

The pathway to new-age education

HYBRID Using a mix of traditional offline methods with the new online tools is key for success in the future

Vikas Gupta

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

The face of education needs an enormous reform to arrive at a point of distinction. With constant evolution demanding us to adapt at a relentless pace, education has become a direct reflection of the change that we predicted years ago. While the actual need of the hour is a coherent transformation in the learning ecosystem with a future-led approach, we still have to introduce a change that redirects our path from the traditional state of learning.

With all the ease that the Internet brings in and the rate at which one sees the increase in the number of online courses is a testament to the acceptance of online learning over traditional methods. Let us now look at the essential ingredients that are prerequisite for a successful model.

FOCUS ON SKILLS, NOT SEMESTERS

Traditional learning always takes place in the physical plane of existence, within the confines of the classroom. It lays its emphasis on a harmonious union between both theoretical and practical knowledge that is being imparted. In the case of higher education, the different approaches are divided into a fixed set of semesters, to reconcile with the entire length of the course itself. This has one obvi-



■ Online courses involve a method where different tools are used to maximise learning

ISTOCKPHOTO

ous drawback, however - it tends to ignore a student's skill set while emphasizing on things that a student may do well without knowing. A dilemma as such presents us with a choice - to either exist with the traditional model of learning or to bring a change for a streamlined focus on skills.

Traditional learning relies upon pedagogy that is based upon imparting knowledge within the boundaries of a classroom, where the teacher or professor explains and elaborates upon the key concepts pertaining to the subject at hand. On the other hand, online courses involve a richer, hybrid pedagogical method where different tools are utilized to maximize

the understanding of the students and enable them to have a better command of the subject at hand. With the introduction of Online courses, comes a comprehensive solution to evaluate students' capabilities and hone their skills. Drifting further from the traditional model of learning, these online platforms resonate with the demands of the incoming age of disruption. Online learning can also include interactive videos, one-on-one interactions with the subject matter expert over video chatting platforms, and enable instant sharing of essential information to a large group of people.

A complex, yet proportionate, stir of the online and offline learn-

ing models makes way for a hybrid model, which inculcates the traditional values of education along with the digital means of delivery.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

In the realm of higher education and academia, we require a mass effort to attain a state of coherence. This perceived state overlaps all the subjects known to human knowledge on certain points and constrains the objective of study to distinct and related disciplines.

Also known as the state of being interdisciplinary, this effort allows us to apply a subject to the study of other subjects as well. To varying degrees, tradi-

tional modes of learning have attained interdisciplinary status in many respects. But the true interdisciplinary potential of a subject is revealed in the case of online learning. Thanks to the rapid rate at which ideas can be communicated and shared with a large number of people, it has become possible for people concerned with a subject to know how that subject can be academically related to another subject at an international level.

DEFLECTING FROM THE LECTURE SYSTEM:

With both hybrid and interdisciplinary becoming integral to today's education system, learning has evolved into another dimension of existence where it is not just restricted to the mere use of lectures to convey important information and to impart knowledge. E-learning breaks away from existing restrictive traditional methods and from the bounds of a fixed number of semesters so that anybody who might be interested in the subject can partake in receiving the specialized knowledge on the subject. This makes education and learning available for everybody, regardless of age, gender or occupation and at any time.

Let the year 2019 be a year of disruption even in the education industry, spearheading a new horizon in the field of learning

The author is MD, Wiley India