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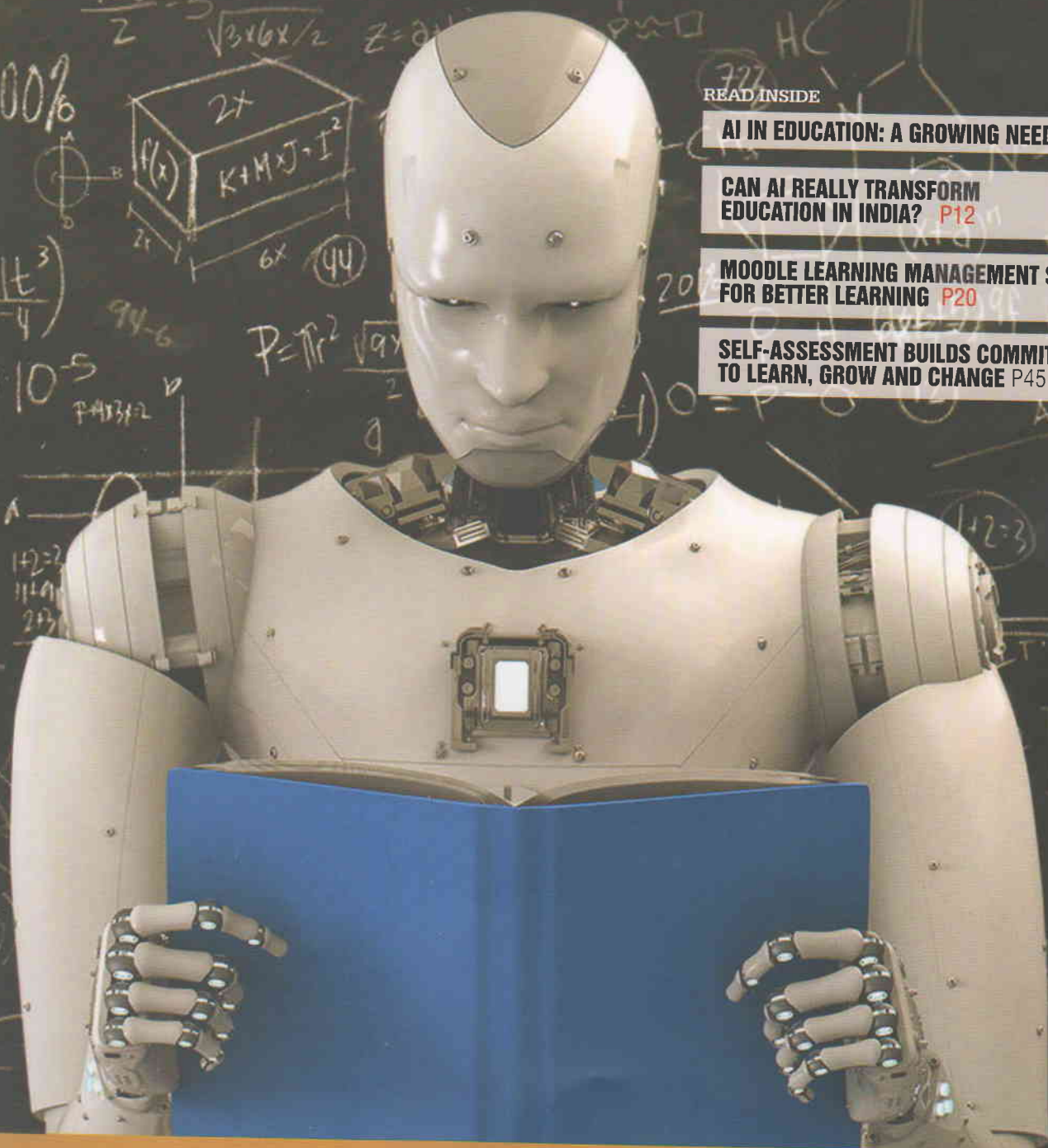
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SELF-ASSESSMENT BUILDS COMMITMENT TO LEARN, GROW AND CHANGE

Self-assessment can help students to identify discrepancies between their current and desired performance levels and work towards bridging that gap.

► by Vandita Sharma

It is always the teachers, peers, relatives, and friends who are continuously assessing and evaluating students on various parameters. Their opinions may have a positive or a negative impact on students. Words in Indian philosophy are called 'Brahma,' the all-powerful. They have immense power and can deeply affect a person, especially children. Opinions can make or mar the personality of an individual and should be used judiciously, carefully and aptly. Positive words can bring out the best in a student while negative or sarcastic remarks could take him into a shell and hamper his growth in the coming years.

Student self-assessment

Students can use self-assessment to

- monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behaviour when learning, and
- identify strategies that improve their understanding and skills.

Self-assessment can help students identify discrepancies between their current and desired performance levels and work towards bridging that gap. Students need to be taught to be critical and introspect their flaws and convert these into their strengths. They should be able to analyse their behaviour and weigh the pros and cons of their actions.

Assessing themselves helps them to contemplate on their action, thus, helps them to realise their potential, and improve their performance and motivate them to grow. At the same time, it dilutes their ego. They realise they are not perfect and they too are vulnerable to mistakes. The students learn to stay in touch with the ground reality, to be humble, appreciate others and draw the line between right and wrong.

Through self-assessment they can evolve as better human beings. They can eliminate their shortcomings and weaknesses. They can excel with adaptability and positive attitude and emancipate themselves from bondage.

How can self-assessment be implemented?

Students have to be taught to assess themselves. The younger they are, easier it is to mould them as they are more receptive to adapt themselves. They will learn, accept, assimilate and apply it in their day to day life.

Setting Learning targets: We can start by setting targets. Were they able to complete the work given within the stipulated time? How well were

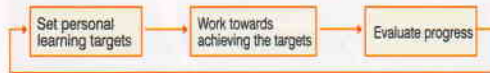


Vandita Sharma is an educator whose passion is teaching. Being a product of a Catholic school, St. Mary's Convent, has been a boon and an added advantage to be a teacher, guide, friend, philosopher and mentor. She is presently working as PGT English at Birla Balika Vidyapeeth, Pilani. Her innovative methods, experimentation and understanding the idiosyncrasies of her students have helped them in securing good results and has further helped them in taking the hobby of Creative writing as well.



We are moving in an age where constant and continuous upgrading, updating and reskilling is required. Therefore, from childhood we have to skill them to reskill themselves so that they do not become redundant in this competitive world.

they able to do it? They can assess themselves by comparing their work with their peers. The Smileys and favourable remarks given by the teachers not only improves their self-esteem but motivates them as well to do better next time. As the child grows, he is able to assess himself. Teachers need to ensure that they are not biased, prejudiced as their opinions are initially the criteria of the student judging himself.



SMART Analysis: This analysis is done world over by teachers without even their realising it. Helping the students to assess themselves can be done in a similar pattern.

- S: Specific
- M: Measurable
- A: Achievable or Attainable
- R: Relevant
- T: Time-bound

Pen and Paper Test, Assignments, Projects, Activities are some of the tools that not only help the teacher but the student as well to assess himself.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats): While assessing, students can get to know their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover they will be able to analyse the opportunities they get where they can showcase their strengths and overcome their weaknesses and convert them into strengths. They can also realise the threats which can be in the form of competition, peer and parental pressure

and teachers' expectations which otherwise might undermine their ability and make them succumb to the pressures.

Writing down their strengths and weaknesses can help them to work on them, transforming their weakness into positives and strengths into challenges to overcome the obstacles that come in their way.

CODER: CODER is a personal audit of one's personality. This analysis is a self-appraisal for students where they learn to appreciate and accept their own and other people's qualities.

- C: Collect
- O: Organise
- D: Draft
- E: Edit
- R: Revise

Students collect the criticism and appreciation they receive, organise their skills to assess themselves, draft an action plan to work on their strengths and weaknesses, edit the plan according to the changes in their personality and the opportunities and threats they encounter, revise and re-revise their plans till the time they are able to overcome their weaknesses and transform them into strengths.

It is a journey of learning how to be our best self through self-assessment.

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Challenges in implementing self-assessment

The biggest challenge that a teacher faces is acceptance to reality. Students become defensive when their mistakes are pointed out. They are simply not ready to accept their mistakes or weaknesses. To top it, this present generation who is born in a nuclear family with working parents following the single child norm are pampered and spoiled brats. Their parents overlook their weaknesses and feel that they are the best. Thus, the present generation is unable to assess themselves in terms of weakness.

On the other hand, they think of themselves perfect and have an overbearing attitude. Their riches (money wise) or talent make them arrogant and bossy. They are the best judge and no one can stop them from this rigid attitude. They are simply unable to find fault with themselves.

Overcoming challenges

Implementing self-assessment from primary classes helps. Younger the child, more receptive they are. They also easily adapt to the criticism because of their inquisitiveness to know the answer for the 'whys'. They realize their follies and try not to repeat the same. If they are tuned to this assessment it will help them in the long run. Subsequently, they will be able to help their peers in this process.

Secondly, in senior classes, teachers need to be patient. They need to practice the same with the students and take their help in the fields they excel. This will boost their morale and thus make them realize, they too have weaknesses they need to work upon. 'Appreciating the classmates' also goes a long way in helping to assess themselves.

We are very critical and quick at pointing fingers, but when it comes to appreciating others, we are stingy. We should understand

that criticism and appreciation go hand in hand. No child is pure black or pure white. We all belong to the 'grey' category with our strengths and faults. Appreciating helps in giving them a 'Green' signal. They learn to appreciate themselves and others too.

The SMART analysis and SWOT analysis also help in overcoming these challenges by keeping them on track. They are able to be specific and measure their progress. Further, they can achieve their target making it relevant and time bound. They learn Time management and the most valuable - self-assessment.

Assessing oneself is a journey of self-development, a journey of learning, a journey towards self-motivation, a journey where 'impossible' becomes 'possible'. In short a journey towards perfection.

To conclude

*Assessing is all about a little care,
A little concern for ourselves,
To improve consciously,
To introspect critically and objectively.
It is a self-reflection,
For our self-improvement,
To bring about a resonance,
Of life and vitality.
To be better human beings,
And lighten the world of its sufferings,
To create a better you and me,
To create a better world with a better 'WE.'*

Assessing helps us to improve consciously, critically to create a new 'WE' so as we can show our care, concern and compassion and evolve creatively and conscientiously, to remove confusion, to produce a rhythm and consonance/ resonance in our life and be committed to learn, to grow and to change.

But before that as August Wilson says, "Confront the dark parts of yourself, and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness. Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing."

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