

Creating innovative, flexible teaching & learning experiences with online content

A playbook for using edX courses
and programs to drive student
success, empower faculty, and
expand institutional value



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An introduction from **edX Founder & CEO** and **MIT professor Anant Agarwal**

As higher education quickly evolves and flexible and hybrid models for teaching and learning become a requirement, many colleges, universities, and faculty struggle with concepts around how to make the transition. How do you access online content, incorporate it into the “classroom,” and provide the learning opportunities required for student academic—and career—success?

On a parallel path, higher ed leaders and faculty are adopting new models and solutions that provide the quality, flexibility, and access they require through sharing courses and programs from all over the globe and leveraging online learning. Higher education en masse will continue to move towards these hybrid approaches that incorporate online courses not only to bridge gaps during the pandemic, but also to strengthen teaching and learning in new ways that set students up for success now so they can flourish in industry later on. Instead of trying to duplicate the efforts of other institutions, this is an opportunity to capitalize on and share existing resources to accelerate the deployment of hybrid learning. To do so, our educational system will need to develop and perfect a global education supply chain to meet the needs of all higher education learners and instructors.

At edX, we work together with our partner institutions on the cutting edge of education as a consortium to learn from each other to create the best online content. We have been able to share and learn a lot as everyone was faced with the same challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this resource, you’ll find insights to support your own institution’s or classroom’s digital transformation journey grounded in data and best practices collected from our work with hundreds of institutions in 70+ countries and evidence-based pedagogical methods.

Continue reading to learn more about how your academic institution and educators can take advantage of a global educational supply chain by accessing a digital catalog of high-quality, relevant edX courses and programs from top universities to:

- **Support your remote learning efforts**
- **Easily expand and add new topics to your curriculum offerings**
- **Enrich and strengthen existing online and in-person learning programs**
- **Offer courses as stand-alone options**
- **Keep students on the path to their academic goals and job-ready skills**



A framework for **developing** your approach

Online education offers the unique ability to partition learning into modular units that unlock opportunities for enhancing existing curricula and experiences, offer new subject areas, or even stack with existing or other online content to offer new credentials or credit pathways. But what does this look like in practice? And how do you make decisions for incorporating these models into your own campus and classrooms?

An efficient, strategic approach considers the strengths and opportunities of balancing traditional with digital, of building in-house solutions vs. capitalizing on existing resources. Creating fully online learning experiences is a challenge for even the most well-resourced institution. Especially when resources are constrained, leveraging ready-made content is a powerful, economical, turnkey approach that addresses institutional content catalog gaps, learning gaps for students, and resource gaps for faculty. To truly build an engaging experience for both students and faculty, consider: Where is faculty expertise and hands-on support most critical? And where can you delegate and add value with external tools and content?

While higher ed lexicon uses an endless array of terminology to describe dynamic models of teaching and learning, we can simplify into two primary approaches to using online courses and programs and platforms as part of your curricula: **blended, or hybrid, learning** and **independent learning**.

AT A GLANCE

BLENDED LEARNING ENABLES YOU TO:

- Take what you need from online content
- Structure faculty facilitation at a level that works for you
- Focus classroom time on reinforcing learning and helping those in need
- Offer more specialized learning opportunities
- Serve more students

INDEPENDENT LEARNING ENABLES YOU TO:

- Deliver prerequisites so students come to campus prepared
- Support more electives, intersessions, and special programming (credit or non-credit)
- Offer additional learning opportunities and subject areas that don't require being on-campus

Blended learning: A primer

In a blended learning model, faculty use online content as an additive to instruction and overall student experience. Full or parts of online courses and programs act as foundational prerequisites, supplemental digital resources, and/or extensions to faculty-led instruction and support.

Faculty are freed to focus their efforts and class time in a more effective, efficient way—and ultimately enhance the learning experience while also serving more students—by delegating the less interactive, administrative, and time-intensive tasks such as delivering lectures, assignments, and grading to the edX platform. Additionally, these hybrid approaches, coupled with the always-on, modular, and self-paced design of edX courses, allow students to engage with content on their own time, in the place and at a pace that works for them.

HOW IT WORKS



Through the edX platform, students watch lectures, complete problem sets, engage in discussion, take assessments, and more through courses structured to engage and motivate students.



Using platform tools, instructors can drive and quantitatively measure engagement, with the ability to track and evaluate student progress. Instructors tailor their level of course facilitation to their specific needs and spend more time on what matters most: supporting students.

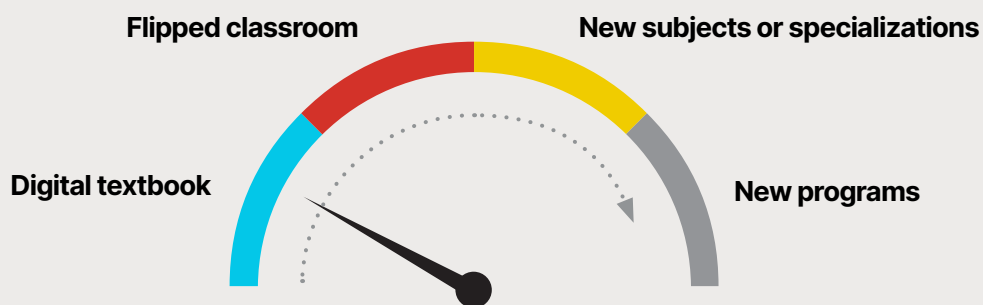


Students learn where and when works best for them at their own pace, whether self-directed or with additional support where needed. They may also earn valuable credentials along the way, such as edX Professional Certificates, to demonstrate knowledge gained in key topics.

Blended learning in action

The term blended learning generally describes a spectrum of approaches which vary according to the level of faculty facilitation and when and how online content is used. The following examples illustrate this variance, from using a piece of an online course as a supplement to stacking online content to create a completely new program.

BLENDED LEARNING APPROACHES VARY ACCORDING TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH ONLINE CONTENT IS LEVERAGED.



Online courses as a digital textbook: The Universitat Politècnica de València uses HarvardX course modules to enrich classroom learning

Valencia, Spain - At the Universitat Politècnica de València, an instructor augments his teaching by incorporating a portion of a HarvardX course into his own course plan. The online course serves as a digital textbook for asynchronous learning. Students are introduced to key concepts through online course modules, which are then reinforced by the instructor through discussion, debate, and inquiry.

Tip Faculty are critical to the creation of successful learning experiences, and online is no exception. Instructor presence—the human connection faculty create with students—is important to consider in your approach. On campus, the informal interactions that build presence and connections come naturally. Online, it must be more thoughtful and deliberate. For example, instructors may invite students to log into video calls early to replicate pre-class chats or email students to check in and ask how they're doing.



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Supporting a flipped classroom with flexible at-home learning: SJCC Increases student support and access to computer science skills



San Jose, California, USA - San Jose City College (SJCC) has successfully used a blended learning approach in its Technest program. This partnership between SJCC and edX leverages online courses from MITx and BerkeleyX to offer an accelerated computer science program intended to increase equity, diversity, and opportunity for SJCC's students, who live in the Silicon Valley area with its booming tech industry. In a flipped classroom, students watch the edX lectures, complete problem sets, engage in discussion, and take assessments on their own time, while using in-person class time (or personalized remote time) to get help.



"There is hard work involved in transitioning your course from in-person to online. The sheer number of practice problems and finger exercises that you want students to have access to so they can be practicing the things that they're learning... that is a benefit of using existing digital materials, like the courses from edX."

- **Mark Branom, faculty at San Jose City College**

Offering new subject areas and skills specializations: IT University Pakistan uses a MicroMasters® program to build a new degree



Lahore, Pakistan - To add a new graduate offering in a high-demand field, Information Technology (IT) University Pakistan combined its existing computer science master's degree with a MicroMasters® program from UCSanDiegoX (UCSD) to create a Master's in Data Science program, awarding credit upon earning the program certificate from the MicroMasters program. The UCSD program included courses in Python, statistics, big data analytics, and machine learning.

Tip Online education offers the unique ability to partition learning into Lego-like building blocks; modular units of learning that allow students to learn in smaller chunks and explore and build customized skill sets that can increase their job prospects and career mobility. Think about creating opportunities for students to augment their education with a specialized credential or portion of a degree and/or combine skills that aren't usually taught together, piecing humanities skills with technology skills, communication skills with coding skills, analytical skills with design skills, etc.

Developing new programs with stackable content: The University of Iceland stacks courses into custom, hybrid programs



Reykjavík, Iceland - The University of Iceland created flexible, hybrid online learning programs by stacking edX courses with a final graded assignment designed by faculty. One of the new offerings, “Leading Change: Gamification, Storytelling, and Superheroes to the Rescue,” combined courses in topics such as climate change and storytelling for social change from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDBx), MichiganX, and SmithsonianX. The university was able to quickly and seamlessly launch the new programs by connecting edX to its Student Management System, where students could easily discover course information and the program syllabus and earn certificates of completion as they passed each modular course, while faculty could monitor progress and intervene as needed and evaluate for awarding credit.

Independent learning: A primer

Independent learning allows students to engage with ready-made digital content with no requirement for additional facilitation. Independent learning can be a powerful, resource-friendly option for both bolstering student success and expanding learning opportunities across your institution. There are a variety of ways independent learning benefits your students, faculty, and alumni:

Offer bridge programs: Use online content to offer refresher or prerequisite courses that fill gaps, level-set knowledge, and set up students for success. Bridge programs can be especially powerful for students making the transition from secondary school to university and from two-year to four-year institutions. In addition, many universities use bridge programs to help students with non-technical backgrounds to develop the skills necessary for STEM degree programs.

Add breadth & increase exploration: Add electives, special projects, or programs, such as during intercessions, that allow students to more easily explore subject areas that may guide their major or career direction or act as valuable add-ons to their chosen path. For instance, provide opportunities for students on technical tracks to learn and earn certificates in soft skills like communications, teamwork, leadership, and languages that will help them progress into their careers. Or offer finance majors access to fintech content that addresses emerging topics like machine learning and blockchain.

Support lifelong learning: Use online courses with faculty and staff for professional development and lifelong learning and as a tool to engage and connect with alumni. For example, at IIT Bombay, administrative staff members are taking edX courses related to accounting, marketing, and leadership.

Independent learning in action

Engaging students during intercessions: The Universitat Politècnica de València uses online courses to satisfy internships

Valencia, Spain - The Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) made it possible for hundreds of students whose internship programs were cancelled during COVID-19 shutdowns to maintain momentum and complete their degrees on time by taking online courses from UPV and other institutions such as TecdeMonterreyX, HarvardX, and IBM instead. Within a week of closing in-person sessions, 10 of UPV's 13 schools used the edX platform to offer access to a diverse course catalog aligned with the professional skills the students would have learned during their internships, from marketing analytics and Python to entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism. Students enrolled in an average of three courses each and had the opportunity to earn certificates for their coursework that were used as benchmarks for awarding credit, as well as standalone signals of knowledge and skill development for use with potential employers.



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“edX content and learning platform allowed us to quickly move online and offer our existing and prospective students innovative learning pathways during our summer school initiative.”

- Páll Ásgeir Torfason, head, department of digital education,
University of Iceland

Offering opportunities to explore and develop new skills:

The University of Iceland builds innovative programs to engage and upskill citizens

Reykjavík, Iceland - In addition to blended learning offerings for students, The University of Iceland was charged by the government to provide additional reskilling and upskilling opportunities to increase the overall employability of the country's population. The university leveraged the edX platform and content to offer independent learning opportunities to recent graduates and citizens looking to bridge a skills gap, make a career change, or better position themselves on the job market. Courses included subjects such as creative thinking, web development fundamentals, education, social work, and more. Once completed, learners earned verified course or program certificates that showcased their new subject mastery.



A platform and content designed to **create exceptional learning experiences**

Designed by educators for educators, edX solutions for higher education provide colleges and universities with a proven online teaching and learning platform that instantly creates secure, scalable access for students and faculty to an unmatched variety of courses and programs. Through custom-curated solutions, access to our full catalog, or our no-cost Online Campus Essentials offering, use edX Online Campus to support your institution's digital strategy with world-class content and a platform designed to optimize the online learning experience, drive engagement, and deliver and measure student success.

THE POWER OF LEARNING WITH EDX ONLINE CAMPUS



Learning informed by science

All course materials are paired with application, feedback, and reflection, resulting in retainable, transferable skills that bring value to learners.



World-class network & content

Founded by Harvard and MIT, edX is home to more than 35 million learners, 160 content partners, and the majority of world's top-ranked universities and industry-leading companies.



Self-paced learning

Students can begin and complete courses any time and work at their own pace. Faculty, alumni, and campus communities can build a lifelong culture of learning.

Regardless of the model you choose, delivering and scaling online learning opportunities across your campus can be easy with edX. Integrate with your LMS to immediately share content through an environment your students and staff are familiar with or enroll students directly via the edX platform. Use the administrative dashboard and platform analytics to measure enrollments by course, track engagement, monitor performance data, and view key details to evaluate courses for credit, such as course objectives and estimated hours.



Create your own innovative online experience with edX For Education

Connect with the edX For Education team to learn more about building flexible, impactful online learning experiences and skills pathways for your students.

Learn more at campus.edx.org