

A shift to learner-centred education edifice is a must

As India rapidly emerges as one of the most powerful economies of the world, riding on what is popularly termed as its 'demographic dividend', the current education system, both mainstream and tertiary, is being subjected to never-before pressures and is being stretched at its seams.

The enormity of the challenge facing the main stream education system can be gauged by the startling fact that by 2025 India is slated to have 65% of its populace in the working age bracket which would roughly translate to around 95 crore people. For such a large number of youth to enter the working populace would entail fundamental changes in the way education and training is viewed in the country. Apart from large scale capacity building both in terms of physical infrastructure and human resources, issues of quality has to be addressed in the right earnest, which would involve re-looking at the current teaching practices, curriculum design, use of technology to disseminate knowledge, and interfacing with the user industry to help create human resources that are found employable by the user industry.

Among the most critical aspects that need change, is the move away

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from the current teacher-centric system of education dissemination, to the more holistic and robust learner-centred instructional methodology. With the focus and spotlight firmly fixed on the learner, students are not only made responsible for their individual learning journeys, but more importantly educators, in their new role, help create a path of demonstrable and achievable success by laying out in clear terms learning objectives and goals and criteria for success.

The basic premise of a learner-

centred instruction system is centred on providing learning experience based on the needs, abilities and learning styles of individual learners. Contrary to perceived notions, research has, time and again, demonstrated that by focusing on learners instead of only on the content, enables educators to bring into play innovative approaches and personalised learning into the classroom, with the active participation of the learners.

Another aspect of learner-centred instruction, which proves invaluable to learners, as they enter the working populace, is the predominance on collaboration and application skills. Deeply connected with the real world, learner-centred instructional strategies provide learners with a wide range of opportunities to collaborate with each other, sharing and upgrading their knowledge while testing their application skills in a variety of situations.

The shift to a learner-centred instruction system calls for new roles for teachers and educators as mentors and the creation of a learning environment that on one hand focuses on the needs of each learner while overhauling the entire curriculum design and content creation process.