



Students practicing using SpeechSmith.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



SpeechSmith founder Anoushka Tandon juggles time, science, music, and competitions!

This energetic 16-year-old innovator from Mumbai is observant and her apps help improve experiences in society. Here she talks about managing time, a big blunder she made, her mindset, and her journey into the vast world of technology!

Indulekha S

Are you someone who is fascinated by technology, enamoured by debates, loves music madly, and wishes to help instil change in places that require it? Then you have a friend in Anoushka Tandon.

Anoushka is the founder of an app called SpeechSmith - the latest of her many creations, that uses the power of AI (Artificial Intelligence) to help you correct your pronunciation. It is an app aimed at helping students improve their English as well as communication skills, aiding them in being confident inside and outside of class- an important skill in social life she realised, from her own experiences of participating in many debate and public-speaking competitions. By observing, she has seen that communicating effectively is utterly important not just in debates but also in day-to-day life where we engage with others. Not to mention getting jobs as one grows older.

Museum and music

It was a museum that brought a young Anoushka into the path of science. A vacation visit to the Natural History Museum left her head filled with



Sharing SpeechSmith with teachers and students of a vocational centre.

technology. She remembers spending much time trying to get an interactive exhibit work. "I remember my mom was taking me through every exhibit and there was one about a rover landing on Mars, if I'm not wrong. And it was an interactive exhibit where I could alter certain values; acceleration, air resistance, drag, all of those complicated physics values." She remarks this as a

turning point in her life as she was taken aback by how something as modern as technology could be applied to things like dinosaur fossils. It made her question the things around her, kickstarting her defining journey of observation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Then there was music. Since a young

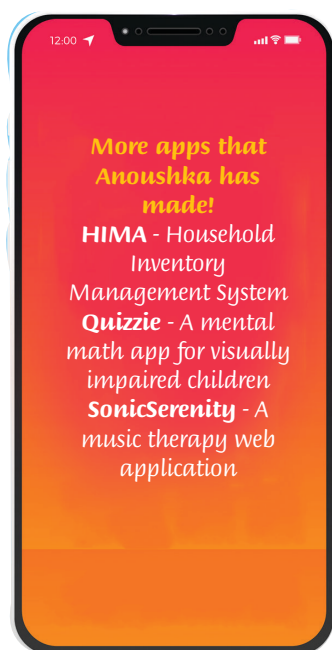


age, she had her eyes and hands on music. Learning keyboard, progressing grade after grade, eventually got her into piano. Then she tried singing and now she's at the composing, songwriting, and producing part of it. There was a bounce in her voice as she explained how passionate she is and how important music is in her life. She isn't kidding at all. She listens to music even when she studies. Music has helped her to focus and ease the pressure of her exams.

Music is equally tied to her growth as an innovator (She has also created an app called SonicSerenity; an app that provides music therapy in a personalised manner).

That competitive spirit!

Currently an 11th grader, Anoushka often participates in competitions that touch her areas of interest. In fact, it was her interest in public speaking which led her to participate in MUNs (Model United Nations), do TED-Ed talks, join science clubs, and debate clubs. In 2023, she won the international "Outstanding STEM Student Award" at STEM Best Practice Awards. Taking opportunities as they come, she quickly found her rhythm and motivation. She says that her love for robotics sparked actively because of it. "I've had endless opportunities in all sectors, especially robotics. I joined one robotics team for 8th graders and then I moved on to the one for the 9th graders and you go on and on. I have led the robotics club, have trained juniors, and we participated in so many competitions."



A mistake and a lesson

Swimming in a sea full of competitions, there was a moment of misstep while preparing for one. "For around one and a half months, I worked on the submission" but when it came to finally submitting it, "I tried to log in and it said 'account not found'. Basically what ended up happening was that my registration hadn't gone through. I didn't know. I hadn't realised I didn't get a confirmation email." Throughout her working on the project the only other time she had checked her account was at the time of submission. She remembers that the mistake felt like the worst thing. "I think it was really big because I spent so much effort and then it just went down the drain. After a couple of months I realised that this stuff I had built, I can use bits and pieces of it for other competitions as well and doing so, it wasn't all a waste." Anoushka points to having an open



Promoting Quizzie.



and optimistic attitude which helps her see the sunny side of things. The moral? "A big, big lesson I learned is that if you register for something, ensure you take a screenshot of the fact that you're registered", shakes off Anoushka about this memorable blunder that made an impact on her life.

Having the right people around

Going to many competitions gave Anoushka the opportunity to meet and make friends with like-minded people. "When I joined teams, like science clubs, robotics clubs, math clubs, like any other clubs, it's just that people around you were also interested, like your age and older or younger. So I think that's how my friends ultimately did become an encouraging factor." It gave her

motivation and a thrilling challenge.

Robotics to AI

"By the time you're in the 7th and 8th grade and if you want to explore technology, robotics is the way to go. I started with coding." From coding to doing competitions combining hardware and software, she got into the more engineering or mechanical side of things. The many AI discussions in school pulled her towards it and with the AI boom, it naturally was perfect timing. In SpeechSmith's case, she observed that she could use AI to help students with their speaking. AI in SpeechSmith analyses the speech input and highlights mispronounced words in the transcript. She has also made it so that AI tells the user what the actual



A message to other students

"Make it fun, make it enjoyable because if it's not then it will become a chore.

For some people what works is doing it with your friends. So do it and make it enjoyable. Look for the things you like. For example, SpeechSmith — I love public speaking and I also love technology.

On time management, plan everything out. I wake up every morning and put down, or at night, put down five tasks for the next day that I have to complete. If it doesn't get completed, I'd carry forward that one task to the next day and that's a pending priority. That's a very, very structured approach to how I go about it. I have a group chat with myself and I do that as it helps me really structure my day because what happens, from what I've experienced, is I have so many things on my plate and I'll forget some important stuff."

pronunciation is (gives the user correctly pronounced sound to listen to). She has added features like a feedback system where AI tells the student whether they are speaking fast or slow, whether they sound flat or vague, and where to pause, which words to stress for impact.

So many things, so little time

As she moved up classes, everything of course became tougher and tougher to handle for Anoushka with diverse interests.

"I think prioritising my time is one thing I really learned along the way, which would be if I have a test the next day, I naturally would not be working on the competition. I'd be working only on the test so that task is done. Then the next day, you know, get back into the competition." It worked well for her as she was able to ace her exams and competitions simultaneously. She also realises that having so many things you want to do is a positive that can end up being a negative. Moments where she feels she has done something but not done enough is no stranger to Anoushka. The key is to maintain confidence with a positive, practical mindset. "What's achievable is achievable, what's not is not."

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"SpeechSmith" to help young adults speak English confidently

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Designed to act as a personal speaking coach anytime, anywhere, SpeechSmith allows users to record themselves and receive instant AI-driven feedback. The app highlights mispronounced words, provides simple phonetic corrections, and plays the correct pronunciation so learners can practice until they get it right. It also analyzes fluency, pace, filler words, tone, and expression, guiding users to communicate with clarity and impact.

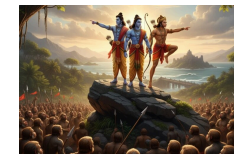
Commenting on the same, Anoushka Tandon, Founder, SpeechSmith, said: "This isn't just about English, it's about employability, opportunity, and dignity. AI can level the playing field, giving every young person the chance to walk into a room and be heard."

From its inception, SpeechSmith has successfully enabled over 15,000 learners across 20+ schools, vocational colleges, NGOs, and training centers in India, establishing a strong presence across the education ecosystem. The application helps students use it to perform better in class, practice pronunciation, and allows young adults to prepare for crucial job interviews and group discussions. Beyond improving language, the platform also builds confidence and refines communication style, strengthening the core skills most sought after by employers.

The platform's impact is already evident, with students speaking more confidently in classrooms and on stage, children showing faster improvement in English pronunciation, and young adults becoming interview-ready with stronger employability prospects.



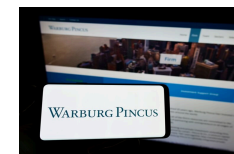
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