

Life after Covid-19 focus: school education

The coronavirus has changed all of our lives with no end in sight and as difficult the situation right now is as eye-opening were the last three months. Everyone realizes that there needs to be a change because the way we have been living for the last couple of years is the reason for our current suffering. This realization affects almost every piece of our society, for example, the health care system, the economy, the social life, even the ground values our society lives by. However, my focus will be set on something that affects me as a student, the educational system. Since March 16th, all schools in Berlin are closed down, and live classes are not a possibility anymore. Instead, the only way to communicate with teachers is through online meetings and e-mails. While there were many problems at first and some are still unsolved, it works out surprisingly well and there is no class in which important content gets lost. One could even go as far as saying, working from home improved the learning efficiency for many students. The fact that this completely new way of learning, which is just meant to be a temporary solution during a global pandemic, works just as well as the normal school system if not better shines a light on how outdated the current school system in Germany is. Because of this I am convinced there will be changes after COVID-19 is over and this is what I think will happen.

Online classes will be incorporated into school permanently.

Online classes are the primary form of lessons at the moment and teachers as well as students started to learn more and more about the different possibilities and options this tool can provide and are working on maximizing its potential. It is so effective that it can almost entirely replace normal lessons in school. Students can virtually raise their arm and then contribute, presentations can be given, through screen sharing work can be shared amongst the entire class, breakout sessions allow for group work and there is even a whiteboard function that allows teachers to write down important aspects when needed. Besides the social aspect, there is almost nothing online classes lack in comparison to normal classes and some features are even better, for example, online classes allow for more discussion and less up-front tutoring. The dynamic feels completely different because no teacher is standing in front of the students exerting power over them, instead, everyone seems to be on the same level which makes open conversation between students and teachers more comfortable. This increased comfort reduces the barrier for students to actively participate and therefore increases the efficiency of the lessons. Furthermore, the teacher has a better overview of the class since there is not an entire classroom to look over which means a student not participating can be noticed better. It also works the other way around students cannot be ignored by teachers without everyone noticing. All these benefits would go to waste if everything gets back to normal after the pandemic is over and since both teachers and students enjoy this new option it is very likely to be implemented permanently. While I do not think it will replace face to face classes due to the socializing aspect it will probably be used as an addition.

There will be fewer classes and more independent learning.

One of the reasons the current solution is working out is the new split between independent learning and online classes. Classes with the teacher have adapted a different role in the learning process. There are no longer used to give the students all the input, this part now needs to be done individually by each student, instead, they are only used as a form of communicating after solving the problems to clarify important aspects, answer questions, and correcting possible mistakes. This means that the students are teaching themselves and are only accompanied by their teachers, contrary to how learning used to look like with the teacher doing all the teaching and students only following. Students now take on a bigger portion of the learning by themselves, they have more responsibility and a larger impact on their success. This is of course only a valid possibility for older, more experienced students

who know how to learn unaccompanied and can work with this level of independence. Nonetheless, for those old enough this opportunity can help them maximize their potential by being able to learn according to their learning type and personal needs. Therefore, my suggestion would be to incorporate more independent learning which each year, starting at year seven as it is the normal year to get into grammar school, to allow for a slow but steady process with increasing responsibility and independence over the years.

Taking both of these points into consideration, I firmly believe the school system will change for the better after the pandemic since the last months showed some of its flaws that could easily be fixed. Online classes as well as independent work have shown great results for many students and if those ideas are held onto, it could have a very positive effect on how learning is approached.

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