

I hate online classes, here's why

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"But online classes let you stay at home!"

This is the usual response I get when I express my distaste for online classes. While it is true that there were no alternatives to online classes during the pandemic, and it even helped students save commute time as well as cut down costs, the drawbacks of online classes trump its advantages.

So, why do I feel this way in the era of Digital Bangladesh? Because technological advancement is not in sync with tech literacy of our teachers. Just because we can do Zoom classes, doesn't mean teachers can leverage the advantages of Zoom.

During one of our online classes, a person impersonating to be a student joined the lecture, and proceeded to play the worst kind of music. The consequences, inevitably, had to be borne by my classmate and not the imposter. The teacher was oblivious to the fact that were two people of the same name in the lecture. The students had to explain the situation to him. It took the teacher ten minutes to kick out the imposter. Ideally, removing a participant should take a few seconds.

Incidents like these are annoyingly common. A teacher's literacy in tech largely defines the experience of one's online classes. But can we blame teachers for lacking in this regard? Our older teachers



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

may be very good at their jobs, but inefficient with digital learning tools. They may be the best people to facilitate learning, but they have been trained in physical classroom environments. Forcing them to adapt to digital classes impedes on their ability to do their work properly.

These aren't the only factors limiting the efficiency of online classes. During on-campus classes, teachers can read

the students' faces and explain topics more thoroughly when needed. Students are also more responsive in physical classrooms. These greatly improve the effectiveness of on-campus classrooms, but digital classes miss out on benefits like this.

The environment of physical classrooms is also important to learning. When you are in a traditional classroom,

you are incentivised to focus. After all, your teacher is right in front of you. In addition, your device is tucked away, out of sight.

As for online classes, cat videos are just a few clicks away. Your teacher can't check whether you're focusing or not (even with your camera on). After all, your phone is buzzing with notifications, and your siblings might be arguing in the next room. Your environment discourages deep focus. A lot of your energy is used up just trying to pay attention, and after the ordeal is over, you have little motivation left in you.

There's another problem with digital classrooms we need to talk more about. When you attend classes on campus, you interact with people in real life. Between classes, and even during classes, we sneak in conversations. This is fundamentally good for us because we are social creatures.

Deep conversations have a greater impact in real life, and small talk is good for our sanity. Such interactions fulfil us in a way messaging apps simply cannot replicate. This is the most important reason as to why I am such an ardent advocate for on-campus classes.

Zaheen equates watching productivity videos to actually getting work done. Send help at instagram.com/tasfiazuhair

READER SUBMISSION

Livraria Lello: the bookstore that inspired Flourish and Blotts

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"This Christmas and new year, I will be visiting Portugal," I told my Portuguese friend, Elisa.

"That's really amazing! In which city?" she asked.

"Lisbon and Porto," I replied.

I received long travel guidelines from Elisa before I left for Portugal on the eve of the new year in 2023. However, I could not read everything she wrote, but I remembered the name Livraria Lello, which is the bookshop from where J.K. Rowling allegedly received inspiration for architectural elements in *Harry Potter*.

In 1991, Rowling visited Livraria Lello while working on the first *Harry Potter* book. It is a popular theory that Livraria Lello inspired the interiors for Hogwarts as well as Flourish and Blotts, the wizarding bookshop, in the *Harry Potter* universe. The bookstore also revealed that she bought a book and spent several hours there. This is why many *Harry Potter* fans, including myself, make a point of visiting Livraria Lello when they are in Porto.



PHOTO: AUTHOR

On my first morning in Porto, I rushed out of my room in search of the bookstore, which is located in Rua das Carmelitas, surrounded by cafes, restaurants, and shops. The streets around the bookstore

are typically narrow and winding and are lined with traditional Portuguese buildings and cobblestone streets, giving it a captivating atmosphere. The area is relatively pedestrian-friendly, making it easy to explore on foot.

In front of the bookstore, there's a narrow street that might be a bit crowded but it's also a pleasant spot to take a stroll or sit down in one of the street-side cafes to enjoy a drink. Many tourists can be spotted walking around, taking photos of the beautiful architecture, trying to capture the charming atmosphere of the area.

Livraria Lello was designed by brothers José and António Lello, who owned the store, and was built in 1906. It is considered one of the most aesthetically pleasing bookstores in the world, and upon seeing the interior, I realised the claims were not exaggerated.

The interior features ornate wooden shelves, stained glass windows, and a grand staircase that winds its way up through the middle of the store, which instantly transports fans to the fictional Flourish and Blotts. In the interior, you will notice a vaulted ceiling decorated

with frescoes and illuminated by skylight. The bookstore's design is reminiscent of Art Nouveau, a style that was popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Livraria Lello carries a wide range of books in various languages, such as Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, alongside German, Italian, and more. Their collection is incredibly diverse, offering a selection of fiction and non-fiction titles, including literature, poetry, history, science, philosophy, and children's books. In addition to books, visitors to Livraria Lello can purchase a variety of items including souvenirs, stationery items, posters, art prints and many more.

While it may not be confirmed that Rowling did indeed take inspiration from Livraria Lello for Flourish and Blotts, visiting the bookstore was an amazing experience nonetheless. In this case, I owe it all to my friend Maria Elisa Dias de Freitas.

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