Focus Group 4

30/09/21: 1300

Discussion with three students on student engagement with Chromebooks devices.

Eddie Falshaw

So girls, thank you very much for agreeing to talk to me this afternoon, just to remind you, we are recording this meeting, and it will be transcribed and later used in the study, but all quotes will be anonymized, are you're happy with that.

All

Yeah,

Eddie Falshaw

Great. So, first question I'm interested to know a little bit more about is if somebody was to describe you as being engaged in a lesson, could be any lesson, with a Chromebook, no Chromebook. What does that mean if you're engaged in what you're doing.

Student 8

You're like listening to what the teacher is saying you're contributing to the lesson. Yeah,

Student 9

I think by putting your hand up, answering questions is like a big thing. Because if no one's doing that you're not really like reacting with the teacher and like engaging with them, and they don't know if like you understand what they're teaching or not.

Student 10

Yeah it's like it's like, it's like they ask you, like, take notes or something and then you're taking notes and that's engaging with like, what you're supposed to be doing.

Eddie Falshaw

And if you're engaged, how does it make you feel

Student 9

Like, I mean like when I am actually listening and like engaging and like putting my hand up and answering questions I feel like I'm learning stuff better than just like writing it down and not talking like not really wanting to be involved, I feel much better when I am more motivated to be like contribute.

Student 8

I think it's like you feel proud when you like engage with the lesson and stuff because, you know, when you put your hand up, to answer the question and you get it right, because you've been engaging with the lessons so understand, you feel really good about yourself and you know that you answered the question

Student 9

Its like a reward.

Student 8

Yeah

Eddie Falshaw

Okay. All right, so how about this then, the survey suggests that students are more engaged, if they are using a Chromebook, in the lesson. What do you think,

Student 9

I don't necessarily think that you'd have to be engaged to use that or you can only be engaged when using your Chromebook. I feel like it's good to use both, like Chromebook and like writing, because you know writing helps your memory. So, just see that, yeah. But I feel like Chromebooks really do help in some way, basically,

Student 9

I think, like, engaging with the lesson, I think, when I'm on my Chromebook, I'm more I just get distracted by things on my Chromebook, and but I do think, when we play like Kahoot on like a certain topic in class, I think that's really good, because the whole class engages with it, we're all doing it together. It's like a fun way of learning what it is, but when it's just like breaking down like things on a document I don't feel like I'm really like involving myself in the class, although I do like using Chromebooks, but like I just personally I think it's better to write things down.

Student 8

I feel like they help the Chromebook itself because if you're doing like a presentation. As a group, you know, it is better because you are then engaging with the lesson, you know, by helping with different pieces.

Student 10

I think it depends on the person and because some people work better if they've got something in front of them and something to focus on while listening, I think the other thing needs like, like others prefer to just like have it all in front of them and like have no Chromebook and just be like writing down notes taking it all in.

Student 9

I feel like, well I, this might just be me right for like when I have my Chromebook but I get distracted like on my Chromebook, like, oh my check my emails, and like, when the teachers like saying something to me, I have my Chromebook out like I just don't feel like I'm taking it all in, like you said, so I obviously I still think it's good to like use documents and Google Slides for like presentations I think that's really good. But when they're actually giving us information, and we should like be contributing. I think we should like have them shut up, like not use them for that.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay now, you mentioned the word distraction so I'll move on to that. This was almost the survey, almost had teachers and students the opposite answers. This was about, is the Chromebook, a distraction, teachers, almost all of them said yes strongly agreed yes that is a distraction. The students answer suggest, no it isn't actually a distraction. What do you think?

Student 8

I feel like it depends on the person if you're very easily distracted by stuff, it could be a distraction. But if you're not easily distracted by stuff that couldn't. But I feel like, you know there are, there isn't really too much on the Chromebook they get distracted by that is my honest opinion.

Student 10

I don't think it is that much of a distraction like, because when it's like in front of you and like you're supposed to be doing something they don't really have time to be going on say different things, different tabs, like you're taking down notes like filling out a question sheet, but then if I think if a teacher is talking the Chromebooks open and you're fiddling around I think then it can be a distraction.

Student 9

I think if we're not actually doing something on it, then it's not obviously we'd be doing hopefully doing the work. But then, if she's like saying something, then I think we should like close it and not use it because I probably like fiddle with the keypads or something. I get distracted so like, it's better to in certain parts of the lesson, to use it

Eddie Falshaw

So do teachers tell you to close your lids?

Student 9

If someone's like, or if they can see that people are like being distracted them, they will or they just say like, oh I'm gonna tell you some information. Now, everyone knows that we don't need to use it right now.

Eddie Falshaw

Do you find you've got loads of tabs open. At the top, when you're working on something.

Student 10 6:24

I've got a couple but only like ones like I've got my timetable and my emails in another example of what I'm doing and my Google Classroom, that's, that's,

Student 9

that's what I've got, I try not to have too much, too many tabs, I just have my emails,

Student 8

I have to say but I don't have my phone.

Eddie Falshaw 6:43

So you would still maintain them that for certain individuals that can be a distraction. But, you two. You're thinking No, not very much and you're sort of saying, Yeah, I do find it, sometimes a distraction. Okay, well, there's also suggestion from the survey that if Chromebooks are being used. Students are less likely to ask the teacher for help.

Student 9

I think that is maybe the case because obviously there's Google, like everything so you can Google the answer, like in Spanish, you've got Google Translate or languages English translate that. And then obviously feel like in Biology or something you just Google the answer. Obviously if it's a cover lesson, how are you going to ask if the cover is not like a teacher from that department, so I feel like it is good, but not good for the, like if you don't ask them

Student 10 7:43

I think it's kind of good just because like it shows you can do it individually isn't like you don't have to consider putting your hand up or asking for help and talking to other people, if you've got like that other thing of like connect then also good spelling because then you've got the spellcheck that you're gonna have like, you're less likely to make mistakes with that.

Student 9

Yeah, I see, like, what Anna said like, I think, we wouldn't really ask as many questions in because we obviously have Google and everything so we wouldn't like have, like, need to ask the teacher but also like if we only used our Chromebooks, and that was the case that we could just search it up, then why would we even need the teacher there. So,

Eddie Falshaw

Great question.

Student 8

I've got one. If you, if you like, in a lesson and everybody knew what they were doing, it was pretty silent in the room and you felt uncomfortable asking, you know what the answer is, it's really if you just can like Google the answer, and find it independently, but

Student 9

I was gonna say, I've actually done this before, I'll be honest. Like when we've done work I didn't know I would just like search up the answer but like I wouldn't like, take it in, so I wouldn't. So when it came to a test, I wouldn't, actually so then I do really bad on the test because I wouldn't actually have learnt what the answer is and what your supposed to know,

Student 8

Thats a really good point

Eddie Falshaw

You talking about copying and pasting things that sort of, I mean, you know, it happens

Student 9

Yeah, cuz I just, I just prefer it when, like, the teacher is explaining it. I just, for me personally is much better and I actually take it in, and I don't just like, copy

Student 10

I think it depends on the teacher, to be honest like if the teacher who you know kind of can actually answer your question, who can help you then you would ask them, but if it's a teacher that you don't think would be able to answer that exact question and then sometimes it is better just to search up.

Eddie Falshaw

So yeah, on the one hand there might be that sort of embarrassment factor am I asking a silly question and I don't really want to in front of everybody, but then you've got the good point as well that actually encourages you to be independent and find things out for yourself. If you're looking at reliable things. Okay, that's very interesting. So, is learning more effective with a Chromebook?

Student 9

What do you mean, like,…

Student 8

Like you like understand it,

Eddie Falshaw

Yeah. Do you think that your learning is better when you're using that device than maybe when you're learning when you're not using the device.

Student 8

For me personally I think it does, because I have dyslexia, so I have the like word processing arrangement. So personally it really helps. So I think it's better and more effective

Student 10

I think I prefer it because like then it's easier to do, like, if you're also doing table or if you're asked to like put in a diagram, it's much easier than like having to get everything like a ruler, pencil, then if you make a mistake you have to rub it out. If

Student 9

I'm gonna have to disagree with you guys, I don't, I, well it depends, like depends if we obviously doing a presentation or something where it's like you like specifically need your Chromebook but then obviously it's better, but for me I just feel like I take things in like much easily like writing it down because I don't know it's like it's like muscle memory that when you write things down, it just like goes into your head like easier and you remember it easier. So I just, but like, obviously it takes longer. So if I wanted to get a lot done in the lesson, it might be better to do use, use your Chromebook, but I just feel like for me, it's much easier to remember things, when you write it down.

Student 10

I think for revision, then Chromebook could be better because then you've got like important documents in like folders and it becomes easier to store and having one piece of paper and then in different books having to find different things,

Student 8

If we didn't have Chromebooks, I think I would have like 100 detentions because I just forget homework,

Student 10

oh yeah that's the big thing I forget to do my homework if don't have that Google Classroom to-do-list.

Student 9

Google Classroom is really good and the calendar, and like, that's really good

Student 8

I wouldn't complete any of my homework if I did't have that.

Eddie Falshaw

So it's great for organisation to help keep on top of the work, which is a good thing in itself. And could you remember a time that any lesson, the last lesson where you had that feeling. Oh goodness, is that the end of the lesson already, or oh I wish it wasn't the end of the lesson, can it carry on. Can you explain what you're doing or what the lesson was.

Student 9

Oh, basically, it was dance, because I really love dance and Beth was just teaching us, our routine. And, and I was like wow I would say like, she's like, we have 10 minutes left and so was it already the end of the lesson, time flies when you're having fun. I just, it was, I just really enjoyed it and like learning the words and she was like telling us, like, what each movement means, like, different elements of dance and, yeah,

Student 8

That did happen, I was in the lesson! My last time that happened was in Spanish, which was Monday I think we were like writing down using our, well, we were writing it down in our text in our like exercise books, but we had our like online, like book on our Chromebooks and we were just like writing down about our families or whatever we were writing at the time, and I thought was really, really fun and really helpful when I had the book there on the Chromebook to like help me and then

Student 10

The last one happened for me was when I was in music, and we were doing a practical thing we were like, trying to compose a different piece of music by ourselves. So she actually gave us a website that, that we could use and it gave us like everything we need like time signatures key signatures all that music stuff, and it was very good because it had all like the spacings we needed.

Eddie Falshaw 14:22

Okay. That's very interesting. Thank you, and sort of a final or sort of final question. Do you think that as a school we should be using the Chromebooks more?

Student 10

I think we use them quite a fair bit I don't think we need to use them more but I think the way we're using them now is good.

Student 8

Yeah, I wouldn't change what we do, I wouldn't add any more time to it.

Student 9

Yeah, I think keeping it equal like like writing, and like using the computer I think.

Eddie Falshaw

And do most subjects do that sort of balance a bit of, you know they're not always on the Chromebook or not using the Chromebook

Student 9

Yeah, I mean, it depends for the teachers try I think, like, do like half the lesson or most of the lesson, like from the board and you write it down and then near the end, like in Spanish. We do like something on the Chromebook, and like, do like an activity.

Student 10

It does depend on the lesson because like in some lessons I have like all of it on the Chromebook and online textbooks online workbooks all of that, then in other lessons we have like no Chromebooks, it's like all textbooks or exercise books I kind of like a mix of both.

Eddie Falshaw

So which subjects you not using and the Chromebook,

Student 9

Dance,

Student 8

No we do use them in Dance, how else do we get all the words.

Student 9

Oh yeah, like for prep for Prep, but like in the lesson we just basically dance.

Eddie Falshaw

Okay, any other lessons

Student 8

Drama

Eddie Falshaw

What about maths,

Student 8

physics very not currently, I use my Chromebook, in physics for five minutes for the first time I say this term, other than like for prep. And like, revising, so your physics is very

Eddie Falshaw 1

That’s in an exercise book is it

Student 8

yeah there aren't any like textbook so its like exercise books.

Student 9

Oh, I was just going to say for months, we, she, she wrote we have, we mostly write it down in our books. We also have a textbook, sometimes we'll go on our Chromebooks, but she mostly has it on the board

Student 10

I don’t think we've ever gone on our Chromebooks in Maths

Student 9

Except for the cover that's it.

Student 10

Oh yeah, apart from the cover lesson but usually we're in actual lesson when we do it

Student 8

Which I prefer, because its all on the board

Eddie Falshaw

Yeah. And then, even though it might be just to access the work in the classroom, rather than to do the work on. Okay. And just finally, any comments that you'd like to make or anything that you want to see with Chromebooks or not have or

Student 8

Don't get rid of them.

Student 9

apparently, they’re trying to get rid of them. Not you...

Student 8

I heard that the school is ging to get rid of them. So, that's my advice, don't

Eddie Falshaw

I can say on tape or version of tape we are not getting rid of the Chromebooks, the only way we would get rid of them is to replace them with another device.

Student 8

Oh my god, maybe an iPad

Eddie Falshaw

Probably be more Microsoft, if we were going down that route, the Surface Pros, apparently are the ones, but we're not going to just remove the devices. Yeah, we'd give you another device because

Student 9

Obviously it's like 2021 so we kind of need

Student 8

To be honest with you one of the reasons I came to the school was because they gave you a Chromebook and I thought that would really, really help.

Eddie Falshaw

Yeah, I think if we took them all away and said right that's it finished with the experiment, it would be a huge mistake.

Student 10

I think people would leave though

Eddie Falshaw 18:09

We're not taking them away.

Student 9 18:11

I do. Well, I did some people might leave I wouldn't leave but it would just like be, because that's like one of the things that attract people to the school is. Not many schools like actually like do that. So, you have to pay for it or like use your own or if you don't have one, then you

Eddie Falshaw 18:30

I know that they're here to stay, it's, this is all about how we use them and getting better at using them and maybe using them smarter. Girls thanks very much for your time really appreciate. Thank you.