Focus Group 1 Discussion

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Discussion with two students on student engagement with Chromebooks devices.

Eddie Falshaw

Right, so welcome. Thank you very much for joining me for this focus group, just to remind you, we are recording this discussion, and later it will be transcribed and will be used as part of this research project. Both happy. Yeah, yeah, brilliant. So first of all, you both complete the survey. So you've got a good idea of what the research is about. Let me just start by asking, when somebody would say that you're engaged in a lesson. What does that actually mean?

Pupil 1

I think it's kind of listening to the teacher and acting upon the advice.

Pupil 2

Yeah, I think it's the same... missing how to teach doing what, say acting, acting on it, instead of just like ignoring it, and then doing your own thing.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, the the survey results suggest that people are more engaged, if they are using a Chromebook. What would you say to that?

Pupil 1

I think maybe they might be engaged because they can do what the teachers say, in a more interesting way than writing stuff in a book.

Pupil 2

Because I think, like, it just seems more interesting and probably we are more used to using technology now than like, writing stuff down so maybe there's more games using technology.

Eddie Falshaw

But what is it about the technology, then that is engaging, if you say that it's better than writing things in a book.

Pupil 1

If the teacher is copying something on the board, I think most people can type faster than they can write. So you could spend less time writing things down.

Pupil 2

You could take notes easier, which would help you in future. Because there's like different resources you can use as well. Which, which there's not as many when you're writing stuff down.

Eddie Falshaw

So just explain a little bit more about that. When you say there are more resources. What do you mean by that?

Pupil 2

Well, like, because like, there's different ways to like, write stuff down is like Google, like Google Docs and stuff, like, in the class you only like have the resources, if like, the teacher like gives you it physically? Yeah.

Eddie Falshaw

They do a lot of that in terms of writing notes. On a Google Doc,

Pupil 1

I think it's kind of the teacher will explain it. And then you can have like, worksheets attached, which is a lot easier than printing out 20 of them.

Eddie Falshaw

So for you, are you saying that when the Chromebook is used in a lesson, it's more likely to engage in what you're doing?

Pupil 1

I think it makes things that would be slightly more boring, or in the books more interesting, because you can personalise it a bit more.

Eddie Falshaw

How can we do that?

Pupil 1

So say you're writing things on a Google Doc. You can put text boxes around the page, and then put some colours in, which would make it more interesting and eye catching.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, it's interesting. Do you do that sort of thing?

Pupil 2

Not necessarily. But I agree with like, what he's saying that you can personalise it, and then make it how you like, when you take notes, you can make it how you be able to read it to you

Eddie Falshaw

Easier than an exercise book when you're writing.

Pupil 2

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

You mentioned before about engagement, listening and acting on the teachers advice. The survey results again, suggest that students are less likely to ask the teacher for help. If they using a Chromebook. What do you think about that?

Pupil 1

I think, probably because there's lots of online resources that you can get many answers quite quickly, especially if the teacher is helping someone else already.

Eddie Falshaw

So it's the first reaction to ask Google rather than the teacher.

Pupil 1

Yeah. Probably

Eddie Falshaw

Is that what you would do?

Pupil 2

Yeah.

Pupil 1

If it's something like maths, that's probably better to ask the teacher because it would be more specialised or you're doing in the moment? Whereas Google wouldn't really help too much in maths.

Eddie Falshaw

Do you use the Chromebook in maths?

Pupil 1

Not usually, because it's easier to write down things like equations in your book. Than on a computer.

Eddie Falshaw

Yeah. So it might be subject specific them?

Pupil 1

Yeah.

Pupil 2

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. Now, big question. There seems to be a little bit of disagreement here about whether the Chromebooks are a distraction, and that people use them for other things in lessons rather than the lesson. But there's also evidence to suggest that that's not the case. If you're being really honest about it, what what's your view is? Does it distract people from the learning or?

Pupil 1

I think it does sometimes. So if the teachers are talking, and you should ask for the lids to be down to avoid distraction, and then when they've got work, they can circle around, to keep people on topic.

Pupil 2

Yeah, I think the same thing, because I mean, kind of depends on the person. Because if that person is more likely to get disctracted it, it's just better to like, for the teacher to ask everyone to put their lids down. Because if they keep them up then they will probably, and then do something else with it,

Eddie Falshaw

like like, what, what's the what's the common themes that people might do?

It could be trying to find funny things on like, images, or funny kind of search results.

And that's because the lesson isn't engaging. That You Might then your mind wanders, and you maybe open up another tab and

Pupil 1

Yeah.

Pupil 2

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

Do you think that's a widespread issue?

Pupil 1

I think so. Yeah.

Eddie Falshaw

So how, how could that be addressed? Is it the content of the lesson? Or is it the Chromebook? What's causing the issue?

Pupil 1

I think Chromebooks can be useful in some parts of the lesson. So if they're not being used when they don't need to be used, then that's probably a good way to address it.

Pupil 2

I think it's the Chromebook because that's more of an issue rather than the content. Because like, you don't need to use a Chromebook all the time. Like this. So it's just, it's there. It's just more of a distraction.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, right. So it's about using the Chromebook for the right sort of exercise is not necessarily just using all the time. Yeah, for the sake of using it. So in that case, is, in your view, learning more effective when a Chromebook is involved, or less? And why?

Pupil 1

I think at certain times it's more effective. And at other times it can be less effective. And that might be subject or teaching style specific.

Eddie Falshaw

Could you give an example of of it being really effective?

Pupil 1

If you're doing a research project, then instead of them handing sheets on with information, you can find information that other people probably won't find to make your research project. Interesting, because there's lots of resources available.

Eddie Falshaw

What about a time when it isn't?

Probably if a teacher's showing you something. So maybe maths when they're showing you how to solve an equation. And then you can try examples. Then it's really not useful there. Because you have all the information that you need to go to do the work already there

Pupil 2

Yeah, I think it also, I think it just like depends on the subject when when not effective. Like, for example, maths don't really need the Chromebook as much. Because, like equations, they're like, the different subjects like science. It can be useful, for example, like doing a project

Eddie Falshaw

And finding out information. Does a Chromebook help you persevere with things? If you're finding it difficult?

Pupil 1

Yes, because there's many steps ona Chromebook to make it easier. Because if you're having trouble, then someone else might have had trouble. Which means there might be answers and help. On the Chromebook.

Pupil 2

Yeah, there's like, there's like lots of different answers on the Internet so. And like, I feel like you can just like, delete it and then like, we do it without much trouble.

Eddie Falshaw

So the Chromebooks allowing you to access the internet, which has this wealth of information.

Pupil 2

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, all right. final final thing I'd like to ask you. Could you share with us an example of when you were you were really engaged in a lesson that you didn't want it to end and you just wanted to keep going? Because you were, you were just so into it? What were you doing? And what was the

Pupil 1

I think, recently, biology teacher said, we could do a project on whatever we're interested in. Which means if we're interested in it, we're going to want to kind of find out information and share it with other people at the end.

Eddie Falshaw

And what were you looking into?

Pupil 1

So me and my partner in quantum computers, which is quite interesting, as they are a lot faster than any computer, we've got them moment.

Eddie Falshaw

And what were you actually doing then which sort of made you want to carry on?

Pupil 1

We will find a lot of interesting information that we didn't know that was quite interesting to find out.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. What about you?

Pupil 2

Computer Science, because, obviously, heavily reliant on Chromebooks. And like, we were doing, like this coding project, using a website, code and make like a story. So I personally like found it like really fun, and then like, didn't want it to stop.

Eddie Falshaw

Great. Is there? Is there any comment you'd like to make about Chromebooks at ######? Anything you know are you a fan? Do we need to use the more or less are you fan or not? What's your just your overall sort of view about the use of them here at school?

Pupil 1

I think they used probably the right amount at the moment. Because some subjects you don't need them and arn't really used too much. But other subjects, they use more, which you need them to be used more in. And that works.

Pupil 2

Yeah, okay. The use of Chromebooks is the right amount, because like, not every subject, we use the Chromebooks. And then obviously, there are some subjects where we use Chromebooks a lot more than others. So there's a kind of general balance,

Eddie Falshaw

okay, so you wouldn't be in favour of getting rid of them.

Pupil 2

No

Eddie Falshaw

What about changing device? So not a Chromebook or something different?

Pupil 1

I think, probably wouldn't be too big a problem.

Pupil 2

I wouldn't make too much of a difference.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, boys, thank you very much for your time. That's really helpful.

Transcribed by https://otter.ai