

Learn to learn; value of a degree is vanishing

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Rajendra Pawar, chairman of the NIIT Group, says earlier if you learnt, say, cement technology of a certain type, the technology would last some 40 years, and what you learnt in college and in the first few years of working would be enough to see you through your entire career. But now, he says, technology is changing extremely fast and you might live up to 100 years. "So imagine the number of times you will have to make changes in your life. Lifelong learning is the rule of the game," says the

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co-founder of the group that pioneered IT skilling in India.

Lifelong learning – it's an idea that many in the technology industry are encouraging youngsters to internalise. "The lifetime value of a degree will vanish," says Pawar.

Rudramuni B, the former vice president and head of Dell EMC's R&D centre, entirely agrees. He says learning to learn has become an essential skill in the industry – because the industry demands constant learning and unlearning.

So how does one learn to learn? Pawar says the lifelong learning mindset has to start in school. "We have to revive the curiosity that children come in with in kindergarten, but lose it by the time they are in class 12," he says. Pawar be-

REVIVE YOUR KINDERGARTEN CURIOSITY

“Lifelong learning mindset has to start in school. But schools will be more difficult to reform. So at least in the first year of college, a lot more time needs to be spent on students to open their minds. We have to revive the curiosity that children came in with in kindergarten, but lost it by the time they were in class 12.



Rajendra Pawar |
CHAIRMAN, NIIT GROUP

To be a better learner, the key is to develop the skill to learn from the source – explore the origin of an idea by researching articles and online sources. Also, develop the ability to visualise 'what-if'

scenarios, the practical steps involved in developing a product. This can prepare us to think about problems in advance.

Rudramuni B | FORMER
HEAD, DELL R&D CENTRE,
BENGALURU



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Abhimanyu Saxena |
CO-FOUNDER,
SCALER ACADEMY



lieves school systems are more difficult to reform. "So at least in the first year of college, a lot more time needs to be spent on students to open their minds," he says, adding that credits should be given not just for curriculum, but for different kinds of activities that students do – participating in plays, or organising TED talks.

Rudramuni says it's very important for students to develop a network to learn early on. "They should inculcate the habit of asking for help from those better informed than them, which will be an asset in the long run. They should develop the art of asking pertinent questions and listening carefully to others," he says.

Abhimanyu Saxena, co-founder of guided learning program Scaler Academy,

says learning skills hands-on is very important and the best way to do that is through mentors. "You get guidance from someone who has been working in the job that you aspire for. The time when scoring good marks in college alone is long gone," he says.

Pawar says he's already seeing students who are in their first or second year of college and who are passionate about a space, connecting to experts in the area to become proficient in it.

Saxena says most of the learning has moved online for tech graduates thanks to an abundance of resources. "A sticky issue is that students from tier-II, tier-III and smaller towns still do not know what resources they should opt for," he says.