# The good and bad of online learning

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Since the last 2 years, we've been under the grasp of covid, which has affected every aspect of our lives. But, it's a known fact that humans are resilient and we have an ability to adapt and overcome. Digital learning and interaction was one of the ways to reduce the impact that covid had on us, our education and our learning. It soon became the new normal, and is still being followed by many educational and workplace institutions. But trying to understand concepts and skills just through a screen while being isolated in you rooms… at what cost does that come?

Digital learning has gained immense popularity amongst students and teachers alike, and is being hailed as 'the new normal'. Students say that online learning has great perks in terms of being accessible, affordable and flexible. They learn in an environment that suits them the most, is comfortable to them and they're in charge of their study space. You can learn at our own pace. Even if you're busy at the time of the lecture, you can simply press 'record' and listen to them later, as per your convenience. Online learning also boosts self esteem, if someone is an introvert and cannot ask questions directly during the lecture, they're free to clarify their doubts later in a private chat with the instructor. Online learning is a great tool, for someone who knows how to use it wisely.

That being said, digital learning also has its fair share of drawbacks, just like any other form of learning. I believe that the major drawback is that it is highly dependent upon the student's self discipline and responsibility, which, truth be told, is lacking in many of us. There is a huge possibility of distractions from social media and many of us also find it difficult to sit through multiple long lectures a day just staring at a screen. It doesn't need to be mentioned that online learning is a privilege in itself, because even after the advent of digitalization, so many people still dont have access to a smartphone, let alone a stable internet connection. There is an absence of face to face interaction with teachers and classmates, which is known to boost learning efficiency. It is also very important to mention that online studying is quite irrelevant when it comes to fields which require a 'hands on' experience, practical knowledge and skills - such as our veterinary profession. Theoretical portion can be covered, but skills need to be learned and practised in real life.

Whats better you ask? The debate will never stop. Schools, colleges and other educational and training institutes have adopted online learning fully and with new variants of covid looming over us yet again, it still might be a long time till offline classes become 'normal' again. I encourage everyone, to make utmost and wise use of online education while acknowledging the efforts our teachers out into diffusing their knowledge towards us, just through a screen. If used judiciously, digital learning can prove to be a very powerful tool.