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How hybrid learning reshapes Indian higher education for global job market

Higher education in India is undergoing a transformation through online learning and hybrid models, aligning with the National Education Policy (NEP) and focusing on holistic learning.

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How hybrid learning reshapes Indian higher education for global job market



India Today Education Desk

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New ideas are taking shape on Indian campuses, inspired by the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) and advances in digital learning since the pandemic. Higher education institutions across India are innovating with hybrid solutions to improve access, quality, and the quality of learning. Much as the NEP envisioned, this is leading to approaches that promote holistic and multidisciplinary learning.

For universities, thinking hybrid also provides a way to balance their evolving mission. The core purpose of higher education remains to nurture well-rounded individuals and lifelong learners who can adapt, solve society's challenges, and become the leaders of tomorrow.

In the near term, universities are also tasked with preparing students for an ever-changing work landscape, producing job-ready graduates.



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With diverse priorities, here are four areas institutions can harness hybrid solutions, to create a university education that is balanced and all-encompassing.

Dr. Ram Sharma, Vice Chancellor, UPES, and Raghav Gupta, Managing Director, India and APAC, Coursera have highlighted four areas in which institutions can harness hybrid solutions, to create a university education that is balanced and all-encompassing.

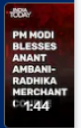
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Analytical thinking, creative thinking, curiosity, and lifelong learning are all among the top skills businesses will prioritise by 2027, according to the World Economic Forum's latest Future of Jobs report. The challenge for universities is to offer a broad-based education, with exposure to liberal studies that helps students hone these 21st-century skills.

Blended learning is opening the door to vast skill choices, giving students the flexibility to choose their learning trajectories and programs according to their inclination and abilities, a fundamental principle of the NEP.

OVERCOMING INDIA'S FACULTY SHORTAGE

Faculty shortages are at an all-time high across the country. The problem gets worse in high-demand fields like data science or cloud computing, where universities are competing with the industry to hire experts.

By integrating online courses from experts globally, universities are giving students exposure to cutting-edge content from the best in the world. Looking through a disciplinary lens, colleges are integrating online solutions for specific impact -- to address faculty shortages in domains like computer science, for instance.

Universities are also exploring HyFlex (hybrid-flexible) learning, where the course structure can change flexibly -- a teacher may flip the classroom, so students individually complete a module online, and class time is reserved for discussion and collaborative work.

Recent changes to government regulations are widening hybrid possibilities. Colleges can now offer 40 percent of credits in any category through online courses, with full autonomy to select the courses. Many institutions are introducing global online content that counts as credit to ramp up industry-focused or cutting-edge learning for students.

This is also increasing the flexibility for students to earn different combinations of majors, minors, double majors, major and more than one minor -- the gamut of major-minor combinations envisioned in the NEP, which till now was difficult to achieve due to infrastructure and faculty constraints.

ADDRESSING CONTEXTUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Colleges frequently grapple with benchmarking their student's skill proficiency, especially for high-demand jobs. Through insights gleaned online, universities can increasingly assess if their students have the necessary proficiency in core skills for emerging jobs, to build learning trajectories and custom solutions accordingly.


With these insights, universities are well equipped to use data and analytics to enrich teaching and learning, develop customised learning solutions with Generative AI, and streamline interventions to improve student outcomes.

Generative AI solutions are already taking the learning and teaching experience up a notch, with personalised and interactive courses and virtual coaches.

CURRICULUM TO CAREERS

A growing number of colleges across India are offering online industry micro-credentials to strengthen employment outcomes for students. These certificates created by industry leaders like Google, IBM, Meta, and Salesforce equip students with specific skills for in-demand entry-level digital jobs -- such as Data Analyst or Digital Marketer.

Integrating 'skills-first' learning online is helping universities build a bridge to what employers want. In a survey, 92 percent of Indian hiring managers felt an industry micro-credential strengthened a candidate's job application.



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Indian graduates will increasingly have access to job opportunities all over the world. Many of these jobs, which need digital skills, are being offered remotely. By helping students build these skills online, colleges can prepare them for a wider range of job opportunities, targeting placements without borders. ■

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