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Tips and tools from your school library

LOW HANGING FRUIT

School Library Service During COVID?

By Jeannie Standal

Welcome to Bizzaro back-to-school! ICfL salutes you and admires the way teachers in all academic settings have jumped in with both feet to tackle this new reality. While setting up remote and physical classrooms, taking on the learning curve of online teaching, maintaining sanitation protocols, and developing systems to communicate with families this school year, library access for your students may have slipped your mind.

We know reading, even a little bit, over the summer combats summer learning loss. Many Idaho students, out of school since March, have been without access to reading materials since their school *and* public libraries have been closed at least part of that time. Consequently, this fall could see the most slippery summer slide ever, which makes access to books a crucial piece of students' and teachers' efforts to get back on track.

Here are a few facts from the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading :

- Basic readers are more than twice as likely as proficient readers to fail to graduate from high school;
- Below basic readers are almost six times as likely to not graduate.

And here are a few findings about vocabulary development:

- The landmark Hart and Risley Study found that kids from households with professional parents heard *30 million more words* before their 4th birthdays than kids from low-income homes.
- Children who listen to good picture books can increase their vocabulary by 4,000-12,000 words per year.
- Children's books contain 50% more rare words than prime-time TV.

If vocabulary development is a key to proficient reading and comprehension, and high-quality children's books have rich vocabulary (not to mention engaging content and beautiful illustrations), it is clear that students need access to those books from the school library. It's the vocabulary vault that can help close the 30 Million Word Gap and provide tools for basic and below-basic readers to become proficient.

In the name of safety and in the face of chaos, some administrators have decided against circulating any library books this fall. To avoid this, ask your school librarian about book quarantine procedures to sanitize books and keep students, families, teachers, and librarians safe. Consider ways to get library books to your class, even if learning remotely.

Everyone agrees that students must practice reading to become better readers. Like a piano player needs a piano and soccer player needs a ball, let's make sure students have the books they need to practice.

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



Care for Your Coronavirus Anxiety

This toolkit offers "resources for anxiety and your mental health in a global climate of uncertainty" and covers everything from isolation and financial fears to support for parents and dealing with xenophobia.

<https://www.virusanxiety.com/>

Tips for How to Stay Happy in Troubling Times

BBC Future's guide to feeling less overwhelmed by world events.

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200317-covid-19-how-to-stay-happy-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?ocid=ww.social.link.email>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



COVID-19 and library materials

[Read here](#) to learn about REALM (REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums) Project findings that the virus that causes COVID-19 is undetectable on five highly circulated library materials after three days. The materials tested include the covers of hardcover and softback books, plain paper pages inside a closed book, Mylar book cover jackets, and plastic DVD cases. As these items also tend to be in high rotation in K-12 classrooms, this is useful information!

DIGITAL TOOLS



Gale eBooks: Health and Wellness

The third volume in the Life and Career Skills series, this Gale eBook (available in the General Reference collection) offers a comprehensive overview of a variety of health topics, including mental health and managing stress. Find it, and other great Gale eBooks [here](#).



