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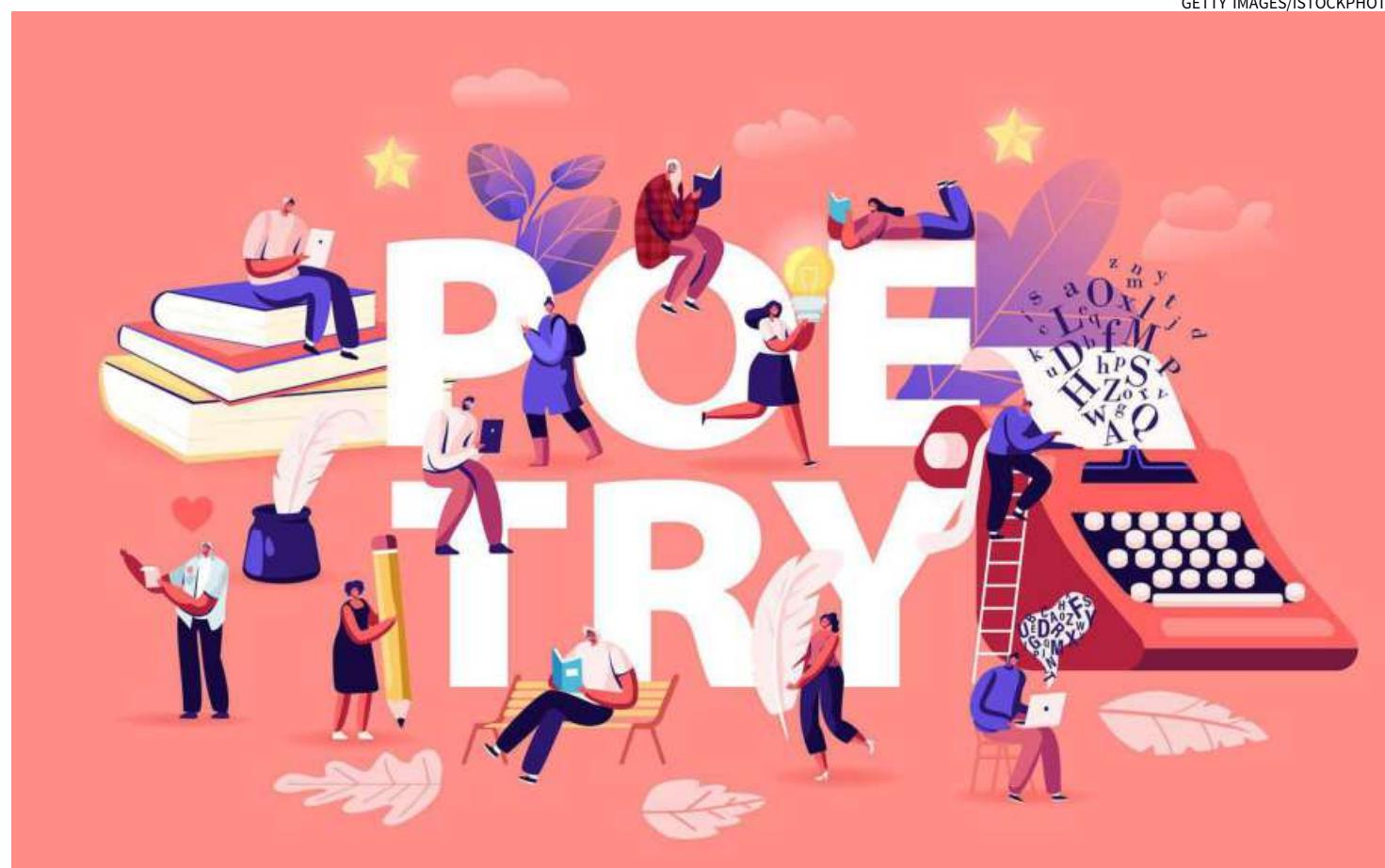
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Nimesh Ved

A few weeks ago, we had organised a session on poetry for teachers. The idea was to delve deeper into poetry and discuss how best we could get children to bond better with it. The session commenced with a song and I began by asking colleagues to recall one or more film songs which, in their understanding, were laden with metaphors.

The silence that followed made me wonder where I had erred. I then wrote on the board a few lines from a song to discuss the metaphors it contained. However, the participants found it difficult to connect the metaphors with the song. Most people like and listen to film songs but rarely associate them with metaphors or with any other figures of speech. Someone said that an exercise like this could suck the joy of out of songs. This left me wondering if we connect with metaphors only when we wear our teaching hats. Do we not connect them with our lives?

What is poetry?
Going forward, one of the questions that came up was how do we introduce poetry to students and tell them what it is. The answers ranged from "not prose", "rhyming", and so on but no one suggested that each student could interpret a poem



Rhyme and reason

How do we introduce poetry to students and tell them what it is?

differently without being incorrect. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge once remarked, poetry is "the best words in the best order". As our discussion progressed, my colleagues' struggle was palpable, despite having invested significant time in reading, reciting and listening to poetry.

Unfortunately, the

"conventional teacher" runs the risk of reducing a William Wordsworth classic to a list of difficult words with their meanings or explain the beauty of a Robert Frost as THE interpretation of the poem. In other words, we wean children away from poetry. On the other hand, I recall my English teacher who immersed us

in Shelley's To A Skylark. I am not sure of the exact impact it had on me or my love for poetry but, even more than two decades later, I can still recall her infectious passion and the skylark she drew on the board. Eugenio Montale famously said, "I wait for poetry to visit me." Poetry surely visited our class that week.

So, what can we do besides, of course, waiting for poetry to visit us?

What we can do

We can begin with the basics. We can figure out what poetry means to us. Or, what is a poem? Paul Celan's response to the latter is epic, "A poem, as a

manifestation of language and thus essentially dialogue, can be a message in a bottle, sent out in the – not always greatly hopeful – belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land, on heartland perhaps. Poems in this sense, too, are under way: they are making toward something".

And possibly move on to how, if at all, can one

teach poetry? Siddhartha Menon, a teacher and poet, has an eloquent take in his *Building A Cathedral: An approach to teaching poetry*. "I ask myself what I might be doing when I teach poetry. A simple, and perhaps the most honest, answer is that I am pleasing myself and thereby, I like to think, my students". We could also delve deeper by bringing in factors like age and comfort with the language. Then, of course, we need to try out actions. There are neither secret formulae nor short-cuts, and we will have to work our way.

In the recent months, in school we have focused on the text. The poem. We have read poems – alone, in silence, together, aloud, in tandem with online videos online and re-read them. We have begun many days with poems as well. We have tried to encompass a wide range from the classics to the contemporary and from the religious to the revolutionary. In the process, not only have we built up a decent collection of books on poems but have also made inroads into our conversations. Some of us have become friends with poetry and a couple have also fallen in love with it. We understand this is a beginning and sooner than later the students will join us.

The writer teaches English and is associated with a school in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

SCHOLARSHIPS

UCL India Excellence Scholarship

An initiative from the University College London (UCL), the U.K.

Eligibility: Permanent residents of India who have a Bachelor's degree equivalent to first-class UK degree.

Rewards: £5,000

Application: Online

Deadline: February 27
www.b4s.in/edge/UCL1

SOAS University of London Felix Scholarships

An initiative from the SOAS University of London, the U.K.

Eligibility: Indian nationals pursuing Master's or Ph.D. at the University of London and have a first-class Bachelor's degree secured from a recognised Indian university.

Rewards: Full tuition fees, living costs, and return airfare.

Application: Online

Deadline: January 31
www.b4s.in/edge/FSSU1

ZScholars Programme

An initiative from ZS Associates India

Eligibility: Indian students studying B.A., B.Com, B.Ed, B.Pharm, B.Sc., B.Sc. (Statistics), Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Mass Communication, BBA, BBM, BBS, BCA, B.Sc. (IT), B.Arch, B.Tech/B.E., B.A. LLB (Integrated), BDS, LLB, MBBS, B.Sc. Nursing, and B.Tech + M.Tech (Integrated five-year programme) in Delhi, Pune, Chennai, or Bengaluru and have scored at least 60% in Class 12.

Annual family income should be less than ₹800,000.
Rewards: Up to ₹50,000 per year
Application: Online
Deadline: January 31
www.b4s.in/edge/ZSPU6

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

FREEPIK

tion's goals.

Build relationships: Internships are as much about networking as they are about skill development. Use this time to connect with colleagues across teams, participate in company activities, and seek mentorship. Building professional relationships creates a support system that could prove invaluable throughout your career. These connections often lead to long-term opportunities, and the trust you cultivate can have a lasting impact.

Be professional: Treat your role with the same level of seriousness and professionalism as a full-time position. Be punctual, adhere to deadlines, and maintain a high standard of quality in your work. Demonstrating ownership over your tasks showcases your reliability and could lead to positive recommendations, or even a full-time role.

Use technology: Leverage your understanding of technology to offer innovative solutions. Whether it is streamlining a process, enhancing a social media campaign, or introducing emerging tech trends, use your skills to contribute to the organisation in ways that make you stand out.

Be aware of the big picture: It is easy to become absorbed in day-to-day tasks, but don't lose sight of how your work contributes to the company's overarching objectives. Understanding the strategic impact of your efforts not only adds depth to your experience but also positions you as someone who thinks beyond their immediate role.

Use your internship to gain critical experience, develop meaningful relationships, and showcase your potential. The future of work is collaborative, dynamic, and demanding. An internship is your entry point; make it count.

The writer is Founder and CEO, Kraftshala.

Take time to decide

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

prep?

Stay persistent and do not lose sight of your goal. Prioritise tasks and create a realistic study schedule. It might help to enrol in a coaching institute or an online course to supplement your preparation, as it will offer structure and consistency and help build the discipline that you need.

Work on your analytical, problem-solving, comprehension and writing, critical thinking, time management and communication skills. To prepare for both the M.Sc. and the UPSC, use the syllabus overlap and link the relevant sections in both such as like Science and Technology and GS Paper III (Environment, Ecology, and so on.). Focus on NCERT books to understand core concepts in Geography, History, Polity, Economics, and Science and Technology. Manage your time sensibly and use weekends to take mock tests and practise writing answers. Use breaks during the M.Sc. schedule for quick revisions and study smartly using mind maps and other techniques.

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what jobs to apply for. I don't have any skills like content writing or graphic design and so on. Saumya

Dear Saumya,
Your education and skills are highly valuable across various sectors. Some potential career paths could be in content writing and editing as a technical writer (working on technical user manuals, software guides, and white papers), a content writer (for blogs, websites, and social media), a copywriter (writing persuasive marketing copy for advertisements, brochures, and product descriptions), or an editor and a proofreader. You could also look at education and training. Working at publishing and media houses will help you discover publishing, journalism and public relations. You can also consider roles in corporate communications, customer Service or HR. Don't worry and get intimidated about not knowing the job; you will learn on the job and grow into the role organically.

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 eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

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I completed MSW and am working on my doctorate in the same field. What are my career options apart from teaching? What is the scope in India? Should I focus on think tanks abroad? Shriram

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My UG and PG degrees are in English Language and Literature. I wish to work in the private sector but don't know where and

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Postgraduate Taught Merit Scholarships are available. **Eligibility:** Holders of a three- or four-year bachelor's degree with minimum 55 % in a relevant subject from a recognised university. Overall IELTS score of 6.5 (with 6 in each component). Details at <https://t.ly/PrUoj>

The University of Sheffield, the U.K., invites applications for its M.Sc. Human Nutrition course starting in September 2025. International

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applications for its two-year, full-time residential Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) programme for the academic session 2025-2027. **Eligibility:** Class 10 and 12 from a recognised board, UG/PG degree in any discipline from a recognised institution; Qualifying scores in CAT, GMAT XAT or MAT

More information at <https://t.ly/wXesN>

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Make it count

Tips for students to make the most of their internships

Varun Satia

The Union Budget 2024-25 has allocated ₹19,000 crore to create 30 lakh internships over the next two years and also requires India's top 500 companies to provide internships. While this aims to address unemployment issues and equip youngsters with real-world experience, the success of this initiative hinges on more than just corporate compliance.

For interns, this is an opportunity to lay the foundation for a meaningful career. Making the most of this scheme will require focus, initiative, and a proactive approach from both interns and organisations.

Here are a few things that students can do to take advantage of this scheme:

Be clear: The first day as an intern is critical to establish clarity about your role and responsibilities.

Take the initiative to ask questions about project objectives, timelines, and expectations. Summarise these discussions in writing to ensure alignment with your supervisor. This not only helps you stay focused but also signals your professionalism and commitment.

Be curious: An internship is an opportunity to learn from seasoned professionals. Take every chance to ask thoughtful questions and understand how your tasks fit into the

organisation's broader goals. Go beyond your immediate responsibilities to explore the industry's trends and challenges. This will help you build a deeper understanding of the field.

Be proactive: The most impactful interns are those who don't wait for instructions but actively seek ways to contribute. Whether it is proposing solutions to existing challenges or suggesting new ideas, your initiative reflects a results-oriented mindset. If you find yourself with downtime, volunteer for additional tasks or explore areas where you can bring fresh insights. This not only builds your credibility but also shows your alignment with the organisation's broader goals.

Be aware of the big picture: It is easy to become absorbed in day-to-day tasks, but don't lose sight of how your work contributes to the company's overarching objectives. Understanding the strategic impact of your efforts not only adds depth to your experience but also positions you as someone who thinks beyond their immediate role.

The writer is Founder and CEO, Kraftshala.

SAVE THE DATE

Admissions

BITS Design School (BITSDES) invites applications for its four-year residential Bachelor of Design (Honours) programme, which has five pathways: Physical Product Design, Digital Product Design (UX/UI), Design Research and Insights, Experience Design, and Visual Design.

Deadline: January 31
<https://www.bitsdesign.edu.in/>

The University of Sheffield, the U.K., invites applications for its M.Sc. Human Nutrition course starting in September 2025. International

Deadline: January 31
<https://t.ly/PrUoj>

Badruka School of Management (BSM), Hyderabad, invites

More information at <https://t.ly/wXesN>

Deadline: January 31
<https://t.ly/wXesN>

The academic vs. non-academic debate



WIDE ANGLE

Albert P' Rayan

"The proper functioning of a university depends on the all-round acceptance of two basic principles. These are autonomy for universities from external control together with a democratic administrative system, and effective participation of the academic community in the formation and implementation of university policy and programmes." - Dr D.S. Kothari, 1964

Universities that enjoy autonomy and are led by visionary, broad-minded leaders can serve as model institutions of higher education and set an example for others across the country. Since independence, Indian universities have had vice-chancellors, some of whom are still remembered and praised long after their retirement or passing for their academic excellence, visionary leadership, and exceptional dedication to improving the quality of higher education in the country.

Recently, there have been extensive discussions and debates about what defines a good vice-chancellor and the criteria for selecting candidates for this position. Political lead-

An examination of the Draft University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, 2025, pertaining to the appointment of Vice Chancellors

ers, academics, teachers' associations, and education activists have raised objections to the Draft University Grants Commission Regulations, 2025 (DUGCR-2025), which grant the Governor the power to appoint VCs and allow non-academics to be considered for the role. They argue that this undermines federalism and destabilises higher education institutes.

The DUGCR-2025 states that individuals "at senior levels in industry, public administration, public policy, or public sector undertakings, with a proven record of significant academic or scholarly contributions" shall be eligible for appointment as VC. This marks a departure from previous regulations, which required candidates for VC to be distinguished academicians with a proven track record.

Concerns

The idea itself raises serious concerns. How would corporates react if an academic without industry experience was appointed as the CEO of a renowned company? This would likely be met with resistance from corporate leaders and industry experts. Similarly, the Vice Chancellor of a university should be a highly qualified academic, researcher,



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educator, and leader who serves as a role model for the academic community. Allowing non-academics to occupy the position risks creating a disconnect between the VC and the academic community. Reducing the role to that of a bureaucrat or human resources manager could undermine the quality of education and have detrimental effects on all stakeholders.

The DUGCR-25 states that the Search-cum-Selection Committee (SSC) will consist of nominees of the

Chancellor (Governor), the UGC Chairman and the university's apex body. The Chancellor's nominee will be the chairperson of the committee. This suggests that the state government will have no power, while the centre will hold complete authority in the selection and appointment of vice-chancellors for state universities and appears to centralise control over the higher education system, undermining the autonomy of state governments. It raises concerns about appointing individuals ideo-

logically aligned with the ruling party and allows for the appointment of vice-chancellors from other states, which risks disconnecting leadership from the local academic and cultural context. Such changes could adversely affect academics and the student community.

Some state governments, particularly Tamil Nadu and Kerala, have strongly opposed this move by the Centre. In 2022, the Tamil Nadu government even passed two bills seeking to grant itself

the authority to appoint vice-chancellors for state universities. This stance is justified; universities funded by state governments should be governed by those states, with the Centre's role, through governors, being minimal or purely supportive.

Environment of excellence

Why fix a system that is already functioning well? Many state universities have been performing admirably with minimal interference from the

Centre. For example, in the NIRF Rankings 2024, Anna University was ranked the top state government-funded university, while Bharathiar University (Coimbatore) secured the eighth position and the University of Madras ranked 12th. Among the top 50 state universities, 10 are from Tamil Nadu. Therefore, it is unfair for the Centre and the UGC to undermine this environment of excellence by attempting to exert full control over them.

The inclusion of education in the concurrent list implies that both the centre and state governments should work together. The question of the centre dominating the states does not arise. Recently, tensions between governors and states governed by non-BJP parties have negatively impacted the higher education sector too. To prevent such conflicts, it is essential to clearly define the roles of the centre and state governments. The responsibilities of the UGC, which operates under the Central Government, include overseeing higher education, setting standards, providing grants, ensuring quality, and monitoring developments. However, it should not control state-funded universities in a manner that undermines federalism.

In a diverse country like India, known for its linguistic, cultural, and regional differences, a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. State governments should have a greater role in governing state-run higher education institutions to better address local needs and contexts. A model similar to the system in the United States can be followed, where both state and federal governments play crucial roles in the public education system. State governments manage day-to-day operations, while the federal government provides support through funding and policy recommendations.

Universities can function effectively when their leadership operates without political interference. This requires appointing the right individuals to top positions. Ideal candidates for VC roles should possess outstanding academic achievements, intellectual brilliance, and the ability to lead teams effectively. They should maintain a non-partisan approach and demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing educational quality, fostering scientific temper, encouraging creativity and innovation, staying responsive to society's evolving needs, and proactively addressing challenges.

Views expressed are personal

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GREEN CAREERS HUB

Lights, camera, conservation!

Documentary filmmaker Krishnendu Bose on how he found his calling



The next in the monthly series by WWF-India that highlights niche and unconventional green careers through the stories of well-known personalities from the field of environment and conservation

From a young age, I was drawn to storytelling and the magic of capturing moments. At 12, I began experimenting with my father's camera and often accompanied my cousin, a filmmaker, on his projects. Those early experiences brought about a fascination with the visual medium that only deepened with time. I pursued my college education in Economics at the University of Delhi. Yet, my passion for filmmaking and environmental conservation ultimately shaped my journey.

In college, I was a member of Kalpavriksh, a student environmental action group. We organised bird-watching trips, monitored the Northern Ridge of Delhi, and participated in various environmental projects. One memorable experience was a student-led expedition to trace the origin of the Narmada during the early 1980s when the Narmada Movement was at its peak.

I found my calling in filming documentaries after I completed my education. In the early 1990s, I directed two significant films on the environmental fallout of the Green Revolution. *Revolution* and *Good Earth* documented organic farming and the effects of chemical agriculture on Indian farmlands.

A turning point came when I began exploring conservation from the perspective of communities living in and around forests. While filming in Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh, I first encountered villages within forest boundaries and

this opened my eyes to people's version of the conservation model! This reshaped my understanding of the field and led me to explore the politics of forest-dwelling communities and their relationship with policies. Over the years, my filmmaking evolved into a platform to amplify the voices of such communities. I believe that conservation is not just about protecting wildlife and the environment but also about understanding the needs and aspirations of people who share these landscapes with animals.

What it takes

Filmmaking is as demanding as it is rewarding. A typical shooting day starts at dawn, with meticulous planning based on the availability of characters or events. It's physically strenuous, especially in remote areas where we need to travel long distances on foot. On the other hand, editing is mentally exhausting and requires hours of reviewing interviews, crafting narratives, and reshaping the story to fit the visual medium.

Filmmaking is not just about creativity but discipline and organisation. As resources and time are limited, the job demands careful planning to complete projects within tight schedules.

Through filmmaking, we aim to bring a story to life, by collaborating with a

Daljeet Sandhu

A Statement of Purpose (SOP) offers applicants a chance to highlight their academic journey, career aspirations, and fit for a programme. However, making it impactful comes with its own set of challenges. Many candidates make avoidable mistakes that dilute the strength of their narrative. Here are a few common pitfalls and how to avoid them.

Lack of clarity: Craft a cohesive narrative linking your academic and professional history to future goals. Avoid vague or poorly defined research interests. Admissions committees value specificity. Highlight your passions and connect them to the programme. While personal struggles may shape your journey, overemphasising them can overshadow achievements.

Writing style: Even strong content can falter if the writing is poor. Grammatical errors or



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Put your best foot forward

How students can make their Statement of Purpose (SOP) stand out

awkward sentences reflect badly on your attention to detail. Use concise sentences and smooth transitions for readability.

Avoid overloading your SOP with jargon; clarity matters more than complexity. Each paragraph should focus on one idea. Review the final document multiple times and seek feedback from peers or mentors to en-

sure it's polished and professional.

The right tone: The SOP should reflect your personality and attitude. Avoid being overly casual, as it may seem unprofessional or imply indifference.

Aim for a formal yet conversational tone that conveys your passion. Focus on the positive aspects of your journey and lessons

learned and avoid negative language or blaming others. Authenticity is key; admissions committees value genuine insights over clichés. Share personal experiences and motivations that make you unique, ensuring your SOP stands out.

Proper structure: Follow a logical structure with an engaging introduction, detailed body paragraphs, and a strong conclusion.

The introduction and conclusion are critical. A weak opening may fail to capture attention, while an uninspired conclusion may leave the reader unimpressed. Craft these sections to be impactful and memorable.

Inconsistent margins, erratic line spacing, or poor alignment can make an SOP appear unprofessional. Ensure you stick to the word limit. Exceeding it can indicate an inability to prioritise information.

Be accurate: A common mistake is failing to demonstrate how your goals align with the programme. Admissions

committees want to know why you are applying to their institution and how their offerings match your aspirations. A lack of research on the programme can make your SOP appear generic. Mentioning specific faculty, courses, or facilities that resonate with your goals adds depth to your application.

Edit and proof-read: Last-minute submissions often result in overlooked errors that could have been avoided with careful review. Take the time to revise multiple drafts, paying attention to grammar, formatting, and style. Plagiarism is another critical issue. Your SOP should be an original reflection of your journey and goals.

Remember, the SOP is a showcase of your qualities and aspirations. Paying attention to detail and crafting a genuine narrative will help impress admission committees and boost your application.

The writer is the CEO of Daltin AI Portal

Nirvaan Birla

Hybrid learning has become pivotal in the post-COVID era, as it offers a flexible approach to education. While it pairs face-to-face classroom experience with online teaching-learning tools, it also enhances student engagement by combining online and offline elements that can be tailored to an individual pace and preference, and opens avenues for educators to gamify their training materials and make learning exciting with the help of FAQ sessions, interactive quizzes, active polling, and so on.

While it empowers students with accessibility, reduces their mental pressure and anxiety, they also need to maintain discipline to reap its benefits in the long run. Here are some tips for both students and educators to make the most of hybrid learning:

Establish a schedule: Forming a structure for

Strike a balance

How to create a successful hybrid learning routine

daily tasks is crucial in a hybrid setup. It helps maintain focus and concentration and enhances learning efficiency. Many learners benefit by designating a specific area for studying during hybrid learning. To avoid distraction and feeling overwhelmed, a meticulous approach towards learning, including using timetables, calendars and reminders, allows one to be productive.

Create engaging content: Educators must ensure that only relevant content reaches students. For example, inventive videos, podcasts or documentaries in sync with the curriculum can add to the lessons.

Establish a schedule: Forming a structure for

them to new perspectives. **Effective communication:** The goal of various communication channels in hybrid mode is to set clear expectations and guidelines to enhance the teaching-learning experience. With the advent of tools such as voice assistants, live chat and virtual classrooms, timely communication

is possible. With the help of breakout rooms, teachers can allow students to pose their queries in smaller groups. When needed, a backchannel can be implemented to address student queries.

Balanced workload: Hybrid mode allows one to strike a balance between studies and personal deve-

lopment. By using fixed schedules, setting deadlines and maximising productivity, students can take regular breaks and incorporate self-care into their routine to aid cognitive development and reduce stress.

Feedback and support systems: Written comments, audio or video recordings, and virtual meetings can be focused, constructive and empowering. Such personalised feedback gives students time to reflect upon their errors and ask questions. A consistent stream of support can be enabled by peers and educators via online tools or classroom discussions.

To make hybrid learning successful, students, educators and other stakeholders must join forces and ensure a balanced approach that enhances the potential of students and meet the demands of the modern age.

The writer is MD, Birla Brainiacs.



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