Flexibility Quiz

An Exercise to Discover How Flexible You Are in Your Practice

You are going on a quest to find your inner strengths. In this quiz, be ready to reveal some of your preconceived notions or personal thoughts about your level of flexibility as an educator. Answer the questions honestly—trust your gut! And don't worry about cramming for it; this quiz is not about testing your content knowledge. While it will provide you with a score for each profile type, the goal is not to achieve a certain number. The score just acts as a guideline to reveal your inclination toward a personality profile, so that you can be more deliberate when reading this book.

After you complete the quiz, calculate your score in appendix A and then read more in-depth information, which also highlights those chapters you might pay closer attention to as you personalize your learning experience.

Ready? Here we go!

Choose only one answer per question. Circle your answer with a pencil or keep track of your answers in a separate location, like a journal.

1. If you had to choose a visual that represents your pedagogical beliefs, what would it look like?

    - ♦ A photo of a passionate adventurer climbing a mountain
    - ♥ A messy canvas
    - ♠ A poster about a contest or competition
    - ♦ A graph showing that effort is everything
    - ♣ A collage of apps and edtech tools
    - ♦ A map showing people who are connected through networks

2. What might the perfect classroom look like?

    - ♣ Students are silent, listening, and following your instructions.
    - ♥ Students are hyperactive—it's loud and messy.

♠ Students take over, which means you might not reach your objective, but it's all about their voice anyway.

♦ Students are engaged and responsive. They feel in charge and are growing.

3. When you think about "technology," you think about:

♥ PowerPoint (you like to have your slides ready and you reuse them every year)

♣ disappointments (whenever you try using technology, it fails!),

♠ apps and other tech tools (the more the tech, the happier you are!),

♦ the tinkering mindset (it's about troubleshooting, creativity, and critical thinking),

♣ old-school hardware (paper, pens, and blackboard), or

♥ Smart Boards (a more advanced way for you to show content to students than using a regular whiteboard).

4. At the end of the week, you often feel:

♦ satisfied about your accomplishments and in control of the upcoming week;

♣ exhausted and ready for a break (planning for next week will have to wait!);

♠ ready to plan all your lessons for next week right away (you've got lots of research to do!);

♥ relieved that your improvisation succeeded this week and will likely succeed next week as well (TGIF!); or

♣ confident, because you just have to give your students the same reliable worksheets that you did last year.

5. When asking a colleague for feedback, you are looking for:

♥ empathy and support,

♣ compliments and praise,

♠ ruthless and straightforward honesty,

♦ sincere suggestions to improve, or

♥ company—a chance to socialize!

6. When you have a conflict with colleagues, your usual solution is to:

   ♣ just drop it (you have other things to do!);
   ♠ fight to win the battle;
   ♦ be quietly frustrated and grumble in your corner, until it passes;
   ♥ take a moment to breathe, calm yourself, and engage in a dialogue to resolve the issue; or
   ♥ find all available evidence to prove you are right.

7. A colleague is upset and acting rude. You think this colleague:

   ♦ must be stressed out (you feel the need to empathise rather than judge);
   ♣ is always like this (seriously—you don't really care);
   ♠ can't be ignored (you harass the person until they tell you what's wrong);
   ♦ might need to talk (you email the person to offer a sympathetic ear if needed); or
   ♥ is someone interesting to gossip about with colleagues (you start delightfully chitchatting about him or her).

8. You are being observed in class as part of your appraisal. How do you feel during the evaluation?

   ♣ Scrutinized and criticized every step of the way
   ♦ Glad to show how your students are doing (You are in your element!)
   ♥ Surprised (You forgot it was today, but no big deal. You will improvise on the fly and should pass.)
   ♣ Stressed, exposed, and convinced that your students will take this as an opportunity to retaliate for some bad lessons in the past
   ♠ Confident (You are sure that you are going to pull this off and impress the evaluator. You aim to be recognized as the best teacher in the department!)

9. How often do you reflect on the best ways for you to grow professionally and become increasingly effective as a teacher?

♣ Hardly ever—it's a waste of time. You would rather finish your photocopying.

♦ Reflection is like breathing for you: it's an everyday part of who you are.

♥ You only think about it when you are formally asked to (at the end of a unit, at reporting time, etc.).

♥ Actually, never—you think of doing it but keep pushing it down in priority on your to-do list.

♠ You only consider it when you're facing competition and need to showcase your best work to impress others.

10. What is most important to you in student development: fostering students who:

♥ make the world a better place even if they don't ever learn any curriculum-specific content;

♣ score the best grades;

♦ think for themselves and are independent;

♠ become the next world leaders; or

♦ follow their passions and dreams?

11. When do you feel the most successful?

♠ When you exceed expectations and wow the people around you

♦ When you see your students learning

♥ When you get good feedback from your supervisor

♦ When you inspire others

♣ All the time (whether people agree with you or not!)

♥ Not sure (You are working on it!)

12. When you start a new project, you are likely to:

♥ doubt yourself and feel a bit anxious;

♠ be ambitious and overachieve to impress everyone;

♣ be frustrated to have one more thing on your list;

♦ be excited and ready to start innovating; or

♥ organize yourself to achieve the minimum requirement.

13. In a collaborative project that seems likely to fail, what is your likely attitude?

    ♦ You like challenges, so you will have a dynamic and positive attitude toward this one.
    ♣ You feel like everything is falling apart, so why should you care?
    ♠ You're optimistic, as always! And you'll push everyone to get it done even if the process is ugly and painful.
    ♥ You'll let others take initiative and you'll do your part, but whatever happens happens.
    ♠ You're in charge now! You'll take the lead and get this up and running again.

14. Tomorrow is a professional-development day at your school, so you are:

    ♣ annoyed at another session of wasted time;
    ♠ ready to spend hours researching the topics to be covered, so that you are super ready to participate and show your prior knowledge;
    ♦ looking forward to learning new things and ready to be an active participant;
    ♥ ready to listen and take notes; or
    ♠ overexcited (by the way, you are presenting at multiple sessions!).

15. You have a new boss at your school, and this is your reaction:

    ♦ "I am glad and ready to start collaborating!"
    ♣ "Oh no! A new manager is only going to tell me what to change, and I like the way I'm doing things now."
    ♥ "I will need to find out a little more about this person when she starts…"
    ♠ "I need to google this person immediately, search his/her digital footprint, and then connect with him/her on social media."
    ♣ "Who cares? I'll just mind my own business per usual and hope I won't be bothered."
    ♠ "I think I'll send my new boss an email right away to introduce myself, and I'll include some of my top achievements to impress her."

16. Your colleague is absent and you are covering for him/her. This is how you proceed:

    ♦ You figure out his/her plan and deliver the best possible lesson, as you imagine he/she would have expected.
    ♥ You try to convey the details of the lesson but end up letting students watch a movie.
    ♠ You start with the initial plan but make many decisions as you go to significantly improve it.
    ♣ You just share the scheduled lesson with the students and warn them they better finish the work without speaking and without questions.

17. You see a student who looks depressed. What do you do?

    ♠ You call the counselor right away and email all the teachers with your concerns.
    ♦ You engage with the student gently: "You seem upset. Do you want to talk to me about it?"
    ♣ You ignore the student. (Nowadays, kids just dramatize everything!)
    ♦ You contact this student's best friend, and watch the magic of friendship do its charm.
    ♥ You pass by and continue with your day. The student is not in your class anyway.

18. A colleague comes to you for help with a project. What's your reaction?

    ♥ "I'll just do the work myself. It takes longer to explain what to do than to do it."
    ♣ "I don't have time—sorry!"
    ♦ "Of course! This is a great opportunity to collaborate!"
    ♠ "With some mentoring, I think my experience could really benefit you. Let's schedule several sessions to achieve the best possible outcome."

19. What is your opinion about social media for professional use?

    ♦ It's an outstanding opportunity to learn and grow as a global educator.

♠ It's a great tool for marketing oneself and getting a super-duper online reputation!

♥ You never remember your password, so you'll probably just join again later, when it's more convenient.

♣ It's all about showing off, which is lame and arrogant. You don't get it.

♠ You keep tweeting all day long! You are addicted to sharing and viewing!

20. There is a new platform at school, and this is your first impression:

♣ You are so angry to have to start over again!

♦ You are excited to embrace this change.

♥ You are a bit frustrated because it will force you to learn something new, but you will probably get on board eventually.

♠ You are already thinking of suggesting additional tools that integrate well with this platform.

Now, go to appendix A to calculate your score and find your profile.

Meditation Prompt

Reflecting on Your Flexibility as an Educator

This is your first meditation prompt. Take a moment to pause, breathe deeply and slowly, and be present to yourself. This journaling exercise is for you to connect with yourself and reflect on your current context.

After examining your inclination for flexibility through calculating your score and reading the profile(s) that best represent you, how do you think it compares to your expectations of yourself?
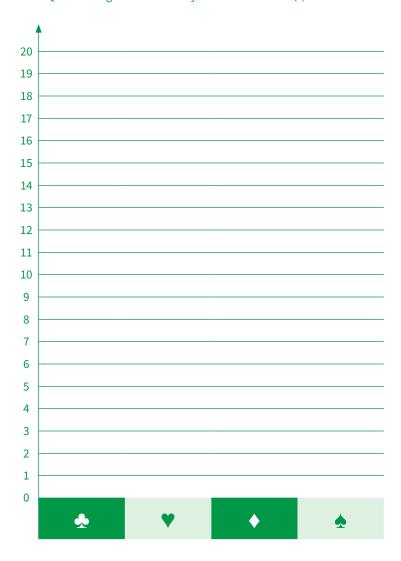
Appendix A

Quiz Scoring and
Personality-Profile Inclination(s)

Calculate your score to the flexibility quiz (in the introduction) by counting the total number for each symbol you selected during the quiz:

♣	♥	♦	♠

Total number: _____   _____   _____   _____

Several scenarios might occur. Some of you might see a clear dominance for one particular profile; however, most people aren't easily put in one box! If you are in the latter group, you probably want to look at the various profiles that you seem to connect with. To visualize the data, draw a bar graph based on your quiz results (see next page).

Now take a look at the profile types that emerged as your dominant influences (from your quiz results), and also look at the profiles that only have a minor influence. This quiz doesn't aim to label you but to make you realize your strengths and inclination toward flexibility!

♣ Stiff/Preflexible

A lot of people come to yoga thinking, "I can't do this. I'm not flexible enough." This may be your current mindset toward edtech yoga. Your learning-practice muscles may be quite tight, and you might be more inclined to keep your practice the way it is now. You might focus on guiding others around you with your own plan of action; when asked to alter your plan, you might not like it because you want to feel in charge. You tend to be straightforward and take the role of a consultant, telling others what they should do or not do, which may lead them to push through or give up, depending on how your guidance is received. You might not be a big fan of differentiation or personalized learning, thinking that these are simply "buzzwords," as you believe it's hardly ever possible to put these methods into action. Instead, your definition of learning might be centered around behaviorism (practicing by drilling, memorization, or rote learning). With technology, you might prefer to stick with ready-made worksheets, and you closely monitor all students when they're online. And when it comes to encouraging creativity with digital tools, you prefer that everyone follows the specific standards that you set.

You may feel some resistance to the exercises in this book—they are purposely designed to stretch you. But you might find, as others do, that once you start stretching your muscles and gaining flexibility, you will be happy with the results! Therefore, it may require some self-monitoring to ensure that you are stretching yourself appropriately as you read and participate in the book's exercises.

It's especially important for you to read chapter one and work through all the exercises there. This will help you discover your own vision for *why* you want to improve your learning practice, and it will keep you focused on the results when the journey seems hard. When you read chapter two, remember that it doesn't matter where you are when you start; the important thing is to keep stretching a little further all the time.

We recommend reading *Courageous Edventures: Navigating Obstacles to Discover Classroom Innovation* by Jennie Magiera (2017). This book will

guide your first steps into technology integration and innovation as it gently pushes you to overcome your fear of change, allowing you to try new things and to be okay with your failed attempts—necessities to learning and growing. As you read, you will slowly gain confidence in taking new initiatives, relying more and more on collaboration with others, including your colleagues and students.

♥ Understretched

Many people start yoga and immediately want to try the difficult poses, but they quickly find out that they need to warm up and try easier postures first; does this reflect how you would approach edtech yoga? If so, you probably like to get out of your comfort zone to take some risks, learn something new, or engage in a collaborative project. However, you might find yourself a bit afraid of trying new and advanced ideas on your own. You are inspired by some educators and look up to them, but you may not see yourself as being able to reach their level. Perhaps you feel a bit underconfident and need to boost your self-esteem.

When it comes to putting your great ideas into practice, do you find that you are left feeling discouraged when they don't work the way you envisioned? For example, you might want to give more agency to your students in their classroom collaborations or be a valuable contributor in a collaborative meeting, but you feel a gap between your aspirations and actions. You would benefit from some guidance in both instances. With technology, you might be too eager to try tools without having tested them, or without planning in depth how the tech will be used in the lesson, and as a result, sometimes it doesn't go the way you thought it would.

Go ahead and jump to chapter four first to learn about different tools that you can incorporate into your classroom practices to engage your students. Look for tools and ideas that may be easier to use and give yourself the chance to test them, warming up to and gaining the skills and stamina you need to go on to the more advanced applications.

We recommend reading *The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity* by George Couros (2015). You are already aware of what innovation is, but you might not understand how it looks in reality—*is* it just a buzzword? This book will allow you to make meaningful connections to this relevant concept, and it will also help you implement new and better ways of teaching, learning, and leading. From vision to action!

◆ Flexible

Many people who regularly practice yoga are comfortable using several of familiar poses, but they are often interested in learning something new to stretch themselves further. You may have a similar experience when it comes to edtech yoga—you know the best practices for technology integration in the classroom, and you use them often in your classroom. You feel quite successful in this teaching practice too; while you are at ease and in control, innovating and sharing about your practice, you also think about ways to challenge yourself. However, you might sometimes lack the courage to throw yourself into the unexpected. Sure, you try new things all the time, but what about elevating your craft to the next level? There might be some projects that could transform you and your students and allow you to consider new alternatives. Your support of student agency is strong, though you might wonder how to boost students' voices, choices, and ownership, reducing the number of teacher-led lessons. You are probably fascinated by personalized learning and by growing self-directedness in your students and yourself. You are a learner and an empowerer! In your areas of uncertainty, you just need help going from anxiety to excitement, so you can give it a go.

Go to chapter five to boost your ability to further develop your tinkering mindset. Use these exercises to reconsider what you already know and do, and think outside your comfort zone to challenge yourself. Be increasingly deliberate about your teaching to reach your expected outcomes.

We recommend reading *Show Your Work!: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Getting Discovered* by Austin Kleon (2014). As an agile educator integrating

a lot of technology and thriving to continuously improve your practice, you are inspiring and should allow yourself to shine! Watch out for signs of the impostor syndrome: doubting yourself. This book is all about gaining the confidence to show your work even when you feel your work isn't quite ready to be shared. The truth is that nothing is ever perfect, but you will be surprised to see the support you get from others when you share. Everyone benefits!

♠ Overstretched

A few yoga practitioners, thinking more is better, stretch farther than they should and injure themselves; this might be the situation you find yourself in with edtech yoga. You might be the type of teacher who strives to always be energetic, dynamic, and excited. As a colleague, you might be the kind who always says, "Yes, and . . . ," and you constantly have a million ideas in mind. Your timetable is full of lessons and meetings, and you volunteer for everything all the time. External recognition is probably important to you too, as you want to have a good reputation. This means competing and showing your work as well.

You likely feel exhausted by this type of overstretching, but we have just the chapter for you! Chapter six discusses the importance of achieving balance by figuring out your most important goals and taking care of yourself.

We recommend reading *Kill the Company: End the Status Quo, Start an Innovation Revolution* by Lisa Bodell (2012). This book encourages you to think about the big picture and reconsider quality over quantity. As you continue your learning journey as a committed educator, you will be able to integrate leadership skills that move you from good to great by operating a change of perspective on your own practice and on the things happening around you. Indeed, there are a lot of practical activities related to change in this book, feeding your thirst for learning and allowing you to focus at the same time!