Continuous learning

SUDHIR DIXIT, DIRECTOR, HP LABS INDIA, ON THE EMERGING TRENDS IN ENGINEERING EDUCATION

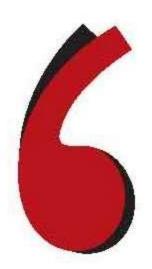**Sudhir Dixit**

WITH the needs and demands of industry changing with time, there has also been a significant change in the way education is imparted in India. Students have become more aware about the latest trends and the emerging sectors in the industry. Thus, they are making consistent efforts to upgrade their knowledge and skills to meet new industry standards.

A lot of this change has to do with the use of technology and people becoming more computer and internet-savvy. One can get whatever information one requires with just a click of a button. The education system has become more transparent as information is readily available to students. A student is able to chart out his study routes and career plans better through the use of e-mail, chat and social networking websites. Hence, technology today is playing a big role in making classroom learning relevant to the real world.

Also, courses which were earlier more theoretical in nature, are being taught from the employability point of view. The gap between theoretical teaching-learning and its commercial application is reducing. This is giving a chance to students to not only learn but also see their concepts being used in the market. This has been possible because of the practical exposure a student gets today. There is a great deal of emphasis on internships, vocational training programmes and apprenticeships in technical education nowadays to help students understand the nuances of the industry better.

Besides, information communication technology is augmenting classroom learning. A student today has access to the latest courses, best universities and expert faculties with the introduction of global programmes and online courses. Professionals can add on to their skills by learning new courses, theories and concepts, which are emerging worldwide, by using the internet. Most of the big companies today also offer regular on-site training programmes for its employees for quality enhancement. So, continuous learning takes place at the workplace as well.

What is the industry looking for in a candidate? The first thing is good fundamental learning. The theoretical learning in colleges and universities needs to be well-embedded in students to open up their mind to critical and logical thinking. One should possess good communication skills and should be assertive in nature. But the important thing a company looks for during recruitments is the flexible approach and adaptive nature of the student as one has to deal with challenges of varied nature.

Engineering education, however, needs to become more standardised. The government and industry have to play a collective role in enhancing and upgrading the quality of education imparted in colleges and universities in India. This is the biggest challenge that the industry faces today. The demand is huge but the quantity of quality graduates is low. This gap has to be met by engineering education today.

(The writer is also a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)

— As told to Reema Kaur

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