

NIIT in design training pact with Autodesk

Our Bureau

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IT education provider NIIT Ltd, which had earlier this year announced plans to gradually diversify into training in various areas, such as banking and finance, has entered into a partnership with global design software company, Autodesk.

Under the partnership, Autodesk will provide technological and software support to NIIT, which, its Chief Executive Officer Vijay Thadani, said would enable them to inculcate "design-thinking into our education system."

"We have over a period of time become an industry driven economy rather than design-driven or innovation-driven economy," he said.

According to Thadani, the companies aim to take design, as a subject, to schools, starting with grade 6 itself and then further into the higher education space with NIIT University and NIIT Ltd. The company will introduce this in schools through their school learning division, which has relationships with 12,000 schools.

Further, other higher education institutes also stand to benefit from this tie-up, as almost 1,000 engineering colleges and other higher education institutes are currently partnered with NIIT Ltd.

"All the subjects that they

currently have (in school), students will practice those subjects in innovations labs that we will set up," Thadani said.

However, design is not being envisaged as a grade-oriented subject in schools and will, instead, be assessed on the basis of the end results in terms of the products that students are able to design.

On its part, Autodesk aims at preparing the next-generation of designers, George Abraham, Director of Emerging Markets, Autodesk Education, said.

"We have a huge customer base using our software and technology. We need a next generation of designers. That's where education and students come into play. We need to provide students with software and technology in classrooms," he said. "It is important that we start with young minds and give exposure to them about the world of design."

Abraham said those who use the software, professional or personal, are customers, including "that kid using our software to print his own toy using our 3D printing."

Both Thadani and Abraham hoped this partnership would be a step toward bridging not just the employability gap plaguing graduates, especially engineering graduates, but also a way of upgrading their skills.

aesha.datta@thehindu.co.in

navadha.pandey@thehindu.co.in