

# Great Learning: Gamifying education to master skills

Rachel Chitra | TNN | Jun 13, 2016, 04.41 PM IST



*The pioneer: Mohan Lakhamraju.*

***This startup offers a blended mode and online courses for working pros, business analytics, management, digital marketing and entrepreneurship***

A shopping expedition in reward for high scores.

Sounds attractive?

Well at Great Learning rewards points in the form of vouchers or gift cards on Amazon, Flipkart are just one of the many things they do to keep their students hooked.

Great Learning, an [education](#) startup promoted by Chennai's Great Lakes Institute of

Management, is pioneering 'Gamification in Education' for its online management courses. Founded in January 2014 by Mohan Lakhamraju, Great Learning offers a blended mode and online programmes for working professionals, business analytics, management, digital marketing and entrepreneurship.

In operation for the past two years, Great Learning has delivered more than 1,50,000 learning hours to 2,000 students in cities like Gurgaon, Chennai, Bengaluru and Pune.

"We have offline and online training. We introduced this concept of gaming to make it more interactive. I was particularly impressed by the Coursera model when I interacted with its founder professor Andrew Ng. One of the main challenges at online learning portal Coursera was the high dropout ratio because online courses need a lot of self motivation. To overcome that hurdle we came up with this concept of gamification," says Lakhamraju, an alumnus of IIT-Mumbai and Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

With initial investment from the Great Lakes Institute of Management, Great Learning was started with an initial capital of \$1.5 million. "I was motivated to start this online programme because of my earlier stint with Great Lakes. While offline model has its advantages, I really wanted to work on an online model and many corporates were enthused by it. The average age of our students is between 27years-40years," says Lakhamraju, who continues as vice chairman of Great Lakes Institute of Management.

Another interesting aspect is the scoring mechanism. "In regular courses, students just enroll so that they can pass. Here we don't encourage such a culture, we want people to understand the course, and to pass, you'd have to score 60% or more," he says.

Gamification has really helped increase engagement with their students as Great Learning uses tactics like points, rules, rewards and achievements.

"We do have offline classes and students attend them on a weekly basis. But we wanted the online model to be standalone, so we devised this system," he says.

Great Learning students are given points for solving problems which they can later redeem for rewards including vouchers or gift cards.

The e-learning management programme also has levels of engagement like a video game, where the player/student has to keep solving increasingly more complex problems to progress higher up the course. "We also have leader boards to instill a sense of competitiveness," he adds.

*(This series profiles innovative startups in the state)*

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