

IDEAS AND RESOURCES FOR THE COVID-19 CRISIS

From recent Marshall Memos – Updated May 16, 2020

During the pandemic, millions of students are unable to go to school, and teachers are stretched thin attending to students' needs, in many cases while taking care of their own children. Below is a collection of recent Marshall Memo items that may be helpful. Be strong and be safe!

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QUOTES ABOUT THE PANDEMIC

“I think my role shifts completely into this symbolic keeper of hope. My role in this family is to make sure that we know that we are trying to get them whatever they need, having staff members feeling like we care about them as humans and as families, and all of the details of their professional lives will get resolved.”

Paul Kelly, principal of Elk Grove High School in Illinois, quoted in ““There Is No Guidebook’: Being the Principal in the Age of Coronavirus” by Denisa Superville in *Education Week*, March 18, 2020, <https://bit.ly/33FCVZT>

“We’re not medical experts, we’re not city planners. This is a time for simplicity and being careful not to throw in too many bells and whistles.”

New York City educator Eva Moskowitz (see item #1k, Memo 829)

“I want to send a message to parents, and in particular to working moms, who will inevitably take on most of this home labor along with working remotely: This is going to be messy and that is OK.”

Jennie Weiner (University of Connecticut) in “I Refuse to Run a Home School” in *The New York Times*, March 20, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/33U1mmq>

“Typing LOL is not the same as actually laughing out loud.”

Alana Semuels, “Does Remote Work Actually Work?” in *Time*, April 6/13, 2020, p. 46

“This is my 16th year teaching, and I feel like I’m a first-year teacher. The amount of work and new things that I’m encountering on a daily basis is astounding.”

Gloria Nicodemi, New York City high-school science teacher, quoted in “Teachers’ Herculean Task: Moving 1.1 Million Children to Online School” by David Chen in *The New York Times*, March 30, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/3bUfe2R>

“When hurricanes, wildfires, and now the coronavirus upend our way of life, they call for everybody, literally every individual, to step into the breach. Not just first responders or caregivers, not only state governors or national leaders, but all of us... In good times, we can rely more on our boss or others to get things done, but that’s no longer enough. It is our own leadership moment, too. We are all in charge.”

Michael Useem, University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, in “It’s Our Leadership Moment” in *Knowledge Wharton*, March 30, 2020, <https://whr.tn/3dW7X4p>

“Don’t worry if you are not the perfect homeschooling parent; don’t worry if you are torn between working at home and helping your kids. Don’t let your kids spend nine hours a day doing schoolwork online – cut them off and tell the teacher it was too much. Don’t let these days be joyless for your kids.”

Jennifer Gallagher, Long Beach, NY school superintendent, in a message to parents, quoted in “How Much Home Teaching Is Too Much? Schools Differ in Demands on Parents” by Christina Samuels in *Education Week*, April 2, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Xcyfti>

“Trust me on this: There’s a good chance that, years from now, you will feel a bit sentimental for these weeks spent in social isolation. We’re built for challenging times. We are writing the stories we will tell our children and grandchildren. Driving down a suburban street waving to elementary school children may not have the historical gravity of landing on Omaha Beach or working on a wartime assembly line. But when the children of the pandemic are old and gray, they will reminisce about the time their teachers paraded past their house because all the schools were closed. It will be a warm memory, even though so many people got sick, lost their jobs, and were afraid. They don’t have the vocabulary today to describe it, but the lessons will stick and become clearer in the retelling. It’s about social cohesion, love and loyalty, and how good people step up when we need them to.”

Robert Pondiscio in “The Lessons That Last in the Time of Pandemic” in *Education Gadfly*, April 8, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2V20dX8>

“Sending home worksheet after worksheet is unlikely to result in fruitful learning that will stick.”

Paul France (see item #1, Memo 832)

“All over social media, teachers are sharing stories tinged with both frustration and fear for students who haven’t logged into learning platforms, participated in threaded discussions, completed an assignment, or returned texts and e-mails... The informal check-ins that schools typically rely on – a teacher, coach, bus driver, or cafeteria worker who would normally be alert to a child in distress – have been disrupted. There are just fewer eyes on children right now.”

Stephen Sawchuk and Christina Samuels in “Where Are They? Students Go Missing in Shift to Remote Classes” in *Education Week*, April 10, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2wT5jMh>

“We’re about to see what happens when we turn up the volume on families and turn it down on schools.”

Paul von Hippel (quoted in item #3, Memo 833)

“Imagine you just got your driver’s license. You’re starting to date. Your team finally clinched the playoffs. Prom is right around the corner. But now you’re stuck all day at home, within 100 feet of your parents, for conceivably months on end... Although adolescents are not considered high risk from a medical perspective, they are still facing very real social and emotional challenges... It is essential that we all look out for adolescents, be sympathetic to their frustrations, and make sure that they have the resources and supports in place for optimal development.”

Leah Lessard and Hannah Schacter in “Why the Coronavirus Crisis Hits Teenagers Particularly Hard: Developmental Scientists Explain” in *Education Week*, April 15, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2yyAzjV>; Schacter is at hannah.schacter@wayne.edu.

“Life without school is much more boring than I thought it would be.”

Una, 14 years old (see item #1, Memo 834)

“Treasure the fact that some kids are escaping from hours of test preparation each day.”

Andy Hargreaves in “A Complete List of What to Do – and Not to Do – for Everyone Teaching Kids at Home During the Coronavirus Crisis” in the *Washington Post*, April 7, 2020, <https://wapo.st/3bK9zNg>

“If sitting is the new smoking, some are up to three packs a day.”

Dan Rockwell in “7 Ways to Fuel Energy During a Pandemic” in *Leadership Freak*, April 24, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2ySmG07>

“There is a reason that homeschooling is rare.”

Robert Slavin (see item #1, Memo 835)

“Some students are not connecting because they felt invisible while they were in the physical classroom, so they feel that they will not be missed in the virtual one.”

Peter DeWitt (see item #2, Memo 835)

“Distance learning requires us to be humans in an inhuman situation. We can’t simply provide lessons and assessments; we have to bridge this digital gap and carry some sense of humor and goodwill and community through the cold wiring. If we’ve succeeded in even a modicum of that task, we owe that to the success in the months prior when we created something special. A school family. A community that could rely on itself, that could flourish even in isolation.”

Daniel Parsons in “I See Education and Humanity in ‘Full Bloom’ in My Covid-19 Classroom” in *Education Gadfly*, April 24, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3aZe7Or>

“Without preparation or permission, we’re participating in the greatest social science experiment of all time.”

Andy Markowitz (see item #3, Memo 836)

“Districts must hold teachers harmless from the challenges unique to the coronavirus environment, but they also have a public obligation to make sure students are being taught as effectively as is practical to expect.”

Kency Nittler and Patricia Saenz-Armstrong in “Teacher Evaluations and Support During Covid-19 Closures,” National Council on Teacher Quality, May 1, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3biaCTr>

UNDERSTANDING THE PANDEMIC AND KIDS' PERSPECTIVE

Details on Virus Transmission

In this online article, Erin Bromage (University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth) presents some key facts about Covid-19:

• *How this very infectious virus moves from person to person* – For Covid-19 to take hold in your body, you need to be exposed to an infectious dose – estimated to be at least 1,000 viral particles – and that can take place over time; the key variables are virus particles and exposure time. You can ingest 1,000 particles in a single breath, or by inhaling 100 particles in 10 breaths, or by inhaling 10 particles in 100 breaths. To get a sense of how many viral particles might be floating around, consider these statistics:

- A cough releases about 3,000 droplets traveling at 50 miles an hour. Most fall to the ground, but some can stay in the air and travel across a room in a few seconds.
- A sneeze releases about 30,000 droplets traveling at 200 miles an hour and can easily get across a room, as well as falling on surfaces (as can cough droplets).
- The droplets in an infected person's cough or sneeze may disperse as many as 200 million virus particles into the surrounding air.
- Talking releases about 200 virus particles per minute.
- Breathing out through one's mouth releases fewer droplets because they're not coming from the lower respiratory tract. Most move at low velocity and fall quickly to the ground. Breathing out through one's nose releases even fewer droplets.

The bottom line: sneezing and coughing are highly efficient ways to infect people nearby. You can enter a room where a person sneezed a few minutes earlier and quickly inhale the viral load needed to get Covid-19. If you are talking face to face with an infected person, it takes longer to get to the 1,000-particle level – roughly 5 to 10 minutes.

These figures are the reasons for mask wearing, physical distancing, adequate testing, and contact tracing – and why infected people need to quarantine themselves.

• *Asymptomatic transmission* – At least 44 percent of all infections come from people who don't yet have active symptoms, with increasing viral shedding as they get closer to being symptomatic. A person can be spreading the virus into the environment up to five days before symptoms appear.

• *Risks of infection* – The worst environments for transmission, says Bromage, are prisons, workplaces where people work shoulder to shoulder (meat packing plants, call centers), religious ceremonies, weddings, funerals, birthday parties, and face-to-face business meetings. In one restaurant (see the diagram in the link below), an asymptomatic person breathed out low levels of the virus during a 90-minute dinner and infected half of the people at that table, three-quarters of the people at tables downwind (the air conditioning system moved air across the room), and two people upwind (probably due to turbulence in the flow of air). Nobody at two other tables out of the airflow were infected. Workplaces can carry similar risks as viral particles spread through an office or cubicle area. Choirs are particularly risky since energetic singing

releases more droplets from the lower respiratory tract. Energetic indoor sporting events are similar.

The key principle is viral exposure, even if the viral load is low but there are droplets in the air for an extended time – and even if you are 50 feet away from an infected person.

- *What's less risky* – All the transmissions described above were indoors. And indeed, 90 percent of documented infections happened at home, in workplaces, on public transportation, and in social gatherings and restaurants. In countries that have done rigorous contact tracing, only one infection took place outdoors. “The effects of sunlight, heat, and humidity on viral survival all serve to minimize the risk to everyone outside,” says Bromage. Outdoors, there’s not enough time to achieve an infectious viral load, even walking, jogging, or biking near an infected person. The risk of infection is also low in a well-ventilated indoor space with few people nearby.

- *Shopping* – With masks and social distancing, grocery stores and malls are not very risky because of low density of people, high air volume, and limited time in the indoor space (for store workers, it’s a different story). Shopping has accounted for only 3-5 percent of infections.

- *Surfaces* – These are an issue, of course, because infected droplets land on them. This makes it important to wear gloves, not touch your eyes, mouth, or nose, and wash your hands frequently.

“The Risks – Know Them – Avoid Them” by Erin Bromage, May 6, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2WGYiaa>; Bromage can be reached at ebromage@umassd.edu.

Putting the Pandemic in Historical and Epidemiological Perspective

In this *New Yorker* article, Michael Specter describes the scientific events that have shaped the career of Dr. Anthony Fauci. Since 1984, he’s been director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and he’s currently at the epicenter of the coronavirus crisis. Specter’s article lists some previous epidemics that wreaked havoc through history:

- In 430 BC, Athens was struck by a plague that killed as many as 2/3 of its residents.
- Beginning in 165 AD, smallpox contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire.
- In the 14th century, the Black Death killed more than half of Europe’s population.

However, by the middle of the 20th century, improvements in antibiotics and sanitary conditions led many scientists to believe it was possible to eradicate, or at least control, infectious diseases. Fauci, who had specialized in this field at the start of his career, worried that he’d chosen an area that was going to become a sideshow.

Then several deadly diseases changed the game. AIDS has killed more than 30 million people, and tuberculosis infects about a quarter of humanity, killing 1.5 million people in 2018 alone. “But the greatest threat that humanity faces, by far,” says Specter, “is a global outbreak of a lethal virus for which no treatment has been found.” And indeed, COVID-19 has forced billions of people into lockdown, and another pandemic like this will inevitably appear – maybe next year, maybe in a decade, maybe in a century.

“We live in evolutionary competition with microbes – bacteria and viruses,” said Nobel Prize-winning molecular biologist Joshua Lederberg. There are countless viruses in animals and

humans, most of them harmless. For a virus to pose a worldwide threat, it has to meet three critical conditions:

- It emerges from animals and humans don't have immunity to it.
- The virus sickens and kills humans (the vast majority of viruses don't).
- The virus spreads efficiently – e.g., through coughing, sneezing, or handshakes.

For years, Fauci and others have been concerned about a virus that would punch all three tickets – new, deadly, and infectious – and that's what we have in COVID-19.

For most of human history, a virus with all three characteristics would afflict many people in the community where it emerged, but then stop spreading. But as human mobility increased, pathogens could spread more widely. Nowadays, someone can wake up with an infectious virus in China and fly to America, spreading it intercontinentally the same day. According to one analysis, at least 430,000 people have arrived in the U.S. on direct flights from China since the coronavirus outbreak began.

Lederberg and others have advocated for greatly expanded early-warning systems, particularly in the developing world, as well as stronger measures to respond to microbial threats. Unfortunately their alarm bells were almost completely ignored. In 2004, a year after those recommendations were made, a highly pathogenic form of avian influenza, H5N1, leaped from waterfowl to chickens to humans. This time, the world was lucky – it was deadly but not very contagious. Five years later, a new influenza virus, H1N1, infected nearly a quarter of the global population before vaccines were developed – but again we were lucky: it was highly contagious but not nearly as deadly as most strains of influenza. Dodging the bullet twice fostered complacency and made it more difficult for scientists to create a sense of urgency.

A somewhat hopeful development is that genetic engineering has made it possible to respond to an epidemic much more quickly than in the past. After the COVID-19 outbreak began, it took scientists less than a month to sequence the genome of the virus; by the end of February, the instructions were on the Internet and the virus had been recreated in labs around the world so that scientists could seek treatments and vaccines. The problem is that treatments and vaccines will be virus-specific. Each year scientists try to scope out newly-evolving viruses and create vaccines, but it's hit-or-miss: in the 2017-18 flu season, the vaccine worked for only about one-third of the people who received it. And scientists are playing whack-a-mole with each new virus. "We keep trying to develop a vaccine for one thing – usually the last one – and it's a waste of time," says Fauci. "Every time we get hit, it is always something we didn't expect."

Fauci has long advocated for developing a universal influenza vaccine that would provide lasting defense against all strains. "Similar to tetanus," he said, "a universal flu vaccine probably would be given every ten years. And if you get one that is really universal, you can vaccinate just about everyone in the world." This would cost hundreds of millions of dollars to develop and test, and to date, that money hasn't been raised. Perhaps that will change now. "To plan a coherent biological future, rather than simply scramble to contain each new pandemic," Specter concludes, "will require an entirely new kind of political commitment."

"Annals of Medicine: The Good Doctor" by Michael Specter in *The New Yorker*, April 20, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2KpmZSB>

Why Is Covid-19 Hitting Some Areas Harder Than Others?

In this *New York Times* article, Hannah Beech, Alissa Rubin, Anatoly Kurmanaev, and Ruth MacLean report that the coronavirus has spread to almost every country on the planet, but some areas are faring much worse than others – for example, the Dominican Republic with many more cases than neighboring Haiti, Iran than Iraq, Indonesia than Malaysia, New York City than Bangkok. What explains these seemingly random disparities? Here are scientists' current insights about areas with lower rates of infection:

- *A younger population* – Many of the areas that have done better so far have a more youthful demographic profile – for example, Africa is the world's youngest continent. Young people, say the reporters, have stronger immune systems and “are more likely to contract mild or asymptomatic cases that are less transmissible to others.” But there are exceptions, including Japan, which has an older population and relatively lower infection rate.

- *Distancing* – In Thailand and India, person-to-person greetings are done at a distance, with palms joined together, and so far those countries have been hit less hard. Wearing face masks has been quite common in many countries well before this pandemic. And in the developing world, the elderly are more often cared for at home rather than being clustered in nursing homes. In addition, some regions are more isolated by geography and sparse public transportation.

- *Heat and light* – An early theory was that Covid-19 spread most easily in temperate regions like northern Italy and the U.S., but one of the worst outbreaks occurred in the equatorial Amazon region of Brazil. There are advantages to being outdoors (versus in close quarters indoors), and the virus wilts on surfaces exposed to direct sunlight. But the coronavirus appears to be so contagious that it can overpower the slight benefit of a warmer climate if people don't take proper precautions.

- *Lockdowns* – Countries like Vietnam, Senegal, Rwanda, and Greece that immediately implemented strict shelter-in-place policies have been able to contain the virus. Countries that had experienced pandemics in the past – tuberculosis, Ebola, H.I.V. – knew the drill and acted quickly, including the suspension of religious gatherings. Iran is a notable exception.

- *Superspreaders* – Luck has played an important part; in several countries, a single infected person attending a crowded social function was responsible for exponential spread: one passenger infected 634 others on the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship, and one woman in South Korea attended a funeral and spread the disease to hundreds of congregants and then thousands of others. “Because an infected person may not experience symptoms for a week or more, if at all,” say Beech, Rubin, Kurmanaev, and MacLean, “the disease spreads under the radar, exponentially and seemingly at random.”

There's a broader caveat, says Dr. Ashish Jah of the Harvard Global Health Research Institute: “We are really early in this disease. If this were a baseball game, it would be the second inning, and there's no reason to think that by the ninth inning the rest of the world that looks now like it hasn't been affected won't be like other places.”

“Virus Batters Some Areas. Why Does It Spare Others?” by Hannah Beech, Alissa Rubin, Anatoly Kurmanaev, and Ruth MacLean in *The New York Times*, May 4, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/2WkSSCD>

Teachable Moments During the Crisis

In this *Edutopia* article, Sarah Gonser says COVID-19 “offers teachers the unique instructional opportunity to tap into students’ innate curiosity about the virus and deliver lessons that are timely, prompt kids to dig deep, and – ideally – provide a modicum of comfort during a time of alarming headlines and copious misinformation.” Gonser suggests six possible areas and highlights the work of teachers in each one (see the link below for details):

- The math behind pandemics – Rates of change, including exponential growth, calculus, and modeling;
- Virology and biology – How a virus affects the human body, especially the lungs;
- Journalism – Teaching students to find and compellingly relate their unique stories of the pandemic;
- Makers of history – Journaling as a powerful tool and an outlet for students as they create a daily first-person account of their lives as history unfolds around them;
- Asking hard ethical questions – For upper-grade students, this is a time for empathy, self-reflection, critical thinking, and debate about moral choices and next steps;
- Media literacy – Discerning what’s true and what isn’t with online information (see the Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart linked below).

“Innovative Ways to Make Coronavirus a Teachable Moment” by Sarah Gonser in *Edutopia*, April 3, 2020, <https://edut.to/3as4XtE>

Is Now the Time to Bring Back “Current Events”?

In this *Education Gadfly* article, Robert Pondiscio says that the taken-for-granted body of general knowledge and key vocabulary necessary for literate discourse is constantly evolving. For example, a few months ago, the terms *coronavirus* and *social distancing* would have been unfamiliar even to the well-educated, but now they’re on everyone’s lips. That demonstrates the importance of keeping abreast of current events in school. “But at a time when it’s never been more important to be well-informed and literate,” says Pondiscio, “children have never been less likely to pay close attention.” A recent report found that only 48 percent of children follow the news, current events are not a regular part of classroom discussions, and when civics knowledge is tested, the performance of U.S. students is worse than it is for any other subject.

Pondiscio remembers that almost every day in his working-class school on Long Island, a different student would have the job of reporting the day’s news. There would be an international, national, and local story, then sports and the weather. “Not the most sophisticated pedagogical approach, perhaps,” he says, “but it normalized the idea of paying attention to what’s going on in the world.” This was reinforced at home, where a morning and afternoon

newspaper was delivered every day and his parents gave him a subscription to *Time* when he was in seventh grade. “Being informed was just a basic part of everyday life.”

In the midst of the current crisis, with many parents “dragooned into service as *ad hoc* teachers,” says Pondiscio, “the juiciest bit of low-hanging educational fruit might be cultivating children’s interest in news and reviving current events... And it’s a habit, once formed, that can continue as a significant value-add once life and school resume their normal shape, contributing to literacy and language proficiency, as well as cultivating a disposition of civic-mindedness.”

But shouldn’t the young be shielded from disturbing news? Appropriate filtering, yes, says Pondiscio, but he notes that his generation came of age in a divided, violent nation with airline hijackings, assassinations, riots, domestic bombings, and a disturbing body count from several wars. “The idea that children should be shielded from the news might seem odder still to our parents,” he says, “who came of age during the Great Depression and World War II.” Common Sense Media suggests that seven-year-olds are old enough to watch and make sense of the news. Pondiscio suggests ABC, CBS, and NBC network newscasts rather than “the fire hose of social media and cable news.” And there are news outlets created specifically for young people, including *Time for Kids*, *The Week for Kids*, and Newsela.

“Keep Kids Learning While School Is Out: Bring Back ‘Current Events’” by Robert Pondiscio in *The Education Gadfly*, March 25, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3bDUKLL>

Kids Comment on Doing School at Home

In this *New York Times* feature, Henry Dodd compiles statements from a number of U.S. schoolchildren about the Covid-19 situation. Some excerpts:

“Life without school is much more boring than I thought it would be. Without the summerlike feeling of no work and being able to see friends, it’s actually very depressing.”

Una, age 14, Beacon, NY

“It’s really easy to get distracted at home. I like going to school and using the time at school to do schoolwork. Now all schoolwork is done at home, so my brain thinks there’s more homework because my brain hasn’t adjusted to staying home the whole day. Learning is difficult because before you were jogging and now you are crawling.”

Juny, age 14, San Francisco, CA

“It’s hell. My teachers think that a responsible amount of work to be assigning is 40 minutes (about a class period) plus half an hour plus of homework. This is from EVERY teacher, so it adds up real fast. Over the last few days, I’ve had more work than I would usually have if schools weren’t closed – and I have to do it sitting in the same spot for hours.”

Jasper, age 17, Brooklyn, NY

“I’m doing online learning through Google Classroom, and sometimes it’s difficult. My math problems won’t attach, the file didn’t save properly. But we have to work through that, and it’s necessary to help others.”

Eleanor, age 14, Wales, MA

“I like our video morning meeting every day with my teachers and friends. It makes me feel like I’m still in school. My baby sister won’t leave me alone, so I decided to let her join.”

Ella, age 6, Manhattan, NY

“It’s harder to focus at home as there’s no one to discipline you for playing on your phone or talking to a friend. It’s harder to grasp certain concepts, specifically those that are more hands-on. It’s harder to ask questions since there’s no way to virtually raise your hand. And it’s harder to keep a smile on my face, because I don’t know if or when I’ll see my teachers and classmates in person again.”

Josephine, age 18, Woodstock, CT

“My phone is right next to me, so it’s so easy to pick up my phone and text my friend, who I see on the screen, or check the newest post on Instagram and TikTok.”

Daniella, age 17, Burlington, NJ

“There are days where I don’t want to do any work, and it’s really easy to just not do it. Learning at school definitely helps motivate me to get my work done, because I’m in the environment to do work and there’s really nothing else I can do. At home I have the liberty to literally do anything other than schoolwork.”

Valeria, age 16, Riverdale Park, MD

“Every day I take a walk around my neighborhood with my parents and when I see my friends, I’m told I have to stay six feet away. I get really sad I can’t be with them. I’m also scared they’ll never find a cure and I’ll never get to play close with my friends again. I’m hoping that things will be back to normal someday.”

Sasha, age 9, Los Angeles, CA

“I’m in my last year of middle school, and I will probably have to finish it from home. I wonder about the students next year, students who I’ll spend the next four years with, whose family died because of this, whose parents died because of this. I wonder about my family. Are they going to get sick? I wonder about the children who’ll die. I wonder if I’ll be one of them. If my family will be the one this virus reaches next. I start high school next year, and I wonder how.”

Louisa, age 13, Jacksonville, FL

“My little brother asks every morning if the germs went away yet – he really misses school like me.”

Tessa, age 7, Montclair, NJ

“Online school is the equivalent of no school. The one-on-one time, the accountability, the schedule and routine are all gone. No parent is perfect, and no parent can effectively replace seven to eight teachers, all with different subjects. The issue is the loss of many factors for success. Isolation, no routine, even just the lack of repercussions for not doing work. All of this leads to a decline.”

Pres, age 17, Fayetteville, AR

“Thousands of juniors (including myself) have selected rigorous courses for our last full year before our apps are due. Many of us are taking five or six A.P. classes and finally getting leadership positions for the clubs and activities we dedicated so much time to. As I sit at home, I

feel that the edge that I have been working so long for is slipping away. I was ready to make this last full semester count.”

Fahad, age 17, Northborough, MA

“Most schools in America have senior prom, Senior Ditch Day, senior prank, senior banquets, and most important, graduation. No one signed a contract giving me the right to any of that, but then again, I feel entitled to my senior year. When I walked out of school on March 11, I didn’t expect that to be the last time I would see the people and the places that helped me mature into the person that I am today. Now when people ask what high school taught me, I can honestly say that I learned something outside of math and science. Nothing in life is promised.”

Rachel, age 18, San Jose, CA

“Polling Our Littlest: ‘I Can’t Believe I Am Going to Say This, but I Would Rather Be in School’” by Henry Dodd in *The New York Times*, April 15, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/35lmT8B>

Will There Be Lasting Changes from the Pandemic?

“Without preparation or permission, we’re participating in the greatest social science experiment of all time,” says Andy Markowitz in this article in *AARP Healthy Living*. He suggests some ways this public health and economic crisis may influence behavior over time:

- Working from home – Having experienced it, many are taking to the experience.
- Seeing your doctor – Telemedicine was rare before Covid-19, but is widespread now.
- Shopping for groceries – Online purchasing saves time and aggravation.
- Staying in touch – Zoom happy hours and Facebook Live watch parties will endure.
- Wearing face masks – What was common in Asia is now more accepted in the U.S.
- Movies at home – Streaming Netflix and other platforms have proven themselves.
- Traveling by air – The experience will be different in a number of ways.
- Riding public transportation – Same here.
- Protecting your privacy – People may become receptive to electronic contract tracing.
- Washing your hands – The message is getting through.

“10 Things the Pandemic Has Changed for Good” by Andy Markowitz in *AARP Healthy Living*, May 4, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3dB4cR3>

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THE HUMAN SIDE OF ONLINE TEACHING

Maintaining Relationships with Students While Physically Separated

In this *Edutopia* article, Sarah Gonser reports on strategies she curated from interviews with teachers about how they stay connected with their students during school closures:

- *Frequently saying hello* – Several teachers emphasized the importance of communicating, by video if possible, that you’re thinking of students, care for them, and miss them. For students without video access, a phone call is a good substitute.
- *Maintaining morning meetings* – This might be a video of announcements and daily content, with students chiming in, or a recorded meeting that students can watch asynchronously.
- *“Temperature” checks* – One high-school teacher is using Schoology to have his students report on their state of mind: thumb up, thumb sideways (meh), or thumb down. As part of homework, another teacher asks students to check in on a classmate and report back to her by e-mail, text, or Skype. Other teachers are using forms like the one developed by the Association for Middle Level Educators <https://bit.ly/2yvRUdl>.
- *Snail-mail pen pals, phone pals, or virtual turn and talk* – One third-grade teacher uses the Zoom breakout room feature to have students discuss a question in small groups and follows up with one-on-one sessions with students, having them read aloud for a few minutes. At the low-tech end of the spectrum, some teachers are encouraging students to call each other on a rotating basis, or sending home paper, envelopes, and stamps for students to write letters to each other.
- *Creating virtual “tables”* – A North Carolina eighth-grade English teacher is using Google Classroom to get groups of 4-5 students (randomly assigned) discussing assignments, asking each other questions, and staying connected.
- *Including parents* – This same teacher checks in with parents via e-mail every day with questions like “How are you?” and “Do you need anything?” Another teacher connects with parents with the messaging platform Remind or, for parents who don’t have text messaging, a dedicated Google Voice phone line.
- *Naming and processing emotions* – Social isolation, cabin fever, and disrupted routines may be freaking out students, and many teachers are providing avenues for kids to express and explore their thoughts, feelings, and worries – individually or with classmates. As students share, teachers watch for those who are having the most difficulty and following up with individual dialogue and perhaps a counseling referral.

“7 Ways to Maintain Relationships During Your School Closure” by Sarah Gonser in *Edutopia*, March 25, 2020, <https://edut.to/2JKmLW4>

Teaching Social-Emotional Skills At a Distance

In this article in *Education Week*, Arianna Prothero says homebound students “now more than ever need strong coping skills to adjust to this new reality that will likely, for many, extend through the end of the school year and beyond.” The uncertainty and lack of control over the future makes social-emotional learning especially important – but how can educators accomplish that at a distance? Prothero interviewed several SEL experts for their ideas:

- *Psychological distancing* – Ask students to think about helping another young person: “Well, what would I do to support my best friend who was telling me they were really worried

about the coronavirus? What would I say to them?” suggests Marc Bracket (Yale University). This gets students out of their own heads, being empathetic and compassionate with another person – which might surface ideas they could apply to themselves. Students could also be asked to examine their own self-talk and think about whether it’s helpful.

- *Literature* – For younger students, reading stories aloud (synchronously or asynchronously) and discussing the feelings and motivations of characters can be helpful.

- *Current events* – Older students might be asked to reflect on the social-emotional attributes on display among political leaders – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making – and discussing how and whether these are helping the U.S. through this crisis.

- *Rituals* – It’s a good idea to maintain cherished traditions like spirit week – for example, having students wear crazy socks and sending in photos of them. Journaling is another ritual, with teachers sending prompts to get students reflecting and writing about their feelings. For students without Internet access, cell phones can be the medium.

- *Setting limits* – It’s important to talk about what’s going on in the world, but teachers and families need to avoid overwhelming young people with too much about the pandemic. One step: suggesting to parents that they not have cable news on all the time.

“Teaching SEL When Students Are Home” by Arianna Prothero in *Education Week*, April 8, 2020 (Vol. 39, #29, pp. 14-15), <https://bit.ly/34xNkXX>

Trust and Boundaries

In this paper in *One Trusted Adult*, consultants Brooklyn Raney and Ryan Donaher suggest guidelines for working online with middle- and high-school students in ways that build trust and maintain boundaries. Some excerpts, directly quoted as noted:

- *Clarify intent.* “I care about your health, happiness, safety, and success, and our inability to meet in person doesn’t change that. I believe a routine and a sense of normalcy will help us during this unprecedented time.”

- *Set up for success.* This includes having a daily routine with students, dressing like you’re going to school, sitting at a table, and asking students how you can help them.

- *Build a safe virtual space.* “Do not assume your students will automatically bring classroom norms with them into this venue. Take time to reiterate all of the rules that still apply, and any additional ones that need to be set up in order to protect the safe space needed to learn. Ask for their contributions and feedback to the list.”

- *Be fully present.* “What students will notice more than anything is whether or not you are really with them.” That means not being visibly distracted by phones and other events.

- *Model vulnerability.* “There is no need to pretend you know what you are doing. Ask for their patience and understanding, request their help, and model learning something new at a rapid pace and delivering it before it is fully tested.”

- *Create opportunities to contribute.* “Seek opportunities for them to lead, teach, inspire, and support each other virtually.”

- *Provide structure and predictability.* “Beyond your curriculum and content, consider the fringe moments, the intentional and unintentional connectors that happen in your classroom, that can be creatively translated to your online space.”

- *Reassure and encourage.* “Try to say every name of each of your students every day. Let them hear their name in a positive way, whether as a greeting or being called upon to share. Allow your students an opportunity to be seen, heard, valued, reassured, and encouraged. And never, ever underestimate your role as a trusted adult, even virtually, in the lives of these young people.”

- *Work with two shoulder partners.* “Continue interacting with young people as if their parents are on one of your shoulders, and your direct supervisor is on the other. Then, assume all your virtual interactions are being recorded – would you want this recording to go viral? For your safety and security as an educator, and for the safety of your students, continue building trust with young people through the establishment of boundaries, and create educational moments you would be proud to share.”

“Tips for Maintaining Trust and Boundaries with Virtual Students” by Brooklyn Raney and Ryan Donaher in *One Trusted Adult*, March 2020; Donaher can be reached at ryan.donaher@gmail.com.

Making Remote Learning Human

“In an era of social distancing, we’re all searching for some form of social closeness right now,” says elementary teacher Paul France in this *Edutopia* article. When he previously worked with an ed tech company and a network of micro-schools, France learned that “many digital tools have dehumanizing effects: they chip away at human connection, limit opportunities for heterogeneous groupings and cross-ability collaboration, and have kids turning toward screens instead of their teachers and fellow learners.”

Now that he and most other teachers have no choice but to use digital pedagogy, he has three suggestions for overcoming some of its disadvantages:

- *Embrace authentic tasks.* The temptation now is to take advantage of the convenience of commercial curriculum products, says France. But he believes this is an excellent time “to leverage open-ended tasks, complex instruction, and journaling, allowing students to post pictures of their journal entries through Seesaw or Google Drive.” How about providing a math task with multiple solutions and challenging students to journal about their solutions, or respond to prompts in a reader’s notebook? After students have had time to work on their own, the teacher might host an online class for sharing and discussion.

- *Create opportunities for dialogue and discourse.* “True, deep learning happens not on a worksheet or through a series of decontextualized videos and closed-ended questions,” says France. “Learning is a conversation; it requires connection and interaction.” He urges regular video class meetings for this reason, as well as for social interaction and connection.

• *Build in opportunities for self-reflection.* “Sending home worksheet after worksheet is unlikely to result in fruitful learning that will stick,” says France. “The current crisis is allowing all of us – educators and parents included – to reflect on what it truly means to learn.” He’s asking his students to think about their learning, and sends them videos of him thinking aloud as he solves math problems and responds to readings. He asks students to make a video of their responses to questions like:

- What went well for you with that task?
- What will you do differently next time?
- How has your thinking changed?

“All of these remind students that learning neither starts nor ends with the activity they’ve completed,” he says. “It can – and will – be connected to future activities, and by taking them through the process of reflecting on the task, I create the expectation that they will need to apply new learnings to future tasks.”

“3 Tips for Humanizing Digital Pedagogy” by Paul France in *Edutopia*, April 1, 2020, <https://edut.to/2JYT183>

Why Teaching in a Virtual Space is Draining

In this *National Geographic* article, Julia Sklar reports that many K-12 and university teachers are finding remote instruction more exhausting than in-person teaching. Cognitive scientists say that virtual interactions are more taxing on the brain – because we’re trying to make up for the copious information we get, without knowing it, during face-to-face interactions.

When we’re physically with others, we’re listening to the words, but also picking up dozens of non-verbal cues – facial expressions, whether the person’s body is facing us or slightly turned away, their fidgeting, perhaps a quick inhalation as a prelude to an interruption. “These cues help paint a holistic picture of what is being conveyed and what’s expected in response from the listener,” says Sklar. “Since humans evolved as social animals, perceiving these cues comes naturally to most of us, takes little conscious effort to parse, and can lay the groundwork for emotional intimacy.”

During a video call, seeing people from the shoulders up, very few of these cues can be perceived, which puts much more cognitive load on listening to what’s being said. We search for non-verbal cues that can’t be seen, and eye contact on the screen can be disconcerting if held too long, which would seldom be the case in a face-to-face conversation.

“Multi-person screens magnify this exhausting problem,” says Sklar. “Gallery view – where all meeting participants appear Brady Bunch-style – challenges the brain’s central vision, forcing it to decode so many people at once that no one comes through meaningfully, not even the speaker.” One psychologist called this attempt to multitask “continuous partial attention,” like trying to cook and read at the same time. A regular telephone conversation is much less taxing because we’re only expecting the voice and we’re not looking for visual cues.

Interestingly, says Sklar, video calls can be a boon for people for whom in-person conversations are challenging – for example, many with autism. However, for others on the spectrum, video calls can be disconcerting because of sensory triggers such as loud noises and bright lights.

It's possible, concludes Sklar, that "Zoom fatigue will abate once people learn to navigate the mental tangle video chatting can cause." In the meantime, one trick is turning off your camera and concentrating just on the words, saving video images for when they're really necessary – or when we want warm fuzzies from a loved one. Another idea is using a phone for a chat and walking around. There's evidence that meetings on the move can improve creativity.

"'Zoom Fatigue' Is Taxing the Brain. Here's Why That Happens" by Julia Sklar in *National Geographic*, April 24, 2020, <https://on.natgeo.com/2Wx10BI>

Better Ways of Starting Online Conversations

In this *Quartz* article, Elizabeth Weingarten says that in the early days of the pandemic, she would ask friends and colleagues, "How are you doing right now?" It was an assumption-free way of showing she cared, but people began to respond in predictable ways: *I'm hanging in there... I've got it better than those heroic first responders...* "When we keep asking the same question," says Weingarten, "or no question at all, we lose out on a chance for deeper connections with our conversation partners, who also happen to be the people we care most about. We are tricked into believing we know how they're feeling or what they're thinking, when we haven't even scratched the surface." Here's a selection of her suggested alternatives:

- How are you taking care of yourself today?
- What's the best thing that happened to you today?
- What's the most generous act you've seen recently?
- What's giving you hope right now?
- What's a story – from a book, movie, article, conversation – that you've been gripped by recently? Why did it capture you?
- What habit have you started, or broken, during the quarantine?
- Which specific place in your neighborhood are you most looking forward to visiting when this is all over?
- What are some things you've realized you don't really need?
- What's something you miss that surprises you? What's something you don't miss that surprises you?
- What's the latest thing you experienced that made you laugh, or cry?
- How do you want this experience to change you? How do you think it will?
- What do you hope we all learn or take away from this experience?

"20 Questions to Ask Instead of 'How Are You Doing Right Now?'" by Elizabeth Weingarten in *Quartz*, April 10, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2YzXpmu>

PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES WITH ONLINE TEACHING

A New York City K-8 School's Mission for Right Now

Franklin Headley shares the mission that his music-themed school in Queens has adopted for the current era (adapted from the goals articulated by principal Steve Evangelista at Harlem Link Charter School):

- Ensure a community of care for all students, families, staff members, and alumni.
- Improve our remote learning environment so that it simulates as much of the regular school day experience as possible, in order to mitigate the loss of learning and community, while carefully instituting a virtual school that will not overwhelm the resources of families and staff.
- Provide targeted supports for at-risk students and families.

VOICE Charter School's Mission for Online Teaching, personal communication from Franklin Headley, April 6, 2020; Headley can be reached at FranklinHeadley@voicecharterschool.org.

Why One Middle-School Student Prefers Online Instruction

In this *New York Times* article, eighth grader Veronique Mintz says she isn't missing in-person schooling during the pandemic. Why? Because every day in her New York City middle school, she says that classmates disrespect teachers, blurt out answers during tests, destroy materials, roll around on the floor, and push, kick, and hit one another. Her math teacher seems to spend one-third of every class struggling with discipline. Attending this school for almost three years, Mintz says she's had "only a few teachers who had strong command of their classrooms – enforcing consistent rules, treating students fairly, and earning their respect."

Now that the school has to use distance learning, she says she can work at her own pace, isn't distracted by nonsense, and finds cooperative groups much more productive. Mintz is also enjoying the recorded lessons posted online by teachers, who do better in this medium than in person. Mintz, who admits she struggles with math, can stop, start, and replay sections until she understands. It's so much better to grasp the lesson the day it's taught rather than having to try getting her questions answered by the teacher before school the next day. Weekly office hours are also a boon, especially since there are only two or three other students taking part. The school's experiment with live video teaching, on the other hand, hasn't been very successful for Mintz; "The same teachers who struggle to manage students in the classroom," she says, "also struggle online."

What are the implications for in-person instruction when schools reopen? This forward-thinking student has three suggestions:

- Teachers should video-record all lessons and send them to all students after class.
- Teachers should offer weekly office hours for individual and small-group follow-up.
- Teachers who are good at classroom management should be paid to train colleagues.

“Learning Online Beats School” by Veronique Mintz in *The New York Times*, May 7, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/2SYvNDY>

Classroom Management When Students Are in Their PJs

In this article in *Education Week Teacher*, Madeline Will reports on how some teachers are dealing with limit-setting in a remote learning environment. “It’s a situation where we need to extend grace,” said Merisha Leak, a North Carolina educator. “I don’t think it’s a school’s right or a teacher’s right to enforce school rules in someone’s home.”

But many teachers in a survey said it was challenging to keep students focused online. One approach is to lay down the law. “Remember,” stated one teacher’s Zoom rules, “this is a class, so treat it as such. Find a quiet place, free from distraction (sibling, pets, parents, television). Video needs to remain ON to promote focus. Eye contact should be maintained. Refrain from chewing gum, eating, or drinking in front of the camera.” Another teacher said that students who didn’t abide by the rules would be removed from the virtual classroom and given a zero.

Somewhere in the middle is Leah Smith, a Connecticut middle-school teacher who believes “the last thing they need is to have somebody be super strict with them.” Her guidelines for students: mute your microphone while others are talking, don’t purposely distract classmates (no TikTok dance moves on video), and above all be kind and respectful. Smith is tolerant of students munching during classes and being on their beds, as long as they’re sitting up. She had students show off their pets in an early class, and when a cat walked across the screen during a class, she said, “Oh, cute cat,” and moved on. “To not accept some of those funny moments is not really conducive to teaching middle school,” said Smith, “but at the same time, it needs to be harnessed so you can get things done.”

Teachers’ morale is also taking a hit, and many need some bucking up. “I think we really should remind teachers that they’re doing a great job, this is uncharted territory, and we’re all figuring this out,” said Ryann Fapohunda, a Washington, DC educator. “I would really encourage them to adopt a less-is-more approach. What success may have looked like when they’re physically in school will look different now... If students are adhering to guidelines in class – participating and showing up – I’m inclined to not call them out for wearing a hoodie or being in pajama pants.”

“Expectations for Online Student Behavior During Coronavirus School Closures” by Madeline Will in *Education Week Teacher*, April 8, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2KeqZW1>

Teachers’ Concerns About Online Instruction

In this article in *Education Week*, Peter DeWitt reports what he’s found combing through scores of Facebook pages created by teachers during the pandemic. He’s struck by heroic efforts to make teaching work in a new environment, along with humor and mutual support. There’s also a lot of venting about how hard this is: many teachers have their own children to contend

with, live in studio apartments, have to work in their bedrooms because of roommates, have spotty Internet access, and are new to videoconferencing tools and the whole business of teaching online.

Among the top concerns on the Facebook pages are students not handing in assignments, parents not returning calls, and how to hold students accountable when districts have nixed grading. There's also uncertainty about the required work day, faculty meetings, and supervision by administrators. Teachers clearly miss the accountability tools that go with in-person classrooms, among them physical proximity, the promise of good grades, and the leverage of privileges and other incentives. "There is a lot less 'control' on the part of the teacher right now," says DeWitt, "and that can make us uncomfortable – especially when teachers are being held accountable as teachers."

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns is worry about students who are not signing in and participating in online instruction. DeWitt believes there are at least six reasons:

- No Internet access and/or computer at home;
- No quiet space to work;
- No grade incentives;
- Taking care of siblings while parents work;
- Full-time jobs providing vital income to their families;
- A weak teacher-student relationship: "Some students are not connecting because they felt invisible while they were in the physical classroom, so they feel that they will not be missed in the virtual one," says DeWitt.

The most interesting question he found in the Facebook pages: *Knowing what you know now, would you have done anything differently when the students were in front of you?* This question prompted ideas on how schools might be run differently when they reopen.

"6 Reasons Students Aren't Showing Up for Virtual Learning" by Peter DeWitt in *Education Week*, April 26, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3dcM13W>

Synchronous versus Asynchronous Instruction

In this article in *Education Week*, Mark Lieberman says teachers across the U.S. are facing a novel question: *When and how often during the school day do my students need to see me?* In other words, how much of daily instruction should be synchronous and how much asynchronous? Lieberman gathered ideas from several experts:

- *Don't waste students' time.* "It doesn't make a lot of sense to do a 15-minute lecture live," says Susan Patrick (Aurora Institute). Asynchronous communication (e-mails, text messages, videos) is efficient for basic instruction, launching a discussion, and setting deadlines. Synchronous communication (a videoconference) works best for discussions, sharing ideas, brainstorming, and spontaneous conversations. A big advantage of asynchronous lectures is that students can watch at their own pace, rewinding if necessary or watching more than once to fully grasp the content.

- *Don't go overboard with synchronous teaching.* Overly long live classes can be overstimulating for students and maddening for teachers. "Expecting students to be glued to their computers all day is especially unrealistic in households with more children than devices," says Lieberman. "So relying too much on this approach could contribute to equity gaps, with students who have easy access to technology getting an edge over those who don't."

- *Asynchronous learning allows flexible pacing.* Teachers can use a variety of approaches: an interactive game, a practice quiz, a supplementary video. Students can feel a kind of ownership of their learning that's not possible in classroom settings, feeling less rushed by their classmates and able to go over material at their own speed.

- *Give parents clear direction.* There are big differences in how parents should be working with elementary students (lots of structure) and what's appropriate for high-school students who might, for example, choose to do all their English work on Sunday and all their math on Monday.

- *Synchronous learning can be informal.* Teachers might conduct virtual office hours, inviting students to join them between certain times, or arrange for an optional lunch chat. Real-time class meetings or kick-offs for the day are especially helpful for younger students.

- *Choose the best modality for different subjects and lessons.* English might be best taught asynchronously when students are doing a lot of thinking and writing on their own. Math, on the other hand, might lend itself more to synchronous instruction, when students need to ask questions and get real-time help.

- *Asynchronous doesn't mean absent.* Because some students won't take the initiative to get in touch, teachers need to be systematic about setting up individual video or phone check-ins, perhaps several times a month for each student.

- *Teaching is different for the time being.* Effective synchronous teaching can be powerful, but it's often difficult to engage students at the level of in-person classes, and this frustrates teachers. For many, online teaching is more facilitative. "You're not leading through the learning process," says Illinois curriculum director Jennifer Kolar Burden, "you're guiding them, you're pointing them in the right direction, you're letting them explore on their own."

"Virtual Education Dilemma: Scheduled Classroom Instruction vs. Anytime Learning" by Mark Lieberman in *Education Week*, March 30, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2VKeJn0>

Grading Dilemmas in the Time of Coronavirus

In this article in *Education Week*, Stephen Sawchuk covers the debate on whether students should get grades during school closures. On one hand, there's the unfairness of penalizing students who don't have computers and/or robust Internet access at home; on the other, there's the danger of communicating that students don't have to take school seriously while instruction is online. The current situation forces educators to consider all the reasons for giving grades: to motivate students to apply themselves; to give them feedback on proficient and less-than-proficient work; to report subject-area mastery to parents; for student-to-student

comparisons (for college admission, for example); and more. Sawchuk reports on different approaches around the U.S.:

- *Mountain Empire* – This sprawling 1,700-student California district includes three Native American reservations, and there is a wide range of Internet access. Teachers are assigning interdisciplinary projects on topics of interest that students can work on over several days, but because of differences in Internet access, teacher-student interactions vary widely. Because of that, the district is recommending that as long as students participate, they should get the grades they were receiving in each subject before schools closed. Students who want to improve on previous grades have the option to do so.

- *Salem City* – In this small district in Virginia, every student has a Chromebook and virtually all have Internet access, thanks to 200 WiFi hotspots and a local cable company providing access to students whose families qualify for free and reduced-price meals. After spring break, teachers aim to cover the most essential of the remaining state standards for their subject via remote learning, and will give letter grades for students' work. Teachers have been asked to stagger instruction and assignments so students aren't slammed with too much work at once. At the end of the school year, students will be able to appeal grades they believe don't reflect their achievement, making the case that those grades should be counted as pass/fail and not be part of GPA calculations.

- *Highline* – This Washington district, whose students speak over 100 different languages, will give pass/no credit grades for the period of online learning and will give students who don't pass other opportunities to earn credit in the summer or later. Many colleges appear to be willing to accept pass/fail or pass/no credit reports.

- *Los Angeles* – The second-largest district in the U.S. says teachers should "continue to grade and give timely feedback to students," but officials haven't yet decided what will go on transcripts.

- *New York City* expects teachers to give grades for remote work, but says there is flexibility to adapt if students don't have access to devices or outside learning supports.

- *New York City math teacher Bobson Wong* says, "I feel like the most important thing I want to accomplish right now, is to establish a routine in this environment and a sense of order and progress that we are actually moving forward, and this is not just 13 days of busywork." Wong is finding the pace is slower because of the difficulty of checking for understanding and following up with students who are not getting it. He's leery of giving grades, but believes it's important to give students feedback on their level of mastery. "Grades aren't a judgment of character," he says, but students need to know if they need to do additional work to achieve mastery.

- *Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, Mississippi, Virginia, and Wisconsin* have waived various graduation requirements, including certain mandated courses, end-of-course exams, and minimum attendance hours. Many states are allowing districts to decide whether students have met graduation requirements. [New York state announced on April 6, 2020 that spring Regents exams have been cancelled.]

- *In Georgia*, more than 70,000 students have signed a petition asking the state to void fourth-quarter GPAs. Says organizer Ellison Gonzalez, “Without the proper help from teachers or having the ability to actively question teachers and receiving rapid responses, students are not truly learning, but rather grabbing the information temporarily.”

“Grading Students During the Coronavirus Crisis: What’s the Right Call?” by Stephen Sawchuk in *Education Week*, April 1, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2UKzQ8a>

Douglas Reeves Pushes Back on Pass/Fail Grading in High Schools

(Originally titled “A Dissent on Pass/Fail Grading in Remote Learning”)

In this *ASCD Inservice* article, author/consultant Douglas Reeves agrees with much of Joe Feldman’s recent article on how to handle grading during the coronavirus crisis: stop averaging grades, grading homework, and using the zero-to-100 scale. Reeves also agrees on using pass/fail grading for students in grades K-8, where feedback is more important than letter grades. But he disagrees with pass/fail for high-school students. Here’s why:

- *Equity* – It’s been argued that until everyone has access to technology and supports, students should all get the same grade or be graded pass/fail. But Reeves fears that this approach disadvantages students who have achieved academic distinction and are competing for scholarships and college admission. “The students who are hurt worst in this scenario,” he says, “are those for whom academic distinction is the only way out of poverty.”

- *Resources* – Given the financial straits in which colleges now find themselves, says Reeves, scholarships will be more competitive than ever. Pass/fail grading makes it impossible for higher education officials to distinguish between A work and D work. He advocates a full-court press to deliver instructional material to all students through online learning, public television, e-mail, phone calls, and mailing books, supplies, and other materials. For students who can’t be reached, Reeves suggests giving them credit for the latest and best evidence of their work up to the time schools closed.

- *Engagement* – “Grades are surely not the only motivator for students,” says Reeves. “Students can be motivated by feedback, learning, and personal relationships with teachers.” This can come through sophisticated online learning platforms or good old-fashioned phone calls. But grades remain meaningful goalposts for students.

“A Dissent on Pass/Fail Grading in Remote Learning” by Douglas Reeves in *ASCD Inservice*, April 22, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2VGaJUe>; Reeves is at douglas.reeves@creativeleadership.net.

A Student Ponders Cheating on an Honor-Code Final Exam

In this *New York Times* column on ethical dilemmas, Kwame Anthony Appiah responds to a college student who’s about to take an online final exam. The student is considering breaking the rules and consulting notes, friends, and the Internet because many classmates seem

to be doing just that. Appiah disapproves of cheating, even when “everyone else is doing it,” but says the best solution is for the professor to give an open-book exam. “Doing this might require changing the test,” he says. “But given the circumstances you describe, it may be the only responsible option. If the professor insists on ignoring these realities, however, you should still do the honest thing. Ethics is always, in part, about what kind of person you ought to be.”

“The Ethicist: If My Classmates Are Going to Cheat on an Online Exam, Why Can’t I?” by Kwame Anthony Appiah in *The New York Times*, April 12, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/39ZFqb6>

Should We Worry About Kids Getting Too Much Screen Time?

In this *New York Times* article, Andrew Przybylski (University of Oxford) and psychologist/author Pete Etchells say that with most schools closed, children’s screen time is going through the roof. That can be a blessing for parents cooped up with their kids 24/7, but wait a minute: isn’t this video game binging and smartphone indulging harming young people? In the last few years, say Przybylski and Etchells, we’ve been hearing that excessive screen time “melts our children’s brains, shrinks their attention spans, and weakens their social skills.” Digital abstinence for young children was the message from the American Academy of Pediatrics until quite recently.

Worries like these have a long history, with parents fretting about each new wave of entertainment technology – radio, movies, TV. But is viewing time all that damaging? For starters, say Przybylski and Etchells, “the evidence linking screens to harm is, in reality, paper thin.” Recent studies have downplayed negative effects, including on adolescents’ sleep. In fact, they say, “a couple of hours of screen-based leisure is associated with improved peer relationships and increased sociality. Gaming meets our fundamental needs for exploration, competence, and social connection. And games often improve rather than undermine our reasoning abilities.” As for concerns about kids getting isolated, the Internet “is the world’s best tool for distanced socializing.”

So parents and educators needn’t fret too much during the coronavirus lockdown, conclude Przybylski and Etchells. But they should monitor what kids are watching and playing, sometimes playing and watching with them, and steer kids toward “brainy games,” age-appropriate educational videos, documentaries available on streaming services, cooperative and team-oriented video games, and timeless films “that don’t just entertain, or distract, but teach ineffable lessons about life, love, and family.”

“Screen Time Isn’t All That Bad” by Andrew Przybylski and Pete Etchells in *The New York Times*, April 7, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/2KkHYGw>; Przybylski can be reached at andy.przybylski@oii.ox.ac.uk

Angela Duckworth on Minimizing Screen Time

“It’s mind-boggling to imagine how many hours our students are spending on screens,” says Angela Duckworth (University of Pennsylvania) in this article in *Education Week*. “The

scientific consensus is that more rigorous research is needed to pinpoint the effects of screen time on physical and emotional health. However, we know enough to say with certainty that staring at screens all day and night can strain the eyes and disrupt circadian rhythms, too. And certainly, sitting constantly – as opposed to moving our bodies – is unhealthy for kids and adults alike.” Duckworth has three suggestions:

- Consider having students listen to audio versus watching videos, perhaps while taking a safe walk in the neighborhood.
- Encourage notetaking by hand rather than on a computer.
- During an online class, periodically ask students to look away from the screen – for example, “Now, from memory, redraw the figure we discussed last week.”

“How to Decrease Screen Time for Students” by Angela Duckworth in *Education Week*, April 24, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Y51kYa>; Duckworth can be reached at duckwort@psych.upenn.edu.

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PLANNING FOR SCHOOL REOPENING

When Schools Reopen, What to Do With Students Who Are Behind

In his *Education Gadfly* article, Michael Petrilli suggests that the question of how to catch students up when schools are back in session may depend on the grade level, the subject, and how far behind students are. He gives two examples:

- A high-school English class reading George Orwell’s novel, *1984* – Perhaps many students don’t have the vocabulary and interpretive skills to make meaning of the book, so one solution is for those students to read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, closer to their reading level. But another approach, with no student missing out on *1984*, is for the teacher to do focused work to make the book understandable for less-prepared students. This might include watching a movie rendition or listening to the audiobook; and reviewing plot guides or digital editions of early chapters, with embedded vocabulary help and synopses. All this would be done just before the class reads *1984* together, preparing those students for success.

- A sixth-grade math class with most students arriving years behind – Should the teacher teach grade-level content and try to fill gaps wherever possible, or go back and address the unfinished learning from prior years and Covid-19 slide, running the risk of students not being up to grade level for the state test? The latter approach makes the most sense.

Petrilli believes the difference is that in math, there’s a clear progression of standards, with mastery of prerequisite skills very important to success. “No amount of ‘supports’ and ‘scaffolding’ is going to magically make that problem go away,” he says. “So we should encourage teachers to go back and help kids fill in the holes – while also helping students make progress on grade-level material.”

But English is different, he believes. In this area, as well as social studies and science, access to grade-level material should be the default. Once students can decode text, understanding and appreciating material is a matter of building up vocabulary and background knowledge, which effective teachers know how to do – “a mix of well-designed small-group instruction, one-on-one tutoring, online acceleration and enrichment, and whole-class discussions.”

The primary grades are different, says Petrilli. Students who were on the verge of sounding out letters, learning to read, and counting to one hundred have big challenges when schools reopen. Petrilli was heavily criticized online when he suggested keeping younger students back, but he’s worried about automatic promotion to the next grade. For starters, there must be thorough diagnosis using high-quality assessments. For students who are way behind, he believes they need “the gift of time,” which might be rebranded as “a second 2nd grade,” moving up to grade 2.5, ideally looping with the same teacher, spreading out three years of standards to four years.

“When It Comes to Catching Kids Up, Let’s Stop with the Generalities” by Michael Petrilli in *The Education Gadfly*, May 6, 2020 (Vol. 20, #8), <https://bit.ly/2YWuo4q>

Lessons from a Hong Kong School That’s Been Closed Since February

In this *Education Week* article, Mark Lieberman interviews Connie Kim, the middle-school principal of a K-12 school in Hong Kong that has a little more perspective on remote learning than U.S. schools: it’s been closed for in-person instruction for more than two months. Here are Kim’s thoughts from the long haul she and her colleagues have been through:

- *Forget about replicating the regular school day.* The school tried to run a regular seven-period schedule at first, but quickly found it was way too intense for a remote environment. The school day now consists of four hour-long periods, with the first 15-20 minutes of each reserved for live videoconferencing between teachers and students.
- *Build in no-screen time for students.* Kim’s school tries to avoid overdoing it each day, and has implemented a “wellness day” that’s a reprieve from the regular pace of teaching and learning. They’ve also blocked out time for reading, outdoor play, and doing things that don’t involve screens.
- *Don’t skimp on professional learning.* After having too little collaborative time at first, the school now has a regular schedule of staff sessions via Zoom so teachers can calibrate their teaching and share tips, insights, and resources.
- *Make it easier for students and parents.* At first, individual teachers in the middle school used different platforms for their learning plans, resulting in a chaotic environment for kids and families to navigate. Teachers now use common procedures posted on Schoology, the school’s learning management system.
- *Don’t assume something can’t be done until you’ve tried it.* Initially, Kim and her colleagues thought that offering personalized instruction and support would be impractical. But using breakout rooms, video chats, and teacher “office hours” solved the problem, and all this has been especially helpful for students with special needs.

• *Pace yourself.* After eight weeks of remote instruction, Kim says they're seeing a loss of enthusiasm and engagement among students. Teachers are now slowing down the pace of instruction and building in more checks for understanding and review. "The novelty of being on Zoom and working from home is wearing out now," she says. "It's a constant cycle of us having to regroup, recharge, having to be the cheerleaders for our students and our parents."

"6 Tips for Teaching Remotely Over the Long Haul of the Coronavirus" by Mark Lieberman in *Education Week*, April 10, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Rz8qzQ>

Planning for Schools' (Hopeful) Reopening

In this *Education Gadfly* article, Robert Pondiscio predicts that when the current crisis is over, remote learning won't continue. We aren't transforming ourselves "into a nation of homeschoolers or 'unschoolers'," he says, "any more than passengers thrown from a sinking ship into lifeboats can be said to have taken up rowing." The online learning being implemented by hard-working teachers is an emergency response. As soon as it's possible, kids and parents and teachers will be happy to get back to their brick-and-mortar schools. Why? "The act of sending our kids every morning to a place called a school is a cultural habit formed over many generations," says Pondiscio. "It persists because we value it, not for want of a better idea or a more-efficient delivery mechanism for education."

There's no question that this period of school closings will widen learning gaps, he continues, because families are much more unequal than schools: broadband access, devices and books in the home, parents available to help. In the words of Paul von Hippel (University of Texas/Austin), "We're about to see what happens when we turn up the volume on families and turn it down on schools." A recent NWEA report predicts that this fall, students will enter school with about 70 percent of the usual reading gains and less than 50 percent of expected achievement in math – and those are averages, masking big differences by social class.

The biggest priority for district leaders right now, says Pondiscio, is getting ready for reopening: "If we aren't planning for the resumption of schools, and for the foreseeable conditions we will face, we will be caught flat-footed a second time." His suggestions:

- Plan for different scenarios – fully open, staggered, virtual for a period of time.
- Assign qualified educators from the central office to teach in the opening weeks to improve the student/teacher ratio.
- Plan to accelerate the learning of students who enter the furthest behind.
- The district's strongest teachers should be working with those students.
- Give special attention to the early grades.
- Assessment-driven achievement grouping may be necessary, especially in the lower grades.
- The primary focus for the early weeks should be on reinforcing the previous grade's learning.
- Use teacher leaders and master teachers to design curriculum and control quality.

- Press new college graduates and non-professionals into service for several weeks or months of targeted, high-dosage tutoring in high-need schools.
- Don't overcomplicate things for teachers.

"Keep it simple," Pondiscio concludes. "Keep it focused, intense, achievable, and time-limited. The most attention should be on those who have fallen the furthest behind."

"No, This Is Not the New Normal" by Robert Pondiscio in *The Education Gadfly*, April 14, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3cBSzsH>

Robert Slavin on an Ambitious Post-Pandemic Plan

In these back-to-back online articles, Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins University) says that our current situation calls for something akin to the Marshall Plan, which committed billions of U.S. dollars to rebuild Western Europe after World War II. That war was awful, says Slavin, but schools and universities remained open. The coronavirus pandemic is different, profoundly interrupting the education of students at every level. "This is a particular problem, of course, for disadvantaged students," says Slavin, "whose parents are more likely to get the virus, who are less likely to have technology at home, and who are more often already having difficulties in school."

Even for students who have robust Internet access, technology, and home support, "distance learning is not going to be enough," he says. "There will be happy exceptions, but there is a reason that homeschooling is rare." When schools reopen, there will be a massive challenge repairing the damage done and addressing a widening achievement gap. The work will be made more difficult because there's likely to be an economic recession in the fall, with many young people entering the labor market at the worst possible time.

Slavin has a plan to address both problems: "Schools should hire, train, and deploy large numbers of recent (and not so recent) college graduates as tutors, and in other essential roles in schools," he proposes. "Imagine that every school could receive up to five well-trained, well-supported teaching assistant tutors, with the number of tutors determined by each school's needs." These young men and women would focus on students who had fallen furthest behind, and could also work as health aides, helping students get eyeglasses and medications for asthma and other chronic illnesses that affect school success, as well as working with families on attendance, social-emotional development, and mental health.

Slavin cites research showing that one-on-one and small-group tutoring can have a powerful effect, up to 0.40 effect size (five months of schooling), provided tutors use proven methods, have expert professional development, and work with proven curriculum materials. He estimates the cost at \$600 per student – which compares favorably to the \$12,000 per capita cost of having students repeat the grade when schools reopen, something that's been proposed as a post-Covid-19 intervention.

"A Marshall Plan for the Post-Covid-19 Recovery," April 23, 2020, and "Marshall Plan II: Heal the Damage, but Build for the Future," April 30, 2020, by Robert Slavin on Slavin's website, <https://robertslavinsblog.wordpress.com/2020/04/>

Is This Looping's Moment?

In this article in *Education Drive*, Texas first-grade teacher Mark Rogers says that every year, the two months after spring break are precious – “an opportunity to crystallize an entire year’s worth of human connection, learning, and special classroom memories.” But not this year, with almost all students and teachers deprived of in-person connections. Rogers sees the transition from this year to 2020-21 as the perfect time for looping – teachers keeping their students for the next grade level. Here’s why he believes principals should support looping:

- Teachers bring into the next year all the human connections from this school year;
- With high-need students, teachers can carry forward the trust that was earned this year, again saving time and emotional energy;
- Teachers hit the ground running in the fall by saving the time normally spent learning names and family information and establishing classroom routines;
- Teachers know exactly what wasn’t covered in the previous year and will be able to more quickly fill in those gaps;
- Teachers are in a better position to decide what can be skipped as they merge the 2019-20 curriculum with 2020-21.

“This year, more than any other, our kids need continuity,” says Rogers, “our kids need their teachers to know them, and, as a result, our kids need their same teacher next year.”

“Why Students Need Looping Now More Than Ever” by Mark Rogers in *Education Drive*, April 17, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2RRR9Co>

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SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR ONLINE TEACHING

UbD Units on Covid-19 – Newsela has just published two Understanding by Design curriculum unit plans on the pandemic developed by Jay McTighe and colleagues. Available (with a free account) at: [Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic](#) and [Covid-19: Human Disease and Epidemics, A Study of Interacting Systems](#)

You can learn more about the units in this recorded webinar by Jay McTighe: <https://go.newsela.com/Jay-McTighe-ODC.html>

Jennifer Gonzalez Resources – This link provides access to an amazing array of materials and suggestions for online learning: <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/distance-learning/>:

- Start with your head and your heart
- Nuts and bolts of online learning: Connecting and communicating with students, keeping everything organized, lesson design, content delivery, and options for demonstrating learning

- General tips and advice for teachers
- Troubleshooting, including helping students who don't yet have Internet access

“Distance Learning: A Gently Curated Collection of Resources for Teachers” by Jennifer Gonzalez in *Cult of Pedagogy*, March 30, 2020

Surveys on distance learning and well-being – Panorama Education is making several surveys available free at <https://www.panoramaed.com/distance-learning-surveys>. Panorama is also offering a free principal's toolkit, with a variety of resources for leading while schools are closed <https://www.panoramaed.com/principal-toolkit-spring-2020>.

Khan Academy Breakthrough Junior Challenge – This competition, launched on April 1, deadline June 25, 2020, challenges young people 13-18 to explain a big idea in physics, life sciences, mathematics, or the science of the COVID-19 pandemic in a 3-minute video. Competition and \$\$\$ prize details are at <https://breakthroughjuniorchallenge.org>.

Updated Media Bias Chart – The Ad Fontes chart analyzes numerous media sources by reliability and political leaning: <https://www.adfontesmedia.com/?v=402f03a963ba>; more important now than ever for students.

A Virtual Kid Lit Party – With children's literature festivals and gatherings cancelled this spring and summer, several authors went to social media and very quickly put together the Everywhere Book Fest <https://everywherebookfest.com>, scheduled to open its virtual doors on May 1 and 2, 2020.

“Virtual Kid Lit Party” by K.Y. in *School Library Journal*, April 2020 (Vol. 66, #4, p. 19)

A Free Community-Needs Survey – Panorama Education is offering these survey questions on students' needs, as well as free tabulation of results: <https://www.panoramaed.com/community-needs-survey>

Tips (with Graphics) for Online Learning – Paviter Singh has curated 18 brief tips for working with students remotely, each accompanied by a graphic symbol: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rsm7bmqcaxxbtjt/ePedagogy%20Visuals.pdf?dl=0>

Five Suggestions for SEL in Distance Learning – Janice Toben of the Institute for Social and Emotional Learning shares tips for distance learning under these headings: Rituals, Energize, Appreciation, Lighten, and Mindful: <https://www.instituteforsel.net/posts/realms>

“A New REALM: IFSEL's Tips for Distance Learning” by Janice Toben, March 16, 2020

One State's Resources – The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has compiled extensive resources for teachers and parents: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/ed-resources.html>

Resources for Homebound Preschoolers – Victoria McDougald compiled this list of 32 activities for the youngest students: <https://bit.ly/2QFuMPY>

“Smiling Through: Thirty-Two Resources for Entertaining Energetic Preschoolers During Daycare and Preschool Closures” by Victoria McDougald in *Education Gadfly*, March 19, 2020

Advice from a New York City Charter School Leader – Robert Pondiscio interviews Success Academy founder and leader Eva Moskowitz on her schools’ policies during the crisis: <https://bit.ly/2vIujFr>

“Remote Learning Advice from Eva Moskowitz: ‘Keep It Simple’” by Robert Pondiscio in *Education Gadfly*, March 18, 2020

PreK-12 Learning Resources – PBS/WGBH in Massachusetts offers math, ELA, social studies, and science resources for grades PreK-12: <https://bit.ly/2UcooBf>

Learning-at-Home Activities – Scholastic offers these resources for PreK-12: <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>

Teaching with Zines – This website has numerous suggestions for getting students creating “zines” – short magazine articles published as booklets: <https://zinelibraries.info/running-a-zine-library/teaching-with-zines/>
Spotted in “Zines in the Classroom: Finding an Audience of One – or 100” by Trisha Collopy in *Council Chronicle*, March 2020 (Vol. 29, #3, pp. 26-29)

Phi Delta Kappan Survey, Resources – This link <https://bit.ly/3auw9J9> has the results of a PDK survey and other resources for the coronavirus crisis.

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VIDEOS, GRAPHICS, AND LESSONS

Two Student-Created Musical Performances – These online performances might put a smile on your face. The first is by students in EL Education schools:

- *Make the World Better* by EL Education students – <https://vimeo.com/413100268>
- *All Day Long (The Coronavirus Song)* by Chloe Langford – <https://youtu.be/SJM-u6IABGQ>

Video Showing How a Virus Can Spread in a Classroom – This video makes virus spread visible: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5-dI74zxPg&feature=youtu.be>

“How to See Germs Spread” by Mark Rober, March 18, 2020, spotted in *The Educator’s Notebook*, March 29, 2020

The Best Graphic on Virus Transmission – This *New York Times* graphic by Jonathan Corum <https://nyti.ms/33Epzgo> does an excellent job showing how one fewer human-to-human contact drastically reduces the exponential spread of the coronavirus.

“You Can Help Break the Chain of Transmission” by Siobhan Roberts in *The New York Times*, March 19, 2020

Animated Graphics on a Virus’s Exponential Spread – This *Washington Post* article by Harry Stevens <https://wapo.st/3dZbdfj> has several animated graphics that show how a virus spreads exponentially.

“Why Outbreaks Like Coronavirus Spread Exponentially, and How to ‘Flatten the Curve’” by Harry Stevens in *The Washington Post*, March 14, 2020

Free Daily Online Drawing/Cartooning Lessons – This *School Library Journal* article lets us know that author Jarrett (JJ) Krosoczka, creator of *Hey, Kiddo* and other popular titles, is doing a YouTube drawing/cartooning lesson every weekday at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time at <https://www.youtube.com/studiojjk>. All previous lessons are available here: <http://www.studiojjk.com/draweveryday.html>

“Authors and Illustrators Lend a Hand” by K.Y. in *School Library Journal*, April 2020 (Vol. 66, #4, p. 18)

YouTube Channels for the Secondary Level – Emma Finn compiled these high-quality video links for middle and high-school students: <https://bit.ly/3djZhVr>

“Great YouTube Channels for Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers for Learning from Home During COVID-19 Closures” by Emma Finn in *Education Gadfly*, March 19, 2020

Great Minds Videos – These “Knowledge on the Go” materials and daily videos cover math, ELA, and science topics for grades K-8, as well as some high-school topics: <https://gm.greatminds.org/en-us/knowledgeonthego>

Online News Created by Elementary Students – The Little News Ears website for students age 4 to 9 covers the news with a light touch: <https://littlenewsears.com>. The site, whose content is free during the Covid-19 pandemic, was created at Tessa International School. Dan Buck is the head of school.

Tips for Making a Screencast – In this *Cult of Pedagogy* feature, Jennifer Gonzalez interviews Kareem Farah on the art of making a classroom video. One key takeaway: teachers’ videos shouldn’t be longer than six minutes!

“Everything You Need to Know About Building a Great Screencast Video” by Kareem Farah in *Cult of Pedagogy*, April 26, 2020, <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/screencast-videos/>, interviewed by Jennifer Gonzalez

FREE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

An Online Book on the Pandemic – This book by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson, and Nia Roberts, illustrated by Axel Scheffler, explains the virus to children from preschool to grade six: https://nosycrow.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus_INSwith-cover.pdf.

Coronavirus: A Book for Children (Nosy Crow, 2020), spotted in *School Library Journal*, May 2020 (Vol. 66, #5, p. 12)

Free Audiobooks Online – This *School Library Journal* article notes several sources of material geared to the virus crisis, notably (you can find more in the full issue, next item): Audible's free site for families and children: <https://stories.audible.com/discovery>

"Going the Distance: Librarians, Covid-19, and the Online Learning Challenge" by *School Library Journal* Editors, illustration by James Yang, in *School Library Journal*, May 2020 (Vol. 66, #5, pp. 20-21)

School Library Journal Free Online – This highly informative magazine for school librarians and literacy mavens has just made its current content free: <https://msi.ipublishcentral.com/pdfreader/school-library-journal-may-2020>
Be sure to check out "Comic Relief: Free Resources on Covid-19 in Graphic Form" on pages 34-35, and "Great Books: Asian Pacific American Showcase" on pages 39-41.

Nancy Flanagan Knapp (University of Georgia/ Athens) suggests five areas in which teachers and school librarians can make effective use of technology, with free links in each:

- Making basic literacy skills practice effective and fun:
 - PBS Kids Reading Games: pbskids.org/games/reading
 - Education World, The Reading Machine: www.educationworld.com/a_tech/archives/readingmachine.shtml
 - Scholastic Student Activities website: teacher.scholastic.com/activities/clf/tguidesitemap.htm
 - The Learning Company games: classicreload.com
- Increasing the number and variety of texts available for readers at all levels:
 - The International Children's Digital Library: en.childrenslibrary.org
 - Unite for Literacy: uniteforliteracy.com
 - Storyjumper: www.storyjumper.com/book/search
 - Project Gutenberg: www.gutenberg.org
 - Gismo Freeware: www.techsupportalert.com/free-ebooks-audio-books-read-online-download.htm
 - Amazon and Barnes and Noble: search Free Kindle books at www.amazon.com or Free Ebooks

at www.barnesandnoble.com.

- Scaffolding texts for struggling readers and writers of all ages:
 - Tech for Teachers: Supporting Struggling Readers with Speech-to-Text: youtu.be/zBLXkAVyJWU
- Personalizing and differentiating instruction for diverse readers:
 - Newsela: current non-fiction articles at multiple Lexile levels: newsela.com
 - Simple English Wikipedia: simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
 - Storyline Online: read-aloud, mostly for younger children: www.storylineonline.net
 - Fact Monster: fun facts, trivia games, and homework help for elementary students: factmonster.com
 - Khan Academy: short online tutorials for all ages: khanacademy.org
- Bringing out the social in reading:
 - Goodreads for students 13 and up; librarians can create private groups with restricted membership: www.goodreads.com
 - Biblionasium, which allows users to share their reading preferences; for students age 6-13: www.biblionasium.com
 - Library Thing: lets students create a private but shareable personal bookshelf, for kids 13 and up: librarything.com
 - Poetry-Free-for-All: for poets of all ages: www.everypoet.org
 - Teen Ink: www.teenink.com
 - Book Crossing: a forum for sharing actual print books in a unique way: www.bookcrossing.com
 - Epals: A reputable global pen pal site that can encourage reading and writing: www.epals.com/#/connections

“Using Technology to Foster Real Reading in the School Library and Beyond” by Nancy Flanagan Knapp in *Knowledge Quest*, September/October 2019 (Vol. 48, #1, pp. 54-60); Knapp can be reached at nfknapp@uga.edu, summarized in Marshall Memo 802

Free webcomics – This *School Library Journal* feature by Mahnaz Dar provides links to 19 webcomics for middle-grade and young adult audiences: <https://bit.ly/3bKeOfR>

“19 Webcomics to Keep Kids and Teens Engaged” by Mahnaz Dar in *School Library Journal*, April 6, 2020

Permission from Publishers to Read Books Online – This link from *School Library Journal* <https://bit.ly/2JrvKLO> includes a constantly updated list of publishers who have granted special permission for teachers to read their books aloud online while schools are closed. The current list includes Abrams, Candlewick, Children’s Books, Chronicle Kids, Crabtree Publishing, Disney Publishing, HarperCollins, Holiday House, Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt, Lee

and Low, Lerner, Little Brown Young Readers, Peachtree, Penguin, Random House, Scholastic, and Simon & Schuster.

“Publishers Adapt Policies to Help Educators” in *School Library Journal*, March 18, 2020

- “10 Strategies for Leading Online When School Is Closed” by Reshan Richards and Stephen Valentine on Global Online Academy, March 4, 2020 - <https://bit.ly/3a7yuK1>
- “Five Tips for Designing Excellent Video Calls” by Emily Hamlin on Global Online Academy, March 13, 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2Wir8iz>
- “Coronavirus Has Led to a Rush of Online Teaching. Here’s Some Advice for Newly Remote Instructors” by Jeffrey Young on *EdSurge*, March 11, 2020 - <https://bit.ly/2WjrVQ8>
- “Best Practices: Online Pedagogy” from Harvard University, <https://teachremotely.harvard.edu/best-practices>
- Resources compiled by Jennifer Gonzalez - <https://bit.ly/3d3x8lh>

In addition, children’s books are available free at Bookshare: www.bookshare.org/cms/

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ONLINE TEACHING TECH RESOURCES AND TROUBLESHOOTING

UbD Units on Covid-19 – Newsela has just published two Understanding by Design curriculum unit plans on the pandemic developed by Jay McTighe and colleagues. Available (with a free account) at: [Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic](#) and [Covid-19: Human Disease and Epidemics, A Study of Interacting Systems](#)

You can learn more about the units in this recorded webinar by Jay McTighe: <https://go.newsela.com/Jay-McTighe-ODC.html>

Zoom Breakout Rooms – Here are instructions on how you can randomly assign a group of up to 150 students to breakout rooms of 3 (or more): <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Getting-Started-with-Breakout-Rooms>

Zoom Polling – Another powerful feature of Zoom is the ability to conduct a live poll of participants. Here are the instructions: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-Meetings>

Dealing with Zoom Problems – These articles in *The New York Times* and *Education Week* report on malicious harassment of Zoom meetings and classes in recent weeks. Some of the “zoombombing” interruptions are by organized groups using a variety of platforms (including Discord, an app popular in right-wing circles) to plan attacks, while others are by teenagers who say they are stressed out by the schoolwork their teachers are assigning (classroom management problems that have migrated to the online

world). Zoom, which had 76 million first-time installs in March, has scrambled to provide safeguards and advice to users and respond to concerns about data privacy.

Here are Massachusetts teacher Megan Mullaly's suggestions for K-12 educators. They've been widely shared on Twitter (spotted in the *Education Week* article linked below):

- Do not post your link publicly.
- Consider using a password for entry to your classes.
- Use the Waiting Room feature to screen new arrivals.
- If possible, have another teacher co-host to manage waiting room, comments, muting.
- Turn off Private Chat (this eliminates chats among students but leaves on group chats).
- Turn off Screen Sharing (it can be added back once norms are established).
- Turn on the "remove uninvited participant" and/or "put participant on hold."
- Lock your meeting once everyone is present.
- Explore other settings, including Chime Upon Entry, Muting All, Annotations, etc.
- Use Zoom for check-ins, games, and social interaction but not for direct teaching.
- Have some practice Zooms with friends and co-workers to check out the features.

"As Zoom's Use Soars, So Does Its Abuse by Harassers" by Taylor Lorenz and Davey Alba in *The New York Times*, April 4, 2020, <https://nyti.ms/2Xg6i3M> and "Zoom Use Skyrockets During Coronavirus Pandemic, Prompting Wave of Problems for Schools" by Mark Lieberman in *Education Week*, April 3, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3bWkqmQ>

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KIM MARSHALL'S TEACHING MATERIALS

(available free at the links below)

Guns, Germs, and Steel Summary: Written in consultation with author Jared Diamond, this 14-page summary (with maps and illustrations) of the Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the origins of worldwide wealth inequality is suitable for high-school students in world/global studies courses bit.ly/2IYJq0y

The Story of Life, from the Big Bang to You: Written for middle- and high-school students (with illustrations by Ingrid Johnson), this is a comprehensive history of the origins of the solar system, the Earth, and life on Earth (originally published by Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, the updated 2019 edition is open source) bit.ly/38ZI6ov

Reading Stories, Book 1: 92 high-interest stories with comprehension questions originally published by Educators Publishing Service, now open source marshallmemo.com/articles/Reading%201.pdf

Reading Stories, Book 2: 94 high-interest stories with comprehension questions, originally published by Educators Publishing Service, now open

source marshallmemo.com/articles/Reading%202.pdf

English: 36 Cumulative Units in Grammar, Writing Skills, and Word Analysis, Book A, originally published by Educators Publishing Service, now open source marshallmemo.com/articles/English%20Book%20A.pdf

English: 36 Cumulative Units in Grammar, Writing Skills, and Word Analysis, Book B, originally published by Educators Publishing Service, now open source marshallmemo.com/articles/English%20Book%20B.pdf

Math: 35 Cumulative Units in Concepts and Skills, Book A, originally published by Educators Publishing Service, now open source marshallmemo.com/articles/Math%20Book%20A.pdf

Math: 35 Cumulative Units in Concepts and Skills, Book B, originally published by Educators Publishing Service, now open source marshallmemo.com/articles/Math%20Book%20B.pdf

(Teacher guides to the English and Math workbooks are available at www.marshallmemo.com, click Kim Published Writing and scroll down to Curriculum Materials.)

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