ROUTLEDGE

REINVENTING the CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

LEARNING ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

NANCY SULLA

An **Eye On Education** Book

Reinventing the Classroom Experience

Learn how to design versatile learning environments in which instruction is as effective virtually as it is in person. Bestselling author and consultant Nancy Sulla shows how you can reinvent the classroom experience and provide high-quality instruction that works as well at home as it does in school. You will discover how to help students build strong work habits and empower them to take responsibility for their learning; five key types of instructional activities; the power of PBL to increase student engagement and motivation; and five types of synchronous engagement between teachers and students. You will also gain strategies for building social and emotional learning, positioning the teacher as the facilitator of learning and parents as partners, and keeping equity at the forefront. No matter what grade level you teach or whether you are teaching fully in school, remotely, or a combination of both, this essential book will help you understand the key structures and strategies that work so students are positioned to learn anywhere, anytime.

Nancy Sulla is an author, national speaker, and thought leader in transforming learning environments to build student engagement, empowerment, and efficacy. She is also the host of the internet TV show "Learning Unwrapped." As the creator of the *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom*™ and founder of IDE Corp. (Innovative Designs for Education) and EdQuiddity Inc, Dr. Sulla leads her educational consulting firms in the pursuit of equity-focused instructional design, positioning students to change the world. Learn more at nancysulla.com.

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Students Taking Charge in Grades K–5:
Inside the Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom

Students Taking Charge in Grades 6–12:
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With Tanya Bosco and Julie Marks

Building Executive Function:
The Missing Link to Student Achievement

It's Not What You Teach But How:
7 Insights to Making the CCSS Work for You

Reinventing the Classroom Experience

Learning Anywhere, Anytime

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To the educators, parents, and students of the 2020 pandemic, for charting an innovative course for the future of education in the face of great challenges. You rock!

To a loving and all-inclusive God who guides my steps daily and who is much greater than any one religion can comprehend.

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Last, but clearly not least, to those who stand up and take action to make all aware of the need for greater justice and inclusion in our society: Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+, women's rights. Never stop marching! As IDE's EVP and friend, Tanya Bosco, quoting Margaret Mead, often says: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Introduction

The power of school comes not from the content you teach, but from positioning students to learn.

It Takes a Disruptor

Throughout history, major events have disrupted the norm to produce innovation. Learning began through oral traditions, with the African philosopher Imhotep believed to be the first, dating back to 2600 B.C.; followed by the Indian philosophers Yajnavalkya and Shankaracharya; Chinese philosophers Confucius, Sun Tzu, and Lao Tzu; and Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. For thousands of years, the earliest teachers spread their knowledge and wisdom through the spoken word, sometimes written down by the students.

The Chinese invention of the printing press in the first century A.D. allowed the first mechanically produced text and began the transformation to learning through the written word. Eighteen centuries later, the Second Industrial Revolution brought the ability to mass-produce products and influenced schooling to become efficient through a systemized, larger-scale delivery of information to students. While the twentieth century brought great technological advances with computers and the internet, nothing seemed to have the power to release schools from the grasp of the factory model of efficiency of information delivery as being paramount to learning.

The year is 2020. The COVID-19 virus has shut down the factories of school. Learning continued for many through the power of technology, though some still had to rely on printed text, in the absence of devices and internet connectivity. The latter have driven stakeholders in some geographic areas to provide more global and universal access to technology. This disruptor can be known in history as either the cause of a brief departure from the factory model of education or the catalyst to reinvent the classroom experience: it's up to you.

#DoSomethingDifferent

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged students, teachers, and parents to identify new ways to provide "schooling" via remote connections. No one could

have imagined that schools would close for months, leaving students to learn at home based on remotely delivered lessons. Many viewed technology as the venue through which teachers would deliver instruction much like they did in school, but that didn't work out as well as some had hoped. It is impossible to simply recreate the experience in a brick-and-mortar classroom through technology. The pandemic was a wake-up call for schools: to be prepared to provide high-quality instructional experiences through structures and strategies that work as well at home as they do in school, such that students can learn anywhere, anytime. Schools can't afford to think that what happened in the spring of 2020 can't happen again.

As of 2020, schools were still fashioned to resemble a factory, with students moving from subject to subject, class to class, while teachers filled them with knowledge through lessons. Perhaps it's time, instead to think of schools more like restaurants: dine in or take out—same great food! The point is, we need to be prepared to be able to provide high-quality instruction whether students are in the physical school building or learning at home. It's time for a new normal for school.

Today's educators are part of a generation that has the opportunity to reinvent the classroom experience, taking advantage of what technology has to offer, educators' expertise, and the benefits of both the physical classroom experience and the home-based learning experience. The key is to begin by thinking about how students learn and then adopt structures and strategies that work as well at home as they do in school.

Students Taking Charge

I developed the *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom* framework in the 1980s, wrote the first *Students Taking Charge* book in 2011, and released the second editions (K–5, 6–8, and leadership) in 2018. The goal of the framework is to build student engagement, empowerment, and efficacy. Much of my consulting career has been dedicated to helping schools implement this framework.

When schools closed in March 2020, I heard from administrators and teachers that students and teachers in *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classrooms* shifted to remote teaching and learning with relative ease. Students were already used to taking responsibility for their own learning; they were used to creating a schedule for how they would use their time and then following it; they were used to being engaged and empowered. I was thrilled to hear that.

I realized, though, that the *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom* framework was designed for the physical classroom. So, I set out to rethink some of the structures and strategies to ensure that they would work as well at home as they do in school. I refer to this collection of structures and strategies as a **Hybrid Learning Environment**. That's not the same as a hybrid attendance model, with students attending the physical school building on alternate days. It's a learning environment that works regardless of where students are, allowing students to learn from home or in school: learning anywhere, anytime.

About the Book Cover

This book is about a revolution: a group of educators around the world who see this moment in time as an opportunity to depart from a former view of the teaching–learning relationship to forge a new path and reinvent the classroom experience. Graphic arts student India L. Adolfsson designed the cover to depict this process of moving from the tightly scheduled learning world of the physical classroom to learning anywhere, anytime.

In the lower left corner, you'll see the icons of physical classrooms over the years. Moving up and to the right, the student leaves the confines of a physical learning environment to enter the world of learning through computer technology, introduced into schools in the 1980s. The late 1990s ushered in the advent of wireless technology, allowing students to take those computing devices with them. Along with that came the ability to connect with others through social media. Ultimately, the World Wide Web has connected students to information and others around the world. While these technology capabilities have existed for years, perhaps now is the time students will be able to climb out of the physical classroom to venture into the world of learning anywhere, anytime.

How to Read This Book

This book offers you structures, strategies, examples, and insights for several topics critical to a learning environment, whether fully in school, fully at home, or a combination of both:

- Chapter 1: Do Something Different—a look at seven attributes of a reinvented classroom experience

- Chapter 2: Positioning Students for Success—structures for building strong work habits
- Chapter 3: Positioning Students for Independent Learning—structures for empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning, including five types of instructional activities
- Chapter 4: Fueling All Learning—the power of the five Ps of PBL (problem-based, project-based, place-based, profession-based, and pursuit-based learning) to increase student engagement and motivation
- Chapter 5: You're On—five types of synchronous engagement between teachers and students
- Chapter 6: School Starts With "S" for Social—structures and strategies for building social and emotional learning
- Chapter 7: Teacher as GPS—the important role of the teacher as facilitator of learning
- Chapter 8: In Pursuit of Equity—seven lenses of equity through which to view the learning environment
- Chapter 9: The Home Connection—eight elements of a home-based learning environment to position parents as partners

While the chapters reference one another, there is no specific, intended order. I recommend reading Chapter 1 and then letting your curiosity lead the way through the rest of the book in whatever order you prefer.

All the structures and strategies of a **Hybrid Learning Environment** are represented as capitalized and italicized words. They can become a checklist, of sorts, for your reinvented classroom experience. (For those of you familiar with the *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom*, you'll recognize most of the structures and strategies—and notice a few new ones.)

Confucius said, "By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third, by experience, which is bitterest." Sticking with the noblest route to wisdom, while you are reading, you will be asked to stop and reflect using an *Efficacy Notebook*. Please set that up in advance, guided by the next section.

The *Efficacy Notebook*

One of the structures we use to promote high levels of retained learning in the *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom* (LATIC) (Sulla, 2019a, 2019b) is the *Efficacy Notebook*. Unlike a typical notebook that is meant as a repository

for notes, the *Efficacy Notebook* is a powerful tool to solidify learning and the realization that we learn in order to accomplish much greater challenges. Essentially, when students complete a *Learning Activity* or assignment, they add it to their *Efficacy Notebook* (which can be paper or digital). They then stop before compliantly moving on to the next activity. They summarize what they learned and then answer questions, such as:

- How will this learning help you in solving the bigger problem-based task on which you are working?
- How does this learning relate to other concepts and skills you have learned?
- What else would you like to know about this topic?

For your journey through this book, please obtain either a paper notebook or journal or establish a digital document. Add your name and the name of this book. Start with your first entry by answering these questions:

1. Why did you choose to read this book?
2. What do you hope to learn from it?
3. What are some of your current successes in promoting student learning?
4. What are some of your current challenges in promoting student learning?

The power of school comes not from the content you teach but from positioning students to learn: anywhere, anytime. That's what this book is all about! On to Chapter 1. . . .

References

Sulla, N. (2019a). *Students taking charge in grades K–5: Inside the learner-active, technology-infused classroom*. New York: Routledge.

Sulla, N. (2019b). *Students taking charge in grades 6–12: Inside the learner-active, technology-infused classroom*. New York: Routledge.

1

Do Something Different

You have a unique opportunity to reinvent the teaching–learning relationship for students for the ages.

Imagine!

Imagine when people hear the word "school," they no longer have a mental image of a building teeming with students, teachers, and administrators. Rather, they see a learning environment characterized by teachers providing online and in-person support whether students are at home or in school; students' brains being challenged and maturing, no matter where they are learning; students building self-esteem and efficacy; teachers and parents working as partners in students' academic, social, physical, and emotional growth; students working on real-world problems of interest beyond the "school day."

This needs to be our new norm, the reality for "schooling" in the twenty-first century. It's time to reinvent the classroom experience to serve an ever-evolving society. Whether the result of a virus shutdown, reaching geographically distant students, allowing parents to travel with their children during the school year, addressing the needs of homebound students, or any other need, the move for schools to offer students the ability to learn from school or home is a powerful, much-needed shift in the field of education. Now, more than ever, school means that students are learning in varied environments: at home, in school, or a combination of both. Flexible learning environments allow students to engage in "learning anywhere, anytime." Welcome to the ***Hybrid Learning Environment*** *! That doesn't mean students have to be split between school and home in a hybrid attendance model. It means that the structures*

and strategies in your students' reinvented classroom experience work as well whether students are at home or at school, and students' transition from one venue to the other is seamless. It's about learning anywhere, anytime.

Creative Roots

Let me take you back in time. The year is 1666. A young man was a student at Trinity College in Cambridge, England. With the outbreak of the Great Plague of London (the last epidemic of the bubonic plague), Cambridge sent students home to socially distance. While home, this young man was outside by an apple tree, perhaps for some fresh air or shade while reading, when an apple fell from the tree. He mused over why it fell to the ground and not sideways or up. That moment set Isaac Newton to working on his theories of gravity. During his social distancing, he went on to develop theories of motion and optics and developed the foundations of calculus. Physics was born! A pandemic can be a disruptor from which creativity flourishes.

In times of stress and uncertainty, the mind becomes more creative, as it seeks to resolve all the unknowns. The pandemic of 2020 gave rise to new ideas for the teaching–learning relationship out of the necessity of social distancing. It's time for us to follow Sir Isaac Newton's lead, look around at the possibilities, and think outside the box. #DoSomethingDifferent.

I remember . . . at age 12 starting a neighborhood summer school three mornings a week. I had students ranging from a gifted 3-year-old to an 18-year-old with cerebral palsy who looked forward to the social interaction. For parents, I was providing babysitting services, but I was serious about schooling. I decided to engage my students in collaborative problem solving. They worked as one community of learners; I held them accountable to my high expectations; my end-of-summer graduation ceremony was filled with efficacious students and grateful parents. Apparently, #DoSomethingDifferent is in my blood. Thank you to all my "first" students. I'm happy to report that 3-year-old Bobby is now a judge in Norway; and I'm dedicated to changing the world through education.

Three Clear Goals for a New Generation

Every teacher should have three clear goals: academic learning, social and emotional learning (SEL), and efficacy—positioning students to tackle any

goal, challenge, or problem. How do you get there? Well, *that* is the subject of this book. Refrain from simply replicating what school used to look like, for example, simply live-streaming lessons you used to offer in the classroom. Instead, develop new structures and strategies to achieve these goals.

People born roughly between the years 2001 and 2018 are known as Generation Z; they follow the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (Millennials). They are the children of Generation X and Generation Y. In their book, *Generation Z Unfiltered* (2019), Tim Elmore and Andrew McPeak offer seven characteristics of this generation and implore us to partner with them to help them learn and mature in their early lives. They are:

- *More private*—Learning from the mistakes of the millennial generation, they use social media in ways that protect their content.
- *More anxious*—Life is easier and yet harder than prior generations; they "suffer from more mental health problems than any other generation of kids" (p. 28).
- *More restless*—Their self-images are often shaped through social media and are constantly shifting based on interests and situations.
- *More tech savvy*—They spend a significant amount of time online and multitask using multiple devices. As a result, they often prefer to learn alone, using technology.
- *More nurtured*—Given the level of information and access to knowledge available to them, their parents are even more focused on protecting them than previous generations. "Parents became helicopters as they raised the Millennial generation. They have become Snowplows now that they're raising Gen Z" (p. 29).
- *More entrepreneurial*—Having lived through two recessions since 2000, they are not inclined to focus on getting that good job as much as they are on starting their own business from home.
- *More redemptive*—They value inclusivity and acceptance of all people; equality and respect are very important to them. "They believe they can change the world because they've grown up in a world that is already changing" (p. 31).

Consider the convergence of the three goals of academics, SEL, and efficacy with Generation Z and the world of teaching through a post-pandemic. This is the time to design learning for a new generation in a new time in our society. #DoSomethingDifferent.

STOP! Turn to Your *Efficacy Notebook* (See the Introduction)

The book *Generation Z Unfiltered* (Elmore & McPeak, 2019) was published a year before the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Consider each of the previous characteristics, copy them into your *Efficacy Notebook*, and add your thoughts about how the pandemic, and teaching and learning through the pandemic, may be further shaping this generation of students.

Do Something Different

The future of education is not in the brick-and-mortar classroom, nor is it in remote, computer-aided instruction. The future of education is in designing learning environments that allow students to work at home or in school and, if they have access to both, move seamlessly between the two, having the same structures and strategies apply in both venues. The future of education is in learning anywhere, anytime.

Having students follow one set of procedures in the physical classroom and another at home is counterproductive to learning. The student then has to put brainpower into considering how to accomplish a task based on physicality. Consider something as simple as raising one's hand or walking over to the teacher to ask for help. That works in the physical classroom but not at home. In the *Learner-Active, Technology-Infused Classroom*, or LATIC (Sulla, 2011), the teacher establishes a *Help Board* where students, once having exhausted other resources for obtaining help—such as checking for tools or documents in the *Resource Area* and requesting assistance from *Peer Experts*—write their names on the *Help Board*. As the teacher moves from student to student, facilitating instruction, they glance at the *Help Board* to see if anyone needs immediate assistance. When school shifted to a remote environment in the spring of 2020, LATIC teachers created digital *Help Boards* to which students posted their names and help topic. What happens if students are sometimes in school and sometimes at home? If their brains have to keep shifting between "school means I write my name on the board" and "home means I write my name in the digital document," they will lose precious time that could be focused on learning. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, the teacher uses a digital *Help Board*, whether students are at home or in school. In school, the teacher might project the *Help Board* to make it easier to see, at any moment, who needs help; that digital *Help Board* would include names of both students who are physically in the classroom and those at

home. Hybridity is about striking a balance between best practices in a physical classroom and best practices in a remote classroom such that they work easily in both environments.

Positioning Yourself to Reinvent the Classroom

Educators put a lot of time and energy into the instructional side of school, with the major areas being:

- Whole-group and small-group "synchronous" instruction
- Student assignments and instructional activities
- Formative and summative assessment
- Collaboration and SEL
- Student responsibility and executive function
- Partnering with parents

You address these areas through lesson planning, classroom norms and structures, professional-development offerings, Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, and faculty meetings. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, you need to meld the best practices related to these topics used in the physical classroom and the best practices used in remote teaching and learning. Then, you need to consider what else you can do and what you can do differently. What could you do that you've never done before to promote academic learning, SEL, and efficacy for *all* your students? Let the disruptor pandemic cause your creativity to flourish as you think about doing something different.

As you tackle reinventing the classroom experience, you'll refer to seven attributes of a **Hybrid Learning Environment** that will ensure all students are engaged in academic, social, physical, and emotional growth through a powerful learning environment.

A Quick Look at the Hybrid Learning Environment Framework

The seven attributes of a **Hybrid Learning Environment** will position students to succeed in anywhere, anytime learning. Teachers are the main curators, students are co-creators, and parents play an important role in helping their children create a productive home-based learning environment. Read through the descriptions and consider the questions posed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Seven Attributes of a Hybrid Learning Environment

An atmosphere of continual motivation	An "atmosphere" is an overall feeling and/or effect of a place. How will you create an overall feeling of motivation in your physical and remote classroom?
A landscape of opportunities for academically rigorous learning	A "landscape" consists of the prevailing conditions in a particular place. How will you ensure that the prevailing conditions of your physical and remote classroom are always geared toward academically rigorous learning?
A climate of executive function	A "climate" represents any conditions that have a widespread effect on life, activity, etc. How will you create the conditions under which students will continuously build executive function in your physical and remote classroom?
A culture of social and emotional learning	A "culture" is evidenced by the ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc., of a people or group that are transferred, communicated, or passed along. How will you position the competencies of social and emotional learning (www.casel.org) to represent the way of life in your physical and remote classroom?
A foundation of student responsibility for learning	A "foundation" is the base upon which something rests. How will you fill your physical and remote classroom with the structures and strategies to create a clear background for students taking responsibility for their own learning?
A network of purposeful and productive facilitation of learning	A "network" can be defined as an extended group of people with similar interests or concerns who interact and remain in contact for mutual assistance or support. How will you develop interactions among people in your physical and remote classroom to facilitate learning?
A structure of meaningful, data-driven learning	A "structure" is the purposeful arrangement of all the parts of a whole. How will you purposefully arrange a collection of structures and strategies for both educators and students to use data to drive learning in both your physical and remote classroom?

Note: The above framework definitions referenced are from yourdictionary.com.

STOP! Turn to Your *Efficacy Notebook*

Put this table into your *Efficacy Notebook*. You may take a photo and insert it, type just the headings into a table, or use another way to capture it. Then, answer the following questions.

1. How do you currently accomplish each of these attributes?
2. What ideas come to mind for each while reading?
3. What related questions do you want answered in reading this book?
4. Why do you think any or each of these is important for Generation Z students?

Intentional Instructional Design

The fact is, as a teacher, you are a caretaker of children's minds. You are not merely an information disseminator; you work to determine the best approach to ensure that each and every student learns. That means you think about how you present information; assess student progress; address students' emotional, social, and physical well-being; and build executive function, which has an impact on student achievement (Sulla, 2018). Some structures and strategies are effective in a brick-and-mortar classroom; some are effective in a remote classroom. Rather than developing two different approaches to teaching and learning, develop one hybrid approach that will offer the best learning experience regardless of the venue. The attributes presented earlier will serve as your guide as you do. Each structure you create, action you take, and word you say should be intentionally selected to promote hybridity while advancing academic learning, SEL, and efficacy.

The Need for Clarity

You can provide high-quality learning activities in either venue; however, in a remote venue, it is important to offer very clear steps and directions since you are not readily available to clarify. With the youngest learners, you will need to rely on video recordings and connections for that. You will need to build in supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students, again through video recordings and connections. Still, that level of direction would benefit students in the physical classroom as well; so, design learning activities that will work in both venues. Your effort will reap benefits regardless of where students are learning.

The Pieces Are Still Here

You will still use many of the structures and strategies, perhaps modified, that you have used in the past, plus new ones. You will still provide instruction, but you will expand your view of what that looks like. You will still assess student progress and use data to inform your instructional decisions, but it will look slightly different to account for the location of the student and teacher at the time. You're not losing a past; you're gaining a future!

You will still connect with small groups of students who share a particular need to be offered direct instruction either through a *Small-Group Mini-Lesson* in a physical venue or the same through a videoconferencing platform in a remote venue. With only five students around a table, on camera, or as a combination of both, the chances are good that you will offer a meaningful lesson that produces learning in either venue. You will still assign purposeful homework in both venues, keeping in mind that it is important to offer students time between learning during the school day and practicing in the evening: a key purpose of homework.

I hope you see that with some modifications to both the brick-and-mortar approach to teaching and remote teaching, you actually have the opportunity to develop one awesome **Hybrid Learning Model**!

A Closer Look at the Seven Attributes

Motivation

At the root of all learning is motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation that is derived from interests, for example, is preferred over extrinsic motivation that is derived from peer pressure, external rewards, and fear. That's because intrinsic motivation will keep fueling the learner and position them well for life, whereas extrinsic motivation relies on others to maintain that motivation. In schools, it's easy to take for granted that students should just be motivated "because." But that's not true of anyone's motivation, whether a student sitting in a classroom, an adult in a staff development day session, or you reading this book! Hey, are you still here???;)

In a brick-and-mortar classroom, you can nudge some students by praising the work they are doing in the moment. Their motivation will either be intrinsically bound to how good it feels to achieve or extrinsically bound to pleasing you as the teacher. That latter strategy, however, is more difficult in a remote venue in which you are not always watching them work.

Teachers can't make students learn. Human beings consciously *choose* to learn, and usually because they have a "felt need" (Sulla, 2019a, 2019b) for the

information. Thus, motivation is key to learning. Teachers tap into intrinsic motivation when they allow students to identify real-world problems they want to solve, pursue learning around an interest of theirs, self-assess and set goals, and teach and help others. Teachers also tap into intrinsic motivation when they pose questions that intrigue students and leave them wanting more. Through both the ways in which teachers frame the learning (e.g., through problems and challenges) and the ways in which they facilitate student learning, students can experience an overall feeling of continuous motivation, whether in a physical or remote classroom.

Think of the strategies you currently employ to build student motivation. For your **Hybrid Learning Environment**, think about how you can foster an **atmosphere of continual motivation**, whether in physical or remote venues. You'll dive into this more throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 7.

Opportunities for Academically Rigorous Learning

Academic rigor speaks to a high level of intellectual and academic challenge; it is what makes content meaningful beyond school and valuable in life. The structures of schooling in the past have relied on compliance: students simply doing what they are told. Teaching through compliance works better in the physical classroom than at home, where students are out of the teacher's easy view. Still, teaching through compliance may produce completed assignments but does not necessarily produce long-term learning. Student engagement is the first step to producing long-term learning, whether in a physical classroom or through a remote environment: not "hands-on" entertainment, but brain-challenging, "minds-on" activities that students *want* to tackle.

Different students need different activities as they engage in purposeful learning. Students most likely are at different cognitive levels of readiness; have different cultural backgrounds; may have language barriers; may have learning disabilities that require specialized activities; and definitely have preferred learning styles (i.e., auditory, kinesthetic, and visual, at the simplest level). While it can be hard to provide a variety of different learning activities when attempting to teach an entire class of students, when you shift your thinking to "learning anywhere, anytime," you create that collection of opportunities for students to learn. Students can access more choices that best suit their needs, whether they are in school or at home. With technology available, students can access myriad instructional resources. Learning is most purposeful when the teacher uses all that is available to *curate* a set of *Learning Activities* and helps students select the right activities for their personalized goals.

The key is to ensure students are not frustrated. This requires providing students with differentiated learning activities that allow them to level up

(Prensky, 2006) a step at a time to achieve increasingly higher levels of rigor. That **landscape of opportunities for academically rigorous learning** adds to the **atmosphere of continual motivation** because students are empowered to access various *Learning Activities* that suit their needs. You'll explore these ideas more in Chapters 3 and 7.

Executive Function

What does it take for students to succeed in learning in a physical classroom? How about focusing, shifting attention from one activity to another, working toward a goal, persisting in a task, catching and correcting errors, managing time? These are important skills for being able to work in a physical classroom and are even more important when working from home, where the teacher is not always watching and prompting students to stay on task and make good decisions. These are just a sampling of the skills of executive function, which has a widespread effect on academic achievement, as well as on social and emotional learning. If climate describes the conditions that have a widespread effect on life, activity, etc., then executive function *is* the climate of a learning environment! If you prioritize executive function early in the school year and throughout, you will provide students with a better chance of succeeding in school and life.

Creating a **climate of executive function** helps develop the brain and contributes to stronger academic achievement, which is critical if students are to be self-directed, productive, resourceful, and resilient at home as well as in the physical classroom. Executive function will help students take advantage of a **landscape of opportunities for academically rigorous learning** and feel successful, which will contribute to an **atmosphere of continual motivation**. You'll explore more about executive function in Chapter 6.

Social and Emotional Learning

The five competencies of SEL, as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (www.casel.org), are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. All of these depend upon executive function being applied to intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. Whether students are working independently or collaboratively, engaging in reflection or communication, faced with expectations or challenges, and working from home or school, they need to be guided by a "culture" of norms, structures, and protocols that support social and emotional learning.

In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, students will be connecting with others both in person and via technology. They will, at times, be following a teacher's direct instruction, and at other times, left to navigate learning on

their own. The stronger a student's social and emotional learning, the greater their resiliency and resourcefulness, important qualities for learning at home as well as in school. A variety of structures and strategies for self-assessment, group discussions, collaborative work, resilience, and resourcefulness will draw on the **climate of executive function** and contribute to creating that **culture of social and emotional learning**. There's more to come in Chapter 6!

Student Responsibility for Learning

While it can seem easier to simply direct students—when to sit, when to move, when to talk, and so on—a crucial part of a student's path to lifelong efficacy is taking responsibility for their own learning. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, where, at times, students are working at home under their own direction, student responsibility becomes the foundation for success. While in the physical classroom, students may benefit from the immediate accessibility of the teacher to clarify and redirect, they need to build the life skill of taking responsibility, whether the teacher is immediately accessible or not. Consider anything you find yourself overtly directing and create a structure to allow students to accomplish it on their own. That includes more clear, printed directions or a *Directions Video*, a *How-To Sheet* or *Instructional Video*, an *Insights Video*, a checklist, etc.

Consider for a moment a teacher in a physical classroom calling out names for students to come to an area of the room to receive instruction. Students learn to simply wait to be told where to go and what to do. Alternatively, if the teacher sets guidelines for students to know when to come to that area of the room, perhaps based on need or student choice, and then students have the responsibility of showing up at the appointed time, students will build much greater responsibility for their own learning and strengthen their executive function.

When students take greater responsibility for their own learning, teachers are freed up to focus on instruction and student learning over classroom management. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, where some students may be physically in the classroom while others are at home, empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning becomes even more important. With a strong **foundation of student responsibility for learning**, teachers can engage more in fostering a **landscape of opportunities for academically rigorous learning** through instruction, facilitation, and data collection. You'll explore this attribute in more depth in Chapter 2.

Purposeful and Productive Facilitation of Learning

Teaching is not learning; teaching is an avenue through which one expects that students will learn. While direct instruction from a teacher, in person or

through video, is a part of that process, and independent instructional activities and assignments are a part of that process, the part that has the biggest impact is the purposeful and productive facilitation of learning by a masterful teacher. That's where there can be an assurance that students are engaged in the best instructional activities and assignments to meet their needs.

As students engage in various instructional activities, the teacher's focus turns to the work being produced and the learner in the midst of the process. "Purposeful" means that teachers' focus, questions, and comments fit into a bigger picture. That might be related to content itself: has the student mastered the prerequisite skills to tackle this skill or concept? It might be related to the learning process: has the student selected the best learning activities, place in which to work, and/or peers with whom to work? "Productive" means that the teacher's facilitation has a positive effect on the student's progress.

In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, teachers create a **network of purposeful and productive facilitation of learning** that includes teachers, co-teachers, teaching assistants, students themselves, administrators, peers, and parents/caregivers. Everyone can and should play a role in facilitating rigorous learning. Develop strategies and structures to advance student learning through two key questions: is the student succeeding with the current instructional activities and assignments? Is the student making the best choices as to how, when, where, and with whom to learn? Your answers will allow you to intervene and guide students in both content and process so they can take appropriate advantage of the **landscape of opportunities for academically rigorous learning** and build a stronger **climate of executive function** and **foundation of student responsibility for learning**. You'll delve more deeply into creating a **network of purposeful and productive facilitation of learning** in Chapter 7.

Meaningful, Data-Driven Learning

Teachers use data to make decisions about instructional lessons and activities. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, where students may be in school or at home, data become even more important to maintain an **atmosphere of continual motivation**.

Data can be gathered in a variety of ways, from one-on-one interactions with a student, observation, student work, quizzes, student self-reporting, parent/caregiver input, and more. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, data are even more important, as the teacher is sometimes guiding a student who is not physically nearby to observe. Deliberate and purposeful data collection and use contributes to a **structure of meaningful, data-driven learning**.

Teachers use data to inform instruction: modifying plans for individual students; recording additional lessons; designing additional instructional

activities; planning for *Small-Group Mini-Lessons*; and more. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, data collection and use contribute to a stronger **network of purposeful and productive facilitation of learning**. Positioning students to collect data and reflect contributes to the **culture of social and emotional learning**. You'll explore more on the power of data in Chapters 3 and 7.

Embedded Topics

Many important topics in curriculum and instruction will cross all seven attributes of a **Hybrid Learning Environment**. Following are just a few.

A Time to Effectively Address Equity

Treating all students equally means providing them with the same opportunities, lessons, assessments, and so forth. There is some sense of "fairness" in that. However, equality will not ensure that all students will learn at high levels. Students have different needs beyond the typical differentiation goals of cognitive leveling and learning styles. What matters is equity—providing students with what *they* each need to excel—and, more importantly, justice—revamping the systems that perpetuate issues of inequity.

It is well known that the current model of education, with the teacher center stage, students compartmentalized into age-based groups learning one subject after another in succession across a day, and an emphasis on equal access to education, is based on a factory model of efficiency of years passed. In a factory, sameness is valued; quality control focuses on that sameness. Our current educational model based on factory efficiency has been, for decades, perhaps centuries, an immovable object. While slight changes and adjustments are made, the overall *thinking* behind this efficiency-and-sameness model has not.

The racial and cultural makeup of the world, however, is changing. Modern technology and transportation have allowed people to travel the world and relocate to any land, allowing for a global migration. The "sameness" that once characterized geographic areas has given way to tremendous diversity. And that diversity is pushing at the "sameness" approach to schooling. Some cultures are more individualistic; some are more collaborative; some are more text-dependent; some are more steeped in oral traditions; all have unique attributes that shape people's worldview. It is time for schools not just to "embrace" diversity, as diversity is not an object or ideal. It is time for schools to "reflect" the diversity of their student population in all aspects of school structures, strategies, resources, and policies.

The disruptive nature of the 2020 pandemic provided schools with a compelling reason to change. And one of those changes needed to be the reflection of global diversity in our learning environments. Equity will be addressed in every chapter, with a particular emphasis in Chapter 8.

Co-Teaching

When co-teachers share responsibility for designing and implementing the learning environment, students benefit from the added expertise and attention. In a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, teachers can more easily address the needs of students, whether they are at home or at school. One teacher can be providing small-group instruction while the other connects with students individually, whether at home or at school. One teacher can be videoconferencing with students while the other is reviewing students' online work and offering comments in the midst of students completing assignments. Co-teachers can share responsibility for designing and recording content lessons. Co-teachers do need to share plans and data regularly to ensure that they deliver instruction and facilitate learning in ways that demonstrate seamless collaboration; technology provides myriad opportunities for that.

Collegiality

Teachers usually work together in PLCs or grade/subject-specific teams. This needs to continue with **Hybridity**, considering ways in which teams work that will allow teachers to move seamlessly between school and home. That means most of the materials, agendas, notes, and the like should be stored online, easily accessible wherever the teachers are. It also means the groups should set norms for participation and engagement that can be implemented as easily at home or at school.

Additionally, discussions among colleagues should include the successes and challenges of designing **Hybrid Learning Environments**. Now, more than ever, teachers need to share their ideas, materials, and experiences with their colleagues. Reinventing the classroom will not happen overnight; yet it needs to happen quickly for the good of the students. Develop ways to leverage collegiality for enhanced learning. Teachers can take responsibility for recording lessons that can be used across the grade level or department; they can share graphic organizers and other structures that they find to be successful.

An added attraction of a **Hybrid Learning Environment** is that it is easy to work across "classrooms," with teachers and students using video connections to work together. Students are typically motivated to work with students in other grade levels or schools. The use of technology makes that much

easier to accomplish. Teachers and students can benefit from the expanded access to others around the world.

Grading

Grading needs to be redefined in a **Hybrid Learning Environment**. The idea that a grade is what a student *earns* and not what a teacher *gives* becomes more important in a **Hybrid Learning Environment**. Yet, still, the student is only able to earn that grade because a teacher is curating the most effective learning environment for each student. The paradox is that students' grades really reflect the teacher's ability to teach! That may sound harsh, but you'll read in Chapter 6 that the part of the brain that handles higher-level reasoning, responsibility, and accountability does not fully mature until approximately age 25. So, while students certainly need to be held accountable for their actions, schools cannot assume that it is enough to provide students with opportunity and access, and if they fail, it's on them. For grades to be meaningful, schools need to take into account that they represent the level of success of two people in the equation: the student and the teacher.

Grading should begin with clear expectations that are shared with the student. In the early stages of learning new content, students should be involved in self-assessment and goal-setting. The focus should be on students demonstrating that they have achieved content mastery. This may include performance-based assessments where students must apply learning to a new situation.

Grades cannot afford to be modified based on students' home situations; teachers need to provide a learning environment that works in any situation. The goal is to ensure that students learn. When that goal is achieved, grades are high, and deservedly so. If a teacher is successful in designing an effective **Hybrid Learning Environment**, students should all be achieving at a high level.

Parent/Caregiver Communication

Parents and caregivers become partners in a **Hybrid Learning Environment**; after all, they establish the home-based learning environment that plays a role in students' learning. Communication should be ongoing, two-way, and enhanced by technology.

The more parents and caregivers know about the learning activities, assignments, and upcoming deadlines, the better. The more teachers communicate with parents about their role (i.e., they are not the teacher, they are the manager of the home-based learning environment), the easier it will be for parents and caregivers to participate in meaningful ways in their children's learning paths. The more teachers know about parents' and caregivers'

situations (e.g., working at home or away from home, number of children in the house, number of computing devices available) the better able they will be to meet the needs of their students.

Hybridity in Action

Armed with the seven attributes of a **Hybrid Learning Environment**, you can now reflect on your current "classroom" and, through reading this book, apply the structures and strategies that you feel will enhance it. A great start is to visualize: close your eyes, and walk yourself mentally through your day. What happens first? Then what? What actions do you take? What words do you speak? What do your students do? As you think through each moment, ask yourself if you have all the structures and strategies set to work as well at home as they do in school. To what extent does your "classroom" address the seven attributes of a **Hybrid Learning Environment**? It may take many iterations to get your "classroom" to where you want it to be, but remember, you are reinventing "school" for today and the future. You have a unique opportunity to reinvent the teaching–learning relationship for students for the ages. Your **Hybrid Learning Environment** will pave the way for generations of teachers who follow you.

STOP! Turn to Your *Efficacy Notebook*

Think of a typical day of school (not the first day, though you can use that for a second round of this activity). Write about what happens directly before the start of the day or class period, during that time, and after that time. Describe in as much detail as possible what a half-hour or hour is like. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What are some examples of structures and strategies you use that work in a **Hybrid Learning Environment** as well at home as they do in school?
2. Which of the seven attributes of a **Hybrid Learning Environment** resonate most with you? Which will be most challenging?
3. What are some ideas you have for structures and strategies that you want to include in your **Hybrid Learning Environment**?
4. What questions do you have that you hope are answered in the rest of the book?

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