

# UCONNECT

The Education Newsletter

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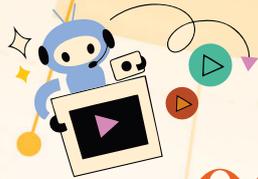
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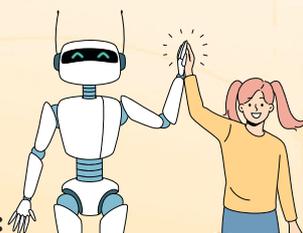


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## COVER STORY

# The Saga of Student Choices

By Smriti Singh Bhati | Director, The Career Foundry

*"For students, choosing a course or career path is often the first big adult decision. It's thrilling, yes—but also terrifying. At 16 or 17, most teenagers are....."*



Walk into any store today, and you're a king. Bought the wrong shoes? Exchange them. Kitchen gadgets not working? Refund. Even airlines—those eternal sticklers—now offer credits, vouchers, or rescheduling options.

But step into education, and suddenly the rules change. No returns. No refunds. No exchanges. You can't walk up to a university counter mid-degree and say, "Excuse me, I think aerospace isn't for me, could I try design instead?"

And yet—this is the very arena where choices shape lives, families, and futures.

### The Weight of One Decision

For students, choosing a course or career path is often the first big adult decision. It's thrilling, yes—but also terrifying. At 16 or 17, most teenagers are still figuring out their playlists, let alone their purpose in life. And still, they are asked: "What do you want to do for the rest of your life?"

The reality? Some guess right. Many stumble. A few spend years (and family fortunes) realizing they've boarded the wrong train. And unlike a pair of sneakers, there's no quick exchange.

But here's the hopeful part: it doesn't have to be this way.

This is where **Career Trails** steps in—not as a silver bullet, but as a light on the path. Think of it as the academic version of a test drive. Students don't just read glossy brochures or sit through polished presentations. They walk the campus, peek into labs, eat in the mess, chat with real students, and engage with faculty.

Suddenly, education becomes tangible. The "idea" of engineering or design, or management, stops being abstract. It becomes an experience—a taste of what life could actually be like in that space. And that's transformative.



### Why Educators and Counselors Should Smile at This?

Because we've all seen the flip side. The anxious student who feels trapped in the wrong course. The parent who whispers, "We didn't know this degree was so narrow." The late-night questions: "Ma'am, what if I want to change direction now?"

Career Trails offers prevention, not a cure. It helps students make decisions with their eyes open, and in doing so, reduces the heartbreak later. For educators and counselors, that means fewer rescue missions—and more success stories.

### Reimagining Degrees as Journeys, Not Products

If degrees were consumer products, we'd all laugh at the absurdity of "no refunds." But education isn't about transactions—it's about transformation. And transformation thrives on awareness, experience, and choice.

By giving students a glimpse of real university life, Career Trails empowers them to choose not just a course, but a fit for their personality, their aspirations, and their style of learning. Isn't that what education was meant to be all along?

### From Satire to Hope

As a literature student, Satire and Pun were my favourite literary tools. It's easy to poke fun at how casually we make education decisions compared to, say, buying a mobile phone. (Let's be honest—many students research headphones more thoroughly than degrees.) But humor aside, there's hope in knowing we can change this.

We don't need a refund policy. What we need is foresight. We need to normalize exploration, trial, and dialogue before commitment.

Imagine the ripple effect if more schools and counselors embraced this approach. Students would step into higher education not with blind faith, but with clarity. Families would feel relief knowing their investment is grounded in experience, not guesswork. And universities, too, would welcome students who truly want to be there—engaged, motivated, ready.

### Closing Thought

Education may never come with an exchange counter or a refund slip—and perhaps that's for the best. After all, what makes the journey valuable is its seriousness. But seriousness doesn't have to mean blindness.

As educators and counselors, we have the privilege of guiding students to make choices they won't regret. And with tools like Career Trails, we can shift the narrative—from "degrees are final sales" to "degrees are informed choices."

And isn't that the kind of hopeful story our students deserve?

### DISCLAIMER:

The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author.



## The IB Diploma: More Than Just a Challenge

By Shivayna De,  
IB DP 2 Student, Lancers International School, Gurugram, India  
UC CAAS 2025



## STUDENT'S Corner

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is widely regarded as one of the most rigorous academic paths for high school students—and from experience, I can say that reputation is well-deserved. Between juggling multiple Internal Assessments (IAs), completing the Extended Essay (EE), and navigating Theory of Knowledge (TOK) assignments, the workload can be intense and, honestly, overwhelming at times. But, with effective time management and guidance from committed teachers, the IB becomes not just manageable but a genuine opportunity for personal and academic growth.

What I have come to appreciate most about the IB is how no subject ever feels surface-level. Each one pulls you deeper into the field. The IB truly encourages you to explore ideas, question reasoning, and understand the “why” behind everything. In Economics, for example, I didn’t just memorise definitions; I applied economic theories to real-world situations. And in English, it was never about reading a novel for its plots or characters; I was dissecting them with the precision and depth expected of a university-level literature student — examining themes, analysing narrative techniques, understanding historical context, and digging into authorial intent to uncover layers of meaning beyond the surface.

This depth shows up in the skills the IB quietly builds along the way. Essay writing, computational research methods, and correct citations— all of it becomes second nature by the time you graduate high school.

I’ve heard from my seniors that their fellow first-year college students often stress about their first research paper, while they feel oddly calm, because IB already trained them for it. Hearing that always reassured me that this journey, though relatively tough, has a purpose.

### The Breakdown That Became A Breakthrough

Despite the foreseen preparedness, IB hasn’t always been smooth sailing. In my first year, I reached a point where I was buried in coursework, and it felt like a breaking point. I had an Economics IA draft due, a Biology summative, and an Extended Essay research to do, all at the same time. I remember staring at my planner, wondering how I could meet all the deadlines.

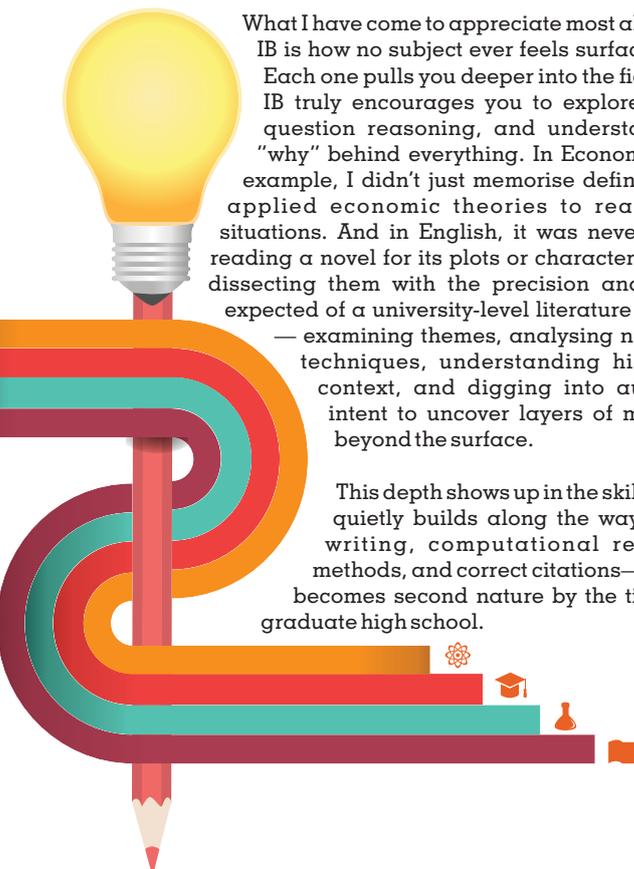
That’s when my teachers stepped in. My Economics teacher noticed I wasn’t myself in class and asked me to stay back. I explained my situation, expecting maybe a quick pep talk, and to my surprise, she offered me an extension on the IA draft. She didn’t just push the deadline back but gave me detailed feedback on my outline and walked me through examples of strong analyses. My Biology teacher did the same—breaking down my lab report into smaller, more manageable steps.

That week taught me a valuable lesson: In the IB, your subject teachers aren’t just graders—they are your biggest allies. Looking back, that moment stands out as a turning point. **I realized that the IB isn’t designed to break you; it’s designed to build you, and it shows you that you’re capable of more than you think.** The workload may be intense, but it’s paired with a support system that ensures you can meet those challenges.

Now, as I continue my IB journey, I’ve learned to:

- Balance deadlines
- Ask for help when needed
- Utilize the resources around me
- Understand that the stress is still there, but so are the skills, the confidence, and the resilience that will follow me into university and beyond.

And that’s why I’ve come to see the IB Diploma as more than a challenge. It’s a journey that demands a lot from you – your time, your patience, your energy. But it gives back something even bigger. It builds resilience, confidence, and a way of thinking that you carry long after the grades stop mattering. It’s tough, yes. But when I look at who I’ve become through it, I know it’s one of the most rewarding experiences I’ll ever have.



## Counselor's Perspective

The IB program's rigor is a significant challenge, but as Shivayna highlights, it's also a powerful tool for growth. It fosters invaluable skills in time management, critical thinking, and research, preparing students exceptionally well for university life. Moreover, the importance of leveraging the built-in support system, where teachers are not just instructors but crucial partners in navigating the demands of the program, is invaluable. A College Counselor's role is to help students navigate through curriculum choices, evaluate their learning styles, aspirations, and pick what may be right for them. Whether it's the IBDP, A Level qualifications, the APs, the High School Diploma, or even the national curriculum, all have their merits and lead to university pathways. For questions about Curriculum and Subject Choices, write to [counselor@universityconnection.in](mailto:counselor@universityconnection.in)



## Digital Marketing: Where Creativity Meets Strategy How I found myself in the Frame

By Roshika Khetan, a class 12 student at Sushila Birla Girls' School, Kolkata,  
UC CAAS Student 2025

I have always been someone who is a little shy—an introvert who is more comfortable behind the scenes than in the spotlight. While I've never been the loudest in the room, it often feels like I am watching life unfold from the sidelines. In a chaotic world of hashtags, filters, and endless content, where we scroll more than we stroll, and where trends go viral faster than my mom forwarding WhatsApp messages, I stumbled upon something unexpected: my passion for digital marketing and video editing.

Digital media and fast-paced content dominate today's world, and it was in this very world that I discovered my voice—not through speaking, but through creating. It started as a casual interest in creating engaging visuals and exploring the mechanics of social media, but it slowly grew into something more meaningful—a clear vision for my future.

At first, I began experimenting with video editing software like CapCut, Inshot, VN, and Canva. These tools felt like a playground for my creativity. I would quietly spend hours working on seamless transitions, sound syncing, and colour grading. I didn't do this because I had to, but because it gave me peace and excitement at the same time; Each project gave me the confidence to keep going. It gave me a space to be expressive, without having to be loud.

Beyond the editing, I became deeply curious about how content gains traction online, what influences engagement,

and how brands use digital platforms to connect with people. The more time I spent, the more questions began to form in my head: *Why do some posts go instantly viral? What makes people stop and engage? How do brands create content that feels so personal even when they are speaking to millions?* This curiosity led me to explore the world of digital marketing—a space where creativity meets strategy.

In addition to mere interest, the ability to analyze trends, craft campaigns, and use content to influence behavior felt like a powerful skill set. So, instead of keeping this passion as a quiet hobby, I began to apply it actively. I started creating content for my school's social media, and also for the NGO that I work with. By editing promotional videos and optimizing Instagram reels, I found myself constantly learning and evolving.

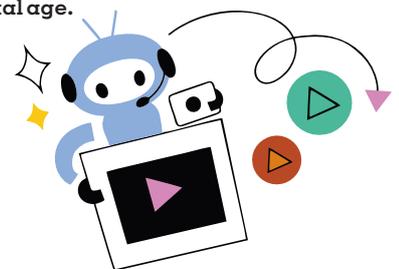
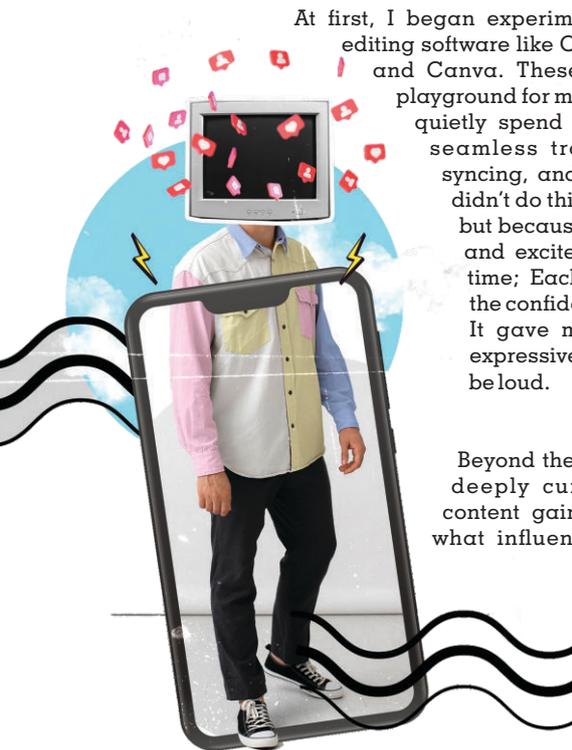
The dynamic nature of social media excites me the most—every algorithm change, every trend, and every consumer insight, there's something about its unpredictability that keeps me engaged. I have taken steps to deepen my understanding through online certificates and internships and these experiences:

- ♦ Helped me grow technically
- ♦ Have encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone
- ♦ Taught me the importance of collaboration
- ♦ Made me a better communicator
- ♦ Made me believe in the value that I bring

Slowly, I have realised that being introverted isn't a limitation and in fact, it allows me to observe more, listen better, and create with intention.

From a quiet corner to a world of digital strategy, this journey has changed me—not by turning me into someone else, but by helping me grow into myself.

Digital marketing and video editing are more than just skills to me—they are the tools of expression and vehicles of influence. As I continue to explore the evolving nature of digital marketing and refine my video editing skills, I am shaping my future to align with my creativity, curiosity, and quiet determination to make a difference. I am excited for what comes next, and I am committed to using my passion not just as a personal outlet but as a powerful tool to connect, express, and inspire in the digital age.



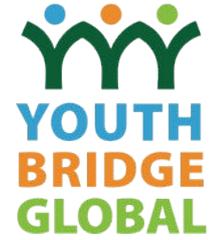
### Counselor's Perspective

This article is a strong example of how genuine curiosity, when paired with consistent practice, can turn a quiet interest into a real skill set. The student's journey – taking on projects, learning tools, and applying their work in real contexts- reflects the kind of purposeful growth colleges value. The key insight is that impact doesn't require being outspoken; it comes from using your strengths intentionally and building a portfolio that speaks for you.

Today, as Roshika explores university applications for Digital Marketing, her thoughtfully built journey becomes a reassuring reminder that she is ready for the next chapter and for doors that will open because of it.



# PARTNER Spotlight



## The Future of Education: Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Industry in India

By **Arjun Sharan** | Founder and Director, YouthBridge Global Education

*"Schools must cultivate adaptable learners; universities must prepare innovators and problem-solvers; and industry must invest in shaping the next generation. ..."*

Education is the foundation of a nation's progress, but its strength depends on how well it adapts to society and industry. In India, the tension between what is taught in classrooms and what the labor market requires is clear. The India Skills Report 2025 shows that only about 55% of graduates are "job ready," leaving nearly 18 million young minds underprepared each year. This mismatch burdens corporations with massive retraining costs; one month of extra training across 18 million graduates equals 1.5 million years of lost productivity. For India to achieve its vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, bridging this gap is not optional but essential.

### The Current Gap

For decades, the education system has emphasized rote learning and examinations. While this produces graduates in large numbers, it often leaves them lacking critical thinking, adaptability, and workplace readiness. Employers routinely invest months retraining new hires, draining resources. With 250 million school students and 40 million in higher education, the stakes are immense. Unless education aligns with industry, India risks underemployment, brain drain, and stunted global competitiveness.

### The Role of Schools vs. Universities

Schools and universities serve distinct but connected purposes. **Schools** should focus on building foundations such as communication, collaboration, digital literacy, empathy, and problem-solving. Yet test scores dominate, and cultural hierarchies form around minor percentage differences, damaging student self-worth. NEP 2020 seeks to shift schools toward competency-based learning, coding, vocational exposure, and community projects. However, schools face infrastructure, teacher training, and resource shortages. This is where external organisations such as YouthBridge Global Education can support with NEP alignment and experiential learning opportunities.

**Universities**, meanwhile, must deliver depth of knowledge while preparing students for the workplace. Collaboration with industry remains inconsistent, leaving graduates without soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, punctuality, and adaptability. Universities need to evolve into innovation hubs, where applied knowledge, entrepreneurship, and multidisciplinary research are prioritized. Their responsibility is not just granting degrees but ensuring workplace readiness.

### NEP 2020 as a Catalyst

The National Education Policy 2020 acknowledges this misalignment and offers pathways for reform. Its vision emphasizes flexibility, experiential learning, and holistic growth.

### The Way Forward

India's future lies in viewing education and employment as a continuum, not two separate worlds. Schools must cultivate adaptable learners; universities must prepare innovators and problem-solvers; and industry must invest in shaping the next generation. If India successfully operationalizes NEP 2020, it can unlock its demographic dividend and build a globally competitive workforce.

The bridge between academia and industry is not only about creating jobs, it is about preparing citizens capable of navigating uncertainty, driving innovation, and contributing meaningfully to the economy and society. Done right, it will accelerate India's journey to becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Key features include:

- **Vocational Education from Grade 6:** Embedding skill-based learning early.
- **Internships:** Practical exposure in schools and colleges to accustom students to work environments.
- **Multidisciplinary Institutions:** Breaking rigid subject boundaries to foster creative problem-solving.
- **National Credit Framework:** Allowing students to move between vocational and academic tracks seamlessly.

If implemented effectively, these reforms can transform India's education pipeline from degree-focused to skills-focused.

### Industry as a Co-Educator

Industry must become a co-educator, not just an end recruiter. But the challenge is balancing education with productivity. A practical solution is embedding students directly into real projects, where their work contributes to company goals under guidance. This avoids yet another "structured" curriculum and provides an authentic experience. Dual-education models, apprenticeships, and live projects, already successful in countries like Germany, South Korea, and the UK, should be adapted to India's scale.

### Challenges to Overcome

Several hurdles remain. Rural schools lack digital infrastructure and trained teachers. Universities often resist industry involvement, fearing over-commercialization. Industry, for its part, tends to recruit from elite institutions, sidelining the majority. Above all, cultural biases toward marks over skills remain entrenched.

Overcoming these requires systemic reforms: large-scale teacher training, government incentives for partnerships, technology access, and campaigns to reshape how society defines success.



## Beyond Classrooms: Redefining Student Leadership and Innovation

By **Rishi Jalan** | Founder and CEO at Big Red Education

*"Education must prepare students not just for exams, but for life."*



In the complexity of the 21st century, students need more than strong grades to thrive. They must be **resilient, creative, empathetic, and ready to lead**. Not too long ago, education in India revolved almost entirely around academics and test preparation. While students performed brilliantly in classrooms, many were left unprepared for the world outside them—a world that demanded much more.

It was this gap that sparked a simple but powerful question: *"What if students in India had access to the same transformative opportunities that prepare young people at the world's leading institutions to innovate, collaborate, and create impact?"*

From that vision, Big Red Education was born.

### Our Movement: From Vision to Global Impact

What started as a small idea soon grew into a movement that has reached schools and communities across India, and, through global collaborations, expanded beyond borders.

Our immersive programs help students not only learn but also discover who they are and what they can contribute to the world with confidence and a vision to make a difference.

At the heart of our work has always been the belief that education must prepare students not only for college, but for life. This belief shapes every experience we design, guided by three core pillars:

### The Quiet Transformations: Stories of Impact

The impact of such experiences is often best seen in the quiet transformations that unfold. We have seen students walk in on the first day shy, hesitant, and unsure of their own ideas, only to emerge as the ones leading group discussions or pitching bold projects by the end.

*"One student described her program as a "turning point" the first time she realized her ideas could inspire others. Another returned to his school, determined to launch a sustainability initiative, which has since grown into a thriving student-led movement."*

Parents and teachers often notice changes too: greater self-assurance, sharper thinking, deeper empathy, and a willingness to take initiative. These are not temporary boosts but lasting shifts that shape choices in school, higher education, and beyond. The ripple effect is powerful because every student who grows carries those values back to their peers, schools, and communities.

### Looking Ahead: Our Unchanged Mission

For us, each new session is an opportunity to raise the bar, offering bigger and bolder experiences that dive even deeper into global challenges and actionable solutions. Our mission has remained unchanged: to democratize access to world-class education and nurture the next generation of changemakers.

The challenges of our times—from climate change to inequality to rapid technological disruption—demand more than academic excellence. They demand leaders who can think critically, collaborate across cultures, and act with empathy. Traditional classrooms alone cannot prepare students for that future, which is why we exist.

In today's world, where students are acquiring 21st-century skills and emerging as visionary leaders, we need mentors passionate about guiding them and educators who believe in shaping the next generation. Today, we must all strive to move closer to a future where education is not about limitations but also possibilities.

**Let us empower young people not just to imagine a better world, but to create it!**

<p><b>Leadership Development:</b> Students discover their voice, take responsibility, and understand that true leadership is about collaboration, not titles.</p>	<p><b>Innovation and Problem-Solving skills:</b> Students are immersed in challenges that push them to analyze critically and imagine boldly, designing creative solutions through design-thinking sessions, real-world case studies, or brainstorming exercises.</p>	<p><b>Global Citizenship:</b> Students begin to see themselves not just as members of their schools or communities, but as global citizens with the power to contribute to meaningful change.</p>
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## Internationalization

**Dr. Upasana**  
Dean, Admissions and Outreach  
at O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU)  
and Professor, Jindal Global Law School

*"As one of India's youngest and most globally connected universities, JGU has placed internationalisation at the very core of its academic mission....."*



### Global Hub: JGU's Vision to Bring the World to India

In an increasingly interconnected world, preparing students for global careers has become a defining imperative in reimagining higher education. Within this evolving landscape of Indian education, O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) has positioned itself at the forefront of international engagement with a simple, yet powerful and ambitious vision: to prepare Indian students to excel on the global stage, while simultaneously bringing the world's knowledge and talent to India. As one of India's youngest and most globally connected universities, JGU has placed internationalisation at the very core of its academic mission, offering students and faculty exceptional opportunities to learn, innovate, and collaborate across continents, disciplines, and cultures.



### A Global Network of Partnerships

At the heart of JGU's internationalisation story lies the sheer breadth and depth of its global partnerships—with over 575+ leading universities and institutions spanning across more than 80 countries and regions. This extensive network includes some of the world's most prestigious institutions such as the University of Oxford, Harvard University, Yale University, Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, United Nations Institute for Training & Research (UNITAR), University of Edinburgh, King's College London, University of Cambridge, National Taiwan University, Peking University, Tsinghua University, University of Melbourne, University of Tokyo, Sciences Po, University of Basel, among many others. They translate into tangible opportunities for JGU students and faculty to participate in joint teaching, research projects, policy dialogues, study abroad opportunities, and global conferences.

### Diverse and Global Faculty

JGU recognises that true internationalisation extends beyond opportunities abroad; it must be embedded within classroom pedagogies and everyday learning experiences. With more than 1,100+ full-time faculty members from over 50+ countries and regions, the university offers a vibrant, cosmopolitan academic environment. Visiting professors and guest lecturers from around the world add further dynamism, turning JGU into a true melting pot of ideas. JGU has nurtured a truly global cosmos, one that thrives without compromising the richness of local wisdom and knowledge traditions.

### Student Mobility- Outward and Inward

At JGU, internationalisation is a lived experience for students. Every year, JGU students travel to destinations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland, France, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Vietnam to pursue study-abroad opportunities, semester exchanges, dual degrees, and short-term immersion programmes. At the same time, JGU's campus hosts students from the University of Sydney, Goethe University Frankfurt, the University of Virginia, the National University of Singapore, Sciences Po, Stockholm University, La Trobe University, and the Australian National University, making its own classrooms richly international. JGU is thus a true portal to the world for Indian students and a gateway to India for global learners.

### Research and Global Collaborations

Internationalisation at JGU is also deeply rooted in collaborative and cross-cultural research and knowledge creation. The university houses specialised centres such as the Motwani-Jadeja Institute of American Studies, Centre for European Studies, Centre for Australian Studies, and Centre for Global South, which engage with pressing questions of diplomacy, law, sustainability, and international security. Regular participation in moot courts, Model UNs, policy dialogues, and youth summits further strengthens JGU's international academic presence, making the university's faculty and students critical stakeholders in global academic dialogues.

### Alumni and Global Fellowships

The impact of JGU's internationalisation is reflected in the achievements of its graduates, who are pursuing advanced studies or professional careers at top global universities, multinational corporations, international law firms, and NGOs. Complementing this is the Naveen Jindal Young Global Research Fellowship, a prestigious initiative that supports early-career researchers in conducting high-impact projects with JGU faculty, while also immersing themselves in India's cultural and academic life. Such initiatives exemplify JGU's commitment to creating meaningful opportunities that transform lives and give wings to young scholars.

In less than two decades, JGU has successfully redefined what it means for an Indian university to be truly global. Most significantly, it has pioneered in creating an ecosystem whenever internationalisation is democratised and made accessible as everyday experiences of students and faculty. It has emerged as a hub of today's India – bold in its vision, imaginative in its pursuits, creative in its spirit – a place where ideas flourish, and diverse minds come together to shape the future.





## Who Will Build the Classrooms for Us?

By **Jasminder Khanna** | Co-founder and CEO at Gresham Global

*We all remember that one question that echoed through our childhood: "Bade hokar kya banoge?" (What will you become when you grow up?)*



The answers were predictable: doctor, pilot, engineer, teacher, or accountant. These were the professions that commanded respect and admiration in our communities. We said them with confidence, not because we understood what those jobs meant, but because we were taught that those were the markers of success and respect in the society we live in.

As life unfolded, our childhood ambitions slowly turned into fantasies, and those fantasies faded into illusions. Some among us did achieve those dreams and became the "ideal" professionals. The rest, including me, took different paths driven by circumstances or necessity. Are we happy today? That remains subjective. Yet, deep inside, many of us wonder what happened to our first love, the dream we once held so dearly.

### Why Only a Few Professions Are Celebrated?

It has always intrigued me why only a handful of professions are celebrated so gloriously. Why do "doctor," "engineer," or "pilot" evoke instant respect while others don't? The answer perhaps lies in the foundation of these professions - the classroom.

Becoming a doctor or engineer requires formal education, structured training, rigorous testing, and most importantly, a grounding in ethics and professional conduct. The classroom doesn't just transfer knowledge; it builds identity, discipline, and integrity. Within those four walls, one learns not only theory and practice but also the moral compass that defines professional responsibility. That classroom is what gives legitimacy, credibility, and respect to a profession. And perhaps that is what our field, career counselling, still lacks.

### The Missing Classroom

Let's be honest, very few of us grew up wanting to become counsellors. Many of us, too, once dreamed of wearing the white coat or the pilot's epaulettes. Life, however, had other plans. And here we are, guiding young minds, shaping futures, and influencing life-changing decisions.

Do we take pride in what we do? Absolutely. Many of us find deep fulfilment in helping students discover their paths and potential. Yet, despite the impact we create, we do not command the same respect as other professionals. Why? Because we don't come from a classroom. There is no structured education system, no standard qualification, and no regulation that governs who can call themselves a counsellor. There are no licensing authorities, no ethical boards, and no defined codes of conduct.

That absence is not just unfortunate; it is risky.

### The Unregulated Gatekeepers of Futures

In a country with over 700 million youth, career counselling remains one of the most influential yet least regulated sectors. Every year, thousands of students make critical choices about courses, universities, and careers based on the advice they receive. But there is no system to ensure that advice is credible, unbiased, or even informed.

Unlike doctors or lawyers, anyone can claim to be a counsellor. A teacher, a marketer, or even a parent can use the title without any formal training. Would we ever trust an untrained pilot to fly an aircraft? Yet, we entrust untrained individuals to guide our children's futures.

The consequences of poor guidance may not be immediate, like a failed operation, but their impact can last a lifetime through misplaced potential, financial strain, and lost confidence.

As Nelson Mandela once said, "You don't need missiles to destroy a nation. Just ruin its education system, and in 10-20 years, the nation will collapse on its own." If we neglect the people who shape our students' choices, the results could be equally devastating.

### Building Our Own Classroom

So, who will build the classroom for us? Perhaps the responsibility lies within our own community, the genuine counsellors, educators, and policymakers who understand the magnitude of our role. We must come together to design structured learning programs, ethical frameworks, and systems of accreditation that professionalize this field.

It is time we stop seeing counselling as an "alternative" profession and start treating it as a "specialised" one. We need classrooms that teach not only the art of guidance but also the ethics of influence and the psychology of decision-making.

Because if our youth are the future of this nation, those who guide them must be held to the highest professional standards.

Until that happens, one question will continue to linger, not "Bade hokar kya banoge?" but "Who will guide those who are yet to grow?"

#### DISCLAIMER:

*The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of University Connection, UCONNECT, or its constituting team of Research Counselors.*



# Your Education Digest: Snapshots of events that matter

Are you hosting an event for your institution?  
Send us details, and we will be happy to feature relevant events  
within this section of UCONNECT

Namrata Sharma, a Guidance Counselor at Strawberry Fields High School recently shared a highly positive experience following their attendance at an education event hosted by York University. The representative described the time as "truly wonderful," highlighting the transformative learning opportunity it provided. A core feature of the event was a deeply insightful session led by a distinguished presenter. The counselor found this presentation particularly inspiring, noting the speaker was able to "unpack the paradoxical dimensions of AI with such clarity." The speaker's deep knowledge, grounded in real data and practical experience, effectively helped "demystify how these systems work," offering valuable insights to the attendees. The event's discussion centered on the crucial topic of integrating AI into the work of teachers, facilitators, educators, and counselors. The SFHS representative emphasized that the conversation helped clear up much of the existing confusion and hesitation surrounding AI. The key takeaway from the event was a "clearer perspective on using AI as an empowering support tool rather than the sole driver of outcomes."

The Outreach Collective (TOC) recently hosted an immersive learning event, the "Coastal Classroom," at a creative space in Goa. This initiative was intentionally structured as an "un-conference" experience, encouraging its members to temporarily shift focus away from standard professional metrics like deadlines and dashboards. The core objective was to reimagine learning led by curiosity and community. The event emphasized the following characteristics: Community as a Catalyst: Deep, meaningful conversations emerged organically, with no formal agendas or pre-set structure. Collaborative Learning: Participants found that knowledge acquisition stemmed as much from peer-to-peer interactions and shared experiences as it did from structured workshops. Spirit of Experimentation: Attendees were commended for bringing intention, humility, and a strong spirit of experimentation to the gathering. The "Coastal Classroom" ultimately served as a powerful illustration of how intentionally opening doors and minds can unlock entirely new, and highly effective, pathways for both thinking and acquiring knowledge.

Komal Singh from University Connection supporting College Counselling at the Sancta Maria International School, recently shared a highly positive reflection on attending the Counselors' Retreat at the Indian School of Hospitality. The interaction with the institute's Co-founder was described as a major highlight, with the leader characterized as someone who "speaks from the heart." This session offered deep insights into how the institution is preparing students for a future where service, design, and technology converge, fostering leadership defined by empathy and execution. The institute's international partnerships were acknowledged for effectively bridging global pedagogical standards with the local business ecosystem. The attendee was particularly impressed by the tangible commitment to sustainability and social impact, specifically citing the composting of food waste for campus kitchens, the strict zero single-use plastic policy, and the active community outreach initiatives. The retreat also served as a valuable networking platform, allowing for heartwarming reconnections with former colleagues and the formation of new bonds within the counseling community.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



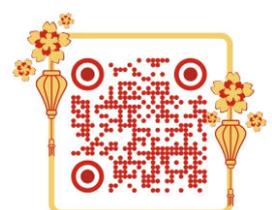
**The Third Weave**  
TOC's Annual Meet



**NAVI JAPAN APP**



**Creative Writing Workshops**  
by Big Red Group



**Design Acceleration Lab:**  
India's First Multi-Campus  
Design Immersion  
for Young Creators



# Check your Orange Quotient (OQ)

## Mix & Match or... Mix & Mess?

### Let's find out!

This crossword pulls from every corner of our newsletter — tests, regions, research, colleges, and more. Try this mini crossword puzzle and prove that you did not just skim through it.

So, how much will you score in our Orange Meter on a scale of 1-10?

5.						2.			10	
	7.				8.					
				6.			3.			
1.	4.									
		9.								

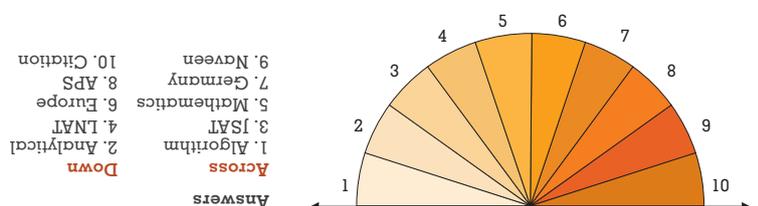
**Across**

- 1. I watch what you watch on your phone, learn your secrets, and decide your next obsession. What am I?
- 3. I'm the gatekeeper to most UG admissions at O.P.Jindal. Show me a good score, and I'll show you the door in. What am I?
- 5. I'm the subject you thought you could ignore... until you realised every STEM degree, or data-driven job, needs me. Which subject am I?
- 7. I'm the place where international students pay nothing for tuition at public universities — thanks, DAAD.
- 9. I'm the JGU's \_\_\_\_\_ Jindal Young Global Research Fellowship that supports emerging scholars with high-impact research and cultural immersion in India? Which fellowship am I?

**Down**

- 2. I read between the lines, crunch the data, and reveal the patterns hiding in plain sight. What skill am I?
- 4. Thinking of being a barrister in the UK and a lawyer in India, because why pick just one? I'm the entrance test that keeps both doors open?
- 6. I'm the region everyone's running to for STEM... because apparently I'm the new 'main character.' Which region am I?
- 8. I'm the permit that says, "Master's over? Perfect. Stay back and live the French dream for two more years." Which Visa am I?
- 10. I'm how you give credit in academia without getting sued. What am I?

### The Orange Meter



## Share your story via UCONNECT

We are proud to be connected with a diverse network of individuals and organizations that resonate with our mission of empowering career choices one student at a time. We welcome and value insights from students, parents, partners, and educators on a wide range of topics and issues, and look forward to sharing their perspectives.

To be featured in UCONNECT - The Education Newsletter, you can write to us at

[connect@universityconnection.in](mailto:connect@universityconnection.in)

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