

The lifestyle of online classes

Whether we like it or not, the global COVID-19 pandemic has forced education to shift towards online platforms. For as long as we know, pedagogy had been only conducted in-person, teacher-to-student(s), and sometimes, from students to teachers. The human interaction was a critical constant, even if students were not always present in classrooms. How does this shift impact the lives involved by the course of educational institutions?

“I enrolled in a private university in Dhaka prior to the pandemic lockdown,” says Nubayra Jeheen, a Masters student, “The remote classes are just something that, having never experienced (both myself as well as the university itself), are bittersweet.”

This is a common sentiment expressed by a lot of students and staff at institutions suddenly flooded with new challenges in creating IT access for all kinds of students. “In Dhaka and other metropolitan cities, Internet is still at least available. But the students are from everywhere and all corners of society, thus having to deal with the issues of proper Internet, or even a device to properly log in from is difficult,” said Shairah, another Masters student from a university in Dhaka, currently relocated since the pandemic lockdown.

So, what are the pros and cons? “For pros, health safety cannot beat anything else. Given how crowded university campuses are, this serves that safety purpose well,” said Nubayra, “For cons, technical glitches are a constant misery.”

There are other additional challenges. Teachers, forced to find new ways of managing students and teaching materials are often resorting to additional homework.

“With all due respect to the professors, the amount of pressure and assignments/video tutorials/research papers/content that they are piling on us is taking a toll,” said Nubayra, who is also a full-time job-holder.

“Working full time and trying to maintain a balance between the two is affecting my mental

health. Given how the interaction is virtual now, I understand how the professors are trying to be considerate, but sadly can’t” she added

In years past, online classes were an extension. Now, doing classes over Zoom has become more conventional. Many students who had enrolled in universities abroad, are also forced to receive their education in the same method as their peers enrolled locally.

Navin Rahman, a post-graduate student at Columbia University, New York, is currently completing her classes online, saying, “I actually don’t mind it at all. Would have hated to be undergrad, given the social experience of undergrad is so much more important, at least in my opinion. I also think, given COVID-19, I would rather do online classes than have to travel all the way to the US in the middle of so much chaos and the lack of certainty, safety.”

Even though Navin is optimistic, she too cannot help lament missing out on the experience of the Columbia campus, and student-life things such as sitting and reading in the library.

“I’m also not being able to experience the city where my grad school is located, thus losing some context.

“I believe in making the most out of every situation. There are

pros and cons for everything. If this continues, I will most likely leverage on the pros in order to minimise the effects of the cons, for when things do open up,” she said.

But many undergraduate students are indeed “stuck” home, unable to share meaningful experiences with peers and academics and deprived from the travel aspect of studying abroad. However, many students are also stuck abroad unable to be near loved ones during the pandemic.

“It was a bit of a shock alone to suddenly switch to online classrooms while already in Canada,” said Shaki-uz Zaman, a Bachelors student in Canada.

“After exams, summer started and I hoped to go to my parents, travel around and make use of a good vacation, but none of that was possible. I stayed back for the sake of my safety. Living by myself in an empty house, trying to make food for myself with no apparent cooking skills (the university food service was closed) and working a full-time job to make up for the increased tuition that the university has established recently.”

Whether we like it or not, we have already ushered in a new era of global connectivity, and it’s time we get acclimatised to the new normal and its new rules.

By Dibarah Mahboob

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ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Don't be too quick to judge. Unpleasant situations are likely. Make sure you and your partner are clear. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Do things you have time for. Avoid spending on luxury. Socialise with people at work. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Don't be overly melodramatic. Secret enemies may cause issues. Be sure to get accurate information. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Discrimination will be in order. Control your temper with your partner. Trips will be enjoyable. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Sign up for enlightening courses. Don't count on getting any help. Be careful to avoid wrongdoings. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Stabilise your financial situation. Call a good friend. You will be in an overly generous mood this week. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Don't divulge secrets. Your personal life will be disrupted. Make money with sound investments. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Older relatives can cause problems. Take a break with loved ones. Don't lose your temper at work. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

You will profit from real estate deals. Avoid being overly opinionated. Difficulties with children will surface. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't expect celebrations. Loved ones may be difficult to reason with. Minor accidents could cause major setbacks. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Don't let your partner dictate your actions. Do a little shopping. Avoid making any residential moves. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Join groups that provide ideas on business. Make money through solid investment plans. Changes at home will be favourable. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.