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Analysis/Interview/Book Review

Exams for computing skills along with English proficiency

CHENNAI: Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) exams are Microsoft-certified programmes that prove and validate a person's skills in MS Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, Outlook and Project. These exams are being offered in India from this year.

Cyberlearningindia.com is the exclusive authorised distributor of MOS exams in India and the sub-continent countries.

It has appointed Orient Longman as the educational segment consultant and to distribute these exams in the academic segment in the region, because, with over 59 years in the publishing industry as an Indian company, Orient Longman has the vantage position of reaching schools and colleges all over the country, said Mr Joe Tun Sein, Consultant (Examinations Division), Orient Longman.

Speaking to Business Line on the programme, he said: "It is this advantage that Cyberlearningindia.com took note of when it decided to make Orient Longman the distributor of MOS exams, as it believes that the company can make the exams available to all students all over the country much better than any other."

According to him, these exams are conducted in over 100 countries in 19 languages.

Some three million persons have already been certified and over 40,000 new persons take these exams and get certified every month worldwide.

On how useful the certification programme is, he said: "Education is building character through knowledge; but in today's world, education is also about employability."

He added: "As we travel all over the country, visiting schools and colleges, we notice the great decline in English standards. We meet the heads of the institutions, teachers and employers, and discuss the issue of unemployable graduates and their growing plight."

According to him, when jobs are waiting to be grabbed, "it's a pity that students are missing the bus due to lack of communication skills and lack of proficiency in English."

Mr Tun Sein said that Orient Longman's business strategy is to provide proof of competency in desktop computer skills along with English skills in order to make the students employable.

"MOS exams do that perfectly. Students with certified English and desktop computing skills stand out as persons with skills to succeed."

He added: "We are glad to help students benchmark their skills against international standards, and in the process acquire internationally valid certificates in English."

The company charges Rs 2,300 per candidate for the certification.

"This is a small price to pay. Incidentally, all those who took the online exams till June 2007 had to pay an inaugural price of only Rs 2,100."

He added that the company is targeting 25,000 students this year.

"When more and more Indian employers begin to understand the benefits of the certification and the high level of productivity and efficiency the certified recruits demonstrate in the workplace, we think employers will mandate MOS as a requirement for recruitment."

According to Mr Tun Sein, legal firms and secretaries and support staff in all organisations will reap the benefit of recruiting MOS-certified persons.

"Accountancy firms and departments will begin to appreciate MOS-certified persons in Excel. Marketing professionals will look for those certified in Power Point. Also, many professional companies may begin to insist on the certification."

Orient Longman is also national manager for the ESOL exams of Trinity College, London. It offers a certification programme of the college, popularly known as Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE), aimed at helping Indian students gain proficiency in spoken English skills.

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