

अभियन्ता

अभियन्ता



Online Examinations a Boon or a Bane?

Online examinations have become the need of the hour. However, is it a boon or a bane? Let us read what our students have to say on this.

The COVID-19 pandemic has totally transformed the field of conventional education. As the pandemic began to peak, schools embraced online exams for evaluating students. While there was scepticism and debate on the pros and cons of online exams, it became inevitable owing to lockdowns and also to address parents' concerns. Today, online exams are the preferred option for both schools and students. However, it is essential to understand the holistic impact of such a major change.

Technology and infrastructure: One of the key challenges with conducting online exams is technology and its supporting infrastructure. Internet and power supply is not always reliable, being dependant upon the location and weather. Any power or network interruptions could jeopardize the ability of students to continue and complete their exam on time. According to a report released by the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), approximately 8.5% of students in India have access to the internet. Some sections of the student community lack access to good quality hardware and technical support. This is an additional barrier to the overall experience.

External Environment: Students need a quiet and congenial environment during an exam. Online examinations can be taken from the comfort of one's homes. However, students may encounter distractions outside their control that would affect their concentration and performance. A number of parents are conducting their office responsibilities from home, thus adding to the already stressed situation.

Ethical Issues: Students are free to engage in malpractices during online exams owing to a lack of physical supervision that is so typical in a conventional exam. Although modern technology offers novel solutions to address cheating, it does so at the expense of user experience thereby affecting the performance of genuine students. With online evaluation the concept of academic honesty has become negotiable.

Paper Setting and Correction: The teachers are likely to face challenges when setting the question paper in a way that allows them to comprehensively assess student knowledge covering the entire syllabus. The online format works well for objective assessments however a thorough evaluation is difficult solely using Multiple Choice Questions. This requires inclusion of descriptive type questions on the exam that may be difficult for the teachers to correct and evaluate in an online format.

Given the above drawbacks, it is prudent to conduct major examinations offline and use online exams for shorter mock and practice tests, to balance academic performance and pandemic response.

Sowmya Anand,
Grade XII Science

The migration to online schooling, including classes and examinations, would be one of the most significant developments brought on by the pandemic. Many of us had never taken such tests before the pandemic. As a result, there was quite a confusion and enthusiasm.

Due to the uncertainty of power outages and the fear of "Have I submitted the correct file?", online exams have proven to be challenging at times. The pleasure of discussing your paper with your peers is no longer available. An increase in the student's average score could be attributed to an increase in malpractices, which are now a painless operation.

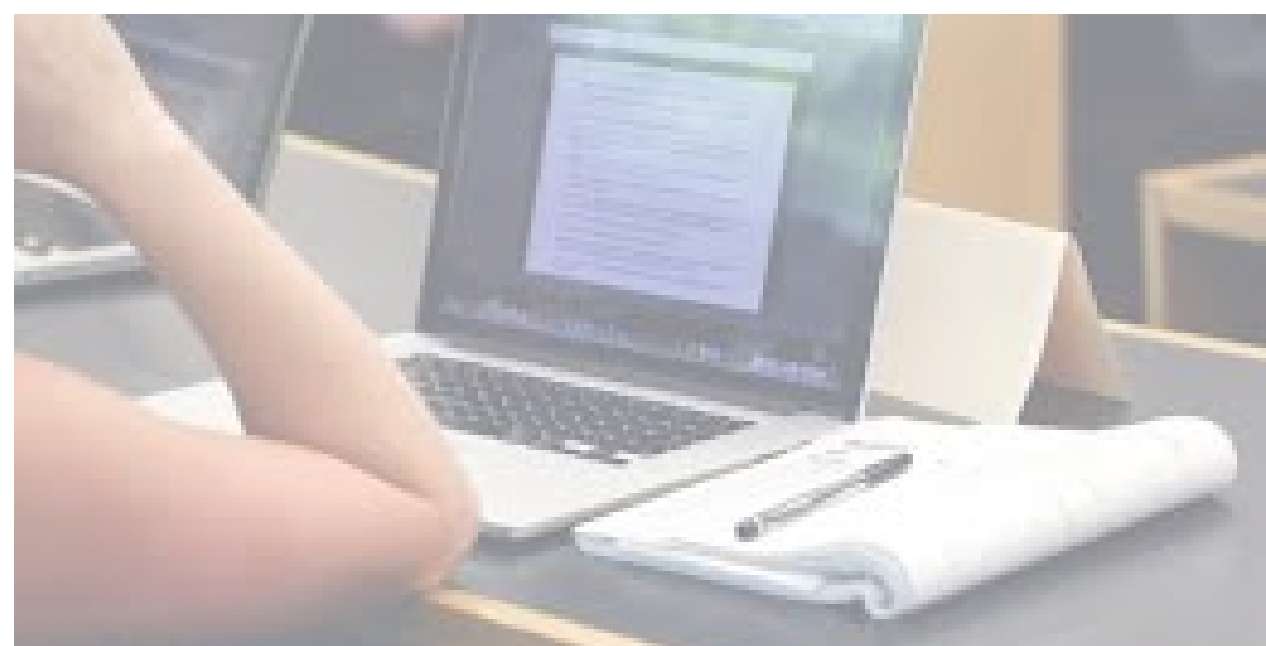
Writing a paper on in the offline, conventional setting, has always been a risky proposition. The worry of being stuck in traffic, which would cause the examinee to report late, is an example of the anxious thoughts that are always present in the examinee's mind space. With the rise of online exams, these anxieties have diminished significantly.

The exam hall's tense atmosphere no longer translates effectively to the screen, enabling pupils to be in a calm state of mind before taking the test. Familiarity provides a sense of security, and submitting a paper at the study desk or at the family dinner table eases the trepidatious mind.

Reduced expenses are a significant benefit for both students and educational institutions. The expense of paper, ink, and transportation for both proctors and examinees has been seamlessly integrated into a larger data plan.

Regardless of how unpleasant online exams were in the past, one must accept the concept that technology has become an indissoluble part of academic culture, and one must become acquainted with it. Online exams have shown to be convenient, and the benefits essentially support the ideology while indicating a long-term shift.

Yashita Sane,
Grade XII Humanities

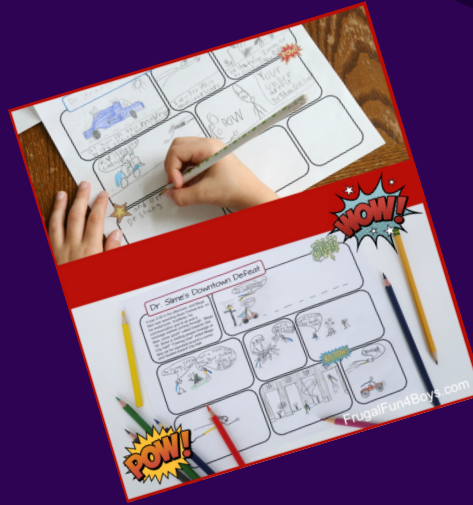


Young Achievers

January 2022



Vaishnavi Patil
ISC Grade IX-Commerce



Vaishnavi Patil from ISC Grade XI commerce has won **3rd prize** in Interschool competition **EComBat** for **Comic Strip** activity conducted by Ahlcon Public School, Delhi.

The Missed Call



BEEP BEEP! "Oh my God!", said Sara, who woke up, startled by the alarm. Sara's mother yelled from the kitchen, "Sara, wake up and switch off that alarm. I have made your breakfast. Now get ready for school." Sara was a 14-year-old punctual girl. But this time, although it seemed like she would be late, she was not. She just jumped from the bed, brushed, bathed and ate her breakfast as quick as the wind.

Sara bid her mother goodbye and sped towards her school. "Good morning, Sara. You are right on time.", said Miss. Marble, Sara's teacher, who was pleased to see her. She wished her teacher a good morning with a warm smile and took her seat. After 2 hours of classes, it was break time. All the students ran down the stairs and rushed to the playground. Sara started playing ball with three of her friends-Jack, Lisa and Susan. Just then, one of her friends threw the ball far away into a shed behind the school building. The shed was usually used to store old stuff and was usually avoided by the students, due to its fearful exteriors.

"Oh no! You threw the ball into the scary shed.", some kid yelled from behind. The four looked at the shed and gradually proceeded towards it.

RING! RING! RING!

Jack said with a worried tone, "The bell has rung now. What are we going to do?" Susan said, "We have to leave for our classes now. We will get it later.", and off they ran back to their classes. Soon, school was over and the four ran back to their homes.

It was 5 p.m. Susan was solving her maths problems; Jack was helping his mother in doing the household chores and Lisa and Sara met in the playground to play catch with their ball.

"The ball! Oh! we left in the shed. We must go back to the shed and get the ball. Meanwhile Jack and Susan can join us in the playground. You know we have been given a lot of homework today.", said Lisa.

Sara and Lisa took their bicycles and cycled to the school, which was only at a 10-minute distance. They soon reached the school gates, which were locked. Lisa asked, "What do we do now? The gates are closed." Sara looked at the gate, smiled and replied, "We jump over it. Look, it is not so tall. I will lift you. You sit on that wall and lift me up as well. We will leave the school the same way."

Slowly, Sara started lifting Lisa up the gate and Lisa managed to sit on the wall nearby. "Give me your hand.", she whispered, making sure no one saw them. "Goodness! You are so heavy Sara, although you look thin. Yes, yes that's it...Be careful! Now jump!" Sara was up the wall and both jumped with a thud. "Now, now, where is that shed? I do not believe in these spooky tales told by kids around here. There it is. Come on, let us hurry before someone sees us. Also, it will soon become dark. Jack and Susan will be waiting in the playground for us.", Sara said, in a hurried manner. Both the girls ran towards the shed.

The sun was slowly setting down and the sky became gloomier. The trees waved in the breeze, the clouds cleared, for the upcoming cold night, the birds flew back to their nests, while Lisa and Sara were on a hunt for their ball. They reached the shed and opened the creaking wooden door. No student had ever seen what was inside the shed. So, the girls were filled with excitement.

The shed was quite big. A huge red stand stood in a corner, filled with files and books. Lisa started coughing and said, "Who keeps these things here? They are so dusty and old." There were piles of things kept, a ladder, rope, chains, paint boxes

and lying in the shadowy corner was a ball. A bright blue ball, which shone in the dark corner. Sara said, "Aha, our ball. Look how elegant it looks in the light of the sun. Let us..." and she paused, looking alert. "What happened to you Sara? Why did you stop?"

"Shhh! I hear a phone call's ringtone. No one is there in school now, but us. We do not have our phones with us then whose phone is ringing?", Sara said, with a scared tone. The phone stopped ringing. "Don't scare me Sara. Let us take the ball and get out of here. I am already feeling a bit creepy here. Look, even the sun has set now. Come on!", Lisa said, who was already terrified by Sara's words. Lisa quickly ran towards the ball and snatched it away and was just about to leave the shed, when suddenly she was pulled back. Lisa fell down and Sara pulled her behind the file stand. At a distance, they could hear muffled voices and slow, heavy footsteps, proceeding towards the shed. TRING TRING!! The phone started ringing again and stopped. "Who is giving so many missed calls. The owner must be really annoyed by the calls.", Sara said, smiling at Lisa. "I am terrified about what lies outside the shed and you are joking now. Come on. Let us plan to escape before we get into any trouble.", Lisa said, frowning at Sara.

They saw two people entering through the door, and a chill went through their spine when they heard the door slowly creaking open and letting a gust of wind blow into the silent shed. "Disconnect the call. Do it right now. If someone hears us, we will be caught. Find it quickly.", one of the voices spoke. It sounded like a boy's voice. The other one nodded and went around throwing things everywhere. "I think they are trying to find something. We better stay hidden here.", Sara whispered to Lisa. "Why is that boy holding a knife? Oh no...if they find us, then...", said Lisa, scared by the appearance of the two persons. Their faces were not quite visible due to lack of sunlight. Then suddenly, CRASH! Sara leaned against a broken table and something fell off the table. The two persons turned their faces towards the dark corner of the shed and slowly walked towards it. Now Sara and Lisa had lost their wits in fear and hugged each other, tightly and quietly waiting for the two to find them.

They could hear their heart beat faster than ever and then suddenly they were startled by a cry, made by the boy. "Sara! Lisa! What are you doing here? Hahaha! It seems that we have scared you to death. Look at them Susan.", Jack said laughing at them. "Jack! Susan! Oh, thank goodness. It was only you.", Lisa and Sara yelled with a sense of relief and joy. "We just came here to find the ball. Your mother was worried about your whereabouts. She kept on calling me and there are tons of text messages. My phone never stops ringing. Ah, I see that Lisa is also here with you.", Susan said, smiling at them.

The warm smile on their friends' faces washed them with relief. "We too came here to pick up the ball until you showed up. Let us leave this place. I do not like it at all. But we had quite a fright today. Come on. Do not forget the ball, of course", Lisa said. The four rushed towards the gate, which shone due to the street lamps. It was 6.30 p.m. now. They had been there for more than an hour and did not even realize it. All the four used Sara's technique to jump out of the school gate and cycled back home. On the way, Sara asked, "What were you doing with a knife, Jack?" Jack replied, "Oh that. I was scared that some spooky stuff might show up in the shed. I just took the knife for safety reasons. It is not so sharp anyways. Every man for himself, remember?" "But you are a boy, Jack. Besides, we are all there to help you when you need us, will you remember that?", Susan replied. Everyone laughed at this comment and rode back to their homes, with their minds filled with excitement and mirth.

Sowmya Anand,
XII Science