

Distance Learning Diaries



Here is a week in my distance learning life:

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Future Ready Librarian

What did you do today?

The first thing we did today was set up a new space for our son, Hagan, to learn from home. Being in high school, our student is now continuing his learning online. We wanted him to have a space he could feel comfortable, organized and focused. I think this will help him with his learning over the next few weeks.



I kicked off my day with some of my 5th grade friends and joined their virtual meeting with their teacher, Mrs. Prouty, for a little [Virtual Pop-In Storytime](#). I read a book, *I Hate Picture Books*, and showed them some of my favorite picture books from when I was little. It was so fun seeing them. Throughout the day, I worked on our continuing learning websites and helped teachers and families with different things. I ended the workday with a practice for my two Follett webinars on Tuesday. I am excited for these and especially to have my friend and colleague, Tracy Ferguson, join me.



What new things did you try today?

Well, I got up really early today and read before my family woke up. I found that to be a relaxing way to start the day, and just think about things by myself for a bit.

What went well today?

Today was a great day! It was nice seeing Hagan get into his new schedule with classes and checking in with Brady, our senior at the University of Northern Iowa, who is also learning online.

I also had fun pushing out two weekly projects I have been working on: [The PebbleGo Weekly Adventures](#) with Capstone and [Week 2 of You've Been Book'd!](#) I will be creating and sharing these every week, so hope you follow along. These can be shared with families and teachers, too.

What didn't go well today?

The only thing that was tough today was not having enough time to get to everything. I hope to catch up on some projects tomorrow after the webinars.

What's on your mind for tomorrow?

The Follett webinars! Definitely the webinars. :)

My Wellness Tips

At the end of the day, I cooked dinner with my family and then went outside to play basketball and take a walk. As the weather gets warmer and everything greens up, take advantage of this and get outside several times each day to walk, play a game, ride bikes or find a good place to read a book and talk with your family.



What did you do today?

After making breakfast for my family, I kicked off the day in a Google Meet with my 4th grade friends and Mrs. Haverstick. I love how they all shared a rose and a thorn. It is important to keep checking in with our students and our own family in this way during this time.

In the afternoon, we had our Follett Double Feature Webinar, Librarians Can Support Teachers and Families During School Closures.

It was great seeing many join us to share our story and lots of ideas and resources that will be helpful to not just librarians, but everyone. You will find the two webinar recordings and all of the resources [here](#).

What new things did you try today?

Something new we talked about as a family today was mixing up where we worked throughout the house. This will help us feel not so isolated and bored. Hagan enjoyed connecting with his teachers and classmates at the kitchen table and I loved sitting outside to take a few calls and write for a bit.



What went well today?

The webinar was so much fun and couldn't have gone better. And the weather was beautiful! We even ate dinner outside.

What didn't go well today?

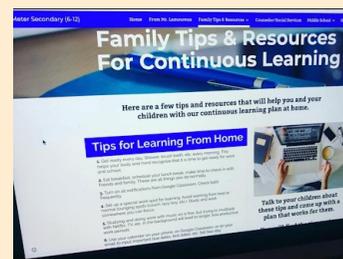
Again, time. I have heard a lot of people say how they feel like the days zip by too quickly to get everything done.

What's on your mind for tomorrow?

Tomorrow, I will be working on some new Collections by Destiny for our district's virtual library, and creating some tip sheets for remote learning for our families. I am looking forward to these projects.

My Wellness Tips

I have found it very comforting talking to my family every day. I call my parents and mother-in-law to check in. My sister, Heather, and I do Facetime. And like I said yesterday, I talk to our kids every day. There is such a feeling of helplessness through this time, so that is one way we can make sure everyone is OK and feeling good, too.



What did you do today?

Today was a day for catching up, which felt really nice. I also worked on a project for our websites with Tips From Learning From Home. I made them in a Google Doc to embed on our websites so families can print and hang them up at home.

What new things did you try today?

One new thing I tried today was to take a two-hour break in the middle of the day. I went outside in the beautiful weather and finished a book.

What went well today?

I love working with my administrators and teachers at Van Meter. We are very lucky to have an amazing staff and to work in such a special community. This is what makes what we are doing easier and things fall into place with the communication, collaboration and connections that are happening on a daily basis.

What didn't go well today?

Today was the first day I had trouble with my internet and connecting with classes virtually. I was sad to miss two of our kindergarten classes because of this, but will catch up with them next week for their weekly check-in together.

What's on your mind for tomorrow?

Actually, the thing that sticks out most is that the weather is going to turn chilly and windy, so I am bummed about that. And I also have a busy day connecting with five different classes for virtual pop-in storytimes and two author visits with our 5th grade book clubs.

My Wellness Tips

This week I haven't been watching as much TV during the day. In the beginning of all of this, I felt like we had the TV on all the time and that was stressful. It is much better catching up at the end of the day with a short time on TV or reading about things online.

What did you do today?

I woke up really early again and worked on a huge project with my Collections by Destiny. Not only can I organize all of our continuous learning resources on our virtual library site, I can also curate, organize and share them in Collections. And I love Collections because I can share them with others outside of our school community too. You will find how I use them and more than 25 new ones [here](#).

I also had five virtual connections with our students, which totally made my day!



What new things did you try today?

Two of these virtual connections were with my colleague and friend, Megan Algreen, and 5th grade book clubs. Last week, we met with the kids online and I shared some choices for new books to read together. They each picked one and I reached out to the authors to see if they would connect with us. It was really awesome having Nicole Valentine and Lynne Kelly join us. We do a lot of Skyping with authors, illustrators and others, so this is one thing we really miss about being at school together.

Our kids LOVE reading and really wanted us to just let them go, but we wanted them to read together like they usually do each week. To give them something else to connect to reading and others, I shared the [Newsela Reading Clubs](#), which helps students connect to their love of reading at home.



Newsela Reading Clubs

Help students continue to grow their love of reading at home. Newsela Reading Clubs let students read daily about a topic that interests and challenges them while their school may be closed.

What went well today?

After connecting with our book clubs, I spoke to more of my author, illustrator and publisher friends about setting up more virtual connections. Tomorrow, I am going to start scheduling some of them to join me in the Virtual Pop-In Storytimes. The kids will be so excited!



I would love to join a virtual meetings with your students for a little **Virtual Pop-In Storytime**.

If you add below when you meet with your class, I can create a schedule to share for the storytimes.

Thank you, friends

What didn't go well today?

Again, the weather: cold and windy. The sun helps so much. And I am feeling a little sad today thinking about Easter this weekend and not being with our family. We are planning a virtual Easter dinner and will think of ways to make that special, too.

What's on your mind for tomorrow?

My husband, Eric, and our son Hagan are off tomorrow for Good Friday, so I am going to try to get things wrapped up early so I can spend the weekend with them and put work aside for a bit.

I also have a few virtual pop-in storytimes and some collaboration meetings with teachers. I am so glad we are continuing to collaborate and feel like we need to do this more than ever now. This sure does help with that feeling of isolation too.

My Wellness Tips

I went to college to be an artist and art teacher. I have always loved painting and drawing, but it is hard to find the time to do this anymore. One of the goals I have for myself is to pick this hobby up again. I want to find something to bring me a little peace and to challenge me, too.

Looking back on your week, how will you plan your next week ahead?

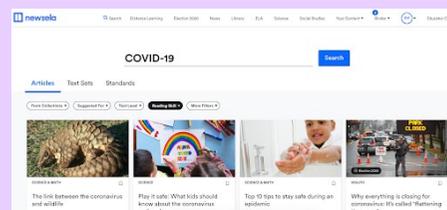
My family and I have already made our grocery list and scheduled our delivery so we are set for another week of being home together. We have some projects to do outside, such as working on our garden and yard, and I have a few projects planned for us inside too: a little painting and baking. Ohhhh and today, Hagan and I are playing lots of basketball and making playdough! I can't tell you the last time I did that with one of my kids.

Throughout this next week, I have set up a similar schedule to this past week. I will be collaborating and helping teachers. I will be connecting with students in virtual pop-in storytimes, book clubs and other co-teaching opportunities. And I'll be working on other district projects and needs.



What are you looking forward to?

A project I am excited to be helping with is one with our 9th grade team. The team is going to kick off a project in a few weeks and it will be to compare COVID-19 to the Spanish Flu. I have brought resources together in a Collection by Destiny for the students to use for their research and have included all of the articles from Newsela, too.



Thoughts to close out the week

You are all doing amazing work and you need to give yourself permission to take a break with your family or by yourself throughout the day. Pick up a hobby and something rewarding you can do together. We have started a garden inside and built three garden boxes outside. And start some new traditions! For example, I talk to my daughter in Denver every afternoon around the same time on Facetime. My husband, Eric, our son Hagan and I have movie nights where we have fun picking lots of new things to watch on Netflix and Disney+. It makes me happy knowing I have these moments to look forward to as we create new memories together. This is what I hope to always remember from this time.

I put together "You've Been Book'd" bags that rotate throughout the year with picture books. Now, because we can't be together, I've created the "You've Been Virtually Book'd" eBook program that you can read about [here](#). Our elementary teachers continue to share the [Newsela Daily Pear Decks](#) with students through Google Classroom, which they love. And Mr. Tibbetts, our elementary principal, gives his fun morning announcement on his Tidbits from Mr. Tibbetts Flipgrid.

