

# Current Scenario of Academics & A closer look at Student - Professor Interaction



By

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Disclaimer: *These are more or less my views, I have tried my best to be honest and provide a general perspective but of course, would not have succeeded completely. And I have not kept my discussion specific to scenario in Maths but have talked in an overall sense.*

# Current Scenario of Regular Academics



We will look at the following aspects related to regular academics and the prevalent academic culture among students -

1. (Equivalence) Class of students
2. Beliefs of these classes
3. Ways to bring about changes in the cardinality of classes (to be discussed by Pawan)

# Current Scenario of Regular Academics



## ❧ CLASS 1 :

Study regularly, keep in touch with lecture notes, solve tutorials (and read books and ask doubts).

## ❧ CLASS 2 :

Start preparing few days before the quiz/mid/endsem, read all lectures, try to attempt and memorise tutorials.

## ❧ CLASS 3 :

Start the preparation on Day '-1' (minus 1), in some cases night/morning of day 0, of the exam. Just run through everything, try to mug up formulas and keep snapshots in mind. Rely heavily on others for preparation (and sometimes in exams as well!)

# Current Scenario of Regular Academics



## ❧ REMARKS:

- ❖ Without loss of generality, we can assume that students do study in groups and help each other in learning the subject. The size and members of the group is primarily dependent on the friend circle. Typically the size grows from class 1  $\rightarrow$  2  $\rightarrow$  3.
- ❖ Each class of students has all kinds of performers(in exams) but on an average the performance goes down from class 1  $\rightarrow$  2  $\rightarrow$  3.
- ❖ Also students do refer to books, but not for mathematics. As the Maths' instructors usually prepare 'very good' slides.

# Students' Beliefs



## ❧ Class 1:

- ❖ They believe that they are here to study & learn and hence give academics the top priority.
- ❖ However, sincerity may go down with time because of
  - Peer Pressure
  - At times, due to failure in exams in spite of their efforts and success of the mates despite of seemingly no inputs.
  - Lack of appreciation from faculty and seniors, and criticism from the batch-mates
  - and hence, these students may switch to class 2 with time.

# Students' Beliefs



## ❧ Class 2:

- ❖ They believe that attending classes is equivalent to devoting a considerable amount of time and hence the '**daily time-quota**' of academics is fulfilled.
- ❖ Special extra slots are allotted to academics only when needs arise (in the form of exams).
- ❖ Since exams are so designed (basically easy) they are able to crack the exam (at least with respect to their own standards or relative to their friend circle) that they **do not** realise the need to put in more than these epsilon efforts, and hence do not explore much beyond the regular classes.

# Students' Beliefs



## ❧ Class 3 :

- ❖ Habits are developed right in the first year, when the topic of extra currics dominate all verbal exchanges, academics seems to be irrelevant.
- ❖ Many first year students are amazed by the glory & glamour of IITB's co-currics and are some-times misguided by seniors with the help of unjustified claims regarding the uselessness of CPI and regularity in academics.
- ❖ *Habit of not studying* is like an addiction, difficult to get rid of!
- ❖ Claims of *lack of interest* in academics, Pursuing of Passions not related to academics

# Students' Beliefs



- More details in survey by Insight.  
<http://www.insightiitb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/insight-15.2.pdf>
- However insight survey may not be that insightful, because people may prefer answering to survey the way one should answer (Psychology).



# Realization



- ❧ However, everyone sooner or later realises the importance of academics and sincerity, and recognise it as a crucial part of a student's life at IITB.
- ❧ *“Though they may not admit this fact by quoting/referring to Bill Gates or Steve Jobs or Larry Page (and simultaneously by ignoring the fact that none of these left schools on the basis of simply their ‘so called extra curricular’ skills).”*

# THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO



The gap that I am referring to is about the lack of interaction between students and professors outside the classroom, apart from the course & the absence of impact of professors' views and experience on students' lives, beliefs and future plans.

And we will try to see, why the two spaces of IITB live as non-intersecting spaces (on a large scale) outside the classroom?

I will not discuss the pros and cons of the gap.

# Why don't we approach professors/interact with professors apart from the course ?



- ❧ Students are shy, some of them are very scared of professors.
- ❧ This fear is on account of many factors namely : weak academic background, lack of communication skills(English proficiency), low confidence and lack of courage to overcome the “great barrier of energy” required to take the step and ask the first question.
- ❧ Besides these some other reasons can be stated as follows :

# Why don't we approach/ interact with professors apart from the course ?

(Use of Hindi to maintain originality)



“Culture hi nahi hai aisa. Prof bas padhate hain. Baaki sab to students hi karte hain. To profs kya batayenge ?”

“Arey, prof se baat kar li to naam jaan jayenge. Fir har class aani padegi aur class mein so nahi paunga. Azaadi to gayi apni fir!”

“Arey prof ne pakad liya to? Acads/CPI ka puch liya to? Uda di to? Bhai dar lagta hai yaar!”

“Arey yaar aaj tak class gaya nai. Gaya bhi to jaaga nahi. Jaaga bhi to suna nahi. Suna bhi to kabhi doubts puche nahi. Wo to dekhte hi bhaga denge!”

Why don't the professors (apart from a few highly interactive ones) promote the interaction beyond the classroom and the course ?



☞ A simple reason may be –

*“They do not study, are not serious and take things for granted. How can we be enthusiastic to care for them beyond the course, when they do not respect it? Their attitude forces us to limit our interaction to the class-rooms. In any-case, our doors are always open for them. They should at-least take that much efforts to walk out of their hostel-room and come to us.”*

<NOTE> Promote here means promoting by use of direct words aimed at encouraging students to come to their office for discussing about different kind of needs, queries and curiosities.



Law of  
Large  
Numbers

Limited Time  
Interaction

Students' response and dry  
behaviour in class drains  
out their enthusiasm and  
motivation.

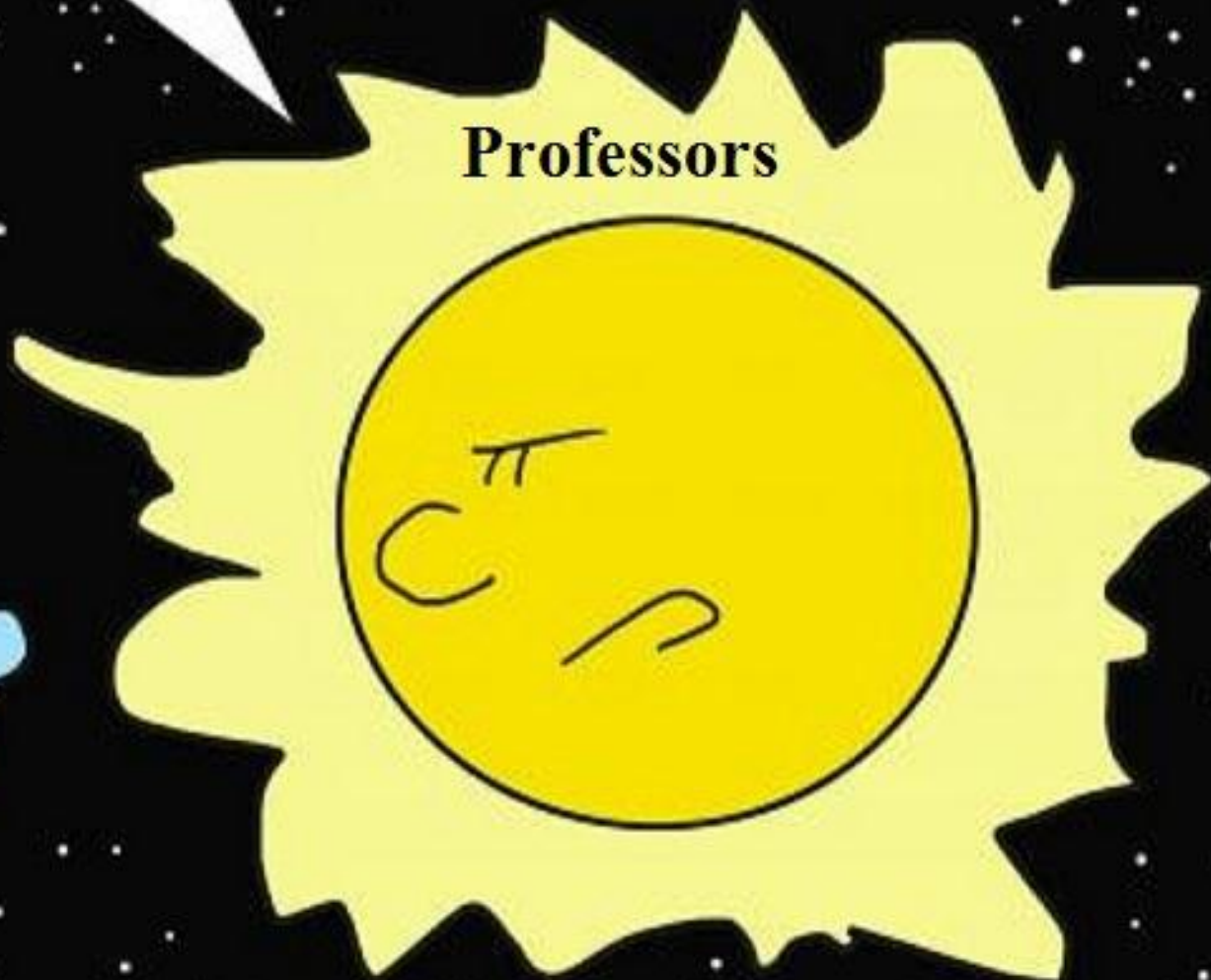
Primary Focus  
on Teaching  
the Course and  
the Syllabus

# CURRENT SCENARIO

Students



Professors



# Initiatives for bridging the Gap



Here we look at some possible initiatives that can be taken by the students and the professors.

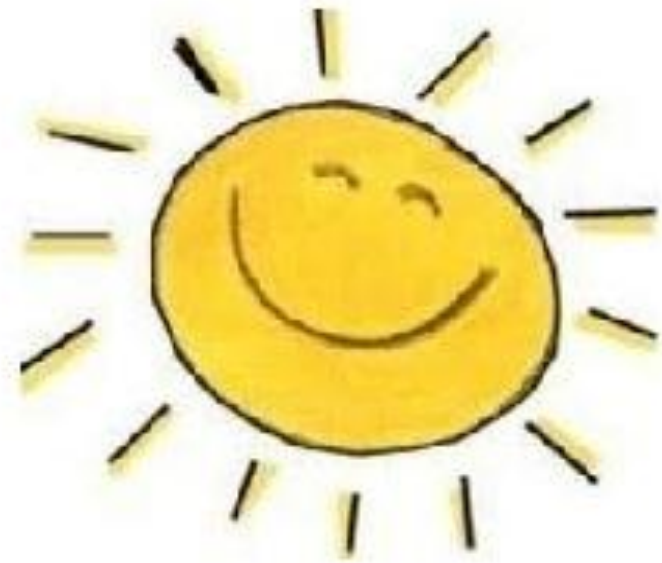


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- \* We the students need to accept that we have been lagging behind in utilising this great opportunity of discovering the hidden aspects of our "Guru", and learning from it. We need to be **ENTHUSIASTIC** to extend this interaction from Lecture Complex to Coffee-Shack and their offices.



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**--These things will definitely excite a significant fraction of students.**





