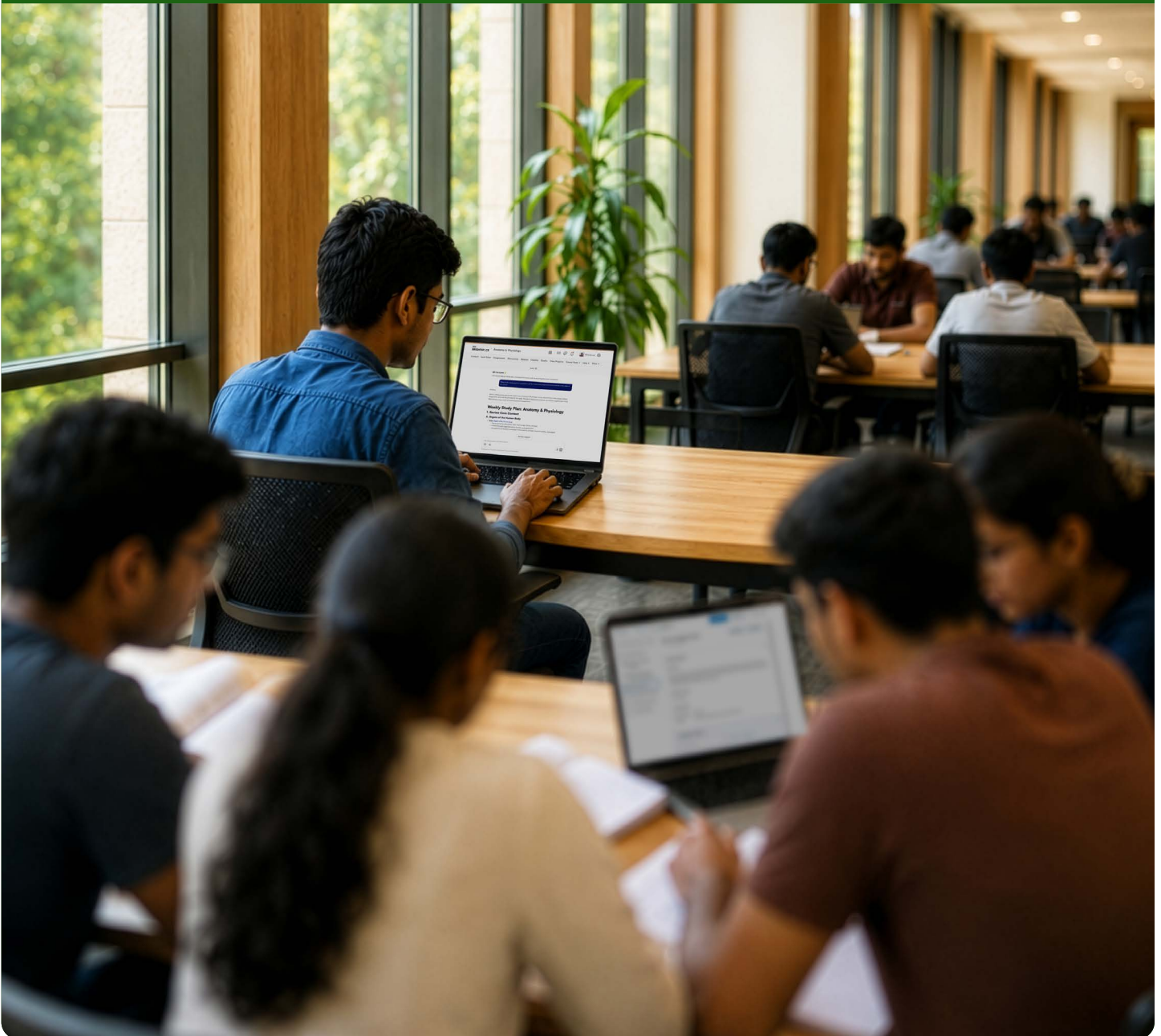


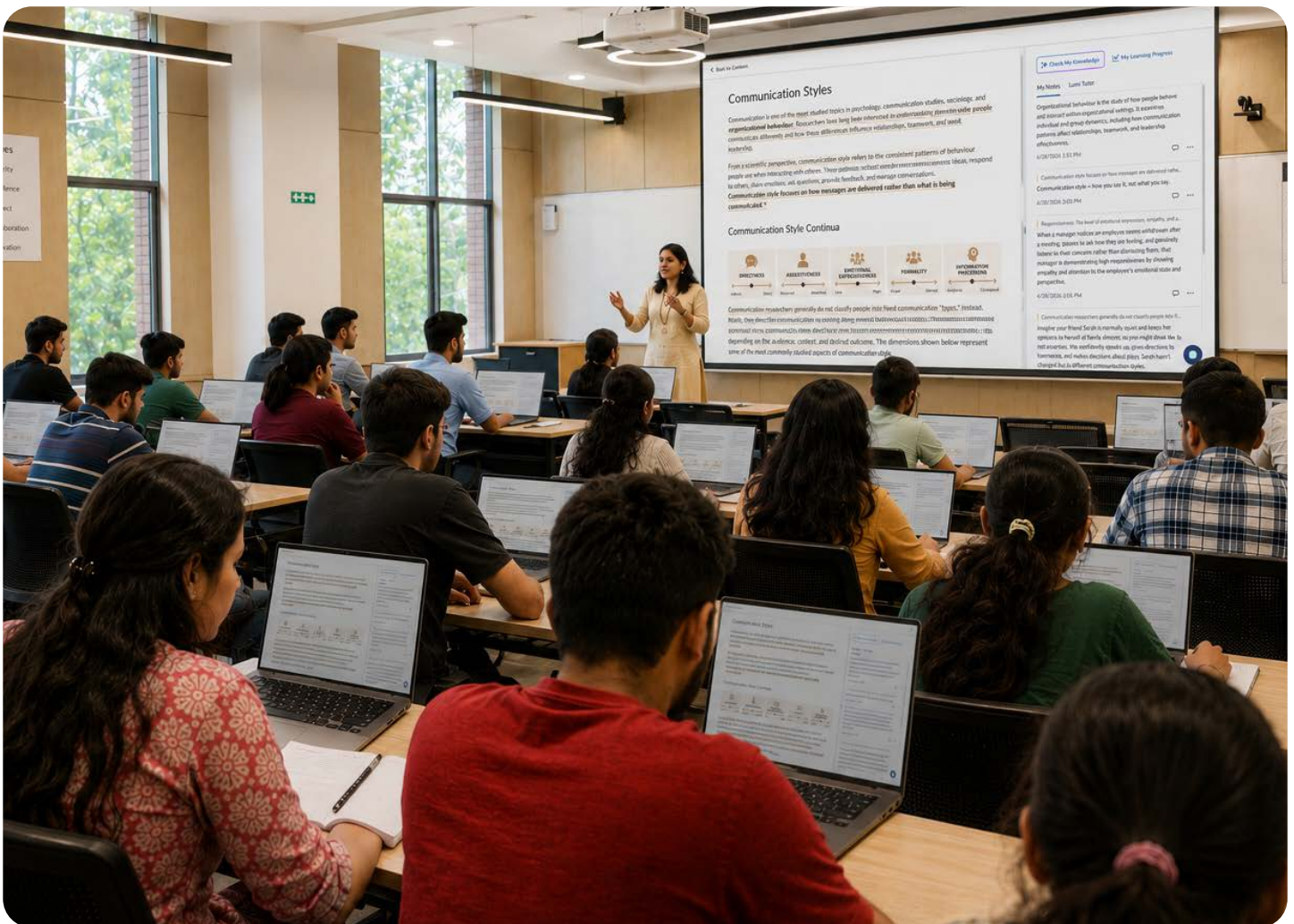
AI in India's higher education:

The future of teaching and learning



AI and the evolving higher education landscape in India

While universities across the world are navigating the uncharted terrain of AI, early adopters may stand to gain a distinct and lasting advantage, enhancing student success and institutional reputation



India has one of the world's largest education sectors. Spurred by influences such as AI, student demand, digital innovation and policy reforms, the sector has entered a transformative phase of growth. As institutions adapt to these changes, they also have significant opportunities to broaden access, improve academic quality, strengthen research and enhance global competitiveness. However, the challenge for Indian institutions is improving access to higher education without compromising quality. AI has the potential to be their strongest ally in navigating the way forward.

CATALYSING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Among the factors shaping institutions' priorities today are government initiatives and policy changes, such as the [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#). One of the cornerstone policies contributing to India's vision for development and growth, it recognises the role of higher education in creating skilled citizens who can address national and global challenges.

"NEP 2020 provides a strong foundation for digital transformation, encouraging blended learning platforms, virtual lab simulations and lifelong learning pathways," says Safia Farooqui, director of the Centre for Online Learning at Dr D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth in Maharashtra, India.

NEP 2020 focuses on helping students not just to acquire knowledge but also develop learning skills. This points to the evolving pedagogy in the country, moving from didactic approaches to more experiential, student-centric and flexible teaching and learning.

"Today, the focus has shifted towards application and industry relevance," says Hazel Siromoni, pro vice-chancellor for strategic initiatives at Chitkara University in Punjab, India. "We no longer view education in a vacuum – it is deeply linked with industry needs." However, challenges such as large class sizes, uneven student support and limited insights into student engagement are common hurdles for institutions in delivering more personalised and learner-centric academic experiences.

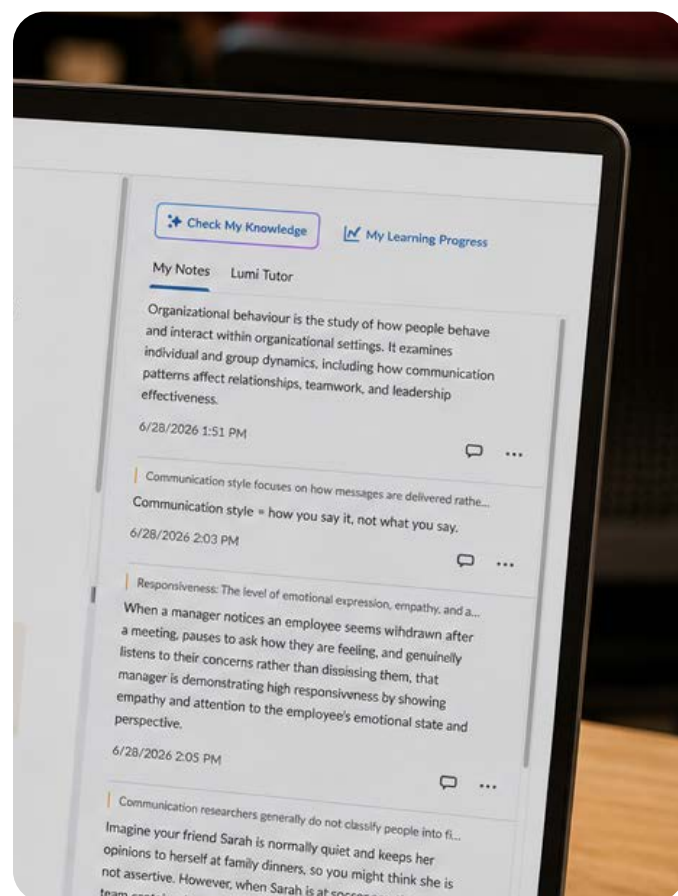
Digital transformation is a major focus of NEP 2020. In addition to modernising the student journey, harnessing technology helps institutions address these challenges and align India's higher education system more closely with global standards. Generative AI presents significant opportunities here.

In 2025, India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council announced changes to its [accreditation process and requirements](#), adopting a continuous, AI-driven, data-based quality verification system. Together with NEP 2020, this signals a strong trend towards technology integration within the higher education ecosystem.

EMBRACING AI AS STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE: WHY NOW?

Adopting AI at the right time can place institutions ahead of the curve, positioning them as thought leaders in reimagining how teaching and learning will be delivered in the future. In a world that is continuously reshaped by technology, this enables institutions to build the foundational infrastructure needed to be innovative and adaptable in the long run.

"The sector is moving towards multidisciplinary, outcome-based pedagogy," says Subarno Bhattacharyya, joint director for digital learning and online education at O.P. Jindal Global University in Haryana, India. "AI supports the transition from standard education models to intelligent,



flexible and student-centric ecosystems,” he notes. “Indian universities are embedding AI in their classrooms to keep pace with the national strategy for AI. The mandate for integration is explicit.”

India’s AI strategy is underpinned by the “[#AIforAll](#)” framework, which emphasises democratising access to AI to ensure inclusive growth and skill building. Similarly, the All India Council for Technical Education declared 2025 as the year of AI, partnering with the software company Perplexity to integrate AI in over 14,000 colleges to empower an estimated 40 million students. These initiatives recognise higher education’s potential to support India’s vision to become a global leader in AI.

“AI has already augmented the multidisciplinary approach for many learners in the country,” says Siromoni. “The students graduating today have a variety of resources at their disposal, including AI. This is going to positively influence their application pathways as they enter the world of work.”

In many universities, AI is also improving the teaching experience for educators, helping them deliver more bespoke curricula. A 2026 report on [the uses of AI in higher education](#) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlights that generative AI “promises to drastically change the way teachers work”, increasing productivity and the quality of teaching and streamlining institutional management.

“AI supports the transition from standard education models to intelligent, flexible and student centric ecosystems.”

Subarno Bhattacharyya, joint director for digital learning and online education, O.P. Jindal Global University

THE PATH TO RESPONSIBLE AI USE

The OECD also suggests that AI can enhance the student experience through personalised, one-on-one tutoring, as well as supporting creativity, reflection and collaborative learning, which align with the goals the NEP 2020 has set out for India’s higher education overhaul.



“Universities can leverage AI to personalise the learning journey of a student,” says Farooqui. “It will also help us improve assessment and feedback mechanisms and enhance curriculum design through learning analytics.”

However, institutions are tasked with a delicate balancing act. Legislative, market and student expectations demand AI adoption, without which institutions risk falling behind their domestic and global peers. At the same time, they must acknowledge and manage the risks surrounding AI. Integrating AI responsibly will be key to building future-ready systems and strengthening teaching capabilities.

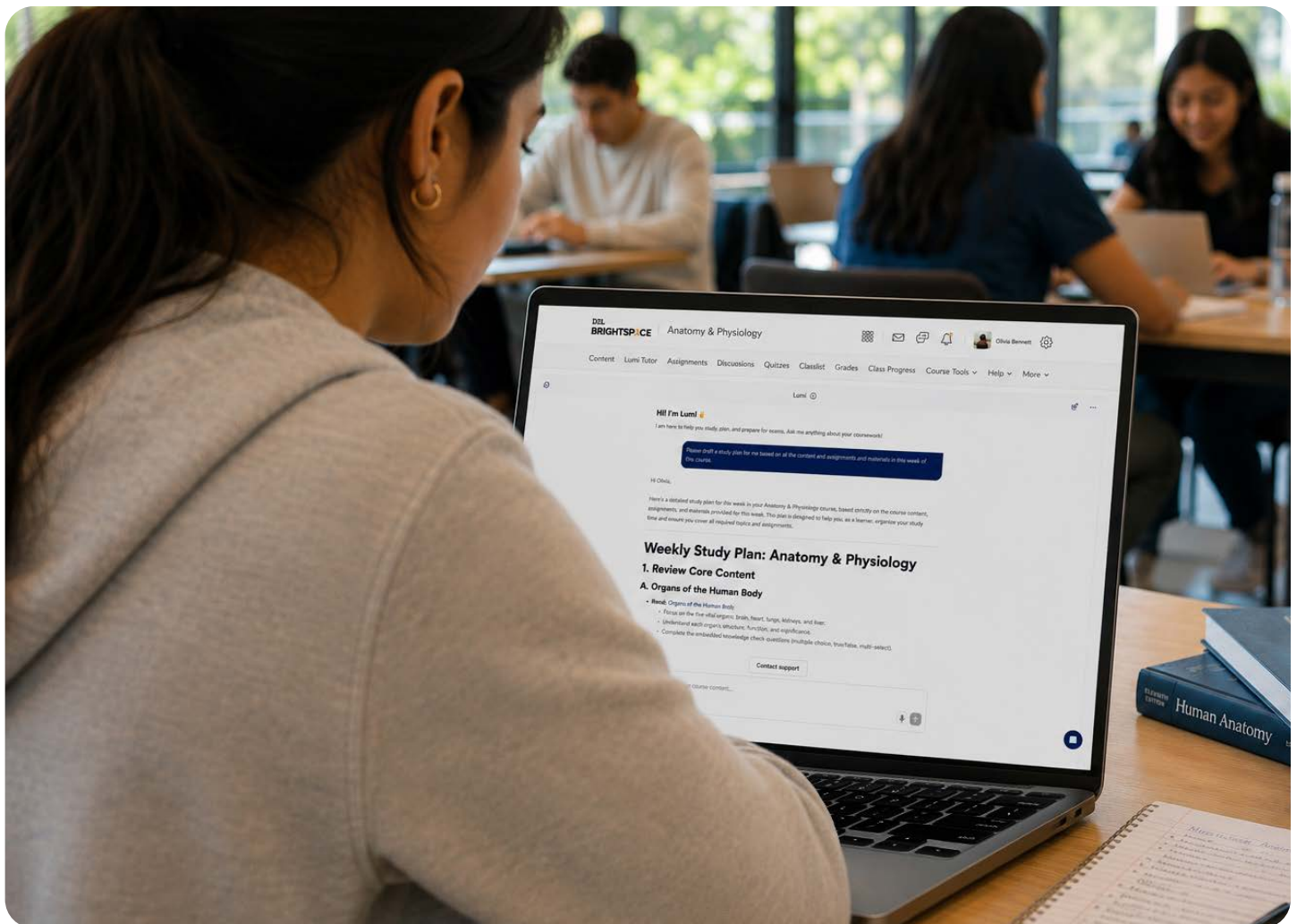
“Universities have realised that AI is here to stay,” Siromoni says. “The challenges now are the ethical issues surrounding AI.” It is up to universities to ensure that AI is implemented in an ethical, inclusive and equitable manner, she adds.

Tools that are designed for the specific needs of higher education can make a difference in achieving this. Digital tools and learning management systems with purpose-built AI features help institutions explore the benefits of technology while managing the risks.

“Technology is a strategic investment in institutional scalability and academic continuity,” says Farooqui. It helps students learn dynamically, empowers faculty members to streamline routine tasks and free up time for high-impact work, and enables institutions to improve learner outcomes and strengthen reputation. ■

From transactional to transformative: how AI is reshaping student success

Digital transformation is changing how higher education institutions view student success, elevating it from a static, transactional metric to an inclusive and increasingly personalised outcome



The demand for personalised and adaptive learning is growing rapidly as learners seek to tailor their higher education journey based on employment and skill development goals. To meet this demand, institutions need to keep pace with the evolving requirements and digital landscape of the modern workplace.

“The new generation of students demands personalised learning pathways, industry-linked curricula and mental health support,” says Subarno Bhattacharyya, joint director for digital learning and online education at O.P. Jindal Global University in Haryana, India. “Gen Z learners require a strong institutional relationship to navigate their learning experience and familiarise themselves with the academic culture.”

Technologies such as AI are helping to facilitate this shift, but concrete, quantifiable evidence of impact is necessary to ensure institutions remain on the right course. “Technology-enhanced education systems in India can capture and converge measurable improvement in enrolments, retention and graduate outcomes,” says Bhattacharyya. “This could be through gamification, virtual and augmented reality labs and collaborative digital environments that can deliver more engaging learning experiences.”

In a higher education market as diverse as India’s, delivering equitable student support hinges on having the right tools in place. AI can be instrumental in offering flexible, personalised learning and continuous support to students from different linguistic, regional and socioeconomic backgrounds. “AI offers extraordinary flexibility for India’s linguistic and regional diversity through multilingual natural language processing and real-time translation engines,” says Bhattacharyya. “This ensures delivery of strong instructional design at scale.”

DATA-ENABLED PERSONALISATION

However, industry demands are evolving fast, with jobs being disrupted and reshaped by AI. According to LinkedIn, around 65 per cent of in-demand skills are expected to change by 2030. This means institutions must continuously assess how degrees prepare learners for the future. “Learning no longer serves a purely educational purpose,” says Hazel Siromoni, pro vice-chancellor for strategic initiatives at Chitkara University in Punjab, India. “Now universities have to consider education in the context of broader industry developments and what the student is going to do with their learning.”

Having access to relevant categories of data is particularly important for boosting student outcomes and monitoring progress towards institutional goals. It can support measurable student interventions, helping educators bridge the gap between targets and classroom reality.

Institutions can use AI-enabled analysis to transform data into actionable insights that enhance student success and operational efficiency. “We get analytics on learning progression, engagement patterns and goal completion rates,” says Safia Farooqui, director of the Centre for Online Learning at Dr D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth in Maharashtra, India. “We are able to identify high-performing learners as well as the courses that have low engagement and require more academic intervention, helping us improve our retention strategies.”

By unifying learning management analytics with predictive AI modelling, universities can move beyond compliance and unlock the true value of modern digital infrastructure.

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS WITH MODERN TOOLS

The learning experience is influenced by various interconnected factors. Providing educators with the right tools, support and training is a prerequisite for ensuring a smooth academic experience for all.

According to the 2021-22 All India Survey on Higher Education, the number of students enrolled in higher education in the country has exceeded 43 million, pushing the pupil-to-teacher ratio for on-campus higher education courses at some institutions to 30:1 or higher. While this reflects the notable growth trajectory of India’s higher education sector, the increased demand comes with challenges such as heavier workloads for educators.

“Faculty members in Indian universities are navigating heavy teaching loads and high research and administrative obligations,” Bhattacharyya says. “There is significant structural time poverty already.” Other challenges include limited insights into student engagement and progress – something that expanding enrolment has the potential to exacerbate. “The academic experience can become transactional rather than transformational due to staff burnout,” echoes Farooqui.

Learning management systems such as D2L Brightspace help institutions reduce administrative burden, enabling faculty to reclaim time for high-value work. Instead of hours of manual grading, cross-referencing curriculum benchmarks and managing paperwork, educators can rely on automated, data-driven systems to handle routine processes.



AI can enable educators to reduce time spent on repetitive, administrative tasks and dedicate more time to mentorship, student support and research. While free AI tools are convenient and easily available, they raise concerns around accuracy, bias, privacy and ethics. With many of these tools, user data feeds the underlying model, leaving institutions with no oversight on how it is used. AI embedded within a learning platform, such as [D2L Lumi](#), also enables institutions to connect insights, workflows and learner data across the entire educational experience.

EMBEDDING PEDAGOGY-DRIVEN AI

D2L Lumi is pedagogically driven and built by experts who understand the learning process. Lumi is built into Brightspace to complement the tools instructors and learners rely on every day. Institutions retain control over how and where AI is used. AI-generated content is clearly marked and requires instructor approval before it reaches students.

“AI systems can help faculty members analyse student performance patterns and identify learning gaps.”

Safia Farooqui, director of the Centre for Online Learning, Dr D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth

“As a university, we are constantly looking to bring in more tools to assist our faculty,” says Siromoni. “The moment there are challenges, we have various 360-degree feedback systems to ensure that for any bottlenecks our academic community is facing, relevant solutions are discussed and brought in.”

Having access to predictive, real-time analytics through AI-powered learning management systems can empower educators to unmask vulnerabilities early. This structural visibility can redefine course planning and student engagement, transforming them into a highly agile, responsive process.

“AI systems can help faculty members analyse student performance patterns and identify learning gaps,” says Farooqui. “Then they can use the support of AI to design the curriculum and create assessment rubrics.”

By systematically dismantling the bottlenecks of time and administrative work, digital tools enhance engagement and critical reflection within the classroom while developing valuable AI skills in students.

In the new era of global competitiveness, embracing technology is a strategic investment in quality education and graduate success. It can be a powerful mechanism through which India can scale its legacy of educational excellence into a future-ready, inclusive digital ecosystem that supports millions of learners. ■

DISCOVER HOW D2L CAN HELP YOUR INSTITUTION MOVE FROM AI EXPERIMENTATION TO STRATEGIC ADOPTION.

About this white paper

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About D2L

D2L is a global learning innovation company, reshaping the future of education and work. Our signature technology product – D2L Brightspace – enhances the learning experience for millions of learners at every stage of life, from the earliest days of school to the world of work.

Since 2019, D2L has been working with higher education institutions in India to support teaching, learning and student success through flexible and scalable digital learning environments. In India alone, Brightspace empowers over 4 lakh learners across leading institutions such as Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal University Jaipur, SRM Online, OP Jindal and BITS Pilani Mumbai.

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