CURE: Curriculum Restructuring at NIFT through Strategic Foresight

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Abstract

Without reflection and keeping an ear out for new developments, no institution can progress. The goal of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) is to continuously lead the industry and produce future leaders for India's fashion and apparel sector. The academic strategy based on the curriculum and its transaction is a key factor in the capacity of the institute to address the changing needs of the industry. Regular assessment of the curriculum with inputs from our stakeholders, including the industry, alumni, and peers in fashion education, is part of the ongoing effort to improve. Each assessment provides a new journey and a more sophisticated understanding of modern practice and its portents.

In 2017, the researcher at the helm of this review process, as Dean, embarked on this journey to assess and develop a strategy to design and implement a new curriculum for the ten programs taught at NIFT. The forethought was to start from a clean slate in order to posit an academic strategy oriented to the new dynamic and keeping abreast of the economic, cultural, technological, and socio-political trends.

Curriculums are never static and can be considered as most appropriate only for a particular period in time. Therefore the curriculum restructuring, renewal, and review (CURE) process is an ongoing one that ensures constant upgradation for the curriculum to be continuously relevant and futuristic. In today's rapidly changing world, new levels of interchangeability and a thinning of disciplinary borders are emerging as professional and future practices. Soft skills are necessary to balance out technical skill sets. Enterprise should foster creativity. The academic transaction approach ought to foster resilience that encapsulates a comprehensive comprehension of settings, adaptability in embracing novel concepts, and persistence. In light of its willingness to adapt to disruptive times, the curriculum development at NIFT was undertaken.

Keywords: Curriculum, restructuring, learning outcomes, assessment, backward alignment

Introduction

The word 'curriculum' comes from the Latin verb "currere," which means to run, whereas the noun curriculum verbally translates as "racecourse." Today, numerous definitions exist for the word 'curriculum'. The most widely used from the Encyclopaedia of Higher Education is "The term curriculum, broadly defined, includes goals for student learning (skills, knowledge, and attitudes); content (the subject matter in which learning experiences are embedded); sequence (the order in which concepts are presented); learners; instructional methods and activities; and instructional resources (materials)." Alternatively, a curriculum is a plan for delineating a set of learning opportunities to attain broad goals and related specific objectives for an identifiable population served by a single school center for people to be educated (Lewis, 1974).

In essence, a curriculum is a structured series of experiences that follow standards to help students become proficient in both subjects and applied learning abilities. To ensure that every student has access to challenging academic experiences, the curriculum serves as the primary source of guidance on critical teaching and learning practices for all educators. A curriculum's structure, organization, and concerns are designed to improve student learning and make instruction easier. For a curriculum to effectively support teaching and learning, it must include the objectives, procedures, resources, and evaluations that are required.

Curriculum goals are the benchmarks or objectives for teaching and learning, which are based on standards. Usually, these objectives clearly state the range and order of skills that students need to learn. The goals should include the scope and depth of knowledge a student is expected to acquire. Educational institutes use various strategies to achieve their goals. The decisions, strategies, practices, and routines used by teachers in the classroom to ensure that each student is engaged in meaningful learning are referred to as methods. These methods facilitate learning experiences to support a student's comprehension and application of knowledge and skills. Different teaching methods are necessary to cater to students' personal needs and interests, task requirements, and learning environments. Ongoing evaluation of students' progress toward achieving the objectives helps in modifying the teaching methods (Ramsden, 2003).

Assessment refers to the continuous process of acquiring data regarding a student's learning within a curriculum. This comprises a range of methods for recording the

student's knowledge, comprehension, and abilities. The assessment data decides the instructional strategies, resources, and academic supports required to enhance student opportunities and direct subsequent instruction (Fink, 2003).

The story of the curriculum of the National Institute of Fashion Technology, set up in 1986 under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles in collaboration with the Fashion Technology Institute, New York, is a fascinating one that evolved from an American model borrowed from FIT for three diploma programs to a full-fledged indigenous degree program for ten programs encompassing both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The entire transformation took two decades, a parliament bill, and the sweat of the brow of dedicated faculty members. The expansion of NIFT from one campus in 1986 to ten in 2006 and eventually sixteen in 2016 led to a standardization of inputs in terms of the curriculum and its transactions. This standardization took a severe toll on creativity and flexibility.

It all started in 2016, when the questions asked by most educators at NIFT were: What is NIFT's ideology/philosophy about education? On introspection, it was ascertained that the current scenario of education at NIFT was plagued by a rigid system as a result of standardization, which came at the cost of losing creativity. The industry reiterated the fact that graduates of NIFT lacked essential skill sets due to vertical departmental structures and compartmentalized disciplinary curricula. It was also felt that there was no room for flexibility and that the traditional teaching-learning systems were not suited to the current students, the millennials.

Research shows that the evolving education landscape needs to move away from preconceived notions about students. Teachers need to understand that their efforts should not propagate rote learning in any way; rather, they should nurture students in their approach to learning. The student needs a certain kind of flexibility when it comes to deciding their portfolio of subjects/areas that they want to be exposed to. The role of the educator, from being a complex one, has further evolved into a mentor-coach-facilitator (Navaneedhan, 2012).

The curriculum for modern-day education should enable collaborative learning, promote blended learning through a flipped classroom design, encourage creative pedagogical models for increasing student accessibility, and facilitate asynchronous learning. Future curricula would focus on skill enhancement as the main learning outcome and stress developing a moral and ethical ecosystem in students, preferably through visual education and interfaces. Traditional chalk-and-talk pedagogies, vertical departmental structures, and compartmentalized disciplinary curricula are specifically unsuitable for the cognitive trends of millennials, who prefer choice and flexibility (Boddington, 2017).

The real professionals of tomorrow will effectively be hyper-experts. They will indulge in multiple careers other than just their chosen field of work or service. They could be musicians, active gamers, or a professional marathon runner along with being a designer, merchandiser, or entrepreneur.

Aim of the Study

The primary objective of the study was to review and restructure the curriculum at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in the years 2016-18, while the researcher was the Dean, responsible for the academic structure and delivery in all 16 campuses across the country. The sub-objectives of the study are delineated as follows:

- To examine and evaluate the current status of education and training imparted in NIFT.
- To formulate ways in which NIFT can be enhanced and upgraded in terms of policy and program to meet the expectations of the textile, garment, and lifestyle industry with a vision of the future.
- To initiate the process of curriculum reform at NIFT
- To restructure the curriculum of 10 programs at NIFT to address industry preparedness, flexibility, creativity standards, and future adaptability.

Methodology

The author followed a case study approach to document the process of curriculum reform and restructuring at NIFT. The step-by-step methodology to review and restructure the curriculum is detailed. The curriculum restructuring exercise included a series of workshops, committees, and consultations. Committees at various levels formed for a holistic revisit of the curriculum held meetings, and corresponded regularly over emails.

- **Chairpersons' workshop:** A workshop of chairpersons and senior faculty from all departments was held to develop a framework for restructuring the curriculum. The Dean of Academics initiated the discussion on curriculum restructuring with a presentation. The presentation highlighted macro-trends impacting curriculum for the future, millennial skill sets, concepts for curriculum development, transaction models for learning, and the format of the restructured curriculum.

- **Constitution of a coordination committee:** A coordination committee of senior faculty members was constituted to work alongside Dean to review

the progress. The committee members studied the curriculum, pedagogy, positioning, transaction models, and credit systems of top national and international fashion/design schools.

- **Comprehensive inquiry by department chairpersons:** The chairpersons of the ten departments were tasked with conducting an in-depth inquiry in the following areas:
  - To study the curriculum and pedagogy of the best institutes inside and outside the country that are offering similar courses.
  - To obtain industry feedback regarding areas where it was felt that the quality of NIFT graduates needed improvement.
  - To identify new and emerging areas to be incorporated into the curriculum.
  - To examine the educational needs of millennials and suggest areas of change.
  - To explore ways by which creativity and flexibility could be enhanced in the transaction of the curriculum.
  - To identify growth potentials, directions, and profiles for future graduates in the industry.
- **Chairperson faculty deliberations:** The chairperson's discussions with department faculty resulted in the following outcomes:
  - Models of majors
  - Models of deepening specializations
  - 2-3 interdisciplinary minors (IDM), which will be offered to students of other departments
  - Individual pathways that were possible.

  Teams were then formed in each department for the detailing of the majors, deepening specializations, and interdisciplinary minors.
- **The marketplace of ideas on interdisciplinary minors:** The objective of the marketplace was to decide the transactions of interdisciplinary minors between various programs. All chairpersons presented the details of the minors to be offered to the other departments, and minors were finalized, balancing what could be offered with what was demanded.

- **Presentation of the progress of the curriculum restructuring exercise before the Board:** The presentation highlighted the need to introduce flexibility, enhance millennial students' desirable skills, deepen domain knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge, promote out-of-the-box thinking, etc. The board was informed of the parallel actions to support curriculum revision that were being taken like academic and industry consultations on each course curriculum, universal training of all faculty across campuses; mapping of space and structural requirements, recruitment and induction of new faculty; faculty orientation on new curriculum as well as pedagogic skill sets; the proposed faculty conclave on revamped curriculum; administrative arrangements for realignment of admissions and examinations; mapping of modular courses under the general themes to be taken by guest faculty; and identification of courses in new emerging areas for training of faculty and assimilation in the curriculum.

- **Campus and student consultations:** Interactions with senior students of all disciplines were held on various campuses on the contours of the restructured curriculum. The objective of the interactions was to examine whether the changes being proposed would address the challenges and inadequacies that the students experienced concerning the nature of the curriculum and the way it was transacted on campus. In particular, it was also to gauge the readiness of the campus to take on the responsibility of identifying and organizing general electives from the basket of possibilities given to the campus. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and senior students requested that the new format also be made applicable to them.

- **Interaction with industry, alumni, and academic experts:** Deliberations with the industry were initiated, with few experts taken on board for the restructuring exercise, which resulted in the finalization of:

    - Final matrix with core subjects, deepening specializations, and interdisciplinary minors to be offered by each department.
    - Clear comparison of the current and new matrix, which included the subjects, hours, and credits.
    - New/futuristic subjects that are being included in the curriculum.
    - Overall learning outcomes were articulated for each program, semester, and major, as well as the deepening specializations and interdisciplinary minors.

- **Presentations by nodal committees on curriculum restructuring:** The need was felt to define structures for the regulatory framework governing the new curriculum and create a support system for the faculty to transact the same with adequate understanding and time for professional self-development. Various nodal committees were set up to review the overall structures affecting the curriculum restructuring.

- **Faculty conclave:** The faculty conclave was organized to allow deliberation and fine-tuning of the curriculum comprehensively and cohesively. Each chairperson formed teams of faculty anchors, faculty co-anchors, and subject faculty to start the process of curriculum development. During the conclave, the subject teams deliberated, discussed, and finalized the contents, along with the learning outcomes for each subject, pathway, semester, and program. Subject teams made presentations to department faculty to ensure that the contents of the subject were coherent. Final teaching/learning methods, assignment models, and industry interaction were also discussed and finalized.

- **Presentation of the curriculum in the Senate:** The chairpersons presented the final curriculum matrix to the Senate as per the template provided. They also made presentations on the following important interventions:

    - How has creativity been addressed in the curriculum?
    - How has flexibility been brought into the curriculum?
    - How has the industry interface been emphasized?
    - How has the craft cluster initiative been incorporated into the curriculum?
    - How has entrepreneurship been emphasized?
    - What are the new, emerging areas, and how have they been incorporated into the curriculum?
    - What are the new readings that are being introduced for the new curriculum?

The program matrix, learning outcomes, and restructured format of the curriculum were approved by the Senate for the Board's consideration.

Results and Discussion

So, what entails the curriculum of the future? Curriculums are vital because they shape learning that has a lifelong impact on individuals. Traditional curriculums are highly

structured, predestined, and created by academicians with little room for co-creation by the learners. The future curriculum should make learners agile in managing the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) changes in the world. The world is undergoing major development in all spheres of human endeavor and can be described through certain patterns of change, termed as macro trends.

Educational research has revealed that there are top ten skills that will be essential for millennials in 2020 (Boddington, 2017). These include complex problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision-making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility. The millennials excel in hands-on exploratory learning that doesn't necessarily rely on a prior knowledge base gained from in-depth readings and lectures.

The faculty team conducted a study to examine the curriculum framework, content, and pedagogy of the best international schools of design and similarly placed institutions in the country. The best practices that emerged included flexible credit regimens, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary education, and multiple modes of study, including modular transactions, online modes of teaching, and self-learning. There was an emphasis on customized products to build on students' intrinsic strengths, individual pathways, and investment in an all-rounded personality, including providing sports/co-curricular activities.

The industry feedback collected by the chairpersons of all the departments was assimilated and analyzed. The important areas of concern identified by departments about the gap between industry requirements and graduate skills were assessed:

- The lack of skill in certain interdisciplinary areas highlighted the need for strengthening the interdisciplinary approach in the curriculum.
- Falling off in manual and hand skills was also pointed out, indicating a need for deepening specialized skills in certain areas.
- Some issues about work ethics, like high attrition and inability to persevere; reluctance to work in Tier II cities; inability to take pressure and meet deadlines; lack of aptitude and enthusiasm; lack of professionalism; and unethical work like plagiarism, pointed to need for inculcating values and deeper sensitivity to ethical concerns through the curriculum.
- The need for soft skills like presentation, effective communication, system thinking, self-belief and motivation, people skills, and interest in current affairs emerged,

pointing to the necessity of including courses that would, directly and indirectly, support personality development.

- The limitations in regard to focus, versatility, creative interpretation of briefs, lack of reflective observation, critical thinking, and the constraints regarding innovative/ creative approaches, observed by most departments, indicated the need for augmenting the creative ability of students.

- Issues about fostering entrepreneurship in the various programs were emphasized. Inadequate worldview and understanding of current events; inadequate knowledge of the legal and financial framework of business and funding options; lack of knowledge regarding developing a business proposal; inadequate understanding of the various aspects of the practice of business; and lack of business incubation facilities highlighted the need to bring entrepreneurship as an important stream of knowledge.

The departments also undertook the task of identifying new and emerging areas to be included in the curriculum. Extensive research on emerging areas and trends in design/ fashion education led to the identification of broad areas for inclusion and augmentation in the curriculum. For example, integrated specializations focus on sustainability, active experimentation, data visualization, fair trade and ethical business, smart textiles, technical textiles, engineered garments, craft studies and co-design, UI/UX, AI, robotics, business analytics, e-commerce, big data, IoT, and cloud computing.

Contours of curriculum reform

Curriculum review is done periodically every four years at NIFT. In 2016, the acronym CURE was coined at the start of the restructuring process to give an informed direction to the faculty fraternity. CURE stands for Curriculum Review/Reform/Renewal/ Restructuring.

Features of effective curriculum renewal/reform

The curriculum renewal process is done inclusively, collaboratively, and participatively when a shared vision is developed, a variety of perspectives are shared and taken into account, and decision-making and planning are open to broad engagement. To ensure success, the process needs leadership, effective, and ongoing communication; it needs to be planned, resourced, and supported; to be monitored and evaluated (Cooper, 2017).

Throughout this process of renewal, three key questions were asked.

- Why?
  - to validate decisions and actions
  - to engage stakeholders
  - to provide a context for decision making, goal setting and evaluation.
- How?
  - to determine the process
  - to develop agreed criteria for success for review and evaluation.
- What?
  - What is the intent and purpose of the program?
  - What skills and knowledge do students need to develop for the program, for the major, for the specialization, and for the course?

Broadly, the following questions were framed:

- What courses will be needed (core) and which can help (electives) to achieve the intent and purpose of the program?
- What will students do to develop the expected knowledge, skills, and application (learning activities)?
- What will students need to do to demonstrate they have achieved program and course learning outcomes (assessment)?

Many of these questions were answered through the curriculum mapping process. Of these, why? was the most important... You can't design and build something that is 'fit for purpose' if you don't know what that purpose is!

Concepts for curriculum development

Backward design (Figure 1) refers to the development of programs, courses, or lessons with the end goals of the experience in mind (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). The term 'alignment', in its broadest sense, refers to two main theories that emerged around the turn of the millennium: L. Dee Fink's integrated design and John Biggs' constructive alignment (Fink, 2003). The tests and instructional techniques used to show that the desired learning objectives of a given educational experience have been met should be consistent with each other. In conclusion, backward design determines what the end

goals of a program (or course, lesson, etc.) should be by defining what students must be able to do, know, etc. at the end of the experience. Alignment makes sure that all the elements—learning goals, assessment, and learning experience—work together to support students in achieving these end goals.

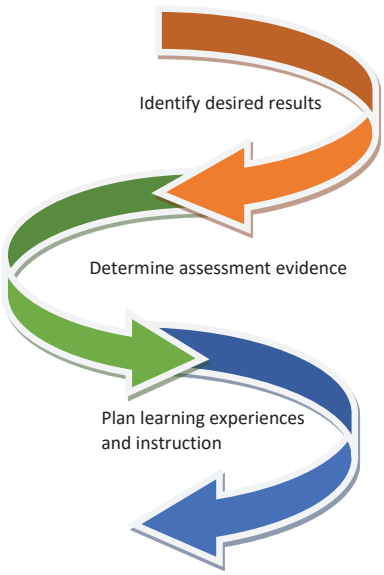

Figure 1: Backward design
Source: Wiggins and McTighe, 2005

Based on industry interactions, chairpersons along with faculty teams assessed strengths and gaps in graduating students' skillsets. Individuated pathways for required areas of focus were identified, based on core areas and including interdisciplinary minors and deepening specializations. Profiles of graduates working in the industry were studied to work on a backward alignment design to develop the learning model for the curriculum.

Learning, assessment and constructive alignment

A crucial component of course curriculum and program design, as well as a primary program quality indicator, is the alignment of teaching and learning activities, assessment, and course learning outcomes. For students to demonstrate that they have met or gone beyond the specified and intended learning outcomes, assessment is a crucial part of the learning process (Biggs and Tang, 2014). These ideas are encapsulated in the term 'Assessment FOR Learning', as opposed to 'Assessment OF Learning'. Students must be aware of both process and product learning expectations before they begin.

Assessment is part of the learning process, but it can only be effective when students receive timely and appropriate feedback. Secondly, the expectations of what they will do must be made explicit and directly related to the learning outcomes. Lastly, the learning and teaching activities are designed to allow students to develop the necessary knowledge and skills.

Learning objectives

The next step was to create the educational objectives for the course, program, and individual subject areas based on the understanding of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. (Bloom, et al., 1956). Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were the six main areas that made up the framework that Bloom and his associates developed. "Skills and abilities" were the categories that followed "knowledge," with the idea being that knowledge was a prerequisite for using these abilities.

The following are succinct explanations of these primary categories by the writers from the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives appendix (ibid.).

- Knowledge: Recalling specifics and universals, methods and procedures, or a pattern, structure, or environment are all included in the definition of knowledge.
- Comprehension: The term 'comprehension' describes a kind of understanding or apprehension in which the person can apply the information being shared and grasp it without necessarily connecting it to other information or realizing all of its consequences.
- Application: The term 'application' describes how abstractions are "used in specific and concrete situations."
- Analysis: The definition of analysis is the "dissection of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relations between ideas expressed are made explicit and/or the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear."
- Synthesis: "Putting together elements and parts to form a whole" is the definition of synthesis.
- Evaluation: "Judgements about the value of material and methods for given purposes" are formed through evaluation.

Why apply Bloom's Taxonomy? The writers of the new taxonomy provided a multi-layered response to this problem, to which the author of this teaching guide has added some clarifications:

- Learning goals, or objectives, must be set for teachers and students to understand the purpose of a pedagogical interchange.
- Establishing objectives helps the teacher and the learner understand them.
- Teachers are better equipped to plan and provide appropriate instruction; create legitimate assessment tasks and procedures; and make sure that the goals are reflected in the instruction and assessment.

Bloom's revised taxonomy

In the mid-1990s, former Bloom students Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl examined the cognitive domain and made several modifications. The three most notable changes are in the names of the six categories' names from noun to verb forms; the rearrangement of categories as indicated in Table 1; and the creation of a matrix of processes and knowledge levels (Anderson, 2001). A combination of the original and revised main domains was studied and used as the guiding principles for identifying the learning outcomes for each program, pathway, and subject by each department.

Table 1: Comparison between original and the revised taxonomy *(Anderson, 2001)*

Original Domains	**New Domains**
Knowledge	Remembering
Comprehension	Understanding
Application	Applying
Analysis	Analyzing
Synthesis	Evaluating
Evaluation	Creating

Conclusion

The curriculum restructuring (CURE) undertaken at NIFT was an exercise steeped in extensive deliberations that included brainstorming, in-depth research, writing workshops, and design conclaves. Apart from the articulation and documentation of the complete curriculum for ten programs ranging from three two-year graduate programs to seven four-year undergraduate programs, it was vital to align it to the vision and mission of the institute. Although the faculty fraternity in its entirety from sixteen campuses was involved in the process based on their expertise and skill set, agency, advocacy, and ownership needed to be established. Faculty conclaves and universal trainings were organized for empowering the faculty to comprehend and

transact the curriculum keeping in mind the objectives with which it was developed. Extensive capacity-building workshops on concepts like transaction models, continuous evaluation, and academic mentoring led to a change in pedantic mindsets and rigid traditional teaching and learning methods.

Committees comprising senior faculty were formulated to discuss and propose guidelines for the corollary arrangements that would be necessitated by curriculum restructuring. Policies and framework guidelines were finalized for the following areas:

- General credit guidelines
- Introduction of interdisciplinary minors (IDM) and general electives (GE) to students on campuses
- Operational instructions for selection of IDMs and GEs
- Guest faculty policy
- Terms of reference for hiring services of external organizations
- Industry engagement policy
- Integrated assignment modalities
- Framework for mentoring by faculty
- Reassessment of working hours of faculty
- Assessment of faculty through APAR
- Permanent transfer guidelines
- Common examination board guidelines
- Evaluation and assessment policy for restructured curriculum

The restructured curriculum addressed the key areas of concern, which included an emphasis on technical skills: applied and hands-on proficiency, interdisciplinary knowledge, personality and value development, out-of-the box thinking, critical reasoning, and problem-solving skills leading to opportunities to play to the strengths of career progression.

Basis of curriculum reform

The focus of the curriculum restructuring entailed flexibility by providing individualized pathways to the students, enabling them to exercise choice and develop to their full potential. This was achieved by incorporating interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary studies into the curriculum. To enhance technical skill sets, deepening specializations were planned within the program. The curriculum was designed to improve the creative

and analytical skill sets of the students through self-learning, peer interactions, library research, field explorations, etc., and also enable the development of a rounded and confident personality in students.

Framework of the restructured curriculum

The framework of the restructured curriculum encapsulated:

- Adoption of a combination of major, minor, and general credits on a 50:30:20 basis.
- Minor credits, including deepening specialization and interdisciplinary subjects in an equal combination, i.e., 15:15.
- The choice and management of general electives are the responsibility of the concerned campus.
- Credits are standardized across programs. Besides direct contact hours, credits will be allocated for self-study, studio practice, and floating subjects.
- Creative thinking and design thinking are incorporated into both the foundation program and general electives.
- Integrated projects for a convergent approach to design.
- Credit-to-hour equivalence: one credit to one hour for contact classes.
- Credits are provided in a range (an essential minimum to be covered and a maximum that can be opted for) to facilitate students undertaking workloads according to their pace and talent, enabling exceptional students to take floating credits if desired.
- Students will be given the option to take certain credits as audited subjects, where the student has attended the subject but the examination was not undertaken (zero credit).
- Academic transactions will be a combination of contact classes, studio work, workshops and seminars, industry visits and other exposure, mentoring, internships with the industry, graduation projects, and collaborative projects with faculty or industry.
- The breakdown of a 37.5 hour per week will entail classroom contact classes: 25 hours/week; studio/workshop: 4.5 hours/week; library/self-learning: 6 hours/week; and mentoring: 2 hours/week.

Important interventions in the restructured curriculum

The changes made in the curriculum were geared to address creativity, build flexibility by offering wider options to students, respond to new and emerging areas of learning,

integrate craft sensitization, and strengthen industry connections to provide a real-time experience to the students.

- Addressing creativity through the curriculum:
    - Building the required fundamental knowledge and skills to express creativity through holistic assignments and classroom projects.
    - Creating ambience and scope required for lateral and out-of-the-box thinking and exploring the same through various design subjects/studio-based projects in the majors and deepening specializations across the semesters.
    - Providing opportunities to explore creative and design thinking skills and capabilities in real-time situations through industry-oriented classroom/ studio projects, internship projects, and graduation projects.
    - Encouraging the students to participate in national and international design competitions and offering free or floating credits as recognition for creative achievements.
    - Encouraging the students to explore innovative material alternates, techniques, and finishes.
    - Interactive modes of assignment evaluation through critique, discussions, and peer reviews to generate rich dialogue, in-depth discussion, enhanced presentation, and documentation skills.
- Addressing flexibility through the curriculum:
    - Direct contact hours were reduced from 37.5 hours in a week to 25 hours in a week.
    - The new curriculum design offers a lot more flexibility through choice of interdisciplinary minors. This teaches them more than one skill and empathy to collaborate across disciplines, while also trimming the redundancy. The students are empowered to design their combination pathways to enter future careers with transferable skills and flexibility.
    - Through general electives, students have the option to choose the subjects of their interest area to develop a multifaceted personality.
    - Options to earn credits by way of freelance projects, participation in fashion week, design competitions, or other industry events, or through faculty assistance in an ongoing consultancy project.

- Flexibility is practiced by variety and choice offered without compromising any academic standards through the use of technology, traditional methods, or suitable combinations.

- New and emerging areas are identified with respect to each program and incorporated into the curriculum.
- Incorporation of craft cluster initiative across design, management, and technology disciplines.
- A robust industry interface is structured into the curriculum through visits, classroom projects, special lectures, transactions of part of the curriculum in the industry, exposure to state-of-the-art machinery and processes, internships, graduation projects, and pre-placement workshops.

The restructured curriculum was implemented across sixteen campuses of NIFT in July 2018. It was offered to the newly inducted batch of students as well as third-semester students for undergraduate programs. With this new journey, NIFT hopes to establish new frameworks for technical skill cementation, new paradigms for exploring creativity, new industry connections, new evaluation criteria, and a fresh confirmation of its key strengths and ideals. An enormous undertaking that not only exposed weaknesses and challenges that would not have been discovered otherwise but also offered an insight into the journey ahead.

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