



Bits & bytes

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 1

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THE NEW COVID - 19 PANDEMIC NORMAL

The new normal. Online classes

The new normal for students who spent most of their hours inside an enclosed space staring blankly at a white screen, where now stirred towards virtual classrooms and online lectures.

It was an unprecedented academic need in response to COVID 19 pandemic and was even-

tually meant to break an institutional status quo. The students now stared at their fifteen inches screen, buffering every minute a tutor moved their cursor across the monitor or lis-

tened to cracking voices in the background. While for some days, it would be a complete

blessing to see their tutors in the cleanest and glitch-free online classes which would, ever

so slightly, leave you wondering if the tutor ever looked or sounded the way he did on the

screen. It was a continuous cycle where the graph would sometimes grow tall towards its

best internet connections, while sometimes it would dive down into its poorest service. All

the while, your parents would stand behind you raising their head in mild amusement to see

a distorted image on the screen.

It has become a new form of normal in the already existing practices. The online classes

which were once seen as an inter-national practice for bringing in short virtual classes, has

now embedded itself into every educational system across the world. This is the new nor-

mal.

-Karma Wangmo

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Architecture

Situational Analysis of COVID-19



Picture Credit: Maxx-Studio/
Shutterstock.com

"It called for a new type of method for teaching practices and students' learning support."

COVID-19 situation has come into our lives unexpectedly. It called for a new type of method for teaching practices and students' learning support. As the college decided to send the students in the mid of March 2020, it tested the agility of every individual to a new method of online teaching. The use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which was always perceived as ineffective earlier by the staff and students had to test its efficiency and ability to connect all. There has been a challenge to manage this complexity, especially when students are distributed over different parts of the country, with problems of poor internet connectivity.

Then, challenges exist for identifying a clear online teaching methodology and assessment in engineering education. The inexperience faculty in online teaching and lack of resources will always have the informational and the motivational gaps among the students. This process of learning will constantly test the ability of students to solve complex real-world problems, develop the entrepreneurial competencies, and check societal awareness. Online teaching requires new structured methods for developing skills, knowledge, values which need sound pedagogy and experiences that provide students with an authentic way of engaging in the learning process.

If the process of online teaching remains, then there is a need to relook and discuss the experience, expertise, and the perspective of the individual faculty and students over this period. Then there is a need to develop new understanding and commitment between the teachers and students towards a socially proof method. As we become more distributed in the setting, the role becomes more critical in making sure that all the students feel included in the teaching and learning process.

Manoj Sharma
Head, Electrical Engineering Department



Picture Credit: Internet/Unknown

I was eating one of my brother's food experiments when I first heard of Covid-19. I only remember vividly because my father likes watching the news while I would rather mindlessly switch channels. Apa won and we watched the news of Wuhan being quarantined. I was mildly concerned about my college roommates and checked up on them. They were still going to work so I didn't think much of it either. So when did it actually affect me? It was when classes were cancelled.

I ordered a microphone online (which never arrived) and planned my first trial run online. My students were excited too as I had a 98% attendance on the first day. However, the novelty quickly wore off. It wasn't just the lack of human interaction that made lessons difficult but the environment. Students had other priorities at home – babysitting, household, etc. "We have to make the best of the situation." "Maybe, it is just the mental block you have against online learning?" I tried convincing my students but I was convincing myself. Often, I questioned if I could learn if I was in their shoes and realized it was a rhetorical question. The class tried their best to follow along, punctuating my lessons with doubts or comments. After a while, it did not feel like I was talking to my screen. I started adjusting to the "new-normal".

Would if I prefer online-teaching over traditional classrooms? Probably not but that doesn't mean I did not learn anything from my experience with online teaching. I learnt more about VLE than I had done in years. I connected with students, understood more about their backgrounds and most importantly, I know that my students and I learnt to adapt to a new situation for which I will forever be grateful for.

Ms. Tshering Denka
Asst. Lecturer
SHD

Teaching Digital Natives

The main objective of pedagogy is to inspire, nurture and encourage young minds to question and absorb information, and to develop skills and intellect that provide the best stepping stones into their futures. But with each new generation of students, new challenges arise in teaching and learning. As teachers, we continually find ourselves adapting our instructional style to account for their interests, struggles and goals. But one thing that won't change is the trend toward a more digital world.

*“digital
technology is
neither distracting
nor exciting for
Gen Z, it is normal
life.”*

We have heard the term 'digital natives' used when speaking about Millennial, but Gen Z is really the first generation that doesn't know life without technology. Anyone born between 1995 and 2010 are known as Generation Z. They are considered to be the first true digital natives, growing up with mobile devices, tablets and laptops in both hands. Arguably, digital technology is neither distracting nor exciting for Gen Z, it is normal life. To them, Google, Instagram and smart phones are not just convenient tools- they're necessary parts of life. Generation Z expects to be connected to the world and able to access information at any time- and this translates to education as well.

They are described as individualistic; they value easy access to information and expect immediate feedback. They learn most effectively when they are left to solve problems and find solutions. Most importantly, they adapt to new technologies faster than any other generation. Gen Z clearly has different learning preferences, goals and values to previous generations. As such, some pedagogy experts identify that teaching methods should be adapted to the preferences of this group. So how can we as teachers adapt?

We can embrace technology. Using educational software can make our jobs much easier from interactive presentations to educational games. Long lectures aren't the best technique for Gen Z students as they are used to multitasking and skimming for the most valuable information. Using large blocks of text can result in students losing engagement. Using charts, graphics and multimedia can make the material more memorable.

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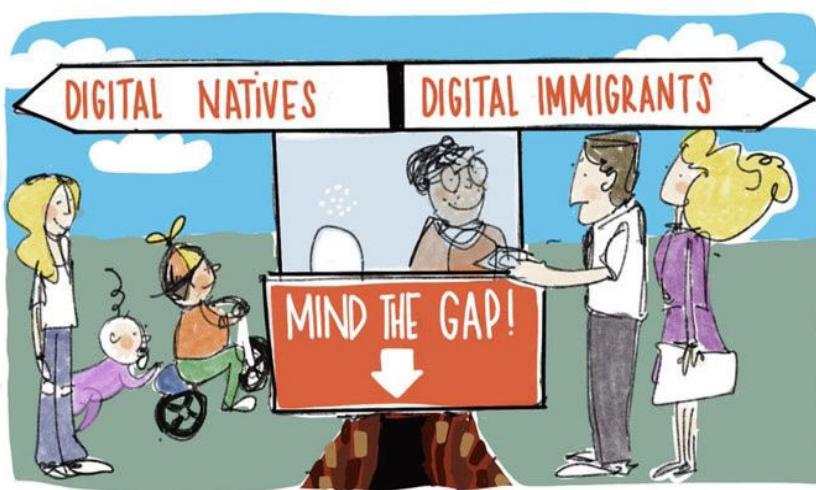
Gen Z students experience high rates of depression and anxiety. It can be easy to dismiss moody or withdrawn behavior as typical teenage angst. But according research, a growing number of this generation is experiencing something more serious. The total number of teenagers experiencing depression is on the increase. Potential contributing factors include academic pressure, high rates of perfectionism, and a lack of adequate sleep. This means that there's a high likelihood that teachers will encounter a student with a mental illness. So how can we adapt?

Rather than using an authoritative teaching style, using techniques that focus on positivity might be more effective. We can focus on empowering students by trying to reward engagement with verbal praise and regularly reviewing ways that students demonstrate growth. Teachers can give assignment extensions, break tasks into smaller pieces, and offer to help students create study plans. We can also encourage students to help one another.

We've heard that Generation Z students are emotionally fragile, have a disproportionate sense of entitlement and require indulgent teaching practices, but dismissing this as a generational malaise is far too glib.

This generation evidently wants to be treated with respect and to be given the space to flourish intellectually. In this sense, the point of being 'engaging' and 'accessible' isn't to be likeable or to dumb down content. Instead, it's about creating an inclusive and supportive environment, where students are treated like intellectuals-in-training, who have something worthwhile to say. Such an environment allows students to explore academic concepts without feeling that they don't have the skills or background knowledge to excel.

The classroom teaching experience has certainly changed a lot since I began teaching in 2010, but that is due to the technology. In terms of actual learning, I don't see any real change. Students do the same things they have always done: read, listen, debate, question and write. However, their demands appear ever more detailed and persistent. My conclusion is that the best way to help students is simply to be there for them. Whatever else we do, we're responsible for their development. This requires time- as well as sensitivity, compassion and patience.

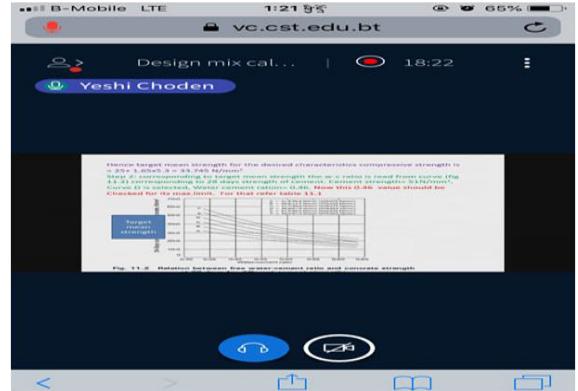


Picture Credit : Twitter

**-PemaChoezom
Lecturer, SHD**

Just completing the syllabus

Assignments became a mere formality and lectures on Zoom virtual meeting application was nothing but background chatter. This was not learning for me, as days turned into weeks and months, I felt we were just rushing to complete the syllabus. Deep inside, the fear, which kept pushing me to study had doused.



It all began on a high note, the child in us was happy to take the break from studies. Not knowing the wait would be so long, we had left most of our belongings in our now deserted hostels.

"It all began on a high note, the child in us was happy to take the break from studies"

I was not bothered either when the novel corona virus was making rounds across the globe. Always believed Bhutan as a special place where all of the worldly threats are kept at bay. My trust in our King and the protecting deities had me oblivious of the fact that Bhutan is vulnerable. And so, it was when an American national became the first positive case of COVID-19 in the country. Bhutan took care of him but at the cost of barring tourist entry and closing schools and educational institutions.

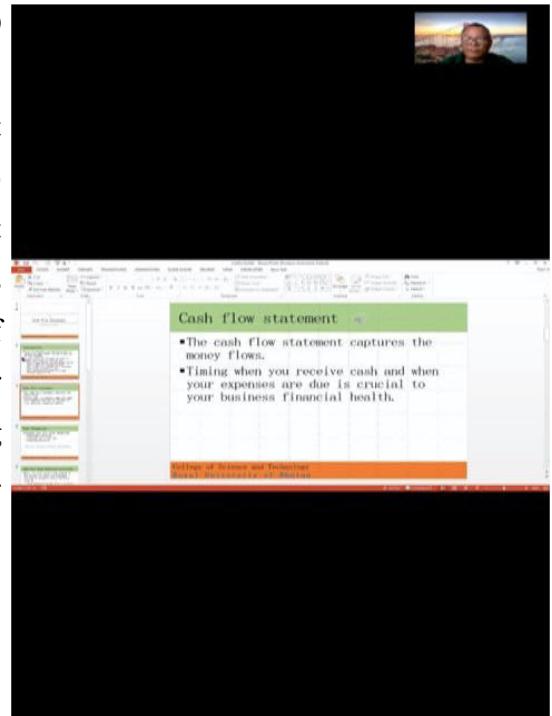
I, like all the other students went home happily. In the first few weeks, helped my parents and had a whole lot of time for myself. But education had to continue and the Government introduced e-learning. Us, university students, used the virtual learning environment (VLE) platform and Zoom virtual meeting application. What started off on a serious note slowly waned off.

Initially, I did not miss any online class and took assignments seriously. Months on and even parents doubted I am studying as I fiddled on phone with a laptop in the front. Assignments returned with more plagiarism scores; I decided this is not going to work. I will get through the semester, thanks to Google search and open book exams, but I would not be content, never. Dissatisfied at not knowing the basics of our modules, I will pass but will never be at peace.

Tshewang Lham
First Year Civil

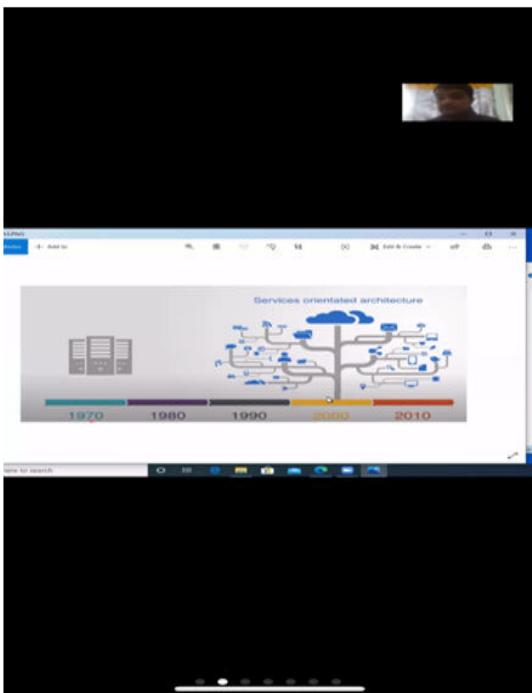
Covid-19 pandemic: A global concern

Many countries around the globe have been affected by COVID-19 and Bhutan is no exception. However, our country explains success in battling this virus. His majesty the king has been at the forefront combating the corona pandemic providing extraordinary leadership and vision to keep people safe from this deadly disease. It has hit hard on the education sector where schools, colleges, and institutes were closed. Understanding the priority to facilitate the continuity of learning, the Ministry of Education has initiated the means for online learning. It might not have been a problem for a well-earning family, but it has caused a big fuss for students coming from a low-income family especially in affording data charges.



Despite the timely delivery of the lessons, it wasn't as effective comparing to the usual class. Sometimes, I would doze off and wake up in the middle of the class not knowing what the lecturer taught, sometimes my network gets depleted in the middle and numerous little things came up during the online session. The online classes were difficult to understand because I was left unmindful mostly. Further, group works were burdensome for few works were entirely done by an individual owing to the difficulty of meeting other members for discussions.

Particularly, I became progressively lazy by being at home all the time. Nonetheless, the positive thing is I got more time on self-exploration. It has immensely helped me to identify my abilities in coping with difficult times.



LekiYangdon(0215521)
B.E 4IT

LECTURING THROUGH COVID-19

The COVID19 crisis across the globe has not only threatened the community's health but also its function. COVID19 issues and death in China gained global attention with annoyance, sympathy and fright. As China healed to its stability, other countries started its fight against the pandemic. Even the world's most developed countries were shaken. Every news channel and social media was floated with COVID19 issues that feared people to rush to the medical stores and stand in queue for hours to buy face masks, hand sanitizer and essential goods of limited stocks. Super powers had no solution, as it could not be killed by the finest gun or swiftest missiles. Much fear and confusion surpassed Bhutan, when the first COVID19 case was declared on 5th of March, 2020. Soon, all the schools were closed by 19th March 2020. Work from home and teaching online was the slogan then.

“Everything was online; listing from project review, meetings, and discussions to national emergency calls.”

“All lectures should go on line”, the management declared. Online teaching was never my piece of cake. In the past 13 years of teaching, I never had any experience of online teaching neither any training on it. Exploring Virtual Learning was never felt of importance; mobile apps and social media were just part of official and social communication. As I entered out of the meeting hall, I pondered upon, how to prepare my lesson, which is mostly numerical based; I had no PowerPoint presentations, except for handwritten notes. It completely changed the system that was in place but was indeed a blessing in disguise. Everyone started to learn VLE, testing BBB and ZOOM links, exploring Google classroom to scanning Mobile apps to social platforms were active communication and teaching learning platform.

As scheduled online class approached, the schedule got tighter. Scanning each chapter took a longer time as it needed to be perfect click. Preparing notes and PPTs that included figures and formulas stressed my eyes out of its socket. Nevertheless, I did manage the notes and PPT on time. Seeking help from IT staff and taking BBB trials took some time to slack and make myself comfortable. First online session went on well; without any idea whether the other end got it or not, I was satisfied with my work. The network issue was another troll which students' deemed. However, having explored to Zoom helped me to record lecture videos. It took hours to scan, make PPTs and videos on zoom and upload it on VLE. Sometimes lesson demanded more videos to be recorded and replayed but something or other went working in between; someone disturbed you, a call interrupted you, an urgent meeting chipped in, and recorded wrongly, etc... The tutors required strenuous efforts to work more beyond the teaching hours to have faultless recorded lessons for their students.

Number of AutoCAD drawings, editing and using other software demanded extra time and patience ultimately leading to frustration and exhaustion. Each time the notification was sent to students to view the uploaded videos/lessons before the next online class began. Interaction was active on all social platforms as it was necessary to share information and materials to all students. It was a pace where I acted only as a tutor and over-looked my responsibility as a mother. I preferred the Laptop and gave my mobile phone to my kids, as I was engaged more on clarifying students doubts. Subsequently, the students appearing online classes dropped by 50% for they could easily access to videos. As a tutor, I stood rigid to my decision of conducting online class only through BBB and say no to videos. This saved a lot of my time and students managed to participate online.

Prior to the exam, tracking each unprivileged student and asking them their preferred mode of examination was a hassle. Conducting exam for only three students through WhatsApp and other through VLE was a success under hardships. Everything was online; listing from project review, meetings, and discussions to national emergency calls. Few irresponsible students complained and demanded excuses when they missed deadlines or failed to submit assignments on time. Sometimes messenger notification beeped late night and put me off from deep sleep. These were the students who ignored tutor's information while time was set and then only get activated later when the marks were declared. Sometimes I felt that, some students might have genuine problems. Not all are blessed! Approving and considering such people were left on the judgement of the God and upon receiving valid reasons and evidences.

To conclude, as a tutor the general observations made were; firstly, we definitely necessitate progression, secondly, students made lame excuses on network issues and thirdly, some unprivileged students' lost interest on online classes due to financial and communication burden. Therefore, online classes can replace real classrooms, if both the parties know their responsibilities to work towards attaining and fulfilling the requirements with flawless technology in place.

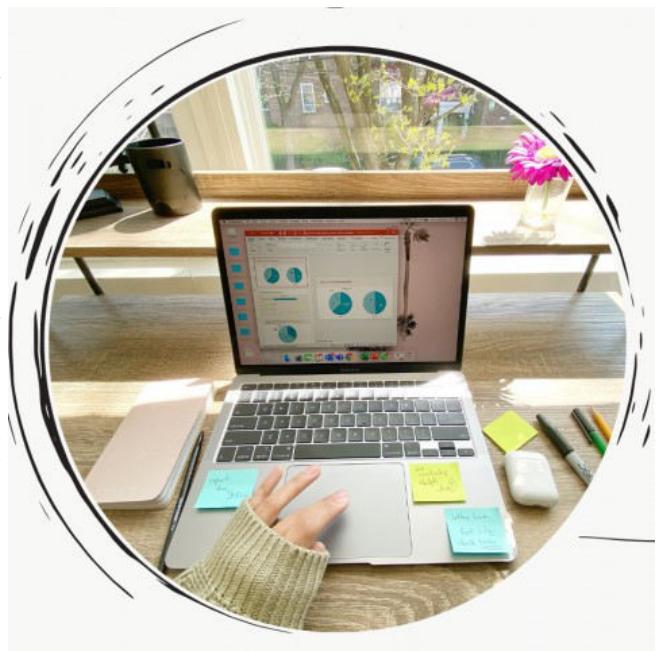


Photo Credit: Dari Dambaeva/UNAI

Monika Thapa
Lecturer
CEAD, CST

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

It was a hectic Wednesday evening when I jotted on the papers with the pace so extraordinary to complete my assignments. “Oh my!” Screamed one of my friends. “We will be sent home.” Instantly, I knew that the pace I mentioned earlier was nothing compared to how I traveled to fantasy enjoying all those things which I couldn’t do during the vacation. I pictured me going on trips and picnics with my friends. “Yippee! Another holiday.” I exclaimed. My excitement reached the peak of the Everest and knew I will break the record of the famous Michael Jackson if I danced at that moment; but who else would have ever thought that the story would turn away different and my story unfurls.

“I was as excited as the little mouse who enjoys every crumb of cheese”

All the schools and educational institutes across the country were closed as a precautionary measure since the press release on 18th March 2020. I was at home a couple of days after the hearing. I was now concerned about thinking of my studies. No Sooner, my tutors announced about resuming the classes “how and where were all that popped up in my head”. I started worrying about how will I be able to study without my tutors and friends around. However, the intellectual teachers came up with a solution to introduce to online teaching. With the fact that I have never attended any online classes before, I was as excited as the little mouse who enjoys every crumb of cheese in the famous Tom and Jerry cartoon show. But just like how the mouse struggled to get the cheese he loves the most, so was I to face the challenging tasks “on-line classes”. And it appeared to be.

After a few weeks, all my tutors kicked off with online teaching. Our tutors introduced us to a platform named Big Blue Button in our very Virtual Learning Environment. I can vividly remember that the very first time, I clicked on the session created by my tutor and unaware that there even existed a microphone which was unmuted, I was in my world muttering with my family. Even today, I feel hilarious when I think of that moment. Besides, I am extremely grateful for I am familiar with many applications such as zoom, google classroom where things can be made to happen in real.

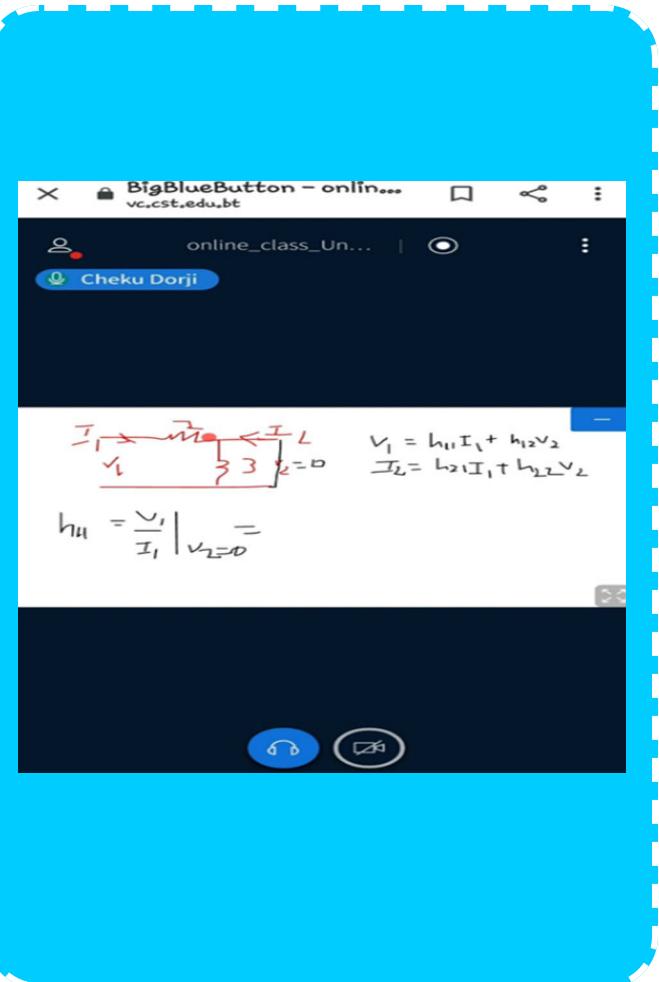
As the number of Covid-19 cases increased, we were still home. There was no trekking, no picnicking, and no partying. Things didn’t turn out the way I imagined. Tutors started to give us assignments and things began to get harder. I missed my friends badly because they would have assisted me if we were in college. The only option was to surf, explore, and challenge me to be an independent learner.

Things became the hardest during the term test one. Descriptively, it was the 'hardest' in the first go but later the feeling was super hardest. Every question was assigned with a time frame. I became fully drawn in answering the questions, completely drenched in sweat, and felt like my summer this year began in April itself. But I consider this to be the most exciting of all things, I have done so far in online classes. It took me out of my comfort zone to manage time and cope with the situations.

The pages of the calendar showed the month of July is not so far for examination. It was time to do VIVA and it was fun doing online. It happened in a friendlier way just like having a conversation with a friend with the only difference that the conversation included, "how does a transformer work? And what are the advantages of an autotransformer? " I enjoyed it fully.

I am very obliged to my tutors who gave their hundred percent efforts in hard times. My love and respect towards them multiplied thoroughly as they did everything with every possibility to make the students understand the session. To me, the betterment in online learning took over the classroom learning because my observation reveals that my classmate wasn't so interactive in the class as they were online. If I am ever asked to give awards, firstly the best award definitely will be to our teachers who were amazing and made everything happen smoothly. Secondly, an award goes to the level of patience the tutors had. New in the world of online teaching, it was hard for them but remained patient at all times and they aced it in that field. Lastly, an award to all the students who tried boldly and succeeded in learning. I have deeper feelings that each of us has gotten a chance to walk through the royal road of great experiences someday.

I could neither invent a vaccine nor save the dying people during a pandemic, but I could defeat COVID-19 by overcoming the challenges and shaping the learning curve.



-Dechen Tshomo

BE2ECE

Life in the period of a pandemic: COVID-19

“The news shattered them, but instantaneously they became cautious of their surroundings”



Photo Credit:: NORRAG BLOG

The Iron Male Rat year 2020 began with a pandemic that struck the world to experience its causes and impacts. Life came to a grinding halt. Corona- the virus was spreading across China and to the world, later it was declared as a global pandemic, the COVID-19. Everyone was confused and so was I, an average engineering student in the College of Science and Technology. The disease winged like a wildfire that could not be put off easily. Many strong countries were struggling to respond to the pandemic that has cost many lives.

The COVID-19 cases were increasing rapidly all over the world. With that in mind, Bhutan under the reigning monarch of Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck too was alarmed for the safety of its people. The people were mindful of every action; as one simple mistake of a citizen can harm the nation as a whole. The news shattered them, but instantaneously became cautious of their surroundings. Also, the university students had to leave their colleges and be with their families. On 20th March, we vacated the hostel to minimise the risk of being adjunct to border area.

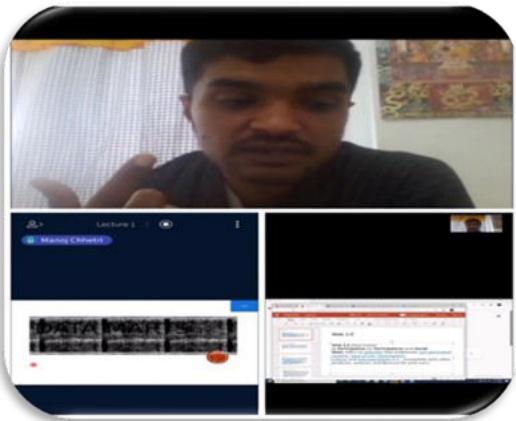
Quality Time with family

Every morning, the sun sneaked into my window; bringing with it new hopes and aspirations. It was nice, warm being home and able to talk to anyone when you were not yourself for some reason besides the pandemic. Each day went on as usual doing the assignment, final year project, and term test preparation. This continued and for the first few weeks, living in home quarantine seemed normal. With some rules and regulations enforced by the government, people were asked to restrict their movement, less social gathering, and nothing else than to stay home. Being a final year student, had to complete a lot of work on time. Continued online classes, assignment submission, and the toughest of all were working on the final year project which required teamwork. The team members were all in different places and that created communication gap between members. We somehow managed among ourselves to complete the task been assigned with much interest. These were the challenges when we had so much on our plates.



Online class & Project team discussion

Besides student life, during those three months of stay with my parents I have valued “the precious time” for our family. It was always like a family gathering, which we have ignored due to some personal reasons at work. We had quality time to understand each other more and engross in motivational talks to get through the hard times. This became my routine daily life and a day came where the college informed us to report on 1st July.



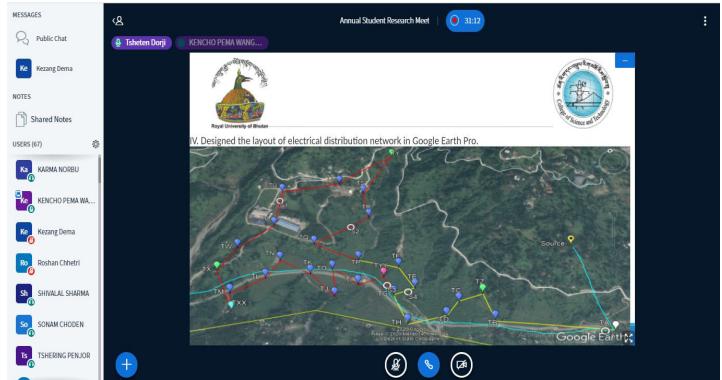
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3rd Annual Student Research Meet by College Research Committee in collaboration with the IEEE R10 Bhutan Subsection

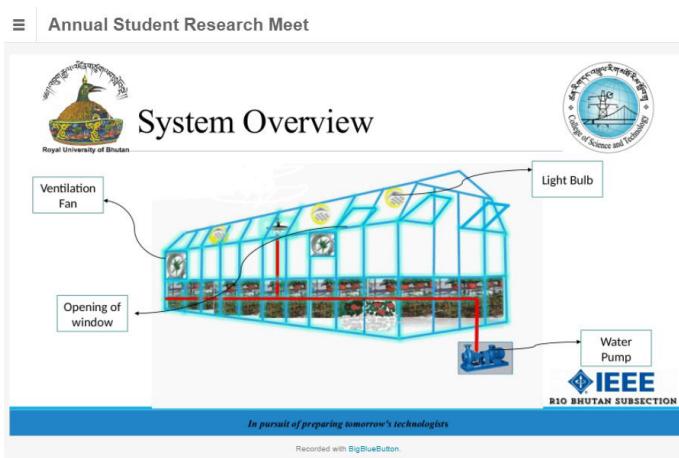


Amidst the lock down imposed by the government due to the ongoing pandemic, the College Research Committee (CRC) in collaboration with IEEE R10 Bhutan Subsection, College of Science and Technology held the 3rd Annual Student Research Meet for 3-days from 24th - 26th August, 2020.

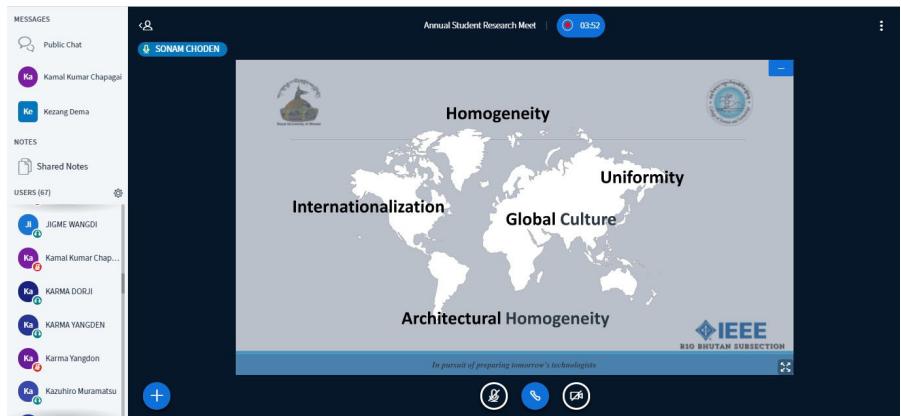
Unlike the past, the event was held online through the BigBlueButton(BBB) application which is presumably the first ever of its kind held in the College. The event made the students and faculty to work and stay engaged during the pandemic.



The first Student Research Meet was organized in 2017 and since then the event has been an annual program organized by the DRIL office. The main objectives of organizing such event is to provide a platform for the students to share their research work and to build a healthy student research ecosystem and encourage collaborative interdisciplinary research.



The research work presented in the SRM are the best ones selected from the various programmes in the college competing for the best student research work award of the college and all the research papers presented in the SRM are published in the college Technical Journal – Zorig Melong.



This year to ensure unbiased judging, the CRC elected the panel members from the Science and Humanities department, which is a neutral department in the college. A total of 12 researches were presented in the 3-day event and the top 3 were selected based on the highest scores by the panels.

Following were the winners of the SRM2020 and they were awarded with cash prizes along with certificates. Aside from the winners, all the participants were also awarded with certificates.

	Project/ Research Title	Winning group members	Programme	Total Score
First	Critical Regionalism: An Architectural Identity of city halls in Bhutan	Sonam Choden	Architecture	81.75
Second	Architecture and Urban Farming in the Vertical Dimension	Sonam Dorji	Architecture	81
Third	Electronic voting system for visually impaired person	Tshering Penjor TashiPhuntsho Dema Choki Dhan Kumar Rai	Electronics and Communication	79.375

-Sonam Deki

TWO SIDES OF COVID-19

“The surfing information through various sources such as YouTube, Google, twitter and browser intensified the learning beyond the text books and to fit in the modern world of technologies.”

The pandemic has resulted in the closing of schools and colleges, leading to the distinctive rise of e-learning and online classes. The hope for returning back to college turned to hallucination as the time kept on ticking around. As days passed by, the new education online scenario took over dealing with the modern technologies and getting exposed to media platform such as zoom and virtual learning environment. This enhanced online learning-teaching communication between students and teachers. The surfing information through various sources such as YouTube, Google, twitter and browser intensified the learning beyond the text books and to fit in the modern world of technologies.

Following the closure of schools and colleges due to pandemic since 5th March, there's been pressure developed among teachers, students and parents. With the increase in internet users across the country, the speed of the internet has been fluctuating persistently. The top most challenge is the poor internet connection that is hampering the interactive aspect of the learning process. As a result, the quality of instruction and the level of creative thinking are reduced. In addition to that, the important online discussions and teachings are also being missed out. However, some recorded sessions helped to proceed with the flow and the content of the lectures.

Sporadically, the purpose of smart phones was in vain due to shortage of data packages. Shop being located at far distance was more time consuming and fatigue too. It has been burdensome for parents to recharge frequently, however, the release in the monthly college stipend assisted comprehensively. Staying at home and seeing parents working in the field are the uneasy moment that is often felt. After the completion of online classes, the works were carried out by being helping hand for parents. Therefore, the online classes has aided in availing educational services, minimizing the contact and spreading of virus, although it possess few defects and technical limitations.

Name: Phurpa Rinchen
Std.no: 02190039
1st year Civil

In the Monotony of Covid-19 Pandemic, 2020

Though the movement of people is not completely closed, the world has been brought to its knees by a tiny microorganism. Isolation and quarantine have become a new normal scheme and we wake up to news of millions of people infected and dying because of covid-19. If the confirmed cases continue to increase, the closing of institutions and agencies may increase, and this would impact the people's source of income.

It is like; we are in the room without doors or windows. It has left us to worry about future and exams that are left inside the bedrooms with laptops and walls of limitations. There seems to be no end to this. At a glimpse of time, the learning switched over to a completely new dimension. It was not easy to cope with online classes, maintain social distancing and stay home the whole day. The virtual learning could never replace smiles, love and laughter in the face of teachers and students. At home, it does not feel good to remain under shelter and study while our parents work under the scorching sun. It was challenging to learn independently and break the cycle of discussing and seeking help from friends back in the college. The online notes, PowerPoint presentations and screen learning almost every day without textbooks in the new normal scheme were challenging too. It was mental draining experience for online classes during day time and to do assignments at night.

But today when I look back, it has discovered me to understand my weaknesses and strengths. To manage anxiety, I started reading books and blogs of people and their experiences of global crisis. Having to keep updates of corona virus in the past few months were quite disturbing in social media. My future seemed blur and despairing upon thinking, "how will I get a job with the country's economy gradually falling apart in combating this pandemic?" Due to this, I even stopped checking onto social media like Face book for time being but never stopped reading twitter page. To lessen monotony and anxiety, I pray to God, do gardening, practice yoga and watch good films. The greatest gift of the virus is bondage between me and my family as we could spend each day qualitatively. Fortunately, we have promoted to stay hygiene that some people rarely practiced. I have developed patience and felt the inner peace of mind and body

Like the situation that changes day by day it helped me look at things differently for I realised nothing is eternal. All that we need right now is solidarity which can defeat the virus and transform this world. It is a critical time to be mindful of the pros and cons of our own doings. I want to share my heartiest gratitude for all the frontline workers and the people who have been trying best cope up with this pandemic. My heart melts out of gratefulness for His Majesty the true saviour in combating this pandemic. Therefore, let us accept the realm of sufferings and embrace the fortune that we are still surviving despite the global crisis. I wish the earth heals and the life gets back to normalcy.

Damber Devi Gautam
BE fourth year civil

Online Education vs. Covid-19

Following the first COVID- 19 case in Bhutan, we were sent home for two weeks to prevent form the local transmission. We were unprepared to leave home but left with a thought to be back after two weeks. I had no books in my luggage, no reading materials and was totally unprepared to the new normal. Shortly, we were informed that online classes will be conducted. Although I was anxious about the idea of online classes, but doubtful on the network speed and availability of resources. I wondered and questioned, “Could online classes suffice the practical need of engineering students?

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When the online classes commenced, everything was new to me. The mode of learning and interacting was different. Sometimes, I missed the classes because of misinformation. Sometimes, while configuring the network, I was left behind. At times, I missed the attendance due to slow network and power shortage. There are students living in the rural pocket of the country and expecting to have proper network connection. I was worried though and questioned again, “how can they manage to get access to online classes?” There are students who migrate to urban areas and live with their relatives to attend on line classes without network disturbance.

However, uplift of online classes has helped the students to continue their education without the need to repeat or wait until the pandemics ends. And also, the students had exposure to social media and electronic gadgets. They juggled between helping the parents and studying with passion without having to dwell on fixed schedule.

Online learning was an urgent opportunity else, every student dream would remain locked down. Together we can win this battle if we stay home and connect online.

Pushpa LalT hapa
BE second year Geology

There's a silver lining

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed our life and the way society works, with lasting effects. Without a doubt, trying to maintain a normal routine is difficult. Although all countries have hard times containing the deadly virus, but we the Bhutanese are fortunate of being under the rule of His Majesty, who works tirelessly for his country and his people. He has always been the great king and will always be our king. Grateful to our king and the great leaders of our country for we are alive and unaffected by this perilous virus that would otherwise not spare anyone.

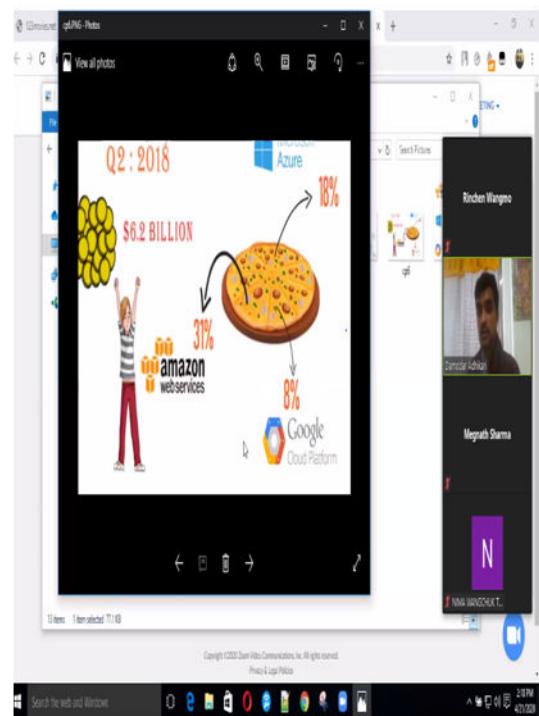
Life in a pandemic situation made me realize how important it is to be vigilant. My three months at home, made me realize that thousands of days of diligent studies are one day with great teachers. Having online lessons were exciting but also pulsating at the cost of data. However, this pandemic has kept me updated with news from around the world.

The pandemic days have been a blessing in disguise as I

had time to explore more on my own. Not having a guide made me work even harder. Doing household chores, doing assignments and attending online lessons were my favorite routines that kept me completely busy without wasting my precious time. I learned the importance of love and support from my family. I could see how my father worked vigorously to provide us with food and shelter. This epidemic showed me how to be grateful for all the luxury they have given me.

Unfortunately, there are no definitive answers for how long we will have to practice physical distancing. On the other hand, the pandemic is teaching us many lessons about the fragility of our social support and health system, in particular, to care our older citizens. Our small communities have come together in these difficult times to help each other. Many companies, organizations, and kind souls have taken a step to donate food supplies, free the tenant from monthly bills, and provide food and accommodation to those in need. Despite our circumstances, the society has given incredible amount of strengths and mutual care. I'm proud to be Bhutanese.

RinchenWangmo
BE4IT



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The College of Science and Technology (CST) is the first institute in the country to offer undergraduate degree programmes in engineering under the Royal University of Bhutan. The college aspires to be a centre of excellence in the field of science and technology-enriched with GNH values by offering quality programmes that are relevant to the need of the job market both within and outside the country.

Our Vision

“A centre of excellence in science and technology enriched with GNH values. “

Our Mission

- 1. To offer internationally recognized programs in science and technology.**
- 2. To generate new knowledge through research and innovation to fulfill the needs of the society**
- 3. To collaborate with stakeholders and provide expert services**
- 4. To provide community services to enhance GNH based society**