



# Transforming Immigrant Digital Equity: Effective Strategies for Learning

## HyFlex Learning Model

“The purpose of the HyFlex model is to provide our learners choice in how they engage in learning...[L]earners make choices based on their home situations, learning preferences, or other circumstances. In addition to offering choice, our goal is to create an equitable learning experience for our learners – no matter how they engage.”

–Vi Hawes, English Language Acquisition for Adults Instructor at [Pima Community College](#) (Tucson, AZ)<sup>1</sup>

### What is the HyFlex model?

Hybrid-flexible, or HyFlex, is an innovative model that pairs *hybrid* and *flexible* instruction, putting the power to decide when and how to learn in learners’ hands.<sup>2</sup> In a HyFlex model, programs provide *hybrid* instruction – a combination of online and in-person instruction – while giving people the *flexibility* to choose to attend live instruction either in-person or remotely or learn asynchronously online.<sup>3</sup>

The table below demonstrates one possible participation path in a HyFlex program. During the three class days, the learner has the ability to choose whether to attend classes in person or remotely online. Outside of the three class days, the learner can also choose to participate in asynchronous online learning in lieu of attending in person or synchronous remote classes.

	Class Day 1	Class Day 2	Class Day 3	Non-Class Days
Week 1	Remote Live	In-Person	In-Person	
Week 2	In-Person	Remote Live		Asynchronous Online
Week 3		In-Person	Remote Live	Asynchronous Online

### How does HyFlex tie into a remote ESOL ecosystem that centers digital equity?

HyFlex increases learners’ access to instruction by eliminating some of the most common barriers to attending English language classes, including schedule conflicts and transportation. The model also

centers learner choice as a fundamental value, giving learners the ability to choose the mode(s) of learning that best suits their preferences and needs at any given time. From the program perspective, HyFlex can increase overall enrollment beyond the constraints of a physical classroom or fixed schedule.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, HyFlex learners build their digital skills and digital resilience – that is, the awareness, skills, agility, and confidence to be empowered users of new technologies and adapt to changing digital skill demands.<sup>4</sup> The overwhelming majority of adult learners fall into one or more of the “covered populations” categories under the [Digital Equity Act](#), including individuals with a language barrier, individuals at or below 150% of the federal poverty level, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority. By pairing ESOL instruction and digital skillbuilding, the HyFlex model can play a critical role within a larger remote ESOL ecosystem as a flexible, high-intensity option.

### What kinds of learners benefit from HyFlex?

HyFlex is especially well positioned to serve learners with changing personal schedules or who are otherwise unable to commit to a set class schedule. Also critical to learner success are personal management skills: learners must be able to decide the most suitable mode of learning, independently manage their own time, and motivate themselves throughout the course.<sup>2</sup>

Since HyFlex requires learners to have the ability to learn remotely, learners with limited digital literacy skills and/or access to technology and internet will need supports to be able to fully engage.<sup>2</sup>

### Is HyFlex right for your program?

	Benefits	Challenges
For Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Learner-centered - learners decide when and how they will learn</li> <li>▶ Increases learners’ access to instruction by eliminating common barriers</li> <li>▶ Supports learners’ attendance and persistence</li> <li>▶ Gives learners access to instructional content in different modalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Learners need self-management, time management, and decision-making skills</li> <li>▶ Learners need technology and digital skills, and access to support to mitigate challenges</li> </ul>
For Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensures instruction continues even if a teacher isn’t available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Teachers need to be willing to implement multimodal instruction</li> <li>▶ Teachers need training, support, time, and practice to develop effective instruction</li> </ul>
For Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased student enrollment</li> <li>▶ Creates opportunities for building digital literacy skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Substantial investments needed in program administration, technology, and supports</li> </ul>

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Hawes, V. (2021, December 13). *Building on a Pilot: HyFlex ESOL Class at Pima Community College*. EdTech Center @ World Education.  
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- <sup>2</sup> Beatty, B. J. (2019). *Hybrid-Flexible Course Design (1st ed.)*. EdTech Books.  
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- <sup>3</sup> Vanek, J. (2021, December 3). *Considering Use of the Hybrid Flexible Model in Adult Education*. EdTech Center @ World Education.  
<https://edtech.worlded.org/considering-use-of-the-hybrid-flexible-model-in-adult-education>
- <sup>4</sup> Digital US. (2020). *Building a Digitally Resilient Workforce: Creating On-Ramps to Opportunity*.  
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## About Transforming Immigrant Digital Equity (TIDE)

To create a transparent, efficient, and effective adult ESOL ecosystem, there is a pressing imperative to incentivize and educate national, state, and local policymakers, institutional decision-makers, and advocates for reform in immigration, workforce development, and digital infrastructure policy. The ESOL ecosystem must further build out existing services with remote learning complements and ensure immigrants and refugees are made aware of tech-enabled ESOL opportunities and be supported to access and participate successfully in them.

[Transforming Immigrant Digital Equity \(TIDE\)](#), which builds upon the findings of the [Remote ESOL Project](#), will dramatically expand access to ESOL learning and related immigrant integration supports for immigrants and refugees through scalable, sustainable program models and services that optimize the use of technology. It will also educate service providers and policymakers at three tiers of the ecosystem: effective practice, effective advocacy, and replicable local models. This project is generously supported by an anonymous funder.



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