

THE HYBRID TEACHER



**Using Technology to Teach
In Person and Online**

EMMA PASS

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TEACHER

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to Teach In Person
and Online*

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A Wiley Imprint
111 River St, Hoboken, NJ 07030
www.josseybass.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available:

ISBN 9781119789857 (paperback)
9781119789864 (ePDF)
9781119789871 (ePub)

COVER DESIGN: PAUL MCCARTHY
COVER ART: © JACEK KITA | GETTY IMAGES

FIRST EDITION

Contents

| | | | |
|--|------|---|-----|
| About the Author | vii | Chapter 11: Little Learners | 179 |
| Acknowledgments | ix | Chapter 12: Subject-Specific Strategies | 187 |
| Before We Begin | xi | Chapter 13: Nonteaching Staff | 205 |
| Introduction | xiii | Chapter 14: Adapting | 209 |
| Chapter 1: Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning | 1 | Chapter 15: Parent/Guardian Communication | 223 |
| Chapter 2: Synchronous Learning | 5 | Chapter 16: Technology Bootcamp | 229 |
| Chapter 3: Asynchronous Learning | 47 | Chapter 17: Teacher Time Savers | 237 |
| Chapter 4: Apply, Create, Explore | 79 | Chapter 18: Going Further... | 245 |
| Chapter 5: Keep Design in Mind | 93 | Chapter 19: The Future of Education Is Hybrid | 257 |
| Chapter 6: Project-Based Learning | 107 | Chapter 20: The Administrators' Appendix | 261 |
| Chapter 7: Executive Functioning Skills | 113 | Appendix: Additional References | 279 |
| Chapter 8: Social and Emotional Learning | 121 | Index | 281 |
| Chapter 9: Building Culture and Community | 125 | | |
| Chapter 10: Attendance and Assessment | 157 | | |

About the Author



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Acknowledgments

A huge thank you to all of my colleagues and friends who I interviewed for this book: Kate Stevens, Tory Wilson, Stacy Denham, Lindsey Mater, Hannah McGrath, Amie Sharp, Aubrey Yeh, Cole Zawaski, Theresa Hoover, and Emma Chitters.

Sam Nagel, who kept Empowered Edu afloat when we were drowning in work.

Cleo Masia, Meraki Designs, for helping to make my work look nice

Betsey Martens, Iris Writing, for quick, clean, and kind copyediting, plus never ending support.

Izzy Martens, marketing advice and general support.

Will Pass for endless edits and enthusiasm.



Before We Begin

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK (PRINT)

I am an English teacher and therefore love physical, paper books. I love to hold them, smell them, gaze upon them as they sit peacefully upon my bookshelf. However, this is a book about technology, and technology is fast paced, flexible, and alive.

Nearly every page of this book has a live link for you to explore, which is very hard to do on paper, which is why I've created an interactive webpage to accompany this book that you can access at hybridteacherresource.com. The links are also available on this book's page on www.wiley.com.

I recommend you highlight, underline, and annotate galore in the print version, and when you get to a link you want to explore, visit the webpage on your computer to find and follow the link. They should be easy to find as they are organized in the same chapter and subsection headings.

Then, be sure to bookmark your favorite tools to use later!

“FREEMIUM”

As I mentioned, this book is chock full of links to educational technology (EdTech) resources. Often I see myself as less of a writer and more of a librarian or curator of EdTech tools, and this book is a collection of my current favorites.

Because the people who make these tools often do it as a means of employment, most tools have some premium version that you can buy to unlock additional features or products.

However, because I am myself a teacher and know all too well the reality of teaching without a classroom budget and spending out of pocket, EVERY tool I mention in this book has a FREE version. In fact, almost every tool I use in my own classroom is the free version.

If you have a sizable classroom budget, why not upgrade and support the education technology industry? If you have a sizable heart and pockets,

consider donating to Donors Choose (www.donorschoose.org) to help other teachers upgrade as well.

Disclaimer: I am not sponsored or paid by any of these companies to promote their products.

GLOSSARY

These terms will help provide a foundational understanding for the content that follows.

| | |
|---|--|
| Hybrid Learning | Refers to the place learning happens; in person and online. |
| Blended Learning | Refers to the tools used to conduct learning; a combination of traditional tools (i.e. books) and online tools (i.e. laptops, videos, EdTech). |
| Online Learning | Education that takes place entirely online. |
| Learning Management System (LMS) | An online platform for the facilitation of learning. Most notably the distribution and collection of student work. |
| Video Conferencing | An online platform where multiple people can join a call via video voice, video, or both. |
| Synchronous Learning | Teaching and learning occurs together, simultaneously. |
| Asynchronous Learning | Students access learning at different times and work through it at their own pace. |
| Browser | An application that allows you to access the internet. Chrome, Firefox, and Safari are examples. |
| Chrome Extension | Small software programs that give you additional features on any given website within your Chrome web browser. |
| Add-On | The “add-ons” I refer to in this book are specific to Google files such as docs, slides, and sheets. Add-ons are downloaded to your Doc, Slide, or Sheet and provide advanced functionalities. |
| App | A computer program that needs to be downloaded to your device (most often a phone or tablet). |
| Hyperlink | Similar to an address, a hyperlink directs you to a website or web-based document. |

Introduction

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

—Theodore Roosevelt

THE WHY

Before I start teaching a new unit, I always try to address the “Why?” with my students. Why are we learning about this? Why will it be meaningful to you? Why will it be beneficial to your life?

For this book, I’ve not only asked myself the “why?” but a few more Ws too. Here is what I’ve come up with:

- *What:* This is a book about using technology and online pedagogy to enhance teaching and learning as a whole.
- *Who is it for:* K-12 teachers of all content areas, in brick-and-mortar, remote, and hybrid schools.
- *How might it be used:*

1. Emergency Preparedness

I was approached to write this book in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when millions of schools globally shut their doors in order to reduce the transmission of disease and save lives.

When it comes to safety, schools regularly prepare and practice for emergency scenarios. I imagine schools will now begin to adopt and regularly practice “emergency remote learning” to be prepared for future disease outbreaks, natural disasters, or any other number of unforeseen circumstances.

This is a guide for them.

2. Emerging Hybrid School Models

Although many teachers, students, parents, and administrators (rightfully) struggled with adapting to emergency remote or hybrid learning

during the COVID-19 pandemic, I hope some innovative educators were able to see beyond the struggle to the benefits of hybrid learning for certain student populations, and new hybrid schools models will begin emerging in districts across the country.

This is a guide for them.

3. Educational Technology Benefits Everyone

In a 2016 Arizona State University study on educational technology (EdTech), researchers found that the use of EdTech in teaching and learning “can have considerable positive impacts on student performance, and efforts to adopt new educational technologies in the classroom will be rewarded.”

Although this book is focused on teaching in a hybrid model, the tools and techniques can be applied to most learning environments.

The study also found that the biggest barrier to success in the implementation of EdTech is providing teachers with the necessary professional development.

This is a guide for you.



Bring it back to the building

If you teach full time in a “brick-and-mortar” classroom, look for these sections, where I explain how an online tool, resource, or strategy could be used in a traditional classroom model.

MY WHY

My first teaching job was as a 6th-grade English teacher in Las Vegas, Nevada.

My years there were easily the most challenging and rewarding of my life.

My love for those first students of mine resonates throughout my entire body.

My students came from the most diverse (in the true sense of the word) backgrounds imaginable. They were Black, White, Latinx, European, African, and Asian.

They were the children of wealthy surgeons as well as single parents who worked the night shift at Burger King. Some of my students had boats that they would take out on Lake Mead, while others were homeless. Our school was a magnet school for the deaf and hard of hearing, and we had a number of students who were Syrian refugees.

Meeting the needs of such a diverse and large group (I taught nearly 200 students per year) was an impossible task. However, I thank my lucky stars every day that our school was awarded a grant in my first year of teaching to receive 1-1 Chromebook devices. (Meaning each student had access to their own device that they were able to use in school and take home.)

Because I had little other experience teaching, I threw myself entirely into learning how to use educational technology to engage my students and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of as many learners as possible. I was also incredibly lucky to have a teacher-mentor, Larenda Norman, who supported me and encouraged me to continue learning.

A few years later when my husband had the opportunity to cover a European news circuit, we jumped at the opportunity to live in London. There, I had another lucky break in meeting my next mentor, Andy Caffrey, with whom I traveled the country and continent working as an educational technology consultant, teaching and training other teachers to use technology in their classrooms.

I currently live in my home state of Colorado, where I still work part time as an EdTech consultant through my consulting company, Empowered Edu. I also teach 7th- and 8th-grade language arts at PSD Global Academy (PGA), a public hybrid school in which students spend half of their time learning in person and half of their time learning from home.



I wanted to start with my story because the perspective of this book comes entirely from these experiences. A lot of what I write about comes not from research or interviews but the time I've spent with students.

Everything I do in education is for them.

A NOTE ON ACCESS AND EQUITY

I want to address the privilege assumed in this book.

My experiences in hybrid teaching are based largely on my current position as a teacher at PGA. We live in a well-funded, predominantly White city where we are able to provide laptop devices, 1-1, to all of the students in our school and district.

Further, many of the students who come to our hybrid school have a stay-at-home or work-from-home parent to support and encourage their learning during online/remote days. There are exceptions, but we are ultimately teaching in a position of great privilege.

This type of digital access and support is not a reality for many schools and districts that are disproportionately made up of low-income, rural, Black, Latinx, and/or Native American populations.



I say this to emphasize the existence of a “digital divide” in our country, which needs to be bridged so that we provide access to technology, Wi-Fi, professional development, and after-school/at-home support to every student, school, and district nationwide.

Shining a light on the issue is only the first step, and it is not enough. People in a position of privilege can choose to simply look away because it does not affect them. If you are in such a position, choose to turn toward the light, then act. There are several immediate steps we can take to help:

- Sign a petition on [Change.org](https://www.change.org) demanding action to provide internet access to low income families.
- Contact your state representatives to request additional funding to public education, specifically to address the digital divide.
- Donate to [ConnectHomeUSA.org](https://www.connecthomeusa.org), a company working to bridge the digital divide in government assisted housing, or to [DonorsChoose.org](https://www.donorschoose.org), where you can provide resources directly to teachers and classrooms nationwide.

I have done my best to explore practical and tangible options for addressing access to technology in the section “Access to Technology” in Chapter 14.

With great hope and effort, we will achieve digital access equity in our country.

Teach on,

Emma

RESOURCES

Items in **bold** in the text are listed here in the Resources.

2016 Arizona State University study on educational technology—<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED577147.pdf>.



Chapter 1

Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.

—Albert Einstein

When we talk about teaching and learning, especially in the context of a digital learning environment, we are typically thinking about it in one of two ways:

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Synchronous Learning Teaching and learning occur together, simultaneously. This can happen in-person or online. |
|  | Asynchronous Learning Students access learning at different times and work through it at their own pace. |

Synchronous learning is what typically happens in a traditional brick-and-mortar school; it's what we think of when we hear "teaching." The teacher stands in front of the class and delivers instruction, and the students receive the information simultaneously. Then students practice and apply their learning within the time constraints of the class period.

However, it's important to note that synchronous learning can also be conducted remotely over a video conferencing platform like Zoom or Google Meet in a remote or hybrid learning scenario.

In contrast, asynchronous learning is typically prebuilt and posted for students on a learning management system (LMS) to access within the time constraints of a day, week, or unit.

Many 100% online schools are entirely asynchronous, where students have access to the entirety of their prebuilt course work, unit, or module, and they work through it at their own pace.

Hybrid schools often use a combination of both. Our PSD Global Academy (PGA) middle school schedule, for example, follows this system for delivering instruction:

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Remote Asynchronous | On-Campus Synchronous | Remote or On-Campus Asynchronous | On-Campus Synchronous | Remote Asynchronous |

However, there are other methods for delivering synchronous/asynchronous instruction that you can read about in The Administrators' Appendix. These examples are found in schools that are attempting to teach synchronously to students who are both in the classroom and at home by livestreaming their lessons (concurrent instruction).

I believe there are benefits to both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and both should be adopted as instruction methods regardless of whether you're full-time brick and mortar, hybrid, or remote.




Chapter 2

Synchronous Learning

Good teaching is 1/4 preparation and 3/4 theatre.

—Gail Goldwin

| | |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Synchronous Learning Teaching and learning occur together, simultaneously. This can happen in-person or online.</p> |
|--|---|

Typically, whenever we are in the classroom with our students, we are engaging in synchronous learning.

However, synchronous learning can also be delivered remotely via a video conferencing platform like Zoom, Google Meet, or Skype.

At PSD Global Academy (PGA) Middle School, we typically engage in synchronous learning 2 days/week (Tuesdays and Thursdays). Those lessons are done in

person at our school building. During the COVID-19 school building closures, we simply moved our classes to a video conferencing program (Google Meet), maintaining nearly the exact same schedule that we had in person.

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Remote Asynchronous | Remote Synchronous | Remote Asynchronous | Remote Synchronous | Remote Asynchronous |

Although I almost always prefer in-person synchronous learning to video conferencing, having those established times during the week to meet as a class to check in, see each other’s faces, and hear each other’s voices felt necessary not only for our academic success, but for the social-emotional well-being of students.

I am going to assume that most teachers reading this book are comfortable with delivering synchronous instruction live/in person, so I will use the rest of this chapter to explain how synchronous teaching and learning can be adapted to an online environment.

Still, keep in mind that many of these tools and tips could also be integrated into in-person synchronous instruction when we return to the classroom. For example, see the section “The Chat Box” later in this chapter to see how I plan to use the chat box in my brick-and-mortar classroom.

CHOOSING A VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM

Most schools or districts will provide you with a video conferencing platform, but if you have a choice, here are some factors worth considering:

Zoom

| Pros | Cons |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waiting rooms• Private chat | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited features in the free version• Potential security risks |

Microsoft Teams

| Pros | Cons |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microsoft Teams Chat (saves communication in a chat room after the call ends) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited features in the free version |

Google Meet

| Pros | Cons |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple and intuitive• Google Classroom integration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited features in the free version |

Since the initial publication of this book in June 2021, all three platforms have been working hard to meet the needs of remote educators and all three now have hand-raising, breakout rooms, and custom background features. Keep in mind, however, that all platforms are continuing to make changes and release additional features in the upcoming months, so check their websites for updated information.

At PGA, we use Microsoft Teams for our staff meetings and Google Meet to teach our students. I prefer Google Meet, and most Google products, because they are simple, easy to use, and integrate well into the “Google Ecosystem.” Throughout this book I will be referencing Google Meet when I discuss video conferencing or “meeting” online.

KEY VIDEO CONFERENCING FEATURES

Regardless of what you choose to use, any video conferencing software will have these key features.

The Microphone

It is the norm in my synchronous online classes that students' microphones are muted unless they are called upon. This is essential for students to be able to focus on the content being delivered. I try to hear my students' voices as much as possible during class and will ask students to unmute their microphones throughout the lesson. We also have class discussions and small-group discussions where students are encouraged to speak.

However, all of these activities need to be done thoughtfully to avoid chaos. There are just too many background sounds in all of our homes (cats, kids, dogs, garbage trucks) for more than a few people to have their microphones unmuted at any one time.

I explain this to my students at the beginning of the year and also point out that keeping your microphones muted is the norm in virtual business meetings as well (so practicing will help prepare them for possible future employment).



The Camera

Similar to the microphone, the camera feature can be turned on or off.

It is wonderful to see your students' faces when teaching remotely, and I encourage my students to leave their cameras on, but I always make it optional. Some of my students are embarrassed to show their rooms or houses, some don't have the luxury of learning in a private space, some have anxiety about being on camera, and to be honest, it can be really distracting to see your own face when you are trying to concentrate on a lesson. Whatever the reason, if a student doesn't want to turn their camera on, I don't make them.

Cameras on? Or cameras optional?

The increase in remote learning because of COVID-19 has led to a heated debate in the online learning community. Do we require students to turn their cameras on for class? Or let it be optional?

First, we need to consider the data and privacy circumstances. Is the class being recorded? If so, where is that recording going to be accessible? It's always a good idea to check with your IT department about data and privacy compliance.

Personally, I let cameras be optional in my online classes and try to engage my students in other ways (see "Synchronous Instruction"). Although I love to see their faces, I understand that it can be uncomfortable to see your own face while trying to pay attention to class, and more than that, uncomfortable to let your fellow classmates see into your room or home.




The Chat Box

Every video conferencing tool will have a chat box. Because speaking is more limited in online synchronous learning, I frequently use the chat box to get feedback from my students and keep them engaged.

Using the chat box for student participation during class has been one of the greatest silver linings I found when teaching synchronously over Google Meet. Some of my students who were very reserved and reluctant to participate in brick-and-mortar class conversations were very active in the chat box and allowed me to see a completely different side to them. It also allowed me to "hear" more students' voices throughout class, without the disruption of 30 actual voices breaking out into discussion that I have to rein back in. During class over Google Meet, I can ask a question and see all my students' responses in the chat box in a matter of moments.

Aside from asking specific questions, here are the common keywords I ask my students to put into the chat box:

| | |
|---|--|
| Here | When students first arrive, I have them type “here” into the chat box, so I can easily scroll back through their names to take attendance. |
| Hall Pass | If a student needs to step away from their screen, to use the bathroom or take care of a family matter, I ask them to type “hall pass” into the chat box, so I know not to call on them or to catch them up when they return. |
| I’m back | When a student returns, either from the bathroom or from completing an assignment on a new tab or window, I ask that they type “I’m back” or “I’m done” into the chat box, so I know they are all back in the Meet, can see my screen, and are ready to move on. |
| Clap clap  | If a student shares during class, I ask the rest of their classmates to give them virtual applause in the chat box, either by typing “clap clap clap” or inserting celebratory emojis. |
| 1–10 | I’ll often ask students to rate something on a scale of 1–10, whether it’s how they are feeling or how interesting an article was. Getting a number in the chat box is quick and easy. |
| Bye! | Finally, I always ask my students to say “goodbye” before they leave a virtual class by either typing in the chat box or unmuting their microphones. |



Bring it back to the building

I’ve enjoyed using the chat box so much, in fact, that I am planning on using a chat box in the brick-and-mortar classroom as well through Backchannel Chat.

Backchannel Chat is an online chat platform that allows teachers to create a chat room and invite students to join (without needing students to sign up or enter an email).

I plan to post the code for Backchannel at the start of each class and ask my students to use it throughout the lesson on their individual laptop devices to respond to questions and add comments. I will be moderating the chat on a tablet, locking the room if students aren’t on topic.