Eddie Falshaw

28/09/21: 1300

Discussion with two students on student engagement with Chromebooks devices.

So, girls, thank you very much for agreeing to talk to me this afternoon, just to remind you that we are recording this group meeting and the recording will be transcribed and then later used in a study, any quotes used will be anonymised, so people won't know who has said what, and you're both happy with that.

Both

Yes

Eddie Falshaw

Fantastic. So firstly, I'm interested to know is, if somebody explains that you are engaged in a lesson, any lesson, what does that mean? What are you doing? or How are you feeling? What does what does being engaged in a lesson mean to you?

Student 6

Putting your hand up and taking part in it

Student 7

I think it's when the teachers are kind of talking to you or having an active discussion rather than being talked at. And when we're engaged, probably also working on breaking stuff down rather than just listening or just writing.

Eddie Falshaw

So is it about you doing something?

Student 7

Yeah, it's like active.

Student 6

Active Listening.

Eddie Falshaw

Yeah. So what does active listening mean?

Student 6

That's really taking in the information and maybe writing a few notes with it as well. Like 50:50 listening in mind.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, so if a teacher was talking, how might they know that you were engaged in what they were saying? And not just sort of like,…

Student 7

I think, the thing that's good in engaged listening and work and stuff, there's a lot of back and forth between the teacher and all students. It's not just one, everyone's involved and everyone feels like they want to be there.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, so leading on from that, the survey results suggest that engagement is better when the Chromebooks are used in a lesson,

Student 6

I would say yes, because sometimes, when you write, you just don't have enough time to get everything done. But when you're on the Chromebooks, you can actually write it down and understand that more. So you want to be more engaged.

Eddie Falshaw

And when you're writing things down, are you doing that from your own initiative? Or is the teacher saying write this down on a Google doc or another,

Student 6

Sometimes the teacher asks you to, but sometimes it's just quicker on the Chromebooks to do it.

Student 7

Also, with computers, you can go back and edit something once you've already written it. So it allows you to ask more questions, because then you can go back and change things. Whereas in your book, then you'd have to cross something out, or you'd have to add to that underneath, which can be frustrating.

Eddie Falshaw

So, if a teacher says to you, right, get your Chromebooks out, we're going to be using these today. Does that make you think? Oh, yes. Great. You're more positive about the lesson.

Student 7

Yeah. Because I prefer using it because it's quicker, and it's easier to get your thoughts out. Whereas when you're writing you to have to focus on your spelling a lot more,

Student 6

Your handwriting, yeah like the pen smudging as well.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, so it's about the Chromebook, allowing you some kind of flexibility and it's making things accessible.

Student 6

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

Whereas you wouldn't sort of jot things down in your exercise book because it might make things look a little messy and disorganised.

Both

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

So if you're using the Chromebook in a lesson, again, the survey suggested that students are less likely to ask the teacher for help. If they're using a Chromebook.

Student 6

I wouldn't say that… I wouldn’t say that was like relevant to each other.

Student 7

Yeah, because maybe it's because people feel like it's easy to look at their online textbook because we don't have that many paper copies. So it's probably if you have a question, they can find the answer themselves, rather than just not asking and muddling through it and being confused the whole time.

Student 6

And if you like, don't know what a word means, and that's being used a lot. And she's already explained that or he, and you still don't understand then you can just Google it fairly quickly, in like 30 seconds and then understand.

Eddie Falshaw

So that might be why people don't ask, is that they Google it.

Student 7

Yeah. So it's more independent. Whereas if you're in your book, then everything has to go to the teacher. But if everyone has lots of questions that can be really difficult for the teacher to filter through.

Eddie Falshaw

That's really interesting. So is that a good thing? Or not? Being more independent, not using a teacher?

Student 7

It depends. Depends if Google's right or not.

Eddie Falshaw

And how do you know if Google's right or not?

Student 7

Sites like BBC bite size and the online textbooks. If you're going to look for things through that, then it's probably a good thing. But if you're just googling and copying and pasting onto a Google Doc, then it's probably not as good. Because you're not going to learn that way.

Eddie Falshaw

And I suppose if you're with your textbook, and exercise book, and you have a question, the natural thing would be to ask the teacher, whereas the Chromebook opens up a whole world of knowledge. Okay. Now, here's the big question. The teacher, and the students were almost literally the opposite in terms of answering this one. And this was all about whether the Chromebook is a distraction to students learning or not, with the students saying, absolutely, No, it isn't. And the teacher saying, almost Absolutely, yes, it is. What do you think?

Student 6

Well, if you actually want to learn, you won't like use the Chromebooks. It's usually the kids who don't want to learn and stay because they've been dropped off at school. So they're just there for the day, or for like the year of course, but just for the, like, they're in a bad mood, because they don't really want to learn. Yeah, they'll go on their Chromebooks and do stuff. But that's probably like 3% of people. The other people usually like Google stuff they don't understand. Or just write it down on their Chromebooks, I wouldn’t say it was a distraction for most people.

Student 7

Yeah, I feel like one of the things that we find frustrating as students is when you're taking notes, as the teacher is talking well as a video, and you're taking notes. And whether it's on your Chromebook, or in a book, when the teacher says, stop that, stop taking notes, and just listen, it can be really hard to retain the information. So if we say that your Chromebook is down, while the teachers talking, because of that reasonable proportion of people that would get distracted, is taking away that opportunity from other people. So for the most part, people don't get distracted. But as with anything, there are going to be those few people who take it as an opportunity to do something else.

Student 6

And there are some people who like it to occupy time, like say they've already done something at home that they were supposed to do in class, they'll probably sit on their Chromebook or say like, the teacher gives you 10 minutes to do an exercise when you finish after three minutes, that you could like, some kids might check their emails or something which you shouldn't really do in the lesson. But I wouldn't say it's distracting if you've already done it.

Eddie Falshaw

So, you two, speaking for yourselves, would say that you don't think it's a distraction?

Student 7

No, speaking for if we think about it from a teacher's perspective, I can definitely see how they would think it's distracting. Because as they're talking, all they can see is people typing, or people clicking on things, and they don't know what you're doing. So it looks like a distraction, even if they are actually working. So it's really difficult to tell.

Eddie Falshaw

So as you hinted that the best thing then maybe is to ask for people to close the Chromebook

Student 6

A lot of teachers do that. Yeah, like imagine she'll give you like five minutes to do a piece of work. And then she'll say, okay, close your laptops. And then when she asks you to answer one of the questions she told you to write down, she said, okay, you can pick up your Chromebook, just for that specific person.

Student 7

And that's, I think that's a good thing to do, because then everyone else is really focused because they know they have this amount of time, and they need to get it done. Well, or they're gonna have to do it for prep. So by giving them a limited amount of time, and then getting everyone to close it, everyone focuses and doesn't get distracted because they know if they are distracted during the lesson, it takes away their time at home.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, and so is learning more effective or better, when a Chromebook is used?

Student 6

I would say like because you can get all the textbooks online, like everything because in Spanish and French, we have the textbooks online. So I would say it's more effective because it's fair for the planet with

Student 7

And that's a Quaker value too

Eddie Falshaw

You mean not using the paper.

Student 6

Yeah because like, especially that paper that they use in textbook, it's really distracting… destructive to the world.

Eddie Falshaw

So actually going paperless would be better, and the Chromebooks can help us do that.

Student 7

I wouldn't take away completely from the books and exercise books, because some people will find it easier to write on paper. And sometimes, if you draw a diagram or something, and you can’t do it on the computer. So having a balance between both makes it as effective as it is.

Student 6

At my last school, we used iPads and they would give you all the textbooks on the sidebar. And then it would be like connected to an internet source where the teachers could tell what apps you were on. So if, because they could go and check. It's called Apple classroom because it was Apple iPod, and they could just check what apps you were on.

Eddie Falshaw

So that's a bit like the SENSO the school uses, they can look at your what you're doing on your screen. Okay. If you're finding things difficult, so you've been set a tough task on the Chromebook, does the device help you to persevere when things are difficult,

Student 7

It can be very frustrating, especially with internet. If you're struggling with something in the first place, and then the internet goes down or something It's really frustrating. So then you just resort to using our books right?

Eddie Falshaw

So reliability is important. But does having access to the worldwide web at your fingertips if you’re struggling with a problem or trying to find the right way to do what you've been asked to do. Is that more helpful say than, if you're writing in a book and struggling with it

Student 6

Well, if you're writing in the Book in struggling with that, you have to ask the teacher and like if it's such a simple question. People don't really want to ask it well I’ve done that a few times. I don't really don't ask like how to spell Tuesday. I know how to spell Tuesday. But it's something like that. I don't want to ask that. So I could Google it in like 10 seconds and be back to my work. So I'd say it's very good to have a Chromebook

Eddie Falshaw 1

So it just helps you along the way, it's like having another teacher maybe

Student 7

Yeah It's a bit like having a Classroom system, because if everyone is confused about the same thing, then someone is going to ask and it will be. It will be the teacher will help you with it. But if it's something that's specifically you, and the teacher. Maybe you're skipping ahead or it's an extension task then, being able to do the independent learning and then how to do to go over it is a much better way of making it stick in your head.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, so should we use the Chromebooks more

Student 7

I don't think so.

Eddie Falshaw

What, is it about right now? Too much?

Student 6

I think there's a way we could use them more because sorry, but at my last school we used to send a photo of our work on Google classroom. So like say you did artwork and you didn't want to bring it into school. They could still see it all very well then it would like be better because your artwork wouldn’t get damaged.

Eddie Falshaw

So, it's not about necessarily using them more, but maybe there are different ways that you could use them?

Student 7

And in some lessons, we just don't use Chromebooks. Like maths and things, like we have paper textbooks and it's difficult to put all the symbols into google doc or something. So I think we don't we don't need to use them more in those kind of lessons, but it is to use them more effectively rather than more.

Student 6

I feel like we could use them like 10 times more in English because we never we never actually use them in English but we have to write these like massive paragraphs, like me and #### we write these massive para… paragraphs in English about analysing and it would just be so much more easier and quicker if we did that on the doc

Eddie Falshaw

So you're doing those in an exercise book, pen and paper.

Student 6

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. So which subjects would you say uses them all the time and you know make great use of them.

Student 7

History, we don’t have any books and we get provided resources like websites and things that have the right information. So that's another way of really easily checking with that point instead of asking the teacher the things over and over again.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. Can you remember a time when you were in a lesson and you have that sort of feeling well you didn't want it to end because you were really enjoying what you're doing in the lesson and the teacher said that's the end of the lesson, and it was like, oh no, I wish we could carry on. Can you remember maybe one of those and what you would Doing and

Student 6

Then there was one time, it was our first drama session and it was really funny because it was about this drama we had to do. One of us had to pretend to be like dead and it just made me laugh. Yeah. So because it's not it's not not that, it's not funny to be dead. You get what I mean it was like, I don't want that.

Student 7

When we're in art, the things we do, we always end up having to carry on in the next lesson and review those with different fun things. So, lessons we don't want to end thinking about it we don't really use Chromebooks, but then they’re mostly creative subjects the ones we both tend to enjoy more aren’t ones that could really use Chromebooks

Eddie Falshaw

The practical ones. Yeah, maybe is that the same in science?

Student 6 15:32

Oh my gosh, in science, in science. I like physics. And so does #### and we sit next to each other and there's this note taking we have to do, and me and #### we do extra of it because we have like full on essays for our note taking when your meant to do like one exercise, like that would be way more quicker. Because I don’t think we use our Chromebooks in physics it would be way more quicker if we had the Chromebooks to take it.

Eddie Falshaw 16:03

So you are both of the view that you can type much quicker than handwriting

Student 7 16:09

I can touch type. But writing I always have to think about spelling whereas it’s much easier to type whereas with writing you have to worry about smudging things and stuff and having to cross things out when you make up random works

Student 6

Say like, because, if we’re always using the Chromebook all the time, it's going to give you like a headache and it's going to make you feel dizzy. So I feel like we shouldn't do more on the Chromebook. But we shouldn't do less. We just need to find smarter ways to use them because there are Lessons where it just doesn't need to be in the book. Like…Music it doesn't need to be that but yeah unless you like writing the notes, but you can do music on a Chromebook.

Student 7

Yeah. In lessons like chemistry, we don't write that much in our books but we still have them where all of our notes are easy to access so if we're in the lab or something, we can find out methods for things and different things like that. So I think that's a lesson where it's important that we have Chromebooks and books because you can't take your computer into the lab in case you blow it up or something

Eddie Falshaw

okay guys that's really, really helpful. Thank you. Are there any other comments that you'd like to make around any aspect of Learning and use of Chromebooks Leighton Park?

Student 6

Geography definitely doesn't need Chromebooks because…because he makes all our questions sheets on a Chromebook or laptop anyway and then he prints them out and then tells us to stick it in our books, but we could have just done it on our Chromebooks and then submit it through the classroom, Yeah,

Student 7

And if we wanted it in our exercise book for revision and things. We can always use our own printer codes or print it out at home and things like that.

Eddie Falshaw

And that goes back to saving paper as you said, earlier on. Great, that's really helpful. Thank you very much for your time. Thank you.

Both

Thank you