Dear Dr. Avalos,

Usain Bolt, "The Fastest Man Alive", cannot beat me in a race. I'm quite positive. All I would need is a head start, a BIG head start. If we both lined up at the same starting location and ended at the same location, he would win without a doubt. Anyone that would choose to waste their time watching this spectacle would already know the outcome. This metaphor resembles the opportunity our school has when it comes to the students' education. Our students are in the race to succeed in life. They are running as hard as they can and are doing quite well, but they aren't always winning the race, yet.

Learning should be similar to a 100 meter dash. Learners should be focused, engaged, excited, and ready to give the race their best shot. In a very short time the learners should either feel excited about their experience or slightly frustrated because they could have performed much better. Either way, there is passion in their experience. I believe that if I were to pilot a virtual English class that is broken down into smaller, faster, rigorous lessons, the students would become more engaged and enjoy their learning experience much more.

Currently our school has advisory periods where students are allowed to do homework or receive extra help in a class. During this period students could use the Blended learning concept and begin my assignments and work at their own pace without worrying about how fast or slow a teacher is moving. Their progress would resemble completing levels in video games. Each lesson would be short, efficient and impactful. The students would be engaged more often because they would be in control of their learning while also being able to see the end stages of the course. Being in control also means that there is a level of pride in their successes and failures. Now the students will care about how much they learn while having fun doing so.

Having technology for every student is amazing, but if we don't utilize our technology to the best of our ability, many students' potential could be wasted. We can prepare them for their next step in a more efficient fashion by enhancing our virtual learning programs. Eventually, I will create English I and II classes for students to take virtually, but they will still have access to me via email or in person in order to provide tutorial sessions. If the students have the passion to learn, there should not be a reason they would be stopped from doing so.

Eventually, more online classes can be built and structured so students will not be limited by the pace of a particular classroom. This form of blended learning also gives the students control of their time, place, path, and pace of learning. These classes could be available to all of the Northbrook students. This is the head start that will give our students the advantages needed for eventual success.

Learning should not be like a marathon where people only care about the start and then the finish. Learning should be engaging, entertaining, and filled with successes and just enough failure to push a person to want to succeed. We have an opportunity to give our students a head start in the race of life. Please help me help our students win. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jason Campbell
Northbrook High School
Teacher/Coach