

AI Talent Grows in Struggle, Not Just Success

MIT's hidden engine for future-ready engineers

Swipe for insights →

Second

Regional Competition Placement

MIT's first ChemE Sports team placed second at regionals in a technical optimization challenge.

This result wasn't just about engineering precision—it reflected a culture where struggle is shared, leadership is earned, and innovation emerges from collective effort. The team applied real-time learning from coursework to optimize a distillation column, demonstrating how applied problem-solving builds resilience.

Source: MIT News • Published October 23, 2026

<https://news.mit.edu/2026/persistence-teamwork-healthy-competition-veronica-calzadilla-sosa-1023>



01

Struggle Builds the AI Mindset

At MIT, students like Veronica Calzadilla Sosa found community not in perfection, but in shared difficulty. Her regular visits to office hours revealed a pattern: others were struggling too. This normalized vulnerability as a pathway to insight—critical for AI development, where failure is not a dead end but data. In higher education, the most adaptive minds are those trained to persist through uncertainty.





02

Competition as a Catalyst for Collective Intelligence

MIT's ChemE Sports team didn't win the top prize, but their second-place finish reveals a deeper truth: success in AI-driven fields depends less on individual brilliance and more on the ability to collaborate under pressure. The competition, structured as a dynamic simulation, required real-time decision-making, shared knowledge, and distributed leadership—all essential traits for AI systems that must learn from distributed data and adapt in real time.

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