

# EDUCATION PLUS

GET THE EDGE

Follow us

[facebook.com/thehindu](https://facebook.com/thehindu)

[twitter.com/the\\_hindu](https://twitter.com/the_hindu)

[instagram.com/the\\_hindu](https://instagram.com/the_hindu)

**A. Joseph Dorairaj**

**T**hese days, words like 'skilling,' 'up-skilling' and 'reskilling' reverberate in the corridors of higher educational institutions. The recent push towards skilling and vocational education has reignited the debate on liberal versus vocational education highlighting the academic-vocational divide.

#### Development

In 387 BCE, Plato's academy in Athens – considered the prototype of a modern university – focused on elenchus and dialectics. The aim was to train youth to be aware of inbuilt contradictions and inconsistencies in discourses and to direct their thinking in terms of contraries. Aristotle, an alumnus, continued this tradition with his Lyceum, established in 334 BCE.

In modern times, Wilhelm von Humboldt, the architect of Berlin University founded in 1810, proclaimed that a university had a dual mandate: teaching and undertaking research. The Humboldtian model of a university as a research-intensive institution is being followed in the West currently.

John Newman, in his *The Idea of a University* (1852) argued that knowledge is its own end. Liberal education, according to him, is the



not be burdened with skill development though students should acquire the skills of transforming and crystallising thoughts into action. Let Community Colleges, ITIs and DDUKs and, to some extent, undergraduate colleges take up skill development in a full-fledged manner.

But, even here, a dose of liberal education is required; for, ultimately, the purpose of higher education is to enhance students' intellectual capacities. Diluting the mandate of higher educational institutions for short-term gains and converting them into skill developers and managers would be detrimental in the long-run. An excessive focus on skill development will eventually lead to an impoverished intellectual climate in higher educational institutions, especially in universities.

Different categories of institutions should adhere to their respective mandates and their roles and responsibilities should not be diluted or mixed up. An entire generation brought up largely on skill development may not be endowed with corresponding cognitive and meta-cognitive competencies, which would be a recipe for disaster.

The writer is Emeritus Professor, Gandhigram Rural Institute Deemed-to-be University, Tamil Nadu

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### Wells Mountain Foundation Scholarship

Provided by Wells Mountain Initiative (WMI).

**Eligibility:** Those applying to or currently enrolled in their first UG degree and plan to live and work in their home country after graduation and show financial need. Prior participation in volunteering and a commitment towards it during the period of studies is required.

**Rewards:** Up to \$3,000 per annum.

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** March 1

[www.b4s.in/edge/WMFS](http://www.b4s.in/edge/WMFS)

### Inlaks Shivdasani Scholarships

Offered by the non-profit Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation.

**Eligibility:** Open to Indian passport holders who have a first-class or equivalent degree from recognised Indian institutions and have scored 65% or equivalent in Arts-related subjects; and 70% or equivalent in Maths and Science-related subjects and have received a valid deferred offer letter for the current academic year and hold an English language certification.

**Rewards:** \$1,00,000 and other benefits (one-time).

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** March 31

[www.b4s.in/edge/INLAKS](http://www.b4s.in/edge/INLAKS)

### SBIF Asha Scholarship for Overseas Education

An initiative of the SBI Foundation under its Integrated Learning Mission (ILM).

**Eligibility:** Indian students belonging to SC and ST categories pursuing a Master's or PG course (any year) at a premier institution outside India and have secured at least 75% or above in their previous academic year.

Annual family income should be ₹600,000.

**Rewards:** Up to ₹20,00,000 or 50% of course-related expenses (whichever is less)

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** March 31

[www.b4s.in/edge/SBIFS2](http://www.b4s.in/edge/SBIFS2)

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

## Develop critical thinking

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



### OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

I am doing a B.A. (Hons) in Political Science from IGNOU. I will be the first graduate in my family. I wanted to pursue Law but couldn't get into the NLUs. I am considering pursuing an LLB from Delhi University. My main concern is job placement. Should I focus on preparing for government jobs? Also are there any scholarships available for students like me?

Aditya

Dear Aditya,  
While a degree from DU can open doors to various opportunities in the legal sector, the admission process is very competitive and, even with a scholarship, it can be financially demanding. The legal job market is also competitive, and there is no guarantee of a campus placement.

Government jobs will offer and provide stability and other benefits but the exams are highly competitive and require dedicated preparation and time. The selection process is also lengthy and unpredictable. Preparing for government exams while studying LLB can maximise your chances of securing a good job.

For financial aid, check out the Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students as it provides financial assistance to meritorious students from low-income families. Many

states offer scholarships for students from economically weaker sections. DU and other universities may offer scholarships based on merit or need. Several private organisations offer scholarships to deserving students.

I am in the fourth year of B.A. LLB (Hons) and specialising in criminal law but my interests are in media and fashion. What are my career options? Should I consider pursuing LLM abroad? Puneet

Dear Puneet,  
Why are you specialising in criminal law when you are not interested in law or practising as an advocate? What do you want to do in media and fashion? Some potential career options are Fashion Law, Media Law, Entertainment Law or content creation related to fashion, law, or a combination of both. Other legal career choices would include corporate law, public policy, legal research, and legal journalism. Pursuing an LLM Abroad can enhance your legal knowledge and skills, and open up more career opportunities. Gain some practical experience through internships in law firms, media houses, or fashion companies to understand what you enjoy and would like to focus on as an eventual career choice.

After completing Class 12 (PCMB), I opted for JEE, DU JAT, and CA but did not succeed. Now, after much introspection, I have found my passion in Law. However, I am

unable to pay for the exam fees. I have tried reaching out to the CLAT and AILET teams for fee exemption, but I haven't received a response. I feel terrified and uncertain about what steps to take next. Mukul

Dear Mukul,  
Explore financial aid options across government scholarships, university scholarships (check college websites for specific details), scholarships offered by private organisations and trusts, and educational loans with flexible repayment options. Reach out to lawyers, judges, or professors who can provide guidance and potentially assist with finances. Join online communities and forums to seek advice and support. Consider taking state-level judicial services exams, which can lead to a career as a judicial officer. Explore State law colleges might have lower fees and easier admission criteria or a part-time LLB course or a distance learning option but be aware of the limitations of online learning. Develop your skills across legal research and writing, gain practical experience through internships at law firms or legal aid clinics. Stay determined, explore all options and don't let financial constraints deter you from pursuing your dreams.

I have a locomotor disability and am doing my BBA online. My parents want me to take the UPSC exam, as they believe it will offer me a life of convenience. However, I aspire to join an IIM to pursue an MBA.

Will my disability affect my studies on campus or limit my prospects when it comes to placements? What are my other options? Also, will my online degree be accepted for the CAT or any government exam? Astha

Dear Astha,  
Online degrees are valid if the university offering the programme is recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the programme passes the application college eligibility criteria. Contact the exam authorities for final clarification. Most IIMs provide a supportive environment for students with disabilities. Your academic performance and potential will be the primary deciding factors, even by recruiters.

You can also consider an online MBA programme, as many top-tier institutions today offer excellent programmes. Given your interest in business and management, you could choose to be a consultant, an analyst, a project manager, or a business development manager or start your own business and leverage technology to overcome physical limitations. E-commerce, financial services and education are some other choices. Network with professors, alumni, and industry professionals and seek a mentor who can guide you through this journey. Finally, stay positive and believe in yourself.

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

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to [edups@thehindu@gmail.com](mailto:edups@thehindu@gmail.com) with the subject line Off the Edge

## Make it interactive and engaging

An interview with British educator Claire Horsburgh on learning strategies for non-native English speaking students and why learning extra languages is important

**Soma Basu**

[soma.basu@thehindu.co.in](http://soma.basu@thehindu.co.in)

**I**magine a class full of children in rural Punjab singing their own version of 'Kolaveri Di' in classical Punjabi. "It is possible because they learnt the original Tamil song and its meaning without stress, and understood the song's essence and its elongated drags to be able to produce their own version," says British educator Claire Horsburgh. As she heard them amid a session full of laughter, fun and noise, it validated what she herself has been promoting for more than a decade now: the importance of learning another language, less often used at home, apart from the mother tongue.

On her part, Horsburgh has been reinforcing the core principles of English language teaching across India with Oxford University Press (OUP). "English can be seen everywhere in this country. It is the language of the world to get jobs and unlock opportunities," she says. However, what should not be overlooked is that children require a foundation to be able to communicate in a language that is not their own and schools are usually the starting point, which require support. Horsburgh's mission is to effectively cultivate multi-lingual students and teachers because she believes English proficiency not only has social and cognitive benefits but is also linked to educational level and social class. Her objective is to ensure the process of learning the language is interactive and engaging.

Horsburgh, who was in India in late 2024 to conduct her workshops after a hiatus following the pandemic, said that she believes that people across all ages and

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



strata take to a new language with ease when they learn by doing, and not just listening.

### Global perspective

Her drive to promote English stems from the need to break barriers of cultural insensitivity. "When we study languages, it allows us to delve into different cultures and their history; it gives learners the ability to develop and have a different perspective and context. She also emphasises that, as global citizens, it is important to be culturally aware, understand different beliefs, and look beyond stereotypes to be able to build stronger international relationships.

According to a government survey of 2011, 10.2% of the Indian population speaks English as first, second or third language as every State promotes its regional language. "For a better and early exposure to English, schools have to rethink the approach of teaching because the younger students in particular are not inspired by learning rigid techniques, solely by a textbook," said Horsburgh, who visited Kanchipuram,



Hyderabad, Kochi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Delhi, Mumbai and Nagpur over the course of two months.

Horsburgh's objective is to make the English classroom lively and enjoyable and she makes her workshop participants – who come from both private and government, rural and urban schools – sing, act, and read with expression various forms of English literature.

Horsburgh's grandfather initiated the English book series for OUP, which her father developed and completed. She takes it forward by aligning it with the National Curriculum Framework now. "There have been big changes in the Indian education sector with a move to

wards experiential learning, activity-based tasks and cross-curricular integration," she says, "and we are trying to make English completely culturally relevant."

### Beyond the textbook

It is easy for teachers to slip into patterns and just focus on grades, but Horsburgh's point is to teach in an interesting way. "The textbook is just a resource; it should not become the only teaching tool with the focus on exams alone. A teacher should take the ownership and think about how to start a lesson refreshingly."

She feels schools fail to motivate learners to engage with the curriculum based on joyful learning pedagogy. "Teaching English is still focused on reading, writing and speaking and not knowing how to use the language to communicate well. Teachers have to think about what their class needs, tailor their approach to supplement or scaffold and raise the standard," says Horsburgh. It is all about active learning because fluency in languages and confident communication is the ultimate goal, according to Horsburgh.



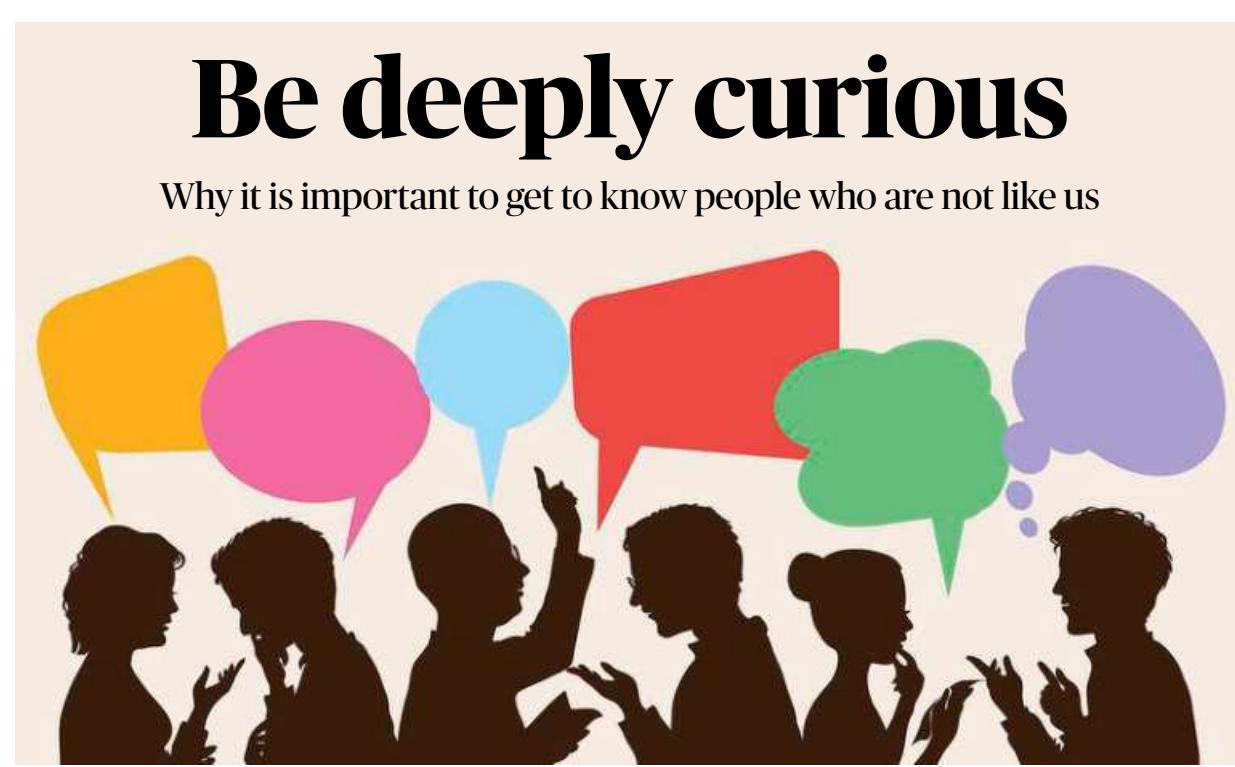
**THINK**  
Aruna Sankaranarayanan

A tendency to categorise people into groups is fairly pervasive. The groupings may be based on various factors ranging from gender, ethnicity, religion, class, caste, language, educational levels, and political affiliation to even more superficial markers like skin colour, fashion and food choices. Though India has been a pluralistic nation housing many types of diversities, it does not preclude us from sorting people into 'us' and 'them'. While we identify and relate to people like 'us', we may distance ourselves and even fear the 'other'. In fact, intolerance of the other seems to be fairly widespread globally.

As author Arthur Brooks

notes in *Love Your Enemies*, we live in a "culture of contempt" that spans geographic boundaries. Contempt, unlike irritation or anger, doesn't dissipate but endures, says Brooks, and involves "complete disdain" of another. Further, it rests on the 'mistaken' notion that we cannot find any "common ground" with the other person. Besides, contempt is a toxic emotion that gnaws at our happiness, health and well-being while belittling and humiliating the other.

**Deep curiosity**  
Arguing or stonewalling people who hold opposing views from us is not going to bring us closer. Rather, Brooks says that we need to take the initiative of "building bridges." And, one way of doing so is by exhibiting "deep curiosity." In an article in *Psyche*, Scott Shigeoka defines deep curiosity as "a search for understanding that leads to connection and transformation". Rather



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

than being a "purely intellectual" endeavour, deep curiosity involves much more than simply seeking information. It involves not only forging bonds with others but also helps us reconnect with ourselves by

providing new insights and alternative perspectives.

By practising deep curiosity, you ask open questions that plumb a person's depths. For example, asking yourself what makes you "feel truly alive," avers

Shigeoka, may help you discover your vocation. When learning about your ancestry, you don't just focus on where your ancestors came from. Instead, you look for ways to connect with your roots. Like-

wise, when you interact with people, especially those who seem different or difficult, try to reach out to them with a genuine curiosity, suspending all your biases and presuppositions. Instead of judging or

categorising them, be open to listening to their views, however divergent they may be from yours.

Shigeoka avers that deep curiosity can be honed like a muscle with practice. The more you exercise it, the more adept you will become at it. You will also find that your relationships with people are smoother and more fulfilling.

#### Express warmth

Brooks also offers advice, based on the research of Professor John Gottman, for dealing with people who press our buttons. When you're having a conversation with people you disagree with, don't listen solely "to rebut" their arguments. Rather focus on their feelings with an empathetic understanding. For every criticism you offer them, ensure that you buffer it with at least "five positive comments". Remember that no person, however divergent their views, is deserving of contempt. Finally, seek people who differ and disagree

with you with an openness that will enrich you.

As the Dalai Lama once advised Brooks, practising warm-heartedness can help you replace contempt with a genuine connection. The next time someone treats you with disdain, you can "change at least one heart; yours," writes Brooks. Though you may not be able to sway the other person, you do have the power to "break the cycle of contempt".

Even if you don't feel like breaking the ice, Brooks suggests that you "Fake it." Often, our emotions will mimic our actions. If we keep behaving like a "nice person would," over time, we will morph into nicer and warmer beings. By remembering to smile, expressing gratitude and listening with the intent of understanding others, foes and frenemies may morph into friends.

The writer blogs at [www.arunasankaranarayanan.com](http://www.arunasankaranarayanan.com) and is the author of *Zero Limits: Things Every 20-Something Should Know*.

## Twinning it

What is a Digital Twin? What are the opportunities the domain offers students?

**Naveen Mishra**

Digital twins are revolutionising industries by providing visual representations of the physical world and creating exciting career opportunities, from city planning to space exploration. The virtual environment is comparatively less costly and riskier than the real-world trials. Hence, it can hasten learning, problem-solving, and experimentation.

Digital reality, or twin, is a precise digital representation of the physical world, using dynamic data to monitor, analyse, simulate, and optimise performance. These virtual models go past static 3D representations by simulating real-world Physics and exhibiting live parameters of the system.

Digital Twins are transforming industries such as manufacturing, urban planning, healthcare, and energy. In an industrial setting, digital twins facilitate the monitoring of processes, equipment, and supply chains, allowing maintenance specialists and quality control personnel to visually detect and rectify faults without using complicated codes or technical readings.

**Career options**  
Like any technology paradigm, there are creators and users who employ these technologies to provide real-world solutions and scale them. Here are some key roles emerging in this domain:

**Optimisation expert (AI)**: Works on captured data to eradicate unwanted objects using classification, and thus improves speed and accuracy. A degree in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence is required.

**Simulation engineer**: Analyses the real-world da-

hands-on field technicians with a great understanding of the physical world, and are adept at using data-capturing devices. Experience in Geomatics, Surveying, or Civil Engineering is an advantage.

**Digital twin experience designer**: Designs intuitive, user-centred digital interfaces and tailors practices based on user cases. The knowledge of user experience and infrastructure design theories is important, along with a background in human-centred design or a related field.

**Space planner**: Integrates captured reality aiming for optimal infrastructure solutions and creates near-real-world environments by allowing digital experiences before execution. A degree in Architecture, Urban Planning, or Interior Design and expertise in digital design tools are required.

**Training application developer**: Develops training tools, in an XR environment by helping the users, especially those in maintenance and operations to learn about the physical solutions. The role demands proficiency in using reality creation tools (such as HxDR, Gaming engines, and XR) along with skills in programming, and an understanding of physical reality and its relationship with digital / IoT devices and data management.

**Optimisation expert (AI)**: Works on captured data to eradicate unwanted objects using classification, and thus improves speed and accuracy. A degree in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence is required.

**Simulation engineer**: Analyses the real-world da-

ta to develop simulations in the virtual environment. Proficiency in simulation software, with a background in applied Maths, will help.

**Project manager**: Oversees the digital twin project, from selecting hardware, scope definition, and data collection to the integration of AI and timeline management. Requires strong subject expertise and project management abilities.

Careers in Digital Reality are expanding in a variety of industries, with a high demand for experts in data collecting, UX/UI design, and space planning to lead senior roles. Professionals will be able to manage large-scale data capture projects, specialise in immersive AR/VR systems, participate in sustainable urban design, or oversee digital transformation initiatives. The growing reliance on digital twins and AI-driven analytics will accelerate roles to evolve into positions that outline key infrastructure and industry solutions, making digital reality a growing frontier for career development.

Educational institutions play a critical role and can work towards the transformation by developing a core curriculum based on leading solutions and collaborating with industry solution providers of hardware and software. Setting up of labs to help students with hands-on practise and real projects, allows students to apply their ingenuity and develop solutions while gaining real-world experience.

The writer is Senior Vice President and Head of Hexagon R&D Center India.

**Kalpesh Banker**

Entering life on campus comes with challenges although prior planning can help one navigate these changes with ease and simplicity. College is a time when aspirations take wing but newcomers often many doubts: how to manage academics, handle finances, make new connections, and so on. Additionally, the pressure to stay ahead and land a dream job also remains a concern among transfer students. Managing all these issues is challenging but an open mind, constructive framework, and the right focus gives one a head start. Here are a few tips that will also help.

**Kickstart academics**: Remembering your "Why" is key to sail through academic challenges. As one has to constantly juggle between classes, assignments, examinations, and deadlines, take the help of educational advisors. Talking to mentors, coordinators, and even seniors helps clear subject-related doubts.

**Leverage resources**: Make maximum use of libraries, study spaces and other assets to excel in research tools, find gaps,



FREEPICK

## It's a fresh start

Tips for freshmen and transfer students to navigate the various challenges as they enter campus life

and develop out-of-the-box ideas. Institutes also run training clubs and career services to help freshmen identify opportunities, prepare resumes, rehearse interviews, and grab opportunities early in their college days. Transfer students, on the other hand, need to sit with academic coordinators to select courses, credit transfers, and map degree plans. Remember, universities offer a lot of opportunities and you have to stay focused and not get

swayed by external influences.

**Build networks**: Your network is your net worth, so start building connections from the start. Making friends, joining communities, and striking collaborations are important strategies to help widen one's circles and also help develop soft skills. Move beyond your comfort zone and engage in activities that challenge your conventional thinking and value system. By involving a wider group of stakeholders

you can develop a holistic, dynamic, and encompassing perspective.

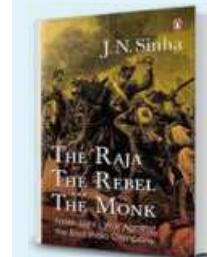
**Manage finances**: Managing money is also a tricky, as most newcomers struggle to organise their expenses. Practice making a budget, allocating money, and tracking expenses. While tuition fees, food, and lodging are mandatory, focus on controlling discretionary purchases. Apply for scholarships, grants, or paid internships to supplement your money and help with finances.

**Time Management**: With a plethora of tasks, time management is a crucial skill. Plan objectives, frame schedules, and categorise tasks according to importance and deadlines. Also keep some time for yourself to rejuvenate your mind and prepare for the next task.

**Seek Support**: Universities today offer counselling services with counsellors being specifically trained to offer holistic support not only in academic issues but also on the personal side. Be proactive in seeking support as sharing issues with experts is an excellent way to address and overcome them.

The writer is Managing Partner at EduShine Search Partners

## ON THE SHELF



### The Raja, The Rebel and The Monk

In late 18th century India, an obscure king who ruled over Huseypur in northwest Bihar challenged the might of the British. When overwhelmed by the East India Company forces, he escaped into the jungles of Gorakhpur, raised a people's army and fought a guerilla war for 30 years. Maharaja Fateh Bahadur Sahi was a warrior, patriot and innovator, who visualised the dangers of impending imperialism and rose to meet the challenge. This happened years before the Indian Revolt of 1857 and the revolutions in America and France.

How did he operate and survive for so long? *The Raja, the Rebel and the Monk* attempts to answer the question.

**Author:** J.N. Sinha  
**Publisher:** Penguin  
**Price:** ₹599

ry. "Teachers will also focus on socio-emotional learning, a critical aspect of any student's holistic development," the policy states. Similarly, international organisations such as UNESCO endorse global peace and sustainable development through education, science, culture, and communication and comprehensive training modules for teachers. These initiatives align with the NEP 2020's focus on holistic, multidisciplinary education.

The shift to urban environments and adaptation of new norms post-pandemic means people must engage with new ways of thinking, communicating, and working. The diverse population and the suddenly imposed dismantling of traditional social networks place additional emphasis on people's sense of trust, cooperation, and compassion. As we acknowledge the evolving landscape of education, emotional intelligence is evidently not an add-on but an essential factor for student development.

**Evolving landscape**  
The Government of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises transforming the nation's education system to make it more holistic, inclusive, flexible, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century.

The writer is the CEO of Globeducate India.

## At the heart of learning



Emotional intelligence shapes well-rounded students with empathy, resilience, and social awareness

Learning (SEL) enhances academic achievement, mental well-being, school climate, and long-term life outcomes. Research links it to improved coping skills, reduced emotional distress, and lower aggression. SEL also benefits educators by boosting job satisfaction. Therefore, providing educators with SEL training is equally critical.

Self-awareness empowers students to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to make decisions and set realistic goals. For instance, a high school student struggling with public speaking might undertake regular practice and seek constructive feedback to gradually build confidence, enhancing future performances.

Resilience also enables students to rebound from setbacks, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. Emotional intelligence helps students thrive socially, encouraging friendships, collaboration, and resilience against peer pressure.

For educators, integrating emotional intelligence

into modern education is fundamental. Models such as project-based learning (PBL) and collaborative problem-solving create dynamic environments that promote creativity, teamwork, and practical problem-solving skills, essential for future success.

**Evolving landscape**  
The Government of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises transforming the nation's education system to make it more holistic, inclusive, flexible, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century.

The writer is the CEO of Globeducate India.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

CMYK

A CH-CHE