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## **Somerville Remote Tutoring Reflections**

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When the Somerville schools closed in early March, I had no idea we might tutor online. One of the tutors on our team told me he was attempting it, and I decided to see what might be possible. I had been working with two first graders, both in the same bilingual class at East Somerville Community School. I emailed their teachers, who put me in email contact with the parents of one child. I was very lucky that the child's parents are high-tech and resourceful, and they set up weekly Zoom meetings for us. They had installed the Epic ebook series and taught their daughter to share her screen.

We've been reading books together online most weeks since late April. It was really a thrill to be able to meet up with my student online, and Epic offers a wide range of books, many colorful, funny, and appealing. I think my student enjoys meeting, though there certainly are limitations to the online format--no chance to do writing, drawing, or other activities, no informal interactions in the class and school hallway. It can be hard for younger kids to focus on a screen for long, even with breaks for stretching and jumping jacks. And there are often distractions, like the cat wandering in. But it's fun to get to know my student in a different way, and it's really nice to have the continuity and connection of reading together.

My other student was harder to reach. Her parents are immigrants and speak limited English, and I imagine their lives are particularly stressful and complicated now. Her teacher gave me her mother's phone number, and I left a message but didn't hear back. I was glad to learn from the teacher that the student was making good progress in her online class, though.