice. Let's not forget the value of recording the class, which allows for all students to get the same experience and not miss instruction. Lastly, adding visual art and music that your students enjoy makes watching the video more interesting for them while stuck at home.

During the third week of remote learning, I posed this question to students: Do you feel supported during my lessons and why/why not? One of my students shared, "I feel I was supported with this week's assignment because on Google Meet you asked us if we had any questions. And if we did not understand the document the first time, you explained it to us again and annotated it also. When I watched the videos you broke down the document by analyzing it, sharing the 5Ws

and what the words meant which helped me understand." At this point, I think I've figured it out!

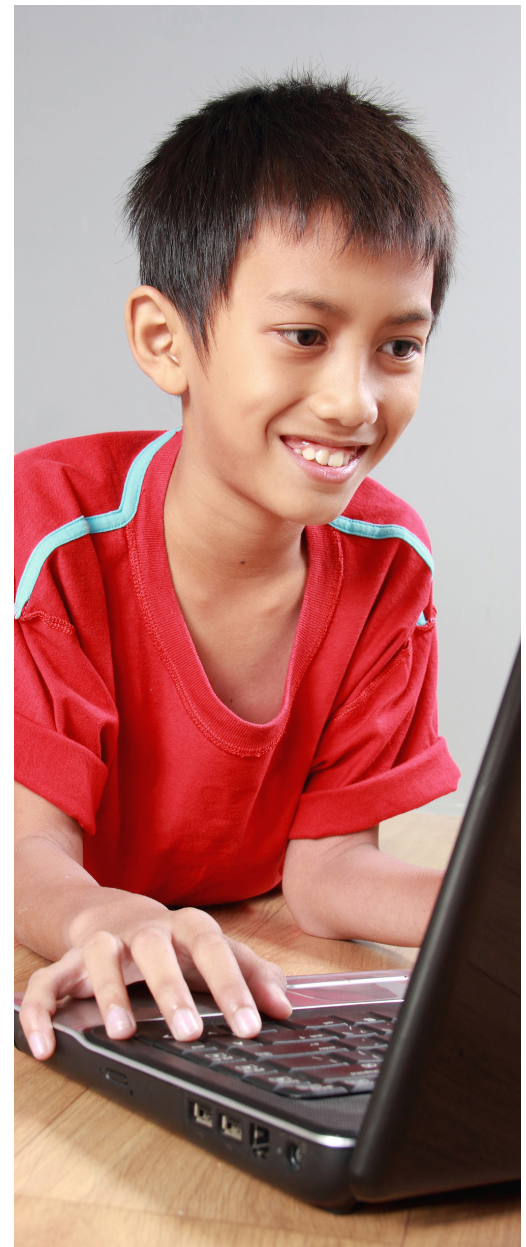
## Impact on Special Education Population

To my surprise, many of my IEP Students prefer watching the pre-recorded video rather than getting the teacher model in person because it makes them feel successful and independent. The assignments that they are completing now earn more-than-satisfactory grades due to them controlling their own learning, which is amazing since they are no longer getting the small group support.

In addition to the teacher-modeled videos, I have also created guided videos specifically for my struggling learners; these videos show me analyzing, breaking down the questions, and reading the text aloud. This allows students to get the modifications that align with their IEP. With the use of Google Classroom, you can give video access to specific students versus the entire class, creating the platform for giving differentiated instruction during remote learning.

## Ready To Create Your Own?

1. Create your own YouTube channel (and don't forget to verify it).
2. Choose a device you want to use to create videos ( phone, tablet, computer, etc. ).
3. Download a screen-recording app that captures your voice as well as what is happening on the screen.
4. Download a video editor (most devices have them already installed).
5. Make it fun, and incorporate some music.



## About the Author

*Alisha Black is currently a second year ELA and Social Studies special education teacher at a Middle School located in the Bronx. She has her bachelor's in Psychology and is now in her last semester of grad school at St. John's University. She will be receiving her Masters in Special Education Generalist Grades 7-12. Alisha took the alternative teacher route and is a part of the NYC Teaching Collaborative Program.*





## New Resources on Achieve the Core

### ➔ K-2 Non-Decodables Protocol for Reinforcing Learning

These practical strategies help cement pre-existing phonics knowledge as well as scaffold the decoding of words with untaught sound and spelling patterns.

### ➔ Foundational Skills Quick-Reference Sheet

Use this quick-reference sheet to learn key terms related to reading foundational skills, including: print concepts, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency.

### ➔ Foundational Skills Annotated Bibliography

Use this resource to dig into the research and scholarship that articulates the evidence base for explicit foundational skills instruction.

### ➔ Foundational Skills Practice Strategies

Help kindergarten and first grade students practice and build their early literacy skills with these resources.

### ➔ The Power of Text Sets

Help your students become stronger readers with this easy, research-based one-pager.



# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

## **ANet**

Senior Software Engineer (Future Opportunity) - Location Flexible  
Director of School Support (Future Opportunity) - Location Flexible  
Director of School Support - Florida  
Director of School Support - Louisiana  
Managing Director, HR & People Operations - Location Flexible

## **EdReports**

Operations Manager  
Specialist, Field Services  
Program Manager, Field Services

## **Public Consulting Group**

Curriculum Writers, ELA Grades 6-12 - Remote



# New Resources from Partners

## SCHOOL RESOURCE HUB



Instruction Partners launched the School Resource Hub to provide school and system leaders a starting point to support student care and continued learning during extended school closures and re-entry into buildings. You'll find toolkits, templates, and ready-made instructional materials that can be adapted for your context.

## DISTANCE LEARNING TOOLKIT



During the month of April, Diversity Talks held a series of webinars in response to COVID-19. The following Toolkit captures our learnings, while also providing a detailed walkthrough of each webinar. These graphics are encouraged to be used with the supplemental walkthrough, which can be accessed by clicking "learn more".

## RETHINKING INTERVENTION SERIES



Instruction Partners is conducting a series of interviews with content experts, researchers, and leading practitioners to consider the question: What do we know about what works and what does not work to intervene effectively and accelerate student learning? You can follow along [here](#).

## RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS



At TNTP, we're doing everything we can to ensure that students have access to the educational opportunities they deserve while schools are closed during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, and when they reopen. On this page, we'll offer free resources for school system leaders to help them navigate the wide range of challenges they're facing right now—from implementing strong at-home instruction while schools are closed, to working with their teams remotely, to finding virtual solutions to teacher recruitment, staffing, and professional learning.





### 3 PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSMENTS DURING INSTRUCTIONAL RECOVERY AND BEYOND.



Identifying and addressing learning loss—and the role of assessments within this work—is top of mind for educators right now. We should resist quick fixes that return us to a status quo in which our most marginalized students have the least access to equitable education. Instead, we have a collective opportunity to create systems that address the underlying issues of racism and marginalization. This will require a strategic approach to leveraging standards-aligned materials and assessments to mitigate learning loss—and begin to close the preexisting gap. ANet has outlined three key principles for implementing an assessment system that will capture the data most meaningful for students and the educators who support them: [3 Principles for Assessments During Instructional Recovery and Beyond.](#)

### NCTM 100 DAYS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Join NCTM as we celebrate our Centennial with 100 Days of Professional Learning with live 60-minute webinars presented by selected speakers from the NCTM Centennial Annual Meeting & Exposition program that was to take place in Chicago. Each webinar will be held at 7 p.m. ET on 100 selected days from April 1 leading up to the October NCTM 2020 Annual Meeting & Exposition in St. Louis. A variety of speakers and topics are geared to meet all grade bands and interests.

### DISTANCE LEARNING REFLECTION AND PLANNING TOOLKIT



The purpose of the toolkit is to help leaders develop a stronger understanding of where they are and make a plan to move forward. These are the tools our ANet coaches have been leveraging during the month of April.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, we want to be mindful of how educators are collectively grappling with safety concerns and handling the transition to distance learning. As we anchor on equity, this toolkit is designed to give school leaders a starting point to reflect and develop an implementation strategy





## TARA WARREN

@TeelDub

State: California

Role: Middle School Math Teacher, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District

How has being a Core Advocate helped you in your job?

Being a Core Advocate has had a major positive impact on my job as well as my path in education. I've worked with educators from all over the country and have learned from every last one of them. As a Core Advocate, I have been immersed in curriculum and instruction as well as best practices. I am very clear on grade-level expectations as they pertain to the standards, and I've become a lifelong learner. The work of a Core Advocate, to me, is not only learning but also creating environments and experiences that bring in other educators to learn and grow as well. The foundation of my work lies in building relationships. This has been the absolute best experience that I've had. It has allowed me to build lifelong relationships with people from various backgrounds and experiences.

What is a recent professional, work-related success you've had?

This school year I moved up to teach middle school math after 16 years in mostly an elementary setting. I knew that I wanted this move but I was also a bit nervous. I found that as I prepared to teach a new grade, I was more equipped than I thought. I was well prepared with what I was going to teach because over the years, I'd used tools such as the [Coherence Map](#), [Mathematics Progression Documents](#), and [Focus documents](#) to guide my teaching in other grades and with coaching. I was surprised how easy the transition was for me, and this allowed me to focus on relationships as I began the school year. Being a Core Advocate had ultimately been a catalyst of change for me.

"Being a Core Advocate had ultimately been a catalyst of change for me."

What is a great professional book, article, website, resource, tool, etc. you would recommend, and why?

I would first recommend the website [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org). The richness of this site is amazing. You can get lost in the articles and mini-assessments and all of the ways that you can enhance your teaching. From this site, the most valuable tool for me is the [Coherence Map](#). Anyone who knows me knows that I truly love this tool. I still use it with every new unit I plan to teach.

A few books that I would recommend are *Digging Deeper: Making Number Talks Matter Even More* by Parker and Humphreys, *Excellence Through Equity* by Blankstein and Noguera, *Developing Deeper Understanding of Ratios, Proportions, and Proportional Thinking* by Lobato, Ellis, and Zbiek, and *Developing Deeper Understanding of Expressions, Equations, and Functions* by Lloyd, Herbel-Eisenmann, Star, and Zbiek. These are the books that have shaped my learning and teaching the most. What I've learned from them as a whole is how to teach authentically with each child as part of every lesson.

A professional development resource I would recommend is Kagan Cooperative Learning. It is a daunting task to learn without being stimulated. Kagan allows me to teach students and engage them in the learning as we go.

**What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

Outside of work, I enjoy reading, swimming, and watching sports. I have a 6th grade son and he enjoys playing sports so, needless to say, I am his biggest fan at every event.

**What experiences or opportunities have you had as a result of being a Core Advocate?**

I've had the opportunity to travel nationally, as a participant at events such as NCSM, and as a facilitator at events such as UnboundEd Standards Institute and state education convenings. I have also had the opportunity to serve as a state-lead to bring together around 100 participants from across California to engage in learning and discussions on how our state is moving forward with the standards. Being a Core Advocate has also afforded me the experiences of critically looking at and reviewing newly updated and created resources for alignment to the standards, as well as meeting math leaders such as Jasonimba and Steve Leinwand.

**Describe how the work you're doing in schools advances equity in education.**

The work that I am currently doing in schools advances equity in education because I continue to share what I learn and advocate for students. I am a facilitator for UnboundEd, and the work that we do to advance equity in education provides me with tools that I bring back not only to my classroom but also to other educators in my district.

**"I've connected with some of the smartest and most amazing individuals over the years, and I know that being a Core Advocate has been the conduit for all of this."**

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us for the Core Advocate spotlight?**

I have been a Core Advocate for so long, it is a part of me now. I embrace that I'm a lifelong learner and commit to being a lifelong educator. I've connected with some of the smartest and most amazing individuals over the years, and I know that being a Core Advocate has been the conduit for all of this.





## LAUREN TRAHAN

@TeachingTrahan

State: Louisiana  
Role: ELA Teacher,  
Louisiana Vermilion Parish

**How has being a Core Advocate helped you in your job?**

Being a Core Advocate has provided resources to grow my skill set and improve my instruction.

**What is a recent professional, work-related success you've had?**

I recently finished Graduate School with my Masters in Educational Leadership.

**What is a great professional book, article, website, resource, tool, etc. you would recommend, and why?**

I recently read an article about teaching metaphors to English Language Learners. It opened my eyes to the saturation level of metaphors in our daily communication and how that creates obstacles for L2 readers to reach deeper meaning in texts.

**What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

Even though I am happily married and have two wonderful teenage daughters, I also have two fur babies (cats) that provide a calming, therapeutic effect, so I like to interact with them. In addition, my "wholistic therapy" also includes exercise and food.

**What experiences or opportunities have you had as a result of being a Core Advocate?**

I have had the opportunity to work on curriculum-building projects, which I love to do! I have had the pleasure of presenting content at conferences in my home state and across the nation. I have made lasting professional connections and experienced personal academic growth through being a Core Advocate.

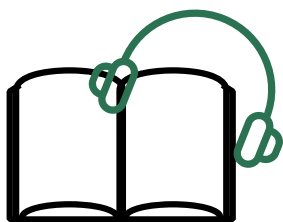
**Describe how the work you're doing in schools advances equity in education.**

The more I know, the more I am able to impact instruction and provide relevant professional development.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us for the Core Advocate spotlight?**

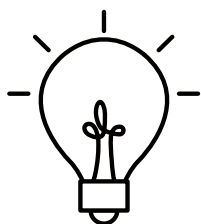
Education is essential to building a future we can be proud of. Our nation needs educators who are committed to the work and to seeing it come to fruition in our schools.

# CORE ADVOCATE WEBINARS



## Reading, Learning, Growing: Creative Ideas to Build Knowledge and Support Literacy Across Subjects -- June 3, 7 p.m. ET

Building knowledge of the world is one of the best ways to empower students and accelerate their learning. What does it mean to “build knowledge” and how can educators do so in ways that are engaging and enriching to all students? Join this webinar to dig into how to leverage the funds of knowledge all students already have, enrich their knowledge of the world, and use text, media, podcasts, and more to create meaningful learning experiences for all. Register [here](#).



## Call for Ideas!

We’re always on the lookout for new webinar topics, so if you have any ideas to share, please let us know [here](#).

## Webinar Certificates

Did you know that we now have professional learning [certificates available for 24 of our 36 webinars](#)? Access the “on-demand” version of these webinars to leverage this new opportunity. Upon completion of the one-hour webinar, you’ll receive an email with a certificate showing one hour of professional learning.

Professional Development  
**Access Monthly Webinars**  
The Core Advocate network hosts monthly webinars on a variety of issues related to the Common Core and College and Career Ready Standards.

FILTER BY CATEGORY

For Credit | X

ELA / Literacy

Mathematics

Results (24)

SORT BY Date Added

10/10/19

1 FILE

**Math Language Routines: Vibrant Discussions in the Math ...**

As in other subjects, math students must be able to read, write, listen, speak, and discuss the subject at hand. Often, these multimodal...

Grades K-12

09/05/19

1 FILE

**Formative Assessment Strategy: Thinking Beyond the Paper...**

This school year, think differently about what it means to assess your students. Learning about what your students know (and don't...

Grades K-12

# IM Talking Math

Inspiring students and families to notice and enjoy mathematics in the world around them

**By Kristin Gray**

While there are so many unknowns around teaching and learning in the upcoming months, one thing is certain – we want students to continue to be curious about mathematics. We want them to continuously see and talk about their math ideas, both inside and outside a school building.

To support teachers and families in sparking discussions that elicit students' mathematical experiences and ideas, we created a resource called **IM Talking Math**. This resource is a collection of images, each with an invitational launch and an accompanying set of questions. The images are chosen to allow a lot of noticing and wondering, while also providing opportunities to focus on one specific mathematical idea. To support


students learning on grade level, teachers having relevant materials, and families having a sense of what students are learning, we included one question per grade level, all aligned to the standards. To further encourage students to connect things they see in the image to the world around them, we also included a set of suggested "After the Image" ideas.

**"one thing is certain –  
we want students to  
continue to be  
curious about  
mathematics"**



So, what does a day of IM Talking Math look like?


First, the image is launched by a prompt meant to familiarize students with the image and offer them an opportunity to ask questions and to bring their own understandings and experiences to the context.



*This is one pea pod split open.*

**Launch**


What math questions do you have, could you ask, or could you answer about this picture?



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The launch is followed by a choice of questions around common domains and specific to grade levels.



*This is 1 pea pod split open.*

**Grade K** How many peas are there? Draw other ways the same peas could be arranged on each side of the pod. (K.CC.A.3)


**Grade 1** After a rabbit ate some peas from this pod there were 7 peas left. How many peas did the rabbit eat? (1.OA.A.1)

**Grade 2** Is the number of peas in the pod odd or even? How do you know? (2.OA.C.3)

**Grade 3** A serving of peas is about 9 pea pods. About how many peas are in a serving? (3.NBT.A.3)

**Grade 4** In 1984 Janet Harris of Sussex, UK set the world record for eating 7,175 peas. About how many pods would that be? How do you know? (4.NBT.B.6)

**Grade 5** Janet Harris (see fact above) ate 7,175 peas in 1 hour. If she ate that amount of peas each day for 12 days, how many peas would she have eaten? Show or explain your reasoning. (5.NBT.B.5)



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9

After the discussions around the image are over, there are suggested activities for students to engage in independently or with a family member related to the image or questions in some way. Here are examples of “After the Image” activities related to this image:

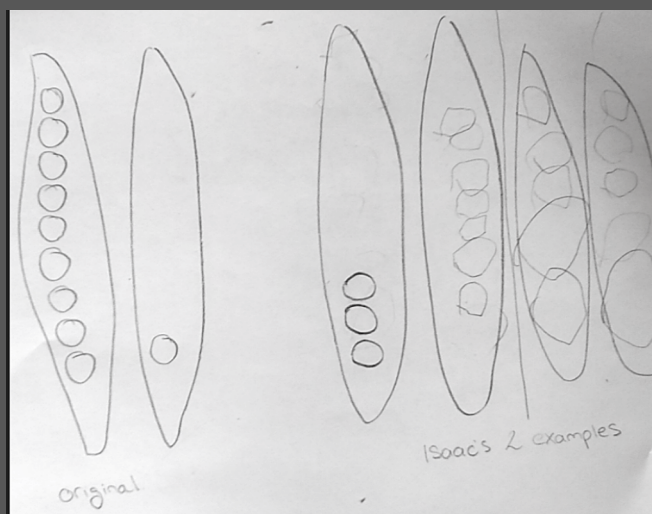
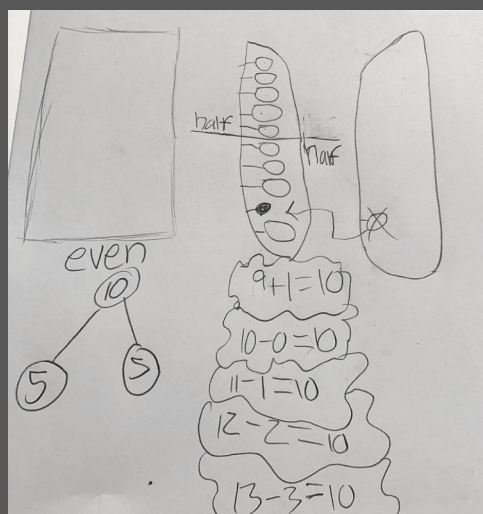
- Find pictures of other vegetables that come in groups. Do they typically come in groups of odd or even numbers? How do you know?
- What fruits and vegetables do you see around you? Draw a picture of your favorite and explain why it is your favorite.
- Green peas are transported from farms in bushels that usually weigh about 28 pounds. Find out more [here](#) about the weights of different vegetables. What problems can you write and solve about vegetable weights?
- Read this related children’s book: Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert
- Find somewhere around you that relates to the math you saw in the image. Take a picture or shoot a video. Send it our way!

**"Because of its design, this resource offers a lot of flexibility."**

Because of its design, this resource offers a lot of flexibility. Here are just a few ways in which we imagine IM Talking Math may be used:

- Teachers could send the slides to students to respond digitally.
- Teachers could send the slides to families to offer opportunities to promote math discussions.
- Teachers or administrators could print out the picture and questions for students and families and either send them in the mail or hand them out as they are picking up meals from school.
- Families could discuss the questions with their children of different grade levels around the same image. Students could start with the kindergarten question and work their way up the grade levels.
- Teachers and families could start a conversation about math in the world around them with the picture as a starting point.
- Students could make connections between the image and their lives and come up with similar ideas or pictures that can be used to answer the same questions as the ones provided.


We have had so much fun receiving student responses to the prompts like the one pictured above. Here are two examples:






Even more exciting, students are taking their own pictures and generating questions for us to use, like this one from Mrs. Welch's third grade class:

They are even making projects inspired by the "After the Image" suggestions, like this one from [Day 24's](#) Skeeball image.



**Talking Math**

Day 32



Sending a big THANK YOU to the students in Mrs. Welch's class! Keep sharing all of the wonderful math you are doing!

<b>Grade K</b>	<i>From Sofia:</i> How many flowers are there in the picture? (K.CC.B.5)
<b>Grade 1</b>	<i>From Paige and Grace:</i> If you give the middle vase of flowers away to a friend, how many flowers would be left? (1.OA.A.1)
<b>Grade 2</b>	<i>From Syd:</i> Is the number of flowers odd or even? How do you know? <i>From Gavin:</i> If the vase is 5 inches tall, estimate the height of one of the flowers. (2.OA.A.3, 2.MD.A.3)
<b>Grade 3</b>	<i>From Jordan:</i> Each flower has 6 petals. How many petals are there in all? Write an equation that matches your thinking. (3.OA.A.3)
<b>Grade 4</b>	<i>From Michael:</i> Write and solve a division word problem about the picture. (4.OA.A.3)
<b>Grade 5</b>	<i>From Colby and Oliver:</i> If each vase of flowers with water weighs 7 ounces, how many pounds do the vases weigh in total? (5.MD.A.1)


 illustrativemathematics.org

65



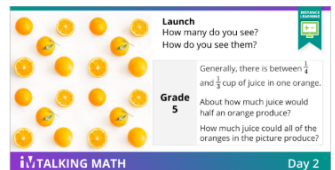
We hope these tasks are a fun start to conversations about math with your students, your own children, or even friends over a virtual gathering! You can follow the #LearnWithIM hashtag to see examples of how teachers and students are using IM Talking Math and find the slide deck link at any time on [our blog](#).



Written by  
Core Advocate  
Kristin Gray  
[@MathMinds](#)

"We want students to continuously see and talk about their math ideas, both inside and outside a school building."

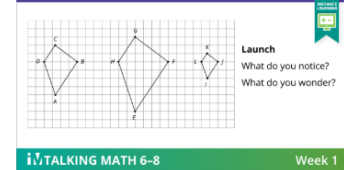
# Click for more!



IM TALKING MATH K-5 PROMPTS




IM TALKING MATH BLOG POST



IM TALKING MATH 6-8 PROMPTS



IM TALKING MATH 6-8 BLOG POST



One child, one  
teacher, one book,  
one pen can  
change the world.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI



# SUMMER READING CLUB KICKOFF!

With the summer of 2020 nearing, we are excited to kick off our summer reading club. Join educators across the country in reading our **top 20 Aligned articles** focusing on topics ranging from remote learning ideas, to math and ELA teacher supports, to professional learning recommendations.

Starting June 1, we invite you to share your takeaways on **Twitter** by using the hashtags **#CoreAdvocates** and **#SummerReading**. Engage with other summer reading club participants and expand your virtual professional learning network!

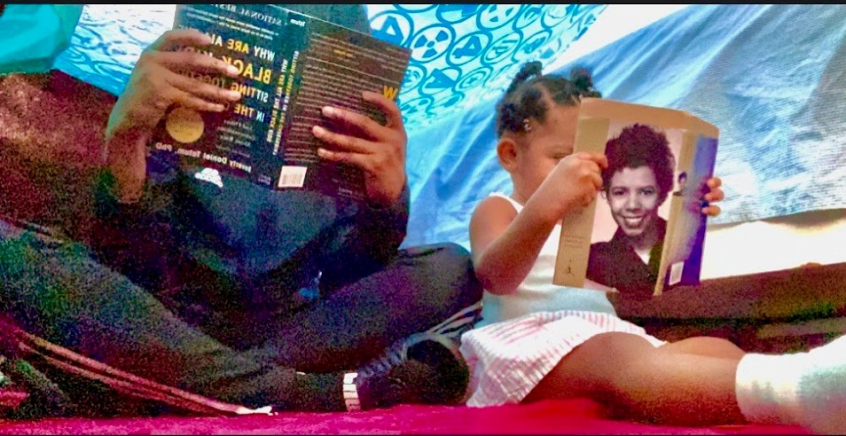
On Facebook? Join our **NEW Facebook Group** for weekly discussions with other educators and even guest appearances from some of the authors!





To: J Duggins >

couldn't get my sister out  
because she wanted to copy  
me 😂 and there a video  
showing the whole fort (not  
really big)



The impact of building a fort and sharing this reading journey with a younger sibling had to bring a sense of calm and togetherness to their home and maybe even a little pride for this big brother during the midst of a pandemic.

## MAKING READING AN ADVENTURE

By: Juliet Duggins  
*MBA, MEd*  
*7th Grade Literacy Teacher*

Reading is learning! The best way to get your students to learn is to ensure they always have a book to read and they are enjoying the experience.

### Impact on Social-Emotional Learning

At the start of the virtual session, my laptop is pinging as students sign in to our Monday morning virtual class. They are talking amongst each other, asking "What is Mrs. Duggins doing?" A student exclaims, "I think she is making a fort!" I then tell them, "I am using four of my dining room chairs and a blanket, and I am making us a fort to have our lesson in today!"

"Oh Cool," says another, and then the guidance counselor (who regularly signs in to our sessions to support students who may express signs of stress or anxiety during the call) pings in and shouts, "Hey Duggins! What are you doing?" And the kids say, "She's building us a fort!" The guidance counselor responds, "Cool, I want to build a fort too!" and she begins to transform her living room couch into a fort.

This idea came about as I asked students a survey question the week prior: What type of leisure reading are you doing during the shelter-in? Their answer choices ranged from different types of platforms (hardcover to

audiobooks) to a few responses of “Not Reading Yet.” We were at the start of our fifth week of remote learning, and I had students that were not yet reading. My goal in this lesson was to motivate those students.

So many of our students who hadn’t yet begun leisure reading started after we taught this lesson. As we are stretched with providing a new way of teaching and instruction, we have to keep the children in mind. It will not work to keep the same routines of sitting down to read for 45 minutes. We have to engage the children and give them a sense of adventure. We can show them first and then allow our example to create a ripple effect in their homes.

Even siblings didn’t want to be left out of the fort fun! After this lesson, I received an email from a student that included a photo. What I adored most about the image was that it showed his little sister “reading” his 7th grade assigned text as he was reading his leisure text. He had to tell his little sister, “If you want to stay in my fort, you have to read!” so she picked up the nearest book available so she could stay in that fort. The impact of building a fort and sharing this reading journey with a younger sibling had to bring a sense of calm and togetherness to their home--and maybe even a little pride for this big brother during the midst of a pandemic. The photo provided evidence of how this assignment created a safe and supportive learning environment for our students, which is the definition of social-emotional learning.

## Making Quarantine Reading Assignments Fun

The idea to create this fun assignment also came from another literacy teacher who shared a “Bingo” reading log with “build a fort” as one of the board spaces. I shared the bingo board with my students and told them to choose three activities for me to do. They chose for me to read a book in another state, to a pet, and in a fort. We discussed how I could drive my car across state lines to Connecticut or New Jersey and take a picture of my navigation map to prove I am reading in my car in another state, or I could read to my dog, Bailey, who regularly joins in on our virtual sessions, or I could have my son build a cool fort and take a picture of myself reading in it. I then challenged them to do the same during the week and then we would all share our pictures during our next virtual session.

## Reluctant Readers Transform into Leisure Readers

I also needed a little motivation to begin leisure reading in my new work/home environment. Usually, I am an avid reader, especially during downtime. I would complete up to three novels during a one-week spring break vacation or, if I had to commute on the MTA, I’d grab a book to read. Since the quarantine, I have become a reluctant reader. As I reflect to understand why I just can’t pick up a book and read, I think it is because my home is no longer a place of rest: it is now a place of work. If I take







two hours to sit and read, then I feel a strong sense of guilt that I should be working on a lesson plan, providing feedback to a student's work, logging grades into the computer system, or taking care of my family's personal needs. It seems that leisure reading is a selfish act during this new climate of remote learning. Surprisingly, by allowing my students to challenge me to create a fort, my very own safe space to do an activity that I enjoy immensely, I have been transformed from a reluctant reader to a leisure reader again.

During my 10 years as a literacy teacher, I've learned my most important role is to encourage reluctant readers to become leisure readers. As we get our students in the habit of reading outside of the classroom for the pleasure of it, it will become less of a challenge for us to build up our students' reading stamina inside the classroom. If you are looking for a resource to help your students make the transformation, I recommend the Audible platform, where students can now have stories read aloud to them for free.

When teachers make the act of reading an adventure, reluctant readers will feel intrigued and, as all avid readers know, the story will then transform them.

### About the Author

Juliet Duggins has been featured and published in various education publications in recognition of her professional awards, research, and work with children from around the world, including New York, South Africa, France, and Japan. Juliet is currently a middle school English teacher in the Bronx, NY; a former International Dean's Fellow at St. John's University, Queens, NY; a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Bronx, NY Graduate Chapter; a proud wife and a mother to two high schoolers.







# We want to celebrate YOU!



Click here to  
share your  
celebrations!

This is an opportunity to share with the network any work-related achievements you've accomplished this year! Did you win teacher of the year? Tell us about it! Did you finish a new degree? Earn an add-on certificate? Tell us about it! Did you win a special grant for your classroom? We want to hear all about it, AND we want to share it with the Core Advocate Network in our *Core Connections* magazine!



# QUARTERLY QUESTION

Last issue we asked: What is your go-to Achieve the Core tool or resource and how do you use it?

THE WINNING REPLY CAME FROM  
ANNE CILVICK

"The GO Math! Guidance Documents are my go-to on the Achieve the Core site. These pages allow me to stick to the core standards by deleting lessons within a unit that don't match a standard, providing additional lessons--including lesson plans--when more substance is needed, and providing the rationale behind the changes that were made."





A red apple sits on top of a stack of books. In the foreground, a silver perforated metal pencil holder contains several sharpened pencils of various colors. The background is a dark, textured surface.

# QUARTERLY QUESTION

What will you  
be focusing on  
this summer to  
prepare for  
next year?

**Submit your  
answer for a  
chance to win  
a \$25 gift card!  
(click here)**



# ALIGNED BLOG

Do you read Achieve the Core's blog, [Aligned](#)? Many of the articles are authored by Core Advocates and are filled with practical advice, new resources, and honest reflections. Here are just a few! Feel free to reach out to these Core Advocate authors if you have questions or want to learn more about their work.



## MISTAKES TELL US WHAT STUDENTS ARE READY TO LEARN

Learning from students' mistakes to enhance instruction  
By Michael Pershan  
[@mpershan](#)

## TOP 5 RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ONLINE

Free, standards-aligned resources to facilitate remote learning  
By Tika Epstein  
[@tikaee](#)



## COACHING THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Four suggestions for how to structure virtual instructional coaching  
By Kenny McKee  
[@kennycmckee](#)



## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING EARLY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS REMOTELY

A kindergarten teacher shares strategies and advice  
By Lindsay Arnold

## CLASS AND FAMILY BOOK TASTING DURING DISTANCE LEARNING

Free, standards-aligned resources to facilitate remote learning  
By Tika Epstein  
[@tikaee](#)



## 5 IDEAS TO ENGAGE K-2 STUDENTS IN MATH REMOTELY

Using video, interactive platforms, and at-home materials to  
support math instruction for young students

By Chris Fishpaw

## DISTANCE LEARNING WITH INTENTION AND PURPOSE

Ideas for engaging and connecting students during distance  
learning  
By Marya Hay  
[@maryahay5](#)



# Distance Learning with Intention and Purpose

Ideas for engaging and connecting students during distance learning

**By Marya Hay**

### Why do students need school right now?

As the working mother of four children ages 19 to 3, I have found distance learning to be a struggle. While I anticipated the frustrations my teenagers would have, I was surprised that my three-year-old would have the hardest time adjusting to the shutdown and close of her daycare.

One week into the Stay at Home orders, my three-year-old daughter, Kaiya, was able to connect with her Karate instructor on Zoom and the transformation in her attitude was apparent right away. She lit up when Master Booe showed up on the screen. The next thing I saw was her frantically searching for a pillow and a stuffed animal to use as props and materials while she practiced her ninja skills and karate moves. Master Booe took a moment to see every kid on screen; he gave them feedback on their kicks and punches and congratulated each toddler individually on a job well done. For those

thirty minutes, my seemingly clingy and dependent toddler transformed into an independent young girl who controlled her learning and her space.

A few weeks later, I had an opportunity to gain insight from a student's perspective. Avery, a high school senior at one of our local schools, shared her thoughts on this new format of school. When asked what has been a positive aspect of online learning during Covid-19, Avery shared she liked the chance to see and talk to her teachers and classmates. One of her teachers had even built in time for connecting informally at the end of the online session, which had almost felt like being socially close during a time of social distancing.

Covid-19 has uncertainty shrouding the next days, weeks, and months. The challenges faced with teaching students were not birthed from this pandemic; they have just been exacerbated.



"School is a space for social connection and relationships. Unfortunately, in many classrooms and schools, these aspects of socialization were not seen as important elements to foster school culture, leaving more possibilities of gaps and missed learning for all students."

- MARYA HAY

School systems are now forced to see that what did not work for students in classrooms has also not been conducive to online learning. How can educators take this opportunity to reexamine the purpose of school for students and provide a safe space to continue to thrive as learners?

#### A Virtual View of Classroom Culture

Our high school and middle school students no longer get those hallway moments between classes to nod to and check in with their classmates while beating the bell to class. Elementary-aged children aren't gathering on the carpet to have morning meetings with their teachers and share their funny stories or hear how their teacher's day was. School is a space for social connection and relationships. Unfortunately, in many classrooms and schools, these aspects of socialization were not seen as important elements to foster school culture, leaving more possibilities of gaps and missed learning for all students.

Personal connections and the presence of collective communities cultivate conditions that invite students to learn. It's imperative to begin with intentionally creating classroom culture online because our students' mental and emotional well-being is tied to relationships and having a safe space for growth as a learner.

Avery's comment highlights this necessity for

attending to these elements of the online classroom culture. What resonated was the feeling the interactions left for her.

As educators, we have to begin with building those spaces for our students.

As an instructional specialist in the Equity Initiatives Unit for Montgomery County Public Schools, I have coached school leaders to examine existing practices using Zaretta Hammond's book [Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students \(2015\)](#).

Hammond makes clear connections between social emotional well-being and developing independent learners. She outlines a framework for culturally responsive teaching titled [The Ready for Rigor Framework](#). The framework consists of four practice areas of learning that work in tandem to create culturally responsive learning environments, 1) Awareness, 2) Learning Partnerships, 3) Information Processing, and 4) Community of Learners & Learning Environment. These practice areas leverage the experiences and existing background knowledge students possess as assets and lead educators to utilize them in order to build intellectual capacity and facilitate growth. Through this process, students are led to become independent and critically conscious thinkers.

Each of the practice areas is imperative to creating effective learning environments allowing students to enter and engage as their authentic selves. As we focus on engaging students in online learning, the attention to the last two practice areas (information processing and community of learners & learning environment) need to be approached with intention and purpose. Let's look at the last one first.

Hammond's fourth practice area focuses on the community of learners and learning environment. The space students enter, whether physically or virtually, can have a tremendous impact on their willingness to engage and opportunity to learn. Incorporating intentional elements that invite socialization and relationship building to the online classroom creates a space for students to be present, feel seen, heard, and affirmed. A community of learners and learning environment is the safe space built consciously to allow students to take risks for the purpose of growth and building their knowledge.

### **The Power of Student Agency**

Once we have a community of learners and learning environment, we have to engage students with purpose. Hammond's third practice area (information processing) hones in on the necessity for providing tools and scaffolds that lead students to independence.

When I reflect on Kaiya's karate class, Master

### **Fostering Online Classroom Culture**

*Some ways you can intentionally foster community in online learning environments:*

#### **Incorporate community building activities at the start of every lesson**

- What's a moment that was positive ("rose") and one that was a challenge ("thorn")?
- Assign a scavenger hunt of items in their homes they can share with their classmates at the start of a lesson.

#### **Provide some questions for students to share aspects of themselves:**

- How did you move today?
- How were you creative today?
- How did you care for yourself today?

Booe's intentional teaching moves were empowering. For a three-year-old whose world had changed in an instant, the autonomy that karate class provided reengaged her with a learning community while allowing her to demonstrate what she knew in her own way. The power of agency, even for a toddler, can lead to impactful learning.

With distance learning, students are in both their learning and home environments at the same time. This opens up a world of ways to engage students and expand ways of thinking while also allowing them to share



aspects of themselves in authentic ways.

Building their agency and allowing them to have some autonomy is one method to ignite their curiosity and elicit their critical thinking skills. Building agency provides options and relevancy for learners. The presence of both these elements move students toward independence and creates opportunities for autonomy.

### Opportunities for Agency to Increase Engagement

*Some ways educators can build students' agency:*

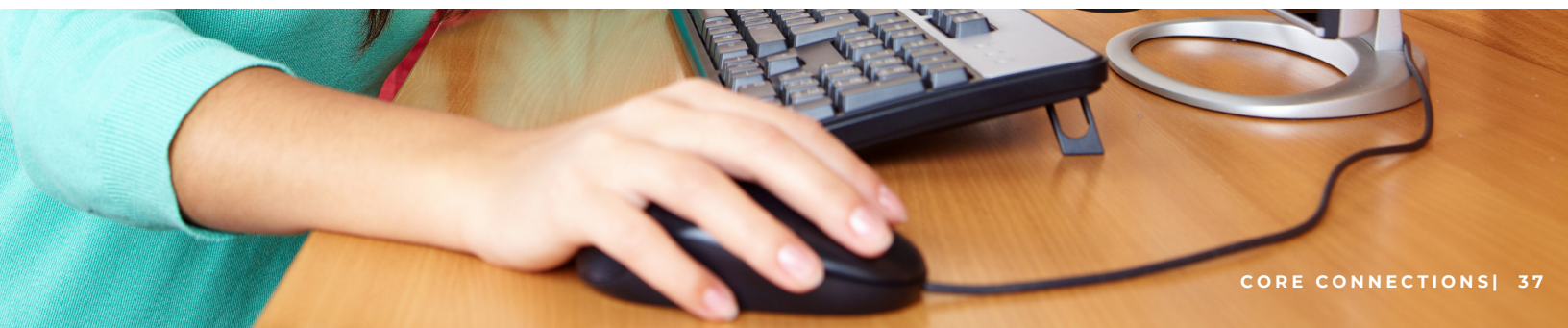
- Provide time for students to create their own understanding of new learning through modeling, practice, and application.
- Design opportunities for students to create, construct, and design in order to apply the new learning in a concrete way.
- Offer options for students to experience what works best for them as learners:
  - Give choices for materials used to engage in the learning (podcasts, videos, and texts).
  - Allow students to demonstrate and present their learning to their peers in formats of their choice
  - Create relevant learning by critically examining challenges in their own experiences and the world around them and then develop ways to address them.

### What Does Getting Back to “Normal” Look Like?

Covid-19 has taught us about the power of humanity and perseverance. It's also transformed how we see school and learning. We are putting relationships first and moving from knowing curriculum to building knowledge. When we return to the classrooms and reenter the school buildings, these same aspects of learning are necessary to foster equitable and culturally responsive learning environments.

Districts and leaders will walk back into uncertainty on many aspects of school, but one thing has been highlighted: the methods for approaching learning have not led to all students thriving. We have seen the lack of access to resources create inequities. We understand that social emotional well-being has to be a priority for students to learn. School leaders now have an opportunity to reexamine the practices in place.

We are living through unprecedented times that will leave a residual impact on students, families, and educators. Now we need to examine how we use this opportunity to create community, build knowledge, and prioritize well-being and success at school for our most marginalized students and families.





## What Can Districts, Leaders, and Coaches Do When School Resumes?

### Recognize Inequities Exist

- Ensure the access of computers and wifi to all students to eliminate the digital divide.
- Provide support systems and point people to ensure all students and families can navigate online instruction courses and tools.
- Elicit the perspectives of families to what is effective and
- ineffective in efforts to communicate and provide access to resources.

### Make Space for Grief and Trauma

- Recognize that behavior can be impacted by stress.
- Remember that behavior is communication.
- Proactively plan for counseling services for students, families, and educators?
- Incorporate space and time to allow students to exhale and process this experience.
- Put relationships and social emotional well-being first for students and teachers.

### There Will Be Gaps in Learning

- Plan instruction that is tailored individually to each student's needs.
- Emphasize strategies and thinking routines to process new content.
- Model and foster critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**Marya Hay** is an Instructional Specialist for the Equity Initiatives Unit in Montgomery County Public Schools. She has had more than 17 years of experience as a teacher. She has taught in both elementary and middle school classrooms. Marya supports school leaders, staff and various departments to shift practices and beliefs that are harming the success of all students.

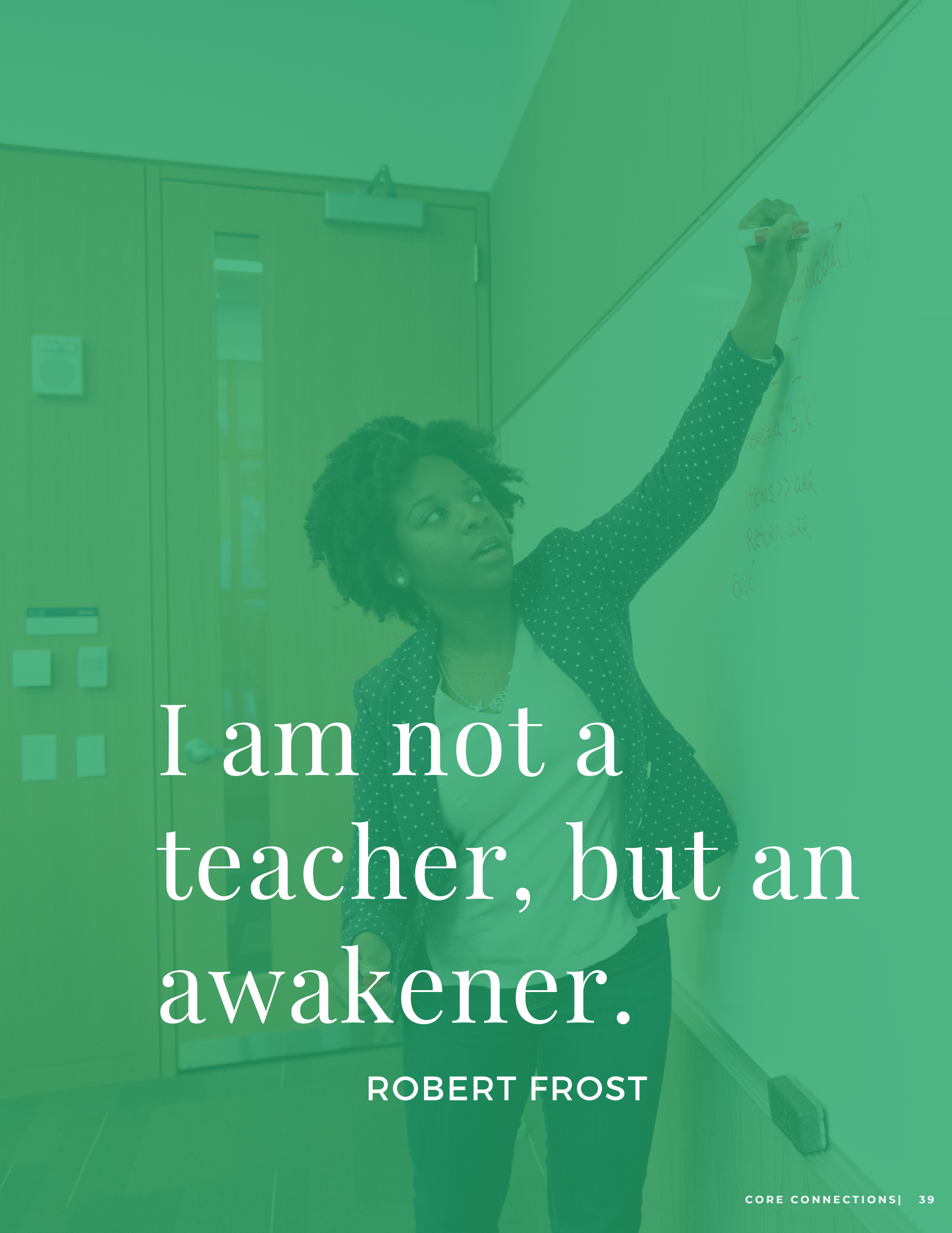
Her work focuses on coaching adults to examine their bias and reflect on actions that impacted students. Her experiences include collaboration with curriculum departments in English Language Arts and Math on the elementary and secondary levels for teacher-leaders to examine beliefs and classroom practices. These include the design of the course Digital Literacy for 8th graders on Social Justice and leading training for math leaders in elementary schools. She has also been an adjunct professor through the Equity and Excellence in Education program at McDaniel College for 6 years teaching the graduate course Foundations of Social Justice Teaching. Through the course, Marya has developed and facilitated learning for professionals in MCPS on topics of equity and recognizing the experiences of students in many marginalized groups throughout the county.



## Submit a Core Advocate Perspective Article!

Do you have an idea for a magazine article topic? We are looking for Core Advocates to submit article ideas they would like to write about to be featured in an upcoming edition of the Core Connections magazine! Articles should reflect the magazine's theme of Excellence and Equity in the Classroom.

Email your idea for a Core Advocate Perspective article to Jennie Beltramini at **[jbeltramini@studentsachieve.net](mailto:jbeltramini@studentsachieve.net)**

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a dark polka-dot blazer, is standing in a classroom. She is holding a red marker and writing on a whiteboard. The whiteboard has some handwritten text, including "model()", "items = a, b, c", "items >> arr", "return arr", and "end". The background shows a classroom door and some papers on the wall. The entire image has a green overlay.

I am not a  
teacher, but an  
awakener.

ROBERT FROST





## SARAH LEDON

@SarahLedon

State: California and Nevada  
Role: Executive Director,  
Achievement Network

### How has being a Core Advocate helped you in your job?

Being a Core Advocate has helped me daily in the roles I have served for many years. As a Core Advocate, I believe in the potential of high-quality standards grounded in evidence to prepare for all students to be college and career ready. In 2011, I was able to pilot a Student Achievement Partners (SAP) close reading with text-dependent questions with my fifth graders. This was a defining moment for me as an educator because prior to the gentle nudge from SAP, I tended to differentiate all ELA/math instruction with multiple groups of students. After experiencing the pilot close reading, I was astounded to see all my students rise to the challenge, deeply engage in learning in a way that I had not seen before, and successfully comprehend complex grade-level text! Teaching and learning were never the same in my classroom after becoming a Core Advocate. Later, as an instructional coach, I was able to use the math [Focus by Grade Level documents](#) to support grade-level PLCs in planning. And today, I still enjoy using the [qualitative rubrics](#) with school leaders to determine text complexity!

### What is a recent professional, work-related success you've had?

This year we partnered with NWEA and Clark County School District (CCSD) in Nevada to support 90 schools with the implementation of best practices in teaching standards and data in ways that fit into each school's unique strengths and mission. Recently, with CCSD shifting to distance learning, we have modified our coaching support to help school leaders plan for instructional recovery for the 2020-2021 school year. Specifically, we've been working alongside leadership teams to:

- Prepare for how schools will diagnose the efficacy of distance learning efforts from Spring 2020. Maintain a focus on the Major Work of the Grade in math and the elements of proficient reading and writing in literacy.
- Leverage data to make targeted adjustments to instruction.
- Provide support and learning to adults to ensure they have the skills necessary to meet the new demands.
- Support staff in maintaining emotional balance and stability for themselves and students.



In a time with so many unknowns, our school partners in CCSD are beginning to feel confident in actions they are planning and taking to address learning loss when students return to school. For example, at Sawyer Middle School, the focus has been on 2020-2021 long-range math planning using the [Focus documents](#) and the [Coherence Map](#) to ensure students have access to grade-level standards while identifying possible opportunities for unfinished teaching as a scaffold. The work-related success has been supporting these school leaders to intentionally plan for a strong instructional start for the new school year.

**What is a great professional book, article, website, resource, tool, etc. you would recommend, and why?**

As a former teacher, instructional coach, and leader, I have always found assessment strategy challenging. Making sense of numerous assessments and the purpose each serves, while trying to use the data in an impactful way, is still hard. Now more so than ever, identifying the purpose of assessment--and how to use quantitative and qualitative data to provide children and families with the best information to accelerate learning-- is critical. Strategic use of assessments can be key in identifying and responding to learning loss now and in the coming weeks.

I highly recommend reading ANet's recent guidance on assessment strategy to build understanding that will support thoughtful planning and use of data: [ANet Guidance: 3 Principles for Assessment During Instructional Recovery and Beyond](#).

**What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time hiking, running, and exploring the outdoors with my husband and four children. In February of this year, I completed my first Spartan race alongside my fourteen-year-old son. As soon as restrictions are lifted, we plan to sign up for another race and beat our original time. We also recently adopted a puppy, and I am enjoying spending time with him. It is true - puppies are a lot of hard work, but I am finding joy in the unconditional love he brings into our family!

**What experiences or opportunities have you had as a result of being a Core Advocate?**

Being a Core Advocate has opened up a world of opportunity to collaborate with other Core Advocates. The relationships I have built with other Core Advocates withstand the test of time and location, and we have been brought together in unique ways. Just recently, I was in Orlando, Florida facilitating at UnboundEd's Standards Institute and a participant came up to ask me if I were a Core Advocate. When I said "yes," she told me that she was a Core Advocate, too, and remembered being together in previous Core Advocate Convenings. Also, it is not uncommon for Core Advocates to text each other with a question about content, standards, instruction, etc., or to use the network to support their local work.

Specifically, the knowledge I built learning alongside other Core Advocates and from SAP provided me an opportunity to build a text set ("Bacteria and Viruses"), led me to EdReports to be a K-2 ELA Lead Reviewer, and gave me the instructional leadership knowledge that led to me joining UnboundEd as a Leadership Facilitator. These opportunities, experiences, and knowledge have been my own connection to Shift 3 in ELA because I am building knowledge around a few topics (ELA, math, Shifts, text complexity, Major Work of the Grade, etc.) by engaging with Core Advocates.

**Describe how the work you're doing in schools advances equity in education.**

Working alongside education nonprofits (ANet, UnboundEd, SAP) that are driven by a common mission to advance equity in education, I believe it is my personal responsibility to actively work toward dismantling institutional racism and systems of oppression in education. In my own personal journey, I am learning to walk the talk by acknowledging and disrupting my own privilege and biases.

In my current role, I work alongside district and school leaders to move toward equitable instruction through an anti-racist lens. This is done by grounding instruction in the CCSS Shifts and standards, anchored in data, and ensuring all students have access to strong Tier 1 instruction daily. Some of this work comes through a focus on mindsets, deepening beliefs that all students come with valuable knowledge and an innate ability to learn. Another part of this work is building knowledge in instructional leadership so that leaders can model this work in their own schools. This might look like supporting leaders in adopting an aligned curriculum or identifying where the curriculum does not meet the bar and what adaptations need to be made. Or this could be supporting leadership teams in identifying school structures that could be accelerating achievement gaps (e.g., leveled reading groups) by using data and research to rethink how we ensure equitable access and instruction. In this example, targeting the opportunity to address unfinished learning/teaching to make grade-level instruction accessible for all students is advancing equity.

Recently, I had an opportunity to surface inequities with a team of educators while examining student achievement data. We noticed that black male students were performing lower (both growth data and proficiency data) than white students. As a result, there was an opportunity to examine the mindsets, beliefs, systems, and structures that perpetuate inequitable experiences and outcomes for students of color.

Being a Core Advocate has opened up a world of opportunity to collaborate with other Core Advocates. The relationships I have built with other Core Advocates withstand the test of time and location, and we have been brought together in unique ways.

# How Has Being a Core Advocate Impacted Your Career?



**Char Shryock** @edtechgirl · May 18

I found that the best way to grow my own learning is to put my thinking out for others to poke at, ask me Qs about it, provide different perspectives on, challenge me to make connections I hadn't seen... this is why my professional learning network is invaluable. [#coreadvocates](#)



1



7



**Natalie Franzi** @NatalieFranzi · May 3

5 years since my first @achievethecore [#coreadvocates](#) event! So thankful for the impact this work has had on me and the connections made @SteveFigurelli @JZagorski1 @JohnFritzky @AngelinaShy @Baskina87 @ALajinian @kevinliner @edtechgirl @JanaBryant14 @JennieBeltro @salberti



Joanie Funderburk and 9 others



6



4



51



We asked, and you answered! Take a look at what being a Core Advocate means to these educators. Do you have a story to tell? We'd love for you to share it with us via Twitter! Use [#coreadvocates](#) and make sure to tag [@achievethecore](#)! Or submit via this [form](#).





# What We're Reading

01

**Dear Educators...This Is A Lot**

-- Jen Bradley, *The Philadelphia Citizen*

02

**What to Consider if You're Adopting a New ELA/Literacy Curriculum**

-- Student Achievement Partners

03

**How Remote Education Is Revealing Alarming Learning Gaps, Particularly for Low-Income Families**

-- Beth Hawkins, *The 74*

04

**Class and Family Book Tasting During Distance Learning**

-- Tika Epstein, *Aligned*

05

**Coronavirus Closures: How Urban Schools are Responding**

--Rick Hess, *Education Week*

Let us know what you're currently reading [here!](#)



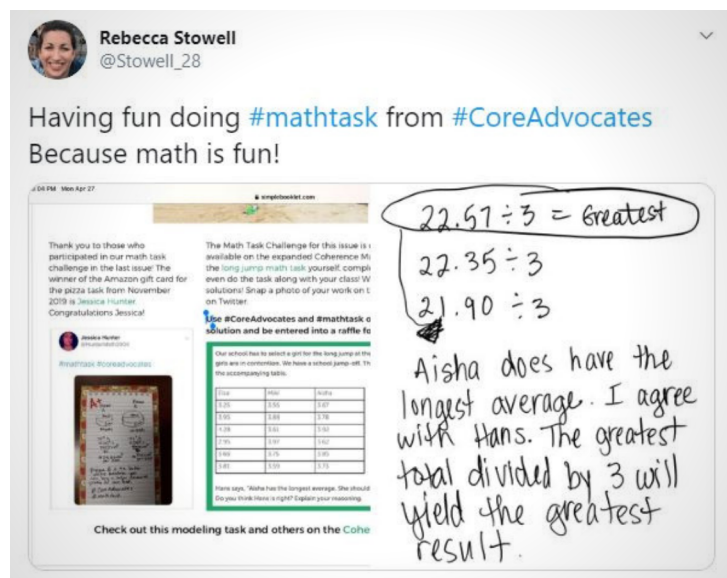
# MATH TASK CHALLENGE



Thank you to those who participated in our math task challenge in the last issue! The winner of the Amazon gift card for the long jump task from February is [Rebecca Stowell](#). Congratulations Rebecca!

The Math Task Challenge for this issue is one of the [Modeling Tasks](#) available on the expanded Coherence Map. We hope you will do the math task yourself, complete it with colleagues, or even do the task along with your students. We'd love to see your solutions! Snap a photo of your work on the math task and share it on Twitter.

**Use #CoreAdvocates and #mathtask on Twitter to share your solution and be entered into a raffle for a \$25 gift card!**



Suppose Tom wrote check #556 on November 5, 1995, and check #953 on September 26, 1997. What is a good guess for when Tom wrote check #678? Explain how you arrived at your guess.

Check out this modeling task and others on the [Coherence Map](#)!





# THE BALANCING ACT

Being a Teacher and a  
Parent in Uncertain  
Times

BY DANIELA ESPINO  
[@danielaa\\_espino](#)

The reality of having to teach during a global pandemic is epitomized by a recent conversation with one of my 11th graders. We have been preparing for the AP English exam since last August, and testing will occur this week. She sent me a long email about being stressed over the practice exam we took because she was caring for a sick family member simultaneously. I reassured her that everything would be okay and offered an alternative assignment that she could complete successfully. She sent me an emotional reply stating how grateful she was for my support and that she really needed my affirmations that day. This is teaching during a pandemic. We are being asked to continue to hold students to high expectations while providing levels of academic, social, and emotional support higher than we ever have. This is what is being asked of our teachers right now and we are doing all we can to rise to the occasion for our students. We owe them this.

Here in Richmond, CA, it took my school site team three days to get distance learning off the ground and into practice. We were given notice during our afternoon PD on Thursday, March 12th that we would be doing distance learning for a few weeks, and we used Friday, March 13th to “prepare” ourselves as best we could. We quickly produced technology surveys, gathered students’ contact information, and began to brainstorm what lessons we would give to students to do at home. Over the next few weeks, we formalized our distance learning process and began to learn from the mistakes we were undoubtedly making. I think back to the conversations we were having on March 13th and compare them to the recent staff meetings and PDs we’ve had and am so proud to be a part of such an amazing team. Our school leadership is constantly reminding us to take care of ourselves and provides us with the professional support we need to be able to do so. My academic coach has been instrumental in helping me make sense of student data and





ensure that I am doing my best to provide as equitable of a learning experience as I can for my students during distance learning. We have been receiving best practices and shorter PD sessions on what accessibility looks like for students with IEPs as we plan our lessons. I am grateful to be a part of such an action-oriented, innovative, and driven community of teachers and staff.

During this entire pandemic experience, I have been a teacher for my own students and a personal tutor for my own daughter. She has a tremendous teacher who has gone above and beyond to continue maintaining strong relationships, strong class culture, and strong learning happening from a distance. Her teacher puts together weekly assignments for them that are posted to Google Classroom and holds one whole-class meeting a week, one small-group meeting for targeted support, and one session of “Reading Buddies,” where an older class joins the call and reads to the second graders. I have loved to see my daughter finding ways to stay connected with her peers and “socialize” as best as anyone can during these times. While most days are fine, there have also

been times where her frustration erupts over a complicated math problem, a technology error, or her most recent frustration: not being able to go to Target and browse the toy section.

The best piece of advice that has been given to me over and over again during this pandemic is to give myself and those around me a whole lot of grace. As much as my type-A self wishes there was a guidebook or set of instructions for how to tackle these multiple competing priorities correctly, there isn’t. Some days I wake up and feel ready to tackle my to-do list and be an excellent teacher, mother, wife, tutor, chef, etc., and there are other days where I spend the entire day in sweats and order pizza for dinner because my brain is too tired from balancing it all. This pandemic has been a humbling experience, to say the least. It’s been a reminder that we do too much, too often, and I am surprisingly starting to develop gratitude for being forced to finally slow down.



# DIGITAL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**In this time of distance teaching, educators have gone above and beyond in finding creative outlets to engage and communicate with both students and colleagues. We're highlighting several tools educators like you have found success using:**



**Jody Guarino**

[@jody\\_guarino](#)

Mathematics Coordinator

Orange County Department of Education

Supporting the teaching and learning of teachers as they transition to distance learning is a big part of my current work as an elementary mathematics coordinator. I'm finding a blend of [Zoom](#) and asynchronous platforms such as [Desmos](#), [Seesaw](#), and [Flipgrid](#) to be valuable tools in distance learning spaces. In Newport-Mesa Unified School District, elementary math fellows engage in regular one-hour Zoom sessions where we do math together, using a variety of platforms. In one recent session, we solved a story problem live on Zoom and shared our work in small-group breakout rooms, holding up and explaining our strategies. Within the same session, a student strategy (which had been done previously on Seesaw) was shared and analyzed by the group. This shared experience provided an opportunity to unpack the affordances and constraints of different platforms and explore considerations when deciding what to do synchronously and what to do asynchronously.

Additionally, it allowed us the chance to experience the nuances of technology together, as we navigated the digital space from both a teacher lens and a student lens all while using a variety of technologies representative of student devices, including iPads, phones, tablets, Chromebooks, and laptops. We've found engaging in this work together provides opportunities to anticipate and troubleshoot some of the challenges that may emerge, develops a professional vision of teaching and learning within distance learning spaces, and further builds our community of learners as we navigate new ways of thinking and doing collaboratively.



## flipgrid

Helen Goldberg  
7th Grade ELA Teacher  
Bay Village City Schools

We love using **Flipgrid** because it gives students an opportunity to share their voice and create something that is all their own. We used Flipgrid in my English Language Arts classroom for a research project presentation. Instead of having the students come up to the front of the room to present, they had to create a presentation video on Flipgrid. They really enjoyed being able to watch their classmates' videos and then give each other feedback with video comments. I was able to assess their presentations with easy-to-use (and easy-to-format) built-in rubrics and--even better--give them feedback through video comments. I have also enjoyed the setup of Flipgrid; it is very user-friendly for both students and teachers. The kids love that it has fun elements that are set up like social media (selfies and stickers). Now that we are learning remotely from home, I am able to send kids video messages and lessons on Flipgrid and even tell them to leave me a video message if they have a question or just want to say hello.



Sarah Martin  
**@Sarah3Martin**  
7th Grade Math Teacher  
Shenandoah, Iowa

## padlet

**Padlet** is an online notice board that can be used by students and teachers to collaborate, reflect, and share on a common secure page. The notes posted can contain links, videos, images, document files, or just your writing. Teachers can moderate posts and remove posts if necessary. The free version allows educators to create three of the collaborative pin boards.

I am using the free version of Padlet right now as a place for students to reflect and share their learning at the end of the week in math. For example, students currently are learning about squares and square roots. I have posted four related topics for students to choose from to reflect on via Padlet at the end of the week. This tool is something different for students to use that is easy and a change in pace from what we have been using.



# DIGITAL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

As the Director of Teaching and Learning, I have been helping teachers think outside the box with [Screencastify](#). One of my grade 2 teachers used it to provide a read-aloud version of her Google Slides, which contain text about the history of our community. Another teacher is using Screencastify to provide feedback on student work. We are providing Zoom-based professional learning labs on Screencastify and have even doing one-on-one tutoring for teachers who need the support. We find that the teachers are more comfortable thinking of new ways to use a tool when we provide a live lab for them to try it with support before implementing it with kids.

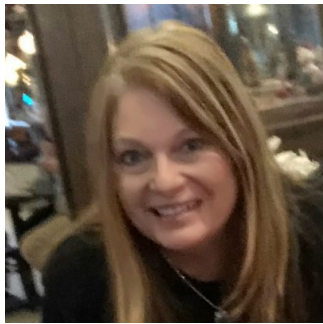
screencastify



**Char Shryock**

[@edtechgirl](#)

Dir. of Teaching & Learning  
Bay Village City Schools



**Karen Kelley Parrino**

[@kkparrino](#)

North Live Oak Elementary  
Livingston Parish  
Louisiana

google classroom

When I left my kindergarten classroom on March 13, 2020, I knew I had to find ways to continue student learning and remain connected. I began using [Google Classroom](#) to stay connected with my students and their families. I discovered that I can organize assignments, questions, etc. with a click of the plus sign and selection of “create topic.” I began posting weekly lesson plans on my Google Classroom. I use the stream tab like the feed on social media and connect with my students. I regularly create posts and announcements, and I add images, files, and videos linked to my posts. Recently, I announced a Story Time on Google Classroom and sent reminders. Our local high school students created stories and read them via Zoom to my students (see picture attached). In this uncharted territory, Google Classroom has proven to be a valuable asset.



# JOIN THE CORE ADVOCATE NETWORK

[JOIN NOW](#)