THE FUTURE OF EXAMS

OPEN-BOOK, AI PROCTORED, OR NO-EXAMS AT ALL?

Introduction

The concept of modern exams was developed by Henry Fischel, a German-American professor in the late 1800s. Previously, the main motive behind conducting the examination was to select qualified candidates for government positions. In addition to this, the main purpose of conducting the exam was to promote efficiency, fairness, and competence in governance. Exams have been a valuable tool for centuries to measure the level of intelligence and competence.

Henry Mishel American

The first person to invent the concept of exam

Importance of Exam

Exams are an important aspect of the student's academic journey, and this approach not only helps students evaluate their knowledge but also understand the subject, which later helps in building their confidence. Regular exams prepare students to face challenges and give their best to perform under pressure, ultimately enhancing their level of confidence.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic brought a paradigm shift in the examination process. After the strict lockdown announced by the Government, schools were closed. As a result, school authorities adopted online teaching methods to deliver lectures and ensure continuity in learning. To tackle the challenge posed by the COVID-19 outbreak in the industry of education use of online classes and exams became popular. The adoption of the latest technology and the growing adoption of remote examination along with remote learning facilities transformed the concept of the traditional exam conduction process.

With the advancement in technology, the future of examination is also going to look very different. Examinations have also evolved in response to modern educational needs to help students better understand their weaknesses, strengths and learning progress. Technological advancements are shaping the future of examinations. Digital solutions have transformed the ways exams are being conducted to assess the progress of a student in school and select the right candidate for the workplace. The assessment methods such as AI-based proctoring, and open book exams were available previously before COVID-19, but their adoption was limited. During a pandemic, when most universities and educational institutes shifted towards online education, the adoption of AI-proctored, open-book assessment methods increased to improve the academic integrity and well-being of the students. As reported by Statista, the revenue of the online education market is projected to reach US$203.81bn in 2025. In addition, the revenue is expected to showcase an annual growth rate of 8.20%, resulting in an increase in market volume of US$279.30bn by 2029. This data indicates that online learning and online exam assessment approaches are going to stay here as a part of global learning.

AI proctored exam: The future of surveillance or an invasion of privacy

AI-powered proctoring is used to recognise cheating and malpractice in the examination through video and audio feeds. The advantage of this AI-powered proctoring is that it can flag any suspicious behaviour in real-time, allowing administrators to take necessary actions when required. This technology not only prevents the chances of cheating in the examination but also reduces the cost of hiring invigilators. In 2020, due to the lockdown, institutions such as the "Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kashipur" adopted this technology that enabled students to take exams from their homes. "Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)" also announced the "Graduate Management

Admission Test (GMAT)" to assess the ability and skill of candidates to take admission in graduate business programs.

Interactive Assessments

Interactive assessments are the assessments in which the marks of the exam are evaluated with the help of a computer or mobile device. This method is helpful for the students learning through a modern educational approach, and this includes assessment through oral presentation, submitting research papers, and individual creative performances. Apps such as Duolingo or Babbel are widely used by both students and working professionals to improve their language skills with the help of gamified challenges and quizzes. Duolingo, through its interactive and gamified approach, allows people to learn over 30 languages. The app also uses Machine Learning and Artificial intelligence-based algorithms to personalise the learning experiences of the users.

Nevertheless, it is argued in the study of Aditya Johri and Ashish Hingle that AI proctored exam invades the privacy of individuals as the AI proctored exams require individuals to show their face, identification, and other things which is a matter of concern. The students feel concerned about who watches their recordings and how the information shared by them is used by the university authorities. Furthermore, the AI-proctored test often requires students to ensure that they are alone in the room, and if they raise their eyes upward while thinking they are considered to be cheating leading to being kicked out from the examination. Moreover, the AI proctored exam requires trans students to use their government-issued ID before the start of the test which puts trans students in vulnerable positions. The AI-based systems have a history of discriminating the individuals as if these systems are not trained properly and are capable of detecting only white skin people with accuracy. Thus, it is inferred that AI-proctored exams pose significant privacy concerns as they require students to share personal data including identification and facial recognition raising concerns regarding surveillance and data misuse.

Open Book Exams

Post-pandemic educational institutions have explored different learning and teaching approaches, which include open-book assessments. The main motive behind the conduction of this exam is to test the critical thinking capability of

the students. Open book exams are supposed to foster deeper engagement with the study material by students reducing the scope of memorisation focusing on comprehending the concepts, and formulating answers based on the concepts learned in the classes. This method recognises that in the real world, professionals refer to the resources instead of relying solely upon memory. In this assessment, students are allowed to access notes, textbooks and digital resources during the test. There are a few advantages of this approach it encourages high-order thinking instead of regurgitating facts. Since students don't need to memorise vast amounts of information, the shift focuses towards real-world applications. The open book exams encourage students to develop problem-solving skills rather than focusing on memorisation of techniques. Open-book exams address the concerns of traditional learning such as memorisation and lack of problem-solving skills, but AI-proctored exams are preferable in online courses to evaluate the performance of the students.

No exams at all? A radical approach to learning assessment

A more radical approach to deal with the concerns associated with traditional exams is the elimination of the exam. A no-exam approach emphasises project-based learning and real-world application of knowledge.

Project-based Learning

Project-based learning allows students to engage in hands-on, meaningful tasks that reflect real-world challenges. This approach focuses on life-long learning instead of short-term retention. Project-based is a student-centered and inquiry-based teaching approach that allows students to actively engage in projects that address real-world issues thereby fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. For example, for the subject of History students should be given an assignment to create a documentary about historical events rather than memorizing dates for an exam.

Real-world application of knowledge

This involves engaging students in internships and apprenticeships to gain hands-on experience. Actively taking part in apprenticeships and internships helps students in the development of confidence, building adaptability and confidence. Today, the fast-changing market of job apprenticeships and

internships has become increasingly important for the development of skills. This approach not only quip with team building skills but also enables students to gain the opportunity to a professional atmosphere. For instance, students should be encouraged to develop a business simulation instead of solving numerical problems to better analyze business trends. Similarly, for IT-based subjects' students should be encouraged to develop an app or website instead of writing theoretical programs for exams.

Challenges in AI proctored, Open book, and no exam approach.

It is important to note that each alternative to the traditional exam comes with its own set of challenges. AI-proctored exams raise ethical and privacy concerns. The primary concern with AI in education is the large-scale analysis and collection of data, including academic behaviour patterns and performance raises questions on how this data is being stored, used, and accessed. The sensitive data collected by AI systems can put students at risk of cyber-attack.

On the other hand, the open book exams require a shift in teaching methodology; students have to spend lots of time in the research process to answer the questions in the examination.

Thus, students need training to adapt to open-book assessment approaches successfully. The open book exam demands a rethinking of how academic achievement should be measured by employers, institutions and educators to develop new standards of evaluation.

'The main goal of education should not be to know how well students perform under artificial constraints but about how they can apply their knowledge critically and effectively to real-world problems.

Conclusion: Rethinking Exam

Given these challenges, the key debate is whether we need better exams or if eliminating exams would be a more effective approach. The problem is not the assessment method used to evaluate fairness but the problems are grades which are used to understand the social worth of any individual. The traditional approach of taking exams is primarily used to rank students rather than to measure their actual learning. However, eliminating them would be as misguided as insisting on never using a particular tool. Whether it be through AI-driven monitoring or an open book assessment approach, the ultimate goal of conducting an exam should be to foster creativity, understanding, and real-world skills, cultivating thinkers, lifelong learners and innovators to easily navigate the challenges of the real world.