Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin:
Learning Beyond the Plan



On the Road Again *is an exclusive monthly feature on our Roadmap 2031 initiative, written by Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin, a leading voice in thought leadership on the future of public education. We house her collective work on our dedicated* ***On the Road Again*** *page. Follow her there!*

Educators plan for the year. Lesson plans are mapped out. Units are sequenced. Timelines are set.

Yet not everything can be planned for.

An unexpected question. A shift in resources. A sudden move to online learning during a global pandemic.

The plan no longer holds.

Schools close overnight. Classes move online. Internet access is uneven. Materials are no longer available. Schedules disappear. Support systems shift.

Nothing runs as designed.

In that moment, the difference shows.

One student logs in, sees the change, and waits.

“I don’t understand the new system, so I’ll wait until this goes back to normal.”

Assignments sit untouched. Progress slows. The expectation is that someone will step in and fix the path. Time passes. Accountability arrives, whether through a test, a grade, or personal growth.



Another student logs in and starts adjusting.

> ***“What do I need to complete this assignment?”***
>
> ***“Who can I reach out to?”***
>
> ***“What can I do with what I have right now?”***

When a student can answer those three questions and act on them, the work continues. A plan still exists, even without the original structure. A simple agenda for the day is created. It does not need to be perfect. It needs to move the work forward.

Answers may be partial. Direction becomes clearer with action.

Work is broken into smaller steps. A message is sent to a peer or instructor. Available materials are used, even if they are not ideal. Progress begins.

The difference is in the response.

One student waits for the system to return. Another builds a way to continue.

Adaptability shows in how the day is organized, how decisions are made, and how work moves forward without full certainty.

A classroom can support adaptability during regular instruction.

As an educator:

Ask for a daily plan before work begins.

Require identification of resources before help is requested.

Build time for adjustment when the first approach does not work.

The goal is not a perfect plan. The goal is movement.

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