A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT LEARNING

The Power of Digital in Higher Education
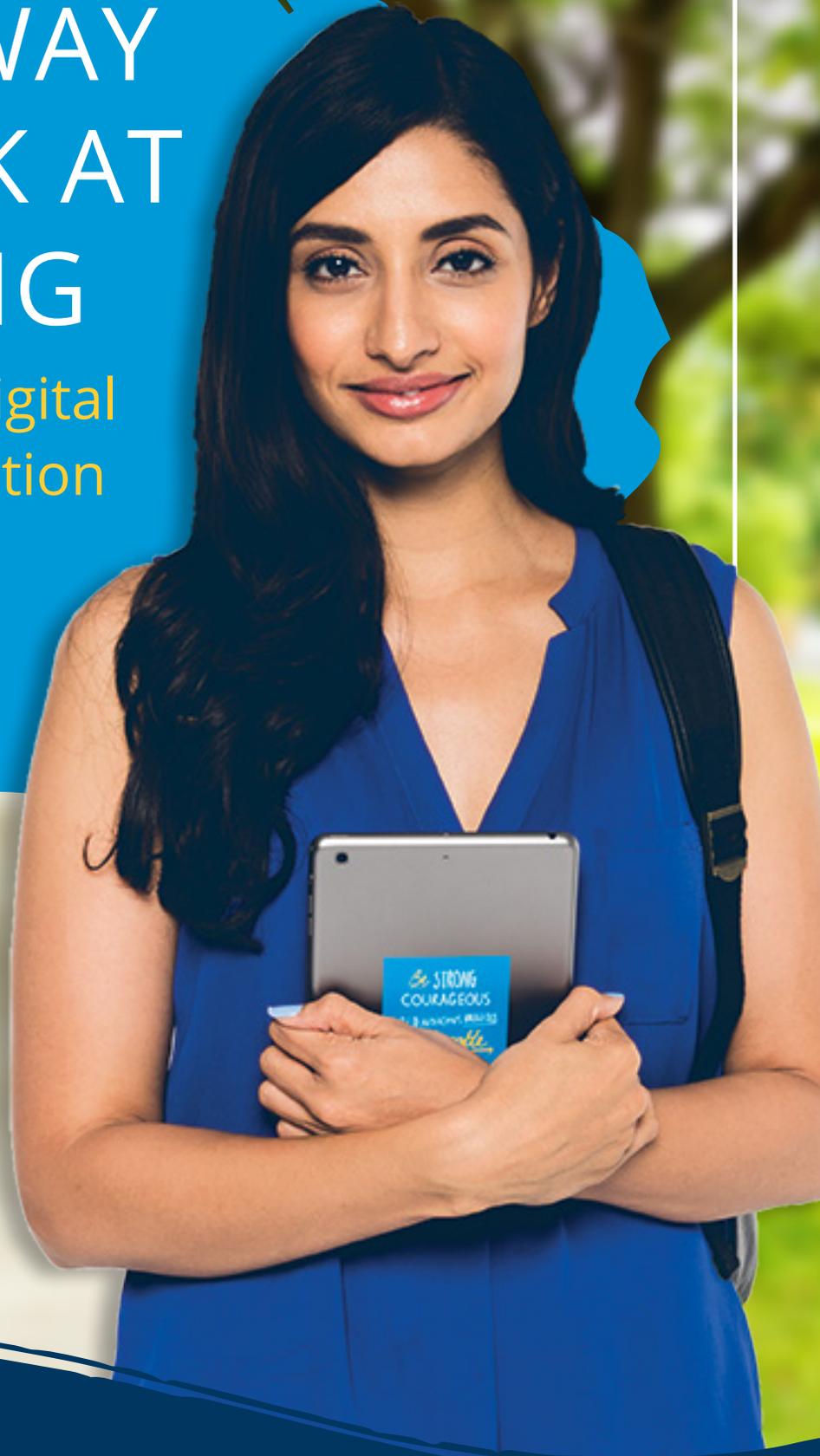
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WHY DIGITAL?

Understanding the Potential of Digital Learning in Higher Education

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Meet Celeste and Jason...

Celeste, a college instructor, is on a mission to increase Jason's chances of success through better retention, greater confidence, increased engagement and higher grades. However, she faces barriers getting through to Jason: lackluster study habits, not much preparation for class and the sense that his mind is always elsewhere.

Jason is among the 40% of current college students who are 25 or older.[1] His support systems are slim as he balances work, school and caring for his young daughter and older parents — not to mention trying to navigate the higher education system as a first-generation student.
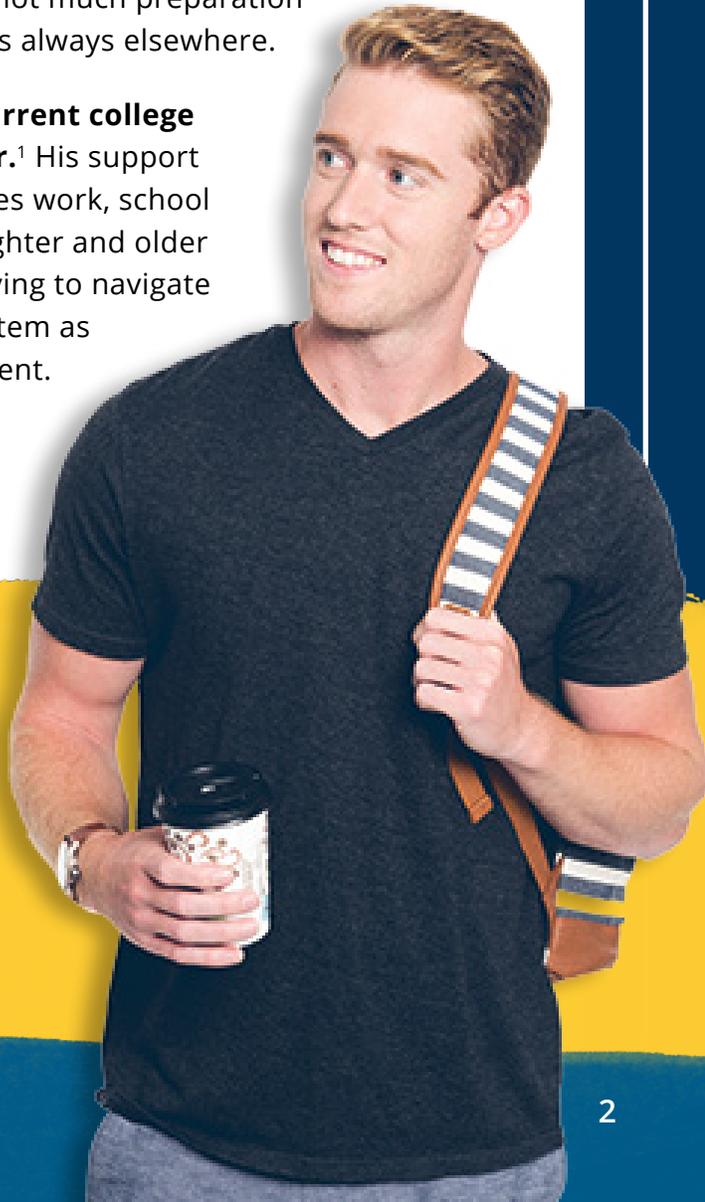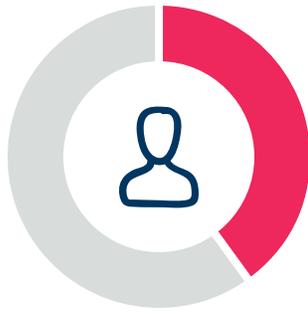
40% of today's college students are 25 or older.[1]

To compound these challenges, Celeste has too many students on her roster with little time to address their different challenges. Some are attending college with a full course load directly after high school. Others, like Jason, may be attending school in the evenings after work or studying full-time for a career change. Every student has his or her own unique story.

Today, both students and instructors have one tool that could make all the difference for their success: digital learning.

DIGITAL LEARNING MEETS STUDENTS
WHERE THEY ARE

In the not-so-distant past, digital learning didn't mean much more than converting textbooks to PDFs. It lightened backpacks but didn't change the way students were learning — or positively affect outcomes.

Today, students live life digitally on their smartphones, tablets and laptops, from streaming videos to paying bills online. They understand — and are ready for — today's digital learning solutions.

Today's students spend much of their lives online.

48%
of 18- to 29-year-olds report being online "almost constantly." [2]

94%
of smartphone owners carry their phone with them frequently. [3]

82%
say they never or rarely turn their phones off. [4]

Need to engage students?
Meet them online with digital learning.

Today's students have competing priorities and need the flexibility to access courses 24/7.

WORK WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL

81%
part-time students

43%
full-time students[5]
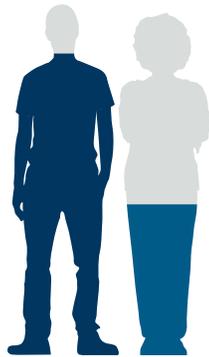
HAVE FAMILY COMMITMENTS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

79%
part-time students

57%
full-time students[6]

Need to engage students?
Meet them between priorities with digital learning.

Today's students already value digital for educational and job-readiness purposes.

81%
of students said easily accessible digital course materials would have a positive impact on their grades.[7]

71%
of students said digital learning has increased their confidence in understanding course materials.[8]

Need to engage students?
Meet them with tools that will help them find success.

DIGITAL LEARNING BOOSTS STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES

From addressing various learning preferences to increasing engagement, communication and confidence, digital learning gets results.

Digital learning addresses multiple styles.

Celeste can embed multimedia and interactive tools into course content so that Jason and his peers can **interact with the materials in ways that engage them best**. Tactile learners can use course flashcards or highlight passages; visual and auditory learners can engage with videos and podcasts.

Digital learning increases communication.

Through digital learning platforms, students **can collaborate and participate in digital group assignments and connect with instructors** without having to find times that meet everyone's schedules.

79% of students say technology makes it easier to ask instructors questions.[9]

75% of students say technology helps them get timely feedback from instructors.[10]

Digital learning keeps students on track.
With a course dashboard that lists all activities, due dates and grades on one screen, Jason stays on top of his classwork. He can **see his assignments and activities throughout the course,** alongside grades and completion indicators. Regular notifications and reminders alert him to upcoming due dates.
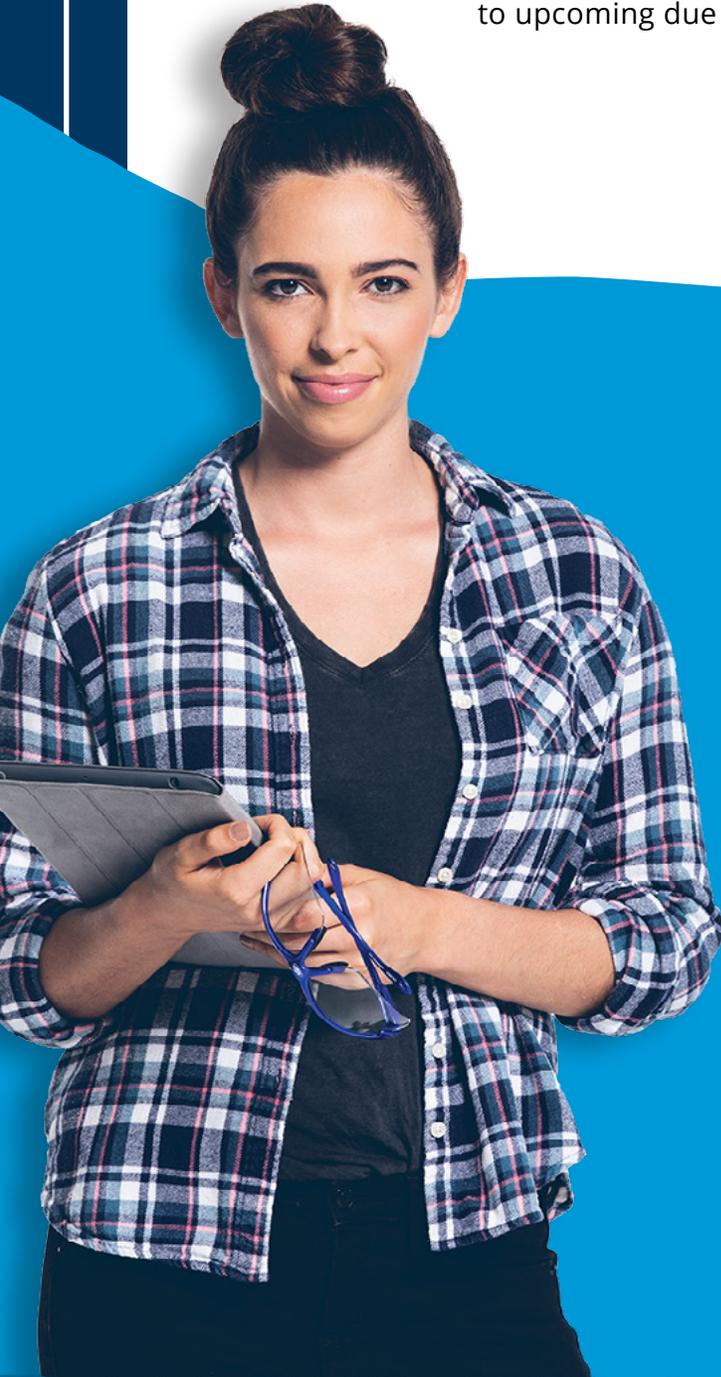
CONFIDENCE COUNTS

A survey of 3,000 students nationwide[11] revealed that these factors make students feel confident in the classroom:

- Notifications of deadlines and when assignments are due

- Mobile study tools

- Personalized instructor feedback

- Content provided or published by instructors

- Instructor-to-student collaboration and communication tools

Digital learning keeps classroom time focused.

With digital, students are empowered to be better prepared for class time. Assignment and due date reminders, as well as tools like flash cards, interactive maps and quizzes for studying, **help learners have a base level of knowledge and confidence when they arrive to class.** This also lets instructors focus on what they love to do most: teach.

Digital learning empowers varied and engaging curricula.

As faculty build their courses, they can tap into **vast libraries of existing learning resources.** This saves time for both seasoned faculty looking for new ideas and newer instructors who may have limited training on how to teach.

Digital learning saves administrative time.

Digital learning can also help instructors more easily conduct both formative and summative assessments of learning and have **grades flow right into the course's learning management system (LMS).**

Digital learning helps instructors track students' progress in real time.

Instructors can **easily monitor individual students' progress and engagement with the materials** and view other flags to indicate those at risk. Also, instructors can see if most or all students are struggling with certain concepts and can pivot their teaching approaches on the spot. Conversely, instructors can see which students are excelling and deliver supplemental materials to them quickly and efficiently.

5 DIGITAL LEARNING
MYTHS BUSTED

When first introduced to digital learning, Celeste was wary;
she still held to common myths. But once she tried it, she was hooked.

MYTH #1

Digital is going to replace me as an instructor.

REALITY: I am the one with the background and expertise, not the technology. Digital learning complements my knowledge with new and engaging ways for students to learn.

MYTH #2

I'm not a digital native, so digital is daunting.

REALITY: My digital learning platform prepared me for success. It's intuitive, has training resources, and even provided a consultant to help me.

MYTH #3

I don't have time to go digital.

REALITY: Going digital actually saves me time. I started slowly with one course and added new digital elements each semester. Now, I only modify courses when I want to change something. I also save time on administrative tasks, like grading.

MYTH #4

My teaching style has worked for a long time and will continue to work.

REALITY: Or so I thought. I knew today's college students would respond well to digital, but now that I've tried it in my classroom, I see how my students are so much more engaged, confident and successful.

MYTH #5

Digital learning is going to increase costs for my students.

REALITY: With the wide array of resources available to students via digital learning, the overall cost is often less than a single textbook, and they'll always be able to access the most up-to-date materials.

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6 TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH DIGITAL

If you're ready to go digital, here are some tips to help you be successful.

1

Look for a seamless user experience for you and your students that helps vs. hinders work.

2

Engage a vendor with a wide variety of learning tools and rich content abilities, so you can customize your courses.

3

Find tools that ease administrative work, like automatic grade return and integration with your LMS.

4

Seek a partner with stellar support, including extensive training and personalized help.

5

Start small with digital and expand your digital presence over time, rather than all at once.

6

Remember your overall objectives, and don't implement digital just for digital's sake.

CONCLUSION

Engaging today's busy, digitally connected students can be more difficult than ever. But with the right digital learning solution partner, you can meet them where they are with a multimedia, mobile education experience that will inspire confidence, enable better communication and boost learning outcomes.

To find out more about digital learning with Cengage, visit **cengage.com.**

[1] Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, *Today's College Students*, retrieved June 10, 2019

[2] Pew Research "About a quarter of U.S. adults say they are 'almost constantly' online," March 14, 2018

[3] Pew Research, *Americans' Views on Mobile Etiquette*, 2015

[4] Ibid.

[5] National Center for Education Statistics, *College Student Employment*, 2019

[6] Ibid.

[7] Cengage, *Today's Learner: Student Views 2018*

[8] Cengage, *The Mindtap Effect: Reporting on the Impact of Inspired Teaching and Confident Learning*

[9] Educause, *ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Technology*, 2017

[10] Ibid.

[11] Cengage, *Students Weigh In: What Role Does Confidence Play in the Lives of Learners?*