EDUCATIONPLUS

Geeta Gopinath
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Key to a humane world

Socio-emotional learning helps students prepare for a sophisticated future with sensitivity and empathy

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The world today has greater connectivity and faster exchange of information. Further, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has created a new paradigm for human existence. However, the focus on greater technical expertise can limit human touch and sensitivity. It can create robotic individuals bereft of human emotions or connections. This makes social-emotional learning (SEL) crucial, as it focuses on developing life skills such as emotional intelligence, empathy, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making and helps students manage stress, develop resilience, and lead balanced lives.

Research has shown that SEL improves social-emotional behaviour and academic performance, and extends the perimeters of education to include the human element in a technologically charged world. It helps manage emotions, develop relationships, set and achieve goals, and make responsible decisions. It involves recognising and respecting each learner's unique attributes and tailoring the teaching according to these attributes.

SEL involves understanding personal strengths and identifies areas of improvement to build confidence and self-efficacy. The next aspect is effective self-regulation of one's emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and actions. This helps manage stress and control one's impulses.

Benefits

Learning is not isolated to the personal level. Students become socially aware and learn to understand and empathise with others and are tuned to recognising and respecting social norms and cultural diversities. They learn to respect other perspectives, give space for others' views and advocate for human rights. SEL teaches students to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

Communication and conflict resolution skills are nurtured through a spirit of cooperation and collaboration and desire to achieve shared goals. The approach enables the person to be a decisive and responsible individual who considers consequences of actions to all and evaluates situations to solve problems effectively. There is holistic integration that balances short- and long-term goals. Educational institutions can integrate the elements of SEL in the curriculum, and extracurricular activities, thus creating a supportive environment for student. This leads to better all-round performance by providing emotional congruence, better communication and teamwork skills and problem-solving abilities. Learners become more engaged in communities and learn to use their strengths for social upliftment.

The most appropriate method to implement SEL in schools is by incorporating its principles into the curriculum of each subject. This could include group activities that foster teamwork and communication or discussions about emotional topics encouraging students to reflect. Educators should implement blended content effectively and efficiently. Further, the support of parents and the community is necessary for successful implementation through PTA.

Community members can create support groups that are involved in the skill-building process.

SEL is the key to retaining humanness in a changing technologically enhanced mechanical environment and improves the student's ability to face technological advances and prepare for a more sophisticated future with sensitivity and empathy.

Geetha Gopinath and Ameen Omar Shareef are Faculty of Economics, National Institute of Technology, Kozhikode.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Narotam Sekhsaria Scholarships
An initiative of the Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation
Eligibility: An Indian national residing in India who has graduated from an accredited Indian institution and is under 30 years old as of January 31, 2025, and plan to pursue a PG degree in top-ranking institutions in India or abroad, starting in the Fall 2025.
Rewards: Interest-free loans and mentorship
Application: Online
Deadline: March 17
www.b4s.in/edge/NSSP1

India High Fliers Undergraduate Scholarships
An opportunity provided by the University of Birmingham, the U.K.
Eligibility: Domiciled resident of India holding an offer for a full-time UG programme and is classified as overseas fee-payer.
Rewards: £5,000 for the first year

Application: Offline applications through local representatives and partnered schools
Deadline: May 31
www.b4s.in/edge/IHFS1

Indus Towers Scholarship Programme
A CSR initiative of Indus Towers Ltd.
Eligibility: Open to Indian citizens between 14 and 30 years as on July 1, 2023, with 40% disability and belonging to the BPL or EWS category with an annual family income below ₹6 lakhs.
Rewards: ₹3,00,000 and other benefits
Application: Shishu Sarothi, Executive Director Centre for Rehabilitation and Training for Multiple Disability Off Ram Krishna Mission Road, Birubari Guwahati 781016, Assam, Contact: (0361)-2470990/2478912/ 920704981
Deadline: July 24
www.b4s.in/edge/ITSP3

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

SBI Youth for India Fellowship

The SBI Foundation has opened registrations for the 13th batch of its SBI Youth for India Fellowship focusing on Health, Rural Livelihood, Food Security, Environmental Protection, Education, Water, Technology, Women's Empowerment, Self-Governance, Social Entrepreneurship, Traditional Craft, and Alternate Energy.
Visit apply.youthforindia.org for more details.

Pursue your interests

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

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I have finished BDS and have been taking the UPSC and PSC exams but have not cleared any. I don't want to be a dentist but I am interested in social service. What are my career options? Arohana

Dear Arohana,
Given your interest in social service, you could explore a Master's in Public Health (MPH) or a Master's in International Development to work in public health organisations, government agencies, or NGOs. A Master's in Healthcare Administration (MHA) can lead to leadership roles in hospitals, clinics, and healthcare organisations. A Master's in Social Work (MSW) will enable you to work in hospitals, schools, and community organisations. Volunteer or intern at local NGOs, community health centres, public health roles, social work, or healthcare administration.

I am in Class 11 (CBSE) and preparing for the JEE. But I am not interested in Engineering. I'm interested in programming, building robots, websites, algorithms, and data structures. I had a YouTube channel during the lockdown but shut it down due to academics. I used to take part in online hackathons during the lockdown but, now that it is all offline, I am unable to participate. My city doesn't have any such events. I started programming in Class 6 and have connections with people in the industry. What should I do? Akshansh Srivastav

Dear Akshansh,
Since you have discovered your passion for programming, pursue your interests. Have an open, honest conversation with your parents about your passion and how it aligns with your future aspirations. Look for universities that offer strong programmes in programming, software development, and Artificial Intelligence. Coursera, edX, and Udemy offer a wide range of programming courses. Join online communities like Stack Overflow, GitHub, and Reddit to connect with other programmers and collaborate on projects. Reconnect with online hackathons to gain practical experience, network with other programmers, showcase your skills and build a strong portfolio. Try to create a website to highlight your skills and experience. Connect with professionals to seek advice and mentorship. Consider a B.Tech. in Computer Science, a B.Sc. in Computer Science or a BCA for your graduation. Focus on your passion for programming and build a successful career in the field of technology.

I finished B.Tech. CSE in 2024 and am preparing for the CAT. I am considering a career in management, largely due to the promising packages. I am also exploring Master's in Computer Science abroad but am open to continuing with management if that is where my strengths align. How can I find programmes abroad that offer scholarships? Aman

Dear Aman,
Reflect on your strengths and interests. Research typical career paths in both Computer Science and Management and then navigate the career crossroads. Most universities with Master's programmes in Computer Science have a dedicated scholarship page (Financial Aid or Scholarships) on their websites. Look up scholarship search engines such as https://www.mastersportal.com/, https://www.wemakescholars.com/scholarship, https://www.idp.com/find-a-scholarship/, https://www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-rankings/computer-science-information-systems Many countries offer scholarships to international students so research those are offered by the government of your target country.

For an MBA, look for programmes with specialisations in Technology Management or Information Systems to bridge the gap between your B.Tech. and a career in Management. Also consider Management Consulting as a career path. It will utilise analytical and problem-solving skills common in computer science while offering strong earning potential.

Focus your search on a specific area of interest within Computer Science (such as AI, Cybersecurity, Data Science) and tailor your scholarship search accordingly. Highlight your strong academic record (B.Tech. grades) and any relevant experience (projects, internships) in your scholarship applications. If financial need is a major concern, emphasise your circumstances in your scholarship essays. Explore the possibility of combining scholarships from different sources to maximise financial aid. Start early to have sufficient time to prepare strong applications.

I have a Master's in Economics and have been working for a year as an analyst. I am considering four options: stay in a corporate job, prepare for a government job, opt for a Ph.D. and research or start my own business. I don't what each brings to the table in terms of stability, peace of mind or monetary benefits. Which one should I opt for? Ankita

Dear Ankita,
Make an informed choice by understanding your strengths, weaknesses, and values. Research your options and talk to mentors in different fields, get different perspectives. Remember, one size does not fit all. Your choice will depend on your circumstances and long-term goals. A corporate job will provide stability, regular income, opportunities for growth and learning but can be stressful with long hours, and might not align with personal passions.

A government job will provide job security, social prestige, and work-life balance but you will need to take competitive exams and cross bureaucratic hurdles. Career progression may be slow. A Ph.D. will enhance your knowledge and lead to an academic career but it involves uncertain hours, lower initial income and an uncertain job market. Entrepreneurship will provide you with flexibility, potential for high rewards and personal satisfaction but also comes with high risks, uncertain income and long hours.

Identify what excites you. What is your passion? Are you comfortable with uncertainty and risk? Do you have the financial stability to support yourself during a slow phase? How important is work-life balance to you? Based on your current background, you can explore management, financial or data analysis or research.

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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Beyond the teaching

Tips for teachers to manage stress and prevent burnout

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Arti Dawar

Stress has become synonymous with contemporary life. The need of the hour is to acknowledge that stress is endemic and to understand how to handle it in a manner that allows for life to remain vibrant and fulfilling. Often dismissed as a 'safe and easy job', contemporary studies show that teaching ranks high when it comes to stress and burnout. Despite the immense responsibility it involves, a career in teaching remains financially less lucrative compared to most professions. How can a teacher prevent burnout and find more fulfillment in their lives?

A vocation
Remind yourself 'why' you chose to become a teacher. Perhaps you were inspired by your teachers or realised that working with children gives you joy. Remembering this during times of stress can help you stay connected to the elements that make teaching a vocation and not just a 'job'.

Plan your routine to include regular self-care. Getting enough sleep, exercising regularly (a brisk 20-minute walk or yoga), having timely meals, and quality time with family and friends should be a part of your life.

Cultivate hobbies and passions that allow you to decompress. Be it reading, crocheting, embroidery, painting, origami and paper-craft, gardening, or volunteer work, explore your talents beyond teaching

Make time for regular reflection and mindfulness practises or something that allows you to 'press pause' and take stock of your own needs. This can be as simple as writing a diary, using YouTube videos to learn and practise new things, or listening to soothing music.

Build a strong support system by sharing experiences, challenges, and successes with your peers. Your colleagues are most likely to empathise with the unique challenges of being a teacher. They can offer practical advice, mentor, and collaborate on various projects. Participating in group activities is also a great way to connect and bond with fellow teachers, be it through sharing recipes, potlucks, or post-school conversation.

Celebrate the small 'wins' of your learners so that focusing on the bigger outcomes (like test results) doesn't feel overwhelming. Did a struggling student grasp a new concept today? Did you manage to reach a quiet student? These small achievements are important and keep your motivation high.

Use academic breaks as downtime to travel and explore new places that allow you to recharge mentally and emotionally. Teaching comes with scheduled breaks and offers time to take proper vacations.

Above all, teaching is a creative profession, so enjoy the process of creating those cool worksheets and lesson plans. Crack a joke or two every now and then, help students see the lighter side of life while building their capacity for resilience, focus, and discipline.

Formal programmes
Supporting teachers with managing stress is something that all educational institutions should focus on by creating avenues to incorporate greater balance in their lives. Some institutions often have formal mentoring programmes and collaborative groups that allow teachers to connect with each other in more supportive ways such as holding regular mindfulness sessions, fitness activities, hobby clubs and wellness seminars. In institutions that may not be able to formally invest in well-being processes, staff members can take the lead in organising group activities to help them relax and unwind.
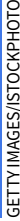
No one can deny that happy teachers lead to happy learners. Education is much more than just teaching; it is about building generations of children to become adults who can balance their own needs and priorities and shape the world around them in healthier and happier ways.

The writer is Deputy CEO, Shiv Nadar School

CAREER CUES
Richa Dwivedi Saklani

Everybody has a style – models, coders working from home, professors, business professionals, college students, sports people, bridesmaids and even gaming characters! Fashion, like tourism, has bounced back after the pandemic with the centre shifting to Asian markets, especially China and India.

So, for students who are interested in fashion trends and celebrate self-expression, here's a look at the latest career trends in the fashion industry:

Artificial Intelligence: Like all other industries, fashion is also impacted by AI with tools like Heuritech that analyse past data to predict consumer preferences and trends, generative design tools like Raspberry Ai that allow you to experiment with and generate styles online, colour palettes like Khroma to try out different versions of the same design, and photorealistic simulators like Browzwear that allow you to visualise these on models. Not to mention the virtual try-ons that are fast becoming a baseline experience in online fashion buying.

Sustainable Fashion: This rapidly growing market makes up 40% of the market in North America and 35% in Europe with countries like Germany, France, and the U.K. having strict environmental policies. Circular fashion promotes recycling and upcycling, and increased use of eco-friendly materials like organic cotton and biodegradable fabrics. Brands are also adopting blockchain for supply chain transparency and launching take-back programs to encourage clothing recycling.

Digital Fashion: It offers a limitless universe of virtual clothing, blending technology with style in exciting new ways. Think 3D-rendered outfits for social media, gaming avatars, and even NFTs. Many brands are already releasing exclusive digital collections for platforms like Roblox and Fortnite. Consumers are embracing virtual fashion as a way to express themselves in the digital space while reducing waste from fast fashion. With the rise of the metaverse, dressing up your online persona is becoming just as important as real-world fashion. Digital clothing also allows for limitless creativity. Designs that may be impossible to produce physically can now come to life in stunning animation. As technology advances, digital fashion can reshape how we think about style and self-expression.

Sportswear Design: Sportswear fashion has evolved beyond the gym. It's now a lifestyle statement. Athleisure – blending athletic wear with casual style – is leading the charge. People want clothing that's functional and stylish, whether they're working out or just running errands. High-performance fabrics, sustainable materials, and bold designs are shaping the future of sportswear. Celebrities and influencers have also fuelled the trend, making joggers, sneakers, and hoodies everyday essentials.

Costume Design: With streaming platforms producing period dramas and fantasy series, there's a rising demand for historical and futuristic costume specialists. Additionally, wearable technology is being integrated into costumes, blending fashion with function for immersive performances and interactive entertainment. These trends are reshaping costume design into a more tech-driven and sustainable career path.

Fashion Management: You love fashion but are not a designer? Consider business roles such as managing events like fashion shows, fashion retailing, fashion communication, social media and advertising. Fashion Management deals with brand building and the business side of the industry. It includes everything from marketing, organising, planning, merchandising, promotion and distribution of products.

Marketing and branding: These shape a brand's identity and connect with consumers through creative strategies. Digital marketing managers use online channels like social media and ads to boost sales and visibility. This requires strong storytelling and tech skills. Social media marketers focus specifically on growing engagement and brand awareness through content creation and interaction. Fashion marketing managers develop campaigns, oversee photoshoots, and track trends to increase market share. Meanwhile, fashion operations teams handle manufacturing, logistics, and retail. Buyers select products based on trends, merchandisers manage stock and pricing, and visual merchandisers design in-store displays to attract customers.

Sustainability Manager: With brands focusing on eco-friendly practices, sustainability managers ensure ethical sourcing, waste reduction, and circular fashion initiatives.

Fashion Data Analyst: Retailers and brands now rely on big data to predict trends and optimise inventory. Fashion data analysts use AI and analytics to track consumer behaviour, helping brands make smarter business decisions.

E-commerce Specialist: Online shopping is bigger than ever and brands need experts to manage digital campaigns, SEO, and influencer partnerships.

Fashion Supply Chain Manager: Global supply chains are more complex than ever. These professionals oversee logistics, sourcing, and ethical production, ensuring timely and sustainable product delivery.

So if you are fascinated by a world in which AI stitches trends before they happen, digital media turns pixels into couture, and sustainability is the new black, the runway of the future is wide open.

With inputs from Kritika Malhotra, Lead Counsellor, Inomi Learning

The writer is the founder and CEO, Inomi Learning, a Gurugram-based career and college guidance firm. info@inomi.in

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Runway of the future

With technology impacting fashion trends, here is a look at the latest career options in the industry

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Drawn to maps

Beyond creating accurate maps, cartographers play a key role in urban planning, environmental studies, disaster management, climate modelling and more.

Mihir Desai

Cartography is the discipline of making or studying maps. The process of communicating or visualising spatial data, it is often employed in urban planning, environmental studies, disaster management, transportation, and military work. Beyond the profession of making accurate maps, cartographers also take part in critical thinking, where the role of maps in shaping the power dynamics of society is questioned, thereby opening up the space for philosophical debates within representational sciences.

Education and skills
Cartographers often have a background in planning, Geography, Geodesy, Geoinformatics, mountaineering, sea or air faring. However, anyone who is specialised in reading, analysing or shaping spaces may also have an aptitude for Cartography. One can consider a certificate, diploma, graduate or postgraduate degree in Geography, Planning, Architecture or design-related fields that can extend to Art, History, Social Science, Healthcare, Politics, Journalism and Marketing. The opportunity to combine spatial data analytics and representations with multidisciplinary fields is an increasing trend in higher education.

Various technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Remote Sensing (RS) and Image Processing (IPC) are used in this field. Cartographers work with a set of technical tools ranging from digital to manual. Skills in GIS, RS, IPC along with programming skills in Python, R or JavaScript may be required. Such digital tools allow cartographers to source and store spatial data, and explore and reorganise datasets in a structured manner so that it could be used for visualisation or communication purposes.

Additionally, cartographers are prolific in the art of map rhetoric and representation. To communicate map content, one has to be able to understand the needs of the user group and study user experience. Skills in manual drafting, digital modelling, precision drafting, mathematical scaling, geometry projection, computer illustration, coding, and web-programming may be required. Empirical approaches in participant observation, observant participant, theoretical de-construction and process genealogy are also common among researchers.

Prospects
Historically, cartographers have worked under various institutions: private, government, NGOs and academia. Their skills are much required in representing data to aid management-level decision making, exploration, and monitoring. GIS specialists and GIS developers are some key positions.

Larger contracting and consulting firms also depend on cartographers and GIS specialists for climate modelling, risk monitoring, land-use planning, biodiversity mapping, social media sensing and geomarketing. The introduction of self-driving vehicles, smart cities, location-based services and indoor navigation has significantly expanded career prospects as Geo-data is becoming central within decision making.

As a counter to market demands and technocratic movements within Cartography, there also exist several lesser known career pathways that focus on critical theory, aesthetics and pedagogy. Cartographers can also pioneer in academic scholarships, which focus on social critiques of map use and map rhetoric. The formation of counter-cartographic collectives within formalised academic institutions, artistic movements, activist movements and advocacy groups opens many possibilities for research collaborations and scholastic partnerships.

The writer is an architect, cartographer and director at HOSMAC.

FREEPIK

Krrish Gupta
Ishita Mahajan

YOUNG ACHIEVER

(From left) Priyanshi Gupta, Krrish Gupta, Ishita Mahajan, and Akarsh Bhatt. (right) The winning installation in Mumbai. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Design for sustainability

How a team of students from The Design Village won the Godrej Design Lab Conscious Collective 2024

Industrial waste, the fragile state of our ecology, and a design prompt. These are three core dots among many that connected our journey at the Godrej Design Lab's Conscious Collective Campus Connect 2024; a journey marked by personal and professional growth, and moments of learning and unlearning.

The Conscious Collective Campus Connect is an initiative by Godrej Design Lab in collaboration with Architecture + Design that focuses on sustainable living solutions. The platform brings together professionals and students to reimagine a greener future, focusing on Conscious Spaces and Sustainable Materials. This national-level competition attracted over 300 entries and ours was one of the two to get the award grant and a chance to showcase our installation in Mumbai.

The design prompt was to make an installation using waste materials generated by Godrej Enterprises Group. During our conceptual journey, we along with our teammates – Priyanshi and Akarsh – focused on the critical, yet often overlooked, issue of mangrove conservation.

Concern for mangroves
Our installation, Beneath the Surface, emerged from our concern for the state of mangrove ecosystems. These natural coastal guardians face rapid decline due to deforestation and pollution despite their crucial role in protecting communities from storms, tides, and erosion. Our vision was simple yet ambitious: to create an immersive experience that would help visitors understand the vital role of mangroves and inspire them to make more environmentally conscious choices in their daily lives.

We worked for almost two months on the design under the guidance of our mentor Mudita Pasari, Academic Dean at The Design Village. Once we had been selected as finalists, we had less than 15 days to prepare the execution details and drawings at our Noida campus and just seven days to erect the final installation in Mumbai.

Despite all our preparations, the reality at the site was totally different. We had to work around available materials and resources while accommodating space limitations. What seemed perfect on paper needed significant adaptation on site. With the help of Anusha Dhawan and Tatsat Shah, from our institute, we bridged the gap between planning and reality while retaining our vision.

Reactions
The most rewarding moment came when visitors engaged with our installation. Their reactions and discussions around environmental protection showed that our installation had achieved its purpose: to raise about these crucial ecosystems.

Thanks to participating in this programme, our understanding of design professional practice has significantly evolved. We are now more sure about the fact that design extends beyond aesthetics and that it's a powerful tool for communication and societal change. Watching a warehouse transform into an exhibition space and being part of that transformation wasn't just about creating an installation. It was about growing as designers and individuals committed to sustainable solutions.

The writers are third-year students of the B.Des. Programme at The Design Village, Noida

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Nien Siao

Today, social impact has enabled us to develop a broader understanding of the world and bring positive changes. Industries increasingly focus on championing sustainability, gender equality, and promoting ethical practices; design education is no exception. The integration of design education and social impact has emerged as an innovative concept, empowering students to use design to address pressing human and environmental crises. This approach weaves empathy and social responsibility into design principles, preparing students to create responsible design.

Socially conscious
With a human-centric approach, designers can tackle pressing challenges by reimagining conventional ideas. Traditional design education was often limited to aesthetics and functional aspects alone. For instance, game design often focused on commercial and entertainment aspects, overlooking the positive impacts it could bring. In recent years, however, games are being used to educate players on important issues and challenging stereotypes. Similarly, visual communication, such as advertisements with powerful messages, has immense potential to educate.

Project-based learning
Experiential learning takes students outside of the classroom, broadening their perspective and teaching them the realities of life. Project-based learning in the design industry promotes high-order thinking, empathy, and tangible solutions, all essential for the 21st century. Cultivating creative thinking skills allows students to adapt for the future. Experiential learning embeds sustainability and equality across the design education curriculum. Incorporating social impact assessments into hands-on projects enables students to measure the effects of their ideas and ensure that their work aligns with ethical and sustainable goals.

Social sensitivity
Community engagement is multi-dimensional and allows design students to gain tangible knowledge and experiences and develop a nuanced understanding of the social and environmental implications of design. By co-creating with communities, students develop empathy, cultural knowledge, and a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of diverse groups. For instance, initiatives like the Tribal India Project (TRIFED) enabled designers to work with tribal communities across India, developing eco-friendly products using highly recyclable materials, generating minimal waste.

New horizons
Current social and ecological crises have revealed the need for innovative and robust design education. Educators and design institutions play a vital role in seamlessly combining social responsibility and design education. By fostering social and emotional depth in designing students, they enhance cognitive, emotional, and social development. Moving beyond mere visual aesthetics, a holistic design education not only provides students with industry-relevant skills, but also instills a forward-thinking mindset. By fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, experiential learning and a collaborative environment, impact-driven design education helps create well-rounded individuals who bring transformative changes to the world.

The writer is Dean at JS Institute of Design.

From aesthetics to ethics

How to teach students to use design as a tool for positive change

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