



Empowering educators: The impact of Microsoft Learn for Educators

ICT Academy



ICT Academy leverages MSLE to help bring tech skills to rural areas of India

The [Microsoft Learn for Educators \(MSLE\)](#) program, which provides higher education institutions and educators with a suite of comprehensive tools and resources to augment students' existing degree paths, can be leveraged in many ways. In this blog, we'll look at how ICT Academy in India is leveraging MSLE to bridge the gap between industry and academia.

ICT Academy is a not-for-profit social enterprise focused on developing India's next generation of teachers and industry-ready students. The organization is a unique public-private partnership between the state government of Tamil Nadu, leading companies in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry, and the National Association of Software Services Companies. By bridging the gap between industry and academia, ICT Academy strives to improve employment in India, particularly in rural areas.

However, like many higher education institutions, ICT Academy is challenged by technology's rapid evolution. "As we are trying to teach one technology, that technology has changed again in two or three years," says Srikanth Venkatraman, Chief Executive Officer at ICT Academy. "These challenges are persistent and require constant reskilling and updating of learning materials. We constantly train faculty to ensure they are prepared to teach the latest skills." For example, in recent years, ICT Academy has seen an emerging need for skilled talent in new and sometimes unexpected areas such as chip design and manufacturing, sustainability and electric and hydrogen-based vehicles.

Expanding educational opportunities and technical skilling for all students

To help it teach cutting-edge technical skills in a rapidly changing world, ICT Academy relies on close partnerships with industry, especially Microsoft Learn for Educators. MSLE allows ICT Academy to expand educational opportunities and offer technical skilling and Microsoft Certifications to its students. It also helps improve educator proficiency. One of ICT Academy's key initiatives is to enhance educators' competency to help them maintain relevant skills and give them the confidence they need to take their teaching to the next level. "The MSLE curriculum helps educators stay up to date with the tools and resources available on the MSLE site, and that helps them transfer knowledge effectively to the classroom," says Venkatraman. "Everybody benefits from this process."

MSLE also helps ICT Academy stay relevant in a changing technical landscape. Because MSLE materials are available to teachers and students located anywhere with an internet connection, ICT Academy can train more students and teachers located in rural areas. This is especially important in India, where cities are becoming more congested, and smaller towns are increasingly emerging as technology hubs in need of tech talent. "Even colleges in the most rural and remote villages can partner with us and use MSLE materials to enable students to earn certificates and improve their digital capabilities," says Ganesh Sir, head of industry and strategic alliances at ICT Academy, who helps identify industry needs and defines programs to meet those needs with skilled resources.

"With MSLE, students can access skilling from any corner of the world, connect with employers and take advantage of positions they would not have had otherwise," adds Venkatraman. "Students in even the most remote parts of India can now aspire to the best jobs available."

Improving employability and productivity

Working with Microsoft helps ICT Academy match the skills it teaches to industry requirements and connect trained students with organizations in need of those skills. “We cycle it back to enable industry to hire candidates who have been trained by us,” says Sir. “We always ensure that we work closely with industry to understand the needs.”

Offering badges and credentials enables students to demonstrate their skills and expertise to potential employers. Sir says that’s translated to an increase in the number of students who have secured jobs quickly following graduation. “It helps students make themselves employment-ready and offers students credentials and Certifications that enable them to be a part of the workforce as soon as they graduate,” he says.

It also means students can become productive at those jobs more quickly. “When they start a job, trained students are competent and skilled enough to become productive and billable as soon as they come on board,” says Sir. “Instead of taking 12 or 15 months, many students take just a month or two because they already know how to use the tools. That saves the hiring institution money and means they can produce a better quality of output.”

Both Sir and Srikanth say they have found value in working with Microsoft and using the MSLE curriculum, which is important given that ICT Academy’s unique educational partnership model is being closely watched in India to better understand its effect and potential for replication in other parts of the country.

“All three partners—government, industry, and academia—are extremely happy to be working with Microsoft,” says Srikanth. “MSLE has enabled educators to embrace the latest technologies and impart those skills to students quickly. Microsoft has been one of our great partners, and we cherish that relationship.”