



Brain Hive® eBooks On-Demand

Harker Lower School, San Jose, California
Grades K–5 • 810 Students

Supporting a Community of Readers with Brain Hive

School librarian Kathy Clark knows how fortunate she is to serve a community of readers. As the librarian for the PreK-5 lower school at The Harker School in San Jose, California, Clark reports that her students are high achievers, generally reading above their grade level. “We are very much advocates for enjoyment. Read what you want to read. Read because you like reading, not because you have to,” says Clark.

The Harker School is a private school with preschool through grade 12 classes on four different campuses. School families tend to be technology oriented—not surprising as many come from Silicon Valley. So using technology to keep students reading is an appreciated strategy.

However, one of Clark’s observations is that reading begins to drop off at 5th grade and into middle school. In part, her decision to add eBooks to the lower school’s library was to encourage kids to read in multiple formats. “I will try to connect whomever needs it to whatever service I need to get them reading. And for the most part, we’ve got voracious readers and we are just trying to keep that up into middle school.”

In thinking about her range of readers, Clark states, **“for those kids who want physical books, they can get a physical book. For those kids who are more interested in the technology end of it, they’re still reading.”**

Clark and her director, Sue Smith, selected Brain Hive® as the first eReading service for their lower school students. They chose Brain Hive because the service makes thousands of eBook titles instantly available without an upfront subscription fee. It is a pay-as-you-go model based on usage, which costs \$1 per eBook checkout. Designed specifically for school libraries, the eBooks can be read on any electronic device.

They began with a short trial of Brain Hive at the beginning of the 2013–14 school year, which quickly became a success. Brain Hive fully launched in November 2013. Then in December, Clark sent emails to teachers and parents, created website information, and promoted eBooks face to face with the students she saw each week in the library.

Building a Reading Culture

The implementation could not have been any easier, Clark reports. She notes that Brain Hive is intuitive and as soon as she had access, students were able to check out eBooks.

A successful reading program is not just about the books that are available. Success is also a function of the prevailing culture, and the culture at The Harker School is one that supports information literacy and reading. “Not only do we have kids who read, but they have adults in their lives—parents, grandparents, teachers—who all really want to keep them reading,” Clark reports. “We have kids who have been checking out books right and left and reading them. But what’s interesting is that our physical book usage is also up.”

“We do a lot with information literacy, helping our students to understand how to navigate around in this world they live in—find the information they need, find quality information and then use it appropriately,” Clark said. Currently, the Brain Hive K-5 elementary collection of more than 5,000 eBooks includes almost 3,000 nonfiction titles. New titles are added each month.

Although most students are accessing eBook titles for independent reading, classroom teachers also endorse Brain Hive. The books available through Brain Hive support Common Core State Standards, STEM initiatives, and state standards for English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The collection includes a variety of topics and themes such as people and places, holidays and festivals, animals, folk tales and myths, biographies, and science and nature. Teachers in the lower school appreciate the choice of titles that help support the curriculum.

Clark is beginning to see teacher-led reading activity that is part of assigned projects in the classroom, in addition to independent reading.

Clark is happy to dedicate part of her book budget to Brain Hive because she sees results. “This is what I do,” Clark says. “I connect children with books, and Brain Hive helps keep our students reading. And that’s the goal.”

About Brain Hive

Brain Hive® is an innovative online book club for K–12 schools, offering a simple, engaging, and affordable solution to support blended learning and independent reading. The only eBook solution that offers the option to buy or borrow, schools pay just \$1 per checkout from a \$350,000 online eBook collection or purchase multi-user editions. Schools easily manage content, spending and student access with user-friendly online tools. Bundled classroom paperbacks are also available to support blended learning programs through our Brain Hive Plus™ division.

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