Focus Group 2 Discussion

30/06/2021

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Discussion with three students on student engagement with Chromebooks devices.

Eddie Falshaw

Right, welcome chaps. Thank you very much for giving your time this afternoon. Just to remind you, we are recording this focus group discussion, and it will need to be transcribed and then used as part of the evidence for the research project. So, first thing I'd like to ask you is about being engaged in a lesson. When you're engaged in a lesson, any lesson. What are you actually doing.

Student 3

Well, to be engaged in lesson. We'd like take notes off the board, ask questions or ask the question yourselves about the topic we're studying.

Student 4

Sometimes working in silence on how Microsoft Project we use to present data

Student 5

[unclear], listening to the teacher, then not focusing on anything else, though, keeping yourself like fully trained on the teacher, so not having that half an eye open or half an ear out for what they're saying, but then also talk to your friend.

Student 3

So like if it helps them to keep Chromebooks closed because they can be used as a distraction.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. And what do you think, are things that engage you in the lesson

Student 5

group work always help but also, the correct use of Chromebooks like Google Docs, help kind of organise things easier than getting a sheet of people writing down my books sometimes.

Student 4

So I'm more of like a, I learn best by doing things so like science experiments, I enjoy a lot, because I get to actually do the practical instead of just watching it happen.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, the survey, did you all complete the survey.... So you didn't okay. The survey results seem to suggest that students are more engaged, if they are using a Chromebook.

Student 3

You can get a lot more writing done auto-correct is much easier than having to ask the teacher for the spelling

Student 5

I also think because Chromebooks aren't used in many other schools that usually one kind of feels like a privilege and you want to use it a lot more because you like it and you'd like the opportunity that you have. And it's also, as Student 3 said it's very easy, it's a lot easier to get notes down, and to complete your task online than writing it down but you can do a lot faster.

Student 4

Just like if you write down my full page of notes your hand might start to hurt while typing is firstly a lot quicker. And also more efficient. Also, you can learn to touch type. So you can still be focusing on what's happening in the lesson, while you're taking notes while writing is a lot more about like looking down and actually looking at what you're writing.

Eddie Falshaw

is, is being busy, and you mentioned writing notes or typing notes is that the same as being engaged in the lesson.

Student 4

Sometimes it's just listening, putting your hand up asking the questions that you experienced as to

Student 5

depends if being busy is part of what you're meant to do in the lesson. If you're being busy on something you're not meant to do the lesson. Like doing work from a different lesson that you haven't done yet, or doing prep, in the middle of a lesson or not focusing on the teacher, then they can't contradict each other.

Student 4

Because like you can be busy, by watching YouTube in lesson which is not what you're supposed to be doing. And that's being busy but not being busy towards productivity.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, so to say the teacher asked you to answer some questions on a topic. And you're answering the questions. Does that mean you're engaged in the lesson, or is there more to it than just going through the motions of what the teacher is asking you to do.

Student 4

Well, I'd say there's more than just doing you have to go to like, above and beyond to be properly engaged. So, maybe expanding your answers instead of just giving simple one word answers, but also you might like ask the questions to get the teacher to expand your knowledge further.

Eddie Falshaw

No, let, that's a, that's a great point. The survey suggests that students are less likely to ask for help. If they're using a Chromebook in the lesson.

Student 4

Well, I guess that's because you have Google to help you. So that would. I guess that helped me to....Ive forgotten how to speak

Student 5

but I also feel like getting help electronically in sometimes isn't as good as getting help from teacher, because I know in some language lessons people use like things like Google Translate. And it doesn't always translate it to how it might be written down. So, asking your teacher of help is always probably the right solution.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, so two things then are we thinking that a lot of students are now googling things rather than asking the teacher, where they might have done had they not have the Chromebook open, it's

Student 3

much more efficient because sometimes you need to get to pick your hand up if it's a silly question or something that would be judged by your classmates and stuff, or you can just type it in the Chromebook.

Student 5

I feel like.. go on..

Student 4

I'm well maybe because instead of Googling something if you want to show me your engagement you just ask the teacher, because that shows that you're engaged by, while it can just ask Google, then, yes, it shows the, the highest standard of work but then it's quite obvious that you Google that and then write down exactly what they written right because it's written by like an adult, they might have a more deeper, a deeper understanding into that topic than we do so we might like copy and paste something which is a lot much higher level than what we're actually learning. So, doesn't, so we don't actually learn it, we just copy it.

Student 5

Yeah, I feel like, like some things that teachers could do to help like it's not it doesn't happen every lesson, but I know some teachers when we're using Chromebooks they do walk around the room and ask if you need help. And that can like, it means you don't always have to rely on Google, because if we are stuck when they're walking around, we can always ask them then we don't have to announce in front of the class.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. And that's interesting, and so is it also dependent on the subject that you're working on you mentioned like Google Translate and for language lessons. So, is it maybe dependent on the lesson type as to whether you might, or the teacher where the Google the some help.

Student 4

Well, if the teacher, I guess if the teacher explains in a really good way that you can understand it, you'd probably ask them for more help. For more help than if he did, don't get what the teacher is saying. And also like in some lessons, such as a like Art can't really Google things it's more down to the teacher to help you.

Student 5

Yeah, and some lessons. It's it's like some words mean similar things, or similar words mean different things. So it's always good to ask a teacher because you could be thinking of a biological word, and then use, but you don't exactly know what it means you search up but it comes up with a musical term, and then it's like, you can't get confused in there. So it's always good to ask Teacher.

Eddie Falshaw

Now, here's a big question. I want you to be really honest here. The survey seemed to have a split view from the students, body, about whether or not the Chromebooks are a distraction. What do you think, do they distract you from actually the learning that should be going on or not, what do you think

Student 3

we've all used for something that we're not supposed to use it for, and we'd be lying if we said that we didn't. But if the teacher knows what they're doing, asked us to close the Chromebook or stands at the back of the class, using SENSO and things like that I think that's a good way of handling.

Student 5

Yeah, I feel like most of distraction, come, come in the beginning of the lesson, and then you don't always have at the beginning it's kind of, it gets harder to know what you're doing towards the end. So, a good thing to help would be like, get teachers to ask you to all close their Chromebooks, right at the beginning so you can the students who get a grip on what the teacher is actually going to go through the lesson because sometimes they don't exactly know what's happening, if they haven't been focusing.

Student 4

It all depends on how engaging the teacher is because they're the teachers like you answer this, you answer this, then you don't really have time to for distractions because you have to be paying attention, because you know you're going to get called on. But if the teachers, dry and it's just talking and talking, then it gets easier to...to get distracted on your Chromebooks.

Eddie Falshaw

And when you're, when you're working on something. What is the temptation, there to open another tab and look at something different or again does it depend on what you're being asked to do.

Student 4

Well, I think it depends on firstly what you're being asked to. Also, like your personality and your self discipline, because you have a lot of self discipline, you'll ignore the temptation. But if you don't, you'll probably succumb and potentially caught doing something you're not supposed to be

Student 5

doing some of that can also be like a peer pressure as well. So if there's people in front of you and your friends around you, which are gaming or like watching YouTube or something. Sometimes you can be pulled into that as well, even if you want to do the work.

Eddie Falshaw

And so when you sit down for the lesson, and it becomes clear that you're going to have to use the Chromebooks. How does that. Do you feel better about it, and you're in a lesson where they said right put the Chromebooks away, you won't need them today. Do you think, or is it the other way around.

Student 5

A lot of it depends on kind of like, what's really happening in the lesson. So you're doing science and you're practical and you won't need Chromebooks you'll be writing stuff in your book. That's a lot different to writing a two page essay for English in your book, because like more on a Chromebook can be easier to write things like English for that. But then, with sciences, if you're just putting out a table. There's not really much of a difference in between, like, doing it for a Chromebook but also just doing a few short sentences in your book.

Student 3

It looks like you've taken a look, it does look like you've taken a lot more time and effort over if you write it down though instead of putting it on a Google Doc. We'll see like you can look back and find it. While, if you have it like on Google, it will disappear eventually. And you just forget about it.

Eddie Falshaw

So do you think learning with a Chromebook is more effective than learning without one.

Student 3

It depends how much you can get down, how concentrated you are. Self discipline,

Student 5

I think a lot of it is quite situation based like it all depends on what you're doing in the lesson, but also kind of, it can depend on your mood, and then who sits around you in your lesson.

Student 4

And like Student 3 said it's all about self discipline.

Eddie Falshaw

Final thing I'd like to ask you all to share is, could you share a lesson that you were in that you didn't want to end. One of those where you think oh why is it the end of the lesson I want to stay carry on, what what was it, what were you doing, and just try to give a flavour of why it was that you didn't want it to end.

Student 4

BV this morning we were watching a movie.

Eddie Falshaw

All right, end of term movie aside. Can you think of a time, you know, you know what I mean when you think, Oh no, it's the end of the lesson I'd quite like to carry on.

Student 3

Physics was really fun when we had to make the parachute for the egg to drop and practical things, making to expand on to get better

Student 4

chemistry experiments where we experiment on like the periodic table so like them reactions. I really enjoyed doing them, and quite a few times you'd like to come back the next lesson which is finishing.

Student 5

Like it all the sciences but in biology. I enjoy biology, quite a lot personally so when we're doing things like questions. I always tried to do the extension, where if I don't have enough time to finish my sentence or complete what Im doing, I can get quite annoyed because I'm like, that close to finishing it and the lesson ends.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. Thank you. Are there any other comments you'd like to make about anything at all to do with Chromebooks, at the school. What you like, what you don't like what you'd like to see anything at all

Student 5

I don't think so

Eddie Falshaw

thank you ever so much for your time, everybody, and it's very much appreciated. Enjoy your afternoon.

Transcribed by https://otter.ai