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An educator examines the changes that have taken place in the field and what we need to do to make teaching-learning purposeful and engaging

PAUL WILSON

Former U.S. President Obama once said that the currency for the 21st century will be education and innovation. Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, former DG-CSIR, went further by saying that what we need most now is education in innovation and innovation in education. And, India needs it the most.

Dramatic changes

The two years of the pandemic has led to a drastic change among the student demography, which would have otherwise normally occurred over the span of a decade. In addition, the socio-cultural changes around the world have also augmented the change in the way students think, learn and value things. Consequently, the changes that the academic sectors have to navigate pose a huge challenge. This includes the need for reorientation among the professors in empathising with students and engaging them without judgement but with a clear action plan to normalise the academic climate. The new normal solicits a specific capacity building among the faculty to navigate the normalisation of the academic climate.

According to recent industry reports, India's online education market is poised to grow by \$2.28 billion between 2021-2025, at a CAGR of 20%. Consequently, it suggests that the stakeholders are already on the verge of readily adopting reshaped pedagogy and redesigned

curriculum for the new dispensation. Are higher education institutes (HEIs) equipped to handle this change to create engaging online modules to appeal to this generation?

Outcome-based attendance

We expect students to be confined within four walls and listen to the conventional instructions as part of the teaching and learning. Irrespective of whether the lectures lead to concept progression among the students, their physical presence is marked as attendance. Specifically, the need is to define attendance by liberating it from time and space and considering it in terms of learning outcome intended for every hour by designing an appropriate formative assessment as metrics. Outcome-based attendance would be meaningful, engaging and liberating since the blended learning or flexible scheduling or hybrid flexible (HyFlex) as modus operandi and culture is emerging to be the new order and Online Distance Learning (ODL) is likely to be legitimised in collegiate education.

The next aspect that bothers institutions is the inability of the present generation of students to handle information overload from social media. Among students, the processing of information acquired through the context or content would typically happen through the progressive organic maturity acquired through social learning and life experiences including extracurricular activities in the college or school,



Look to the future

friendships made during their education, and leadership skills learnt by being involved in organising cultural and co-curricular activities. If the information processing does not happen through adequate social learning, it may lead to a cognitive overload among students. Subsequently, this may lead to difficulty in comprehending an issue and making effective decisions. Consequently, the inability to assimilate the information as personality traits would render students to be puffed up with pseudo-cognition thus triggering them to make hasty decisions, ignoring the prerequisite for negotiation

and coping skills, social skills including people skills as part of life. Reports have shown that, in the post pandemic, emotional intelligence seems to be missing among students.

Period of transition

On the one hand, we are in a race for organisational accreditation or ranking and the operation appears to be successful. It is not clear whether ranking or accrediting agencies are really concerned about these aspects to adjudicate the mental health index of students or offer a clear provision to incentivise such measures administered by the colleges as part of their

assessment.

Students, teachers and learning itself have transformed. Learning tools too have evolved accordingly. The ways of thinking and working and tools for working have also undergone a dramatic change. Teachers today have to realise these aspects, as this is a period of transition. Teachers need to liberate themselves from the past and think along with the present generation to render the teaching-learning process pleasurable.

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Clear your doubts

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This career counselling column may help



OFF THE EDGE

NANDINI RAMAN

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

I am a Class 12 student (Humanities stream without Maths), and wish to pursue a Bachelor's in Design. Will I be eligible? - Meenakshi
Dear Meenakshi,

For B. Des, there is no restriction of streams at 10+2 level. Some of the reputed colleges for this course are NID; NIFT; Amity University; Symbiosis Institute of Design, Pune, IIT-Delhi; IIT-Mumbai, VIT-Vellore, and Manipal University. Each has its own requirements for admission. Shortlist the institutes you are keen on and start preparing accordingly.

I am in Class 12 (Science stream with Biology as optional). I want to pursue my Bachelor's in Forensic Science. Is such a course available? Which institutes offer it? - Gahan
Dear Gahan,

Forensic Science courses are now popular and are available across B.Sc. and B.Tech. (IT Security and Forensics). PCM/B is a prerequisite. Manipal School of Life Sciences, Manipal; Jamia Hamdard University, New Delhi; Institute of Forensic Science, Mumbai; KJC, Bengaluru; and Amity Noida are some of the better-known institutes. You will have to take the All India Forensic Science Entrance test (AIFSET). Some universities may demand qualifications of the following entrance exams: Ouat, GSAT,

NEST, CG PAT, BHU UET and so on.

I am in the second year of BSW, but don't like the course, and am pursuing this merely to gain a degree. don't have any idea of what I want to become. What should I do? - Varsha
Dear Varsha,

That is not a great space to be but the good news is that you are aware of it. What would you enjoy studying and doing? Get a career profile done to see what can you move without losing any more time. Post BSW, you could look at alternate careers in Counselling: Corporate EAP/ own practice, paralegal, teaching, outreach coordinator, HR specialist, an educational consultant and so on. Identify your likes, dislikes, hobbies, interests, and core aptitude, and then make an informed choice.

I am attempting the Chartered Accountants Final for the fourth time and am losing motivation and interest. I have no plan B. How do I start afresh? - Arpitha
Dear Arpitha,

It can get discouraging and demotivating. CA Final is among the world's toughest exams. You need to have the confidence, perseverance, self-belief, ability to deal with and accept failure and a never-say-die attitude to crack this paper. Do other professional accounting/finance-related courses interest you? If yes, consider CMA, CFA, ACCA or CS. What about a MBA? If none of this interests you, consult a career counselor and get an assessment of your aptitude.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line 'Off the edge'.