



Striving Readers

Kent County Public Schools

The Shift to Virtual Learning

The spring semester is not what any student pictured it to be. The words *distance learning*, *virtual classroom*, and *Zoom* were never really part of our vocabulary until late March. The idea of holding class from a kitchen table on a computer screen—something that looked like the opening of the Brady Bunch tv show--was not how teachers envisioned teaching their lessons at the end of the school year. But amid the disruption and changes, the phrase “we’re all in this together” was evident as students across all grade levels, educators, administrators, and parents in the Kent County Public School System came together to make this work.

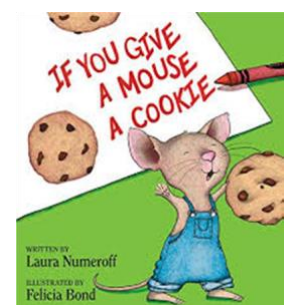
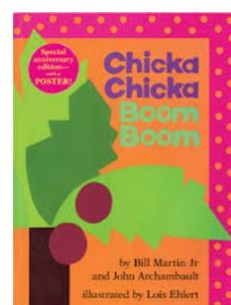
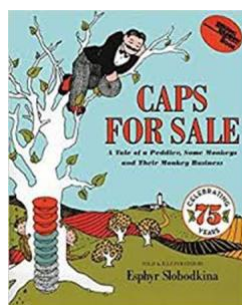
High School Students Make Guest Appearances on Elementary Virtual Classrooms to Read Stories to the Students

Many students in Kent County High School wanted to do something to support the younger students because they knew that this new style of remote learning would be very different for them. The older students who are more familiar with the daily use of technology and using tools like Google Classroom knew that the younger students may need something to lift their spirits in this difficult time, so they decided to do something about it. These students volunteered to make guest appearances in the virtual class meetings for classes in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd.

These weren’t ordinary guest appearances! These students went above and beyond! Once they worked out a schedule with the elementary teacher, they planned their virtual visit. On top of their own high school virtual classes, and digital homework, they chose books they loved when they were in elementary school, created digital displays and presentations to go with them, and practiced reading the books out loud so that they would be engaging.

Some of the books that the high school students read to the kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 students were: *Caps for Sale*, *Love you Forever*, *If You Give a Pig a Party*, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *Giraffes Can’t Dance*, and *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, just to name a few.

As Jake, a high school sophomore, finished reading *Caps for Sale* (with a cap on his head for added entertainment) to the first grade he said, “That was actually really fun. I think the kids really liked the book too. A lot of them told me their favorite part was when the monkeys took his caps.”





Distance Learning: Making Literacy Exciting

Kent County Public School teachers have continued their effort to increase literacy engagement, even while at home. Students have been invited to join read alouds on social media, through the Google Classroom, and on the school websites. Teachers have hosted live read alouds, but also supported reading instruction by offering recorded versions of them reading text and asking great thinking questions. During this pandemic, our teachers have made a great effort to foster a love of reading by showing their own passion for text. We are so fortunate to have such a strong foundation of teachers willing to support students by whatever means possible.

The teachers also supported each other as they discovered and shared any new and exciting strategies to teach virtually. They offered Zoom professional developments on Chrome Extensions, Loom, BitMoji Classroom, Discovery Ed Boards, and Padlet just to name a few. The teachers enjoyed learning from each other and using these engaging strategies for distance learning.



Literacy Engagement Cohort: A Reflection on Our Most Successful Reading Engagement Strategy Used this Year

In the middle school reciprocal teaching seemed to be the winning reading engagement strategy. Our teachers using the strategies say it the best, so here are some quotes from them:

Middle school language arts and special education teacher, Stacey Baker, said this in her reflection:

“I am always looking for engaging ways to motivate my students to collaborate to assist with tackling grade level work from a different angle. This year when the 6th grade went to Echo Hill I stayed back with the students who did not go. I needed to find an engaging strategy the students could participate in to increase their reading comprehension. I decided to teach my students reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is a collaboration engagement strategy where students work in small groups to help with reading comprehension and engagement.

“In reciprocal teaching, every student in my classroom had a specific job to guide a self-lead group discussion. The group discussion focused on reading strategies that helped improve comprehension. Students learned the strategies of summarizing, generating questions, clarifying, and predicting.”

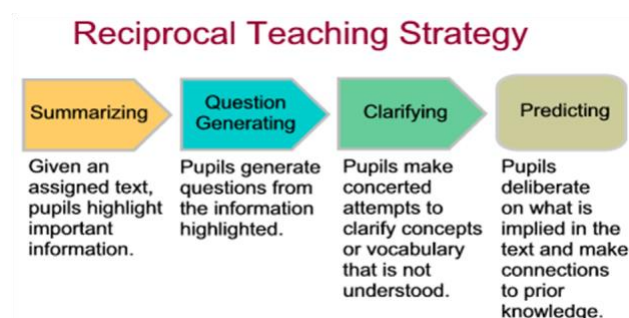
“When using reciprocal teaching students had the chance to collaborate and become more involved in their learning. They learned so much from their conversations and listening to each other. Reciprocal teaching is an engagement strategy that improves not only engagement, but also reading comprehension. I will use this strategy in the future in my classroom.”

Middle school language arts teacher, Laura Fratangelo, said this in her reflection:

“In looking back at different reading and teaching strategies from this year, many have worked, and I will continue to tweak and use again next year. Others did not work, but that is the nature of teaching, I believe. Trial and error, revising plans, and trying again are all a part of successful teaching. Even a “failed” day teaching has taught me something, which makes me a better teacher in the days and years to come.”

“A strategy that has worked well in my classroom this year is Reciprocal Teaching. Reciprocal Teaching is a group reading activity that ensures all students have an active role in the reading and group work assigned for the day.”

“In looking back on strategies that I have used in the classroom, many have worked, while others didn’t. As a teacher, the use of trial and error is a yearly battle, with each year being different as our students each year are different, and they have different needs and learning styles.”



Summer Reading



This year the Kent County Public Schools Elementary Summer Reading program is working in collaboration with the Kent County Public Library's Summer Program. All students are encouraged to participate in the *Imagine Your Story* Summer Reading Game through the public library. Activities and book choices will be available through a Kent County Public Library Virtual Library Card, as well as through the KCPL Curbside pick-up. Starting on July 1st, students can kentcountylibrary.org for details on how to sign up. In conjunction with the library program, KCPS elementary teachers will be offering weekly live book chats for all elementary school students. A variety of book chats will be held allowing children to select a discussion based on interest, level, and text choice. All book chats will be held on Zoom and begin the week of June 29th.

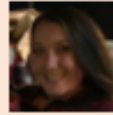


*Imagine
Your
Story*

Book Talk Hosts

Mrs. Cochran

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Grades 2 & 3- Wednesdays @ 10:30am
Meeting ID: 867 5546 0150
Password: 1pYB3x



Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library
Grades 4 & 5- Tuesdays @ 10:30am
Meeting ID: 895 6277 2265
Password: 5Mtiu4

Mrs. Fogel

The Tale of Despereaux
(Book available in hard copy or electronic)
Grades 1-3- Tuesdays @ 10am
Meeting ID: 864 0424 8211
Password: 4KraUy



Mrs. Spero

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane
(Book available in hard copy or electronic)
Grades 2,3,4- Thursdays @10am
Meeting ID: 837 3064 3751
Password: 3DeFpU



Mrs. Calloway

Book Selection open for Student Choice
Grades 4&5- Mondays @ 10:30 am
Meeting ID: 968 5342 4609
Password: 3A3Y8d



Mrs. McGee

Book Selection open for Student Choice
Grades K,1, 2- Mondays @ 10am
Meeting ID: 879 7602 3561
Password: books



Ms. Martinez – bilingual book club
Alma

ID: 81263030285
Password: 4L4yAWm8Y



Grades 2&3- Wednesdays @ 1pm
Esperanza Peace
Grades 4&5 @ 2pm
ID: 81263030285
Password: 4L4yAWm8Y

Mrs. Kennedy

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
Students entering grade 4- Thursdays @ 9am
Meeting ID: 827 2393 5213
Password: ReadWithMe



Virtual LETRS Training for KCPS Elementary Teachers



While teachers learned a new way to teach this spring due to Covid-19 they were also able to participate in online professional development. Through the use of funds from the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant teachers in grades Pre-K and kindergarten had the opportunity to participate in LETRS online training. **LETRS[®] For Early Childhood Educators** is a professional development course designed with developmentally appropriate content woven throughout, providing the in-depth knowledge PreK–K teachers need to teach language and literacy skills. Teachers worked through four modules learning about the English language and how best to use this knowledge to teach the foundational skills that young children need in order to read fluently.

LETRS[®]

for Early Childhood Educators

Lexia Reading[®] Core5[®] Works



Evidence-based research studies have demonstrated that Lexia's literacy program, Core5, contributes to students' success on standardized reading assessments. In multiple studies published in peer-reviewed journals, Lexia Reading Core5 has been found to accelerate the development of literacy skills.

Lexia[®] Core5[®] is an adaptive, engaging computer-based learning program. The activities in Lexia[®] Core5[®] support and build on reading standards and focus on developing reading skills in six areas: phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Using Lexia, students work independently at their own pace through individualized learning paths to develop fundamental reading skills in a structured, sequential manner. Teachers are notified when students require support or intervention.

KCPS has had a partnership with Lexia Learning for groups of students since 2017. We were thrilled to learn that, given the sudden change in learning environment, Lexia was generous enough to extend our license, free of charge, to include all students in K-5 students through July 31, 2020. If you have not been taking advantage of this opportunity while your student has been learning from home, please reach out to the school to learn how to get your student logged in and placed. All k-5 students are encouraged to continue use between 10-20 minutes each day throughout the summer to reinforce newly gained skills and to continue to advance in their learning.