

Student focus group 1

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SPEAKERS

Ffion Neal, Craig Morley, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 1, Participant 4, Participant 5

F Ffion Neal 00:00
Participant 1 , do you want to answer that first?

P Participant 1 00:13
But yeah, well, it's kind of it's kind of a weird one 'cause... I'm not, I wouldn't say that I have negative experience. But it's like when there's like a lot of students, we used to back in, when the Covid started right in March, two years ago. There we go. We had these, like, massive meetings for like, with the unit introductions, and it was not always, I mean, it's like some people like, I feel like they forgot to turn on the camera. But it wasn't like negative experience. Well, it's just a bit too, real experienced is, yeah, but also I have a positive experience. When I'm on one on one sessions, for example, I keeps it more like a more personal, like, feel to the meeting, like when you are like in the office it's still not the same, but it's at least halfway through. Because I feel like we had for example, if I was with my supervisor and we had the webcams off, we had quite an impersonal meeting, which is not really point of the meeting. So that's just like my five cents from the to the day.

F Ffion Neal 01:18
Yeah, that's brilliant, thank you. Participant 2, were you next?

P Participant 2 01:26
It's a bit random but for us, we kept getting put in like breakout rooms. So having like webcams on, we would all just like discuss each other's bedroom, and it would help like, the conversation to flow because I feel like everyone hated icebreakers. So just like seeing everyone in their own environment, it's sort of like we all just felt a bit more comfortable to like, just make like funny comments and get on.

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Ffion Neal 01:52

Yeah, that's brilliant. Thank you, Participant 3, have your got hand up as well.

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Participant 3 01:56

Yeh, so I'm a first year. And we we do a lot of mix. So sometimes we're on campus. Sometimes we're online. We find a lot when we're online, if we go in like breakout rooms, no one's got webcams on. And they just kind of hide in the shadows on mute. So you're trying to engage conversation with them to discuss like the topics we've just been asked to discuss. And you're find. Like, it's like, you're just talking to a blank screen, because sometimes they just won't reply. Whereas I think if they've got the webcams on, they're more likely to say something because you can see they are actually sat there. They're not just like, on mute and away from the computer screen. And it's always like the same people who pop up as well. And some people who stay quiet, which is interesting, now and then you'll get them say, Pop a thing in the chat saying the microphone doesn't work. But honestly, I'm not convinced at that. So I think it's just them being shy rather than actually wanting to speak up. But it doesn't make it challenging. At the start of our lectures, what, again, being in first year, and it was a bit daunting, especially me because I'm a mature student so i've come back after like a 14 year break from uni. But it's more relaxed, where then a classroom setting so I don't find it awkward, with webcam being gone. But it's nice to see the tutors in their own setting at home as well, it feels a bit more personal and I can't think what the word is. But whereas you've normally got like Lecturers stood at the front of the room. And it's like our focus in there, it's it's a bit more relaxed, but it feels a bit more personal at the same time, which I think helps

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Ffion Neal 03:40

Do you think you prefer having webcams on when you're in calls then?

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Participant 3 03:43

definitely, definitely, because you can see as I sometimes if you've got the kids, they'll turn it off because the recorded lectures. So they don't want the kids on there. But sometimes you think people just switch off. But interestingly, we do have a Facebook chat as well that the people who don't speak sometimes pop up in there instead. So then we're looking at our phones getting distracted, and it's not going to look good when we are on webcam to our tutors either. So

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Ffion Neal 04:08

yeah, that's brilliant. Thank you! Participant 4. Do you want to say something as well?

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Participant 4 04:15

Yeah, so I think my experience with webcams has largely been good. I like to sort of participate if I've got something good to say. So there was this particular day that I had the cameras on, and there were some kids in the house. I've told them don't come to this room i'm in a zoom session where you know, kids will be kids so they just turned up. So with the cameras on, you're not just gonna look at them, like, leave, you know, but if I had cameras turned off, I could just give them that stern look. And I think it was just also distracting for the people in the Zoom meeting seeing kids roaming around in the background. So that's the I was really embarrassed that day. I think it shouldn't have been But yeah, so it's just about people coming in to because you know, with Zoom meetings, it's, you're in your personal space, right. And a lot of things happen in the background. So when the cameras on Yeah, they get captured too, if if you don't turn it off, so

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Ffion Neal 05:18

that's great. Thank you. Participant 5. Do you want to go next?

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Participant 5 05:23

Yeah, I think it really fluctuates between positive and negative. Because I think at the start of the year for me, people were more willing to be on webcams, because it was like an online year, for example, last year. And then funny experiences would happen where like a cat would walk in front of someone's camera, someone's mom came in with like, a plate of fruit. And then you'd see them like, quickly, close the webcam. But but on the other hand, when when everyone had their webcams off, I know that that takes away from the engagement of the class. But I think it kind of also depends on what you're talking about. Because in politics, for example, it gave a bit of freedom, because you can associate someone with their face. So people would talk about people were more willing to talk about things that might have been a bit more controversial, or a bit more debatable, through chat, or through just audio. So sometimes it did speak for the engagement of the class, but sometimes as well, I didn't because everyone was just, if no one spoke up then was less likely that people would say, yes, that was it fluctuate over time. Really.

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Ffion Neal 06:31

That's a great point. And thank you for sharing that. I never thought about having webcams off as a privacy thing. That's really interesting. Has anyone else got anything they want to say about that, or should we move on to the next question? Yeah. Okay. So the next question we've got is, what do you think the benefits of webcams are? And why do you think lecturers may want you to use webcams when you're in sessions with them? Jacob?

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Participant 1 07:01

Yeah, I can go first. So as I think I've said it before, I'll say it again, it's so I feel like it's more personal. And I like having the webcam on, for example, I when there's like a massive meeting, like for example, the intro to the year, like we used to have, and there's like 300 people on the Zoom. Like, I would rather turn my camera off. And it's also not really necessary. Like it's like,

it's it's a it's a session that's like really non interactive. It's just like a giving us like, like information about like, how to use gonna go and stuff like that. And if somebody has a question they'll just pop it into the chat, then then usually the person who's facilitating the meeting has somebody who like, like, like, he like hints that there is a question as well. And then they answer the question, but when there is like, again, the breakout room that I can information is, is like a good but, like to have a webcam on there, it would be good thing, because like it feels more like we are in like a one room together. And we are actually solving the problems. And again, as Participant 3 as well pointed out, I also feel like when I'm in the breakout room, and like I'm usually the one engaging the group, because I always found out that I'm the one engaging. So sometimes people just want to talk back, and that's like, yeah, it's just feels a bit weird. Because you're supposed to work on something, but it's like, yeah, this is the one of the things I didn't really like about the remote, like teaching that putting people in the breakouts that don't know each other and like the the you never know what's going to happen. So that was like, that'd be like the positive and negative at the same time. Yeah, but I honestly feel like having to work hands on and in the proper meetings and problem like, like a zoom qualities is definitely good. And like it makes it a more personal space for everybody. And but on the other hand, some again, like pointed out there might be like certain for example, situations where you don't want to have a webcam on and then you're more than willing to come out with like, your own faults on the table. Because that I think that some are some pretty well that when people can associate your opinion that might be like this, this like, nothing bad. But like if there is like something you're trying to explain, or like discuss some some topic and politics, especially I think this applies a lot. That is, I don't know, it's for me, it makes sense that sometimes it could be better idea to not have to look down because people might judge you and there will there is like always people will do that. So it's Yeah, yeah. That's right. It might make sense. glassfibre Oh,

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Ffion Neal 10:00

yeah, that makes sense. Thank you, Participant 3?

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Participant 3 10:04

Yeah, I think Jacobs just covered some of the stuff I was going to say. And I think I've already said a lot of it already as well. But yeah, I think it helps you with engagement. I think, in particular for lectures as well, if you're teaching a class of like six to seven students, it's hard to know if people are switched on and engaging. I think with me with my course, I'm on split week. So I've got two days at uni, and then two to three days on the placement. So it's just nice to see everyone's faces. Sometimes we're not in uni at all. It's all online. Sometimes it's recorded sessions. So it just nice to see faces. Otherwise, it gets a bit daunting, then when you come back on campus. We've just had two weeks off for Easter, and I've just come on back on campus for one day. And I'm like, it's like starting all over again, sometimes. Even like with with lectures, it's nice to see everyone's faces. And yeah, we do get like, I know, my dog reacts to one of our tutors dogs. So whenever she, my dog hears her voice, you see my dog pop up, and I'm like, you know, trying to shut him out of the way. But it just shows that we're all human. I think with the pandemic as well, in particular, there's been that little bit, not so much relaxed, but that focus on we are human these things happen. It's all part of being human. Obviously, technology's not, I guess it is a human thing. But it just shows how much we adapt as well. And I think it's great that with webcams on.

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Ffion Neal 11:30

Yeah. Would you say that webcams help you feel more involved in your course, like in your cohort?

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Participant 3 11:36

Definitely. And with me in particular, I don't, I don't, hopefully, you can't hear my budgies in the background, because the downstairs shut the door. Yeah, I get distracted quite easily. So me, I've got my cup of tea, I've got a cereal bar, I know, I've got a stash of chocolate, which is in a cupboard. So I'm being really good. But if I've got my webcam turned off, and then like the dog starts barking I'll bob my head up, and then I move around, and then I completely forget what's going on. And then I have to watch the recordings afterwards, which I'm very thankful recordings is a thing. Yeah, with webcams on, it's making sure that I am here, and I am focused, which is good as well. And then I can scribble my notes down as well for any questions.

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Ffion Neal 12:19

That's great. Thank you. So anyone else got anything they want to add to that? Or do we want to move on? No, okay, so the next question we've got are, were the benefits of webcams explained or discuss with you at the start of term during like the initial induction period of online learning. So was it was it addressed why you should have your outcome on? Participant 3 again?

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Participant 3 12:49

The tutors have said to us when we first started that they'd prefer webcams on. So it helps us get familiar with each other and get to know one another, especially because with us, there's like 90 in our cohort when we started, even now still faces pop up and I think, who's that I'm not seeing them here before, but I recognize the name. So it's nice to try and put names to faces. But what we have found is though, that internet connections, the bandwidth, causes lots of problems. I think it's the only downside to that. But it wasn't really explained too much the benefits of why it was just more of a tutor preference that we had webcams on and we just did as we were told.

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Ffion Neal 13:31

Yeah, that's great. Participant 5, do you want to add anything to that?

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Participant 5 13:34

Um, I think it depends, again, like on the course on people's individual experiences, I not none of my lectures really spoke about webcams, right, right at the start of the Europe COVID Or

right when we transitioned to online, I think midway through the semester, and even more so like the second semester where they really encouraged people to be more engaged, because they saw a lack of engagement because of closed webcams. But at the same time, it wasn't really for like the wider lectures. For like 300 people, it was more so for like the smaller groups, and in breakout rooms, and all the strangers up. People might have their webcams on during the main room, and then just close your webcams in the breakout. Because it's even more intimidating when it's like two or three people instead of 10/20, perhaps. And then what my tutorials and ours would do as well as that, they'd make a point of like having their webcam on. If they say things like if people could join me or if we could turn their webcam on with me. So it's more encouraging that way and not to make them alone. That's talking to like a black screen. Yeah.

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Ffion Neal 14:46

Did you feel any pressure by being asked those kinds of questions but if other people were asking if you could turn it on and stuff like that, did you feel the pressure to turn yours on then or..

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Participant 5 14:57

Occasionally Yeah, because If everyone has a webcam come on, and I don't. It's a bit more pressure like today, for example, like I want to put my webcam on. But there's just so many different distractions distractions in the room. Plus, it helps me to just not have it on. I could do several things at once. But I can I do understand the sentiment, it's just, I think should be more awareness, or I think that in the induction period, they should also mention that if it's for someone to come for, or if it's for privacy reasons that they can, it's more like, oh, it's bad. If you don't, even though it could be either or.

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Ffion Neal 15:34

Yeah, no, I completely understand what you're saying. Yeah. Participant 2, you want to answer next?

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Participant 2 15:42

Yeah, and we were given like a pretty intense list of like, you should have your cameras on. It should be at like, base level, there can't be any minors in the back, there can't be any other people, you shouldn't be sat on your bed. Because or like in pajamas, or anything that's not professional looking. But personally, that list, like completely put me off because in the pandemic, I was caring for my grandma. So it would have been me sat here, and then like my grandma on the back because i had to keep an eye on her, and then all her stuff out, which for me, it's not embarrassing, but I would have felt embarrassed letting everyone in my course know about my personal circumstances. Like I don't think anyone's entitled to that. So for me, the list just put me off because it's like, you're not taking into account the fact I have my own personal life. And then also the bit about like, no minors, like a lot of people on my course are

parents, so they can't control if that kid comes in the screen or not. And I remember we discussed it, and we were like, yeah, that list is pretty intense. Like we might as well just not even bother putting our cameras on. Because the expectation is so high.

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Ffion Neal 16:49

Yeah, did you have a lot of people not not putting cameras on then after the list?

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Participant 2 16:54

A lot of people I felt like a lot of them mature students had their cameras on at all times. And we're very set up and like presentable. And then like the younger people on the course we think like we talk amongst ourselves like, we do not look that ready. Like we'll just have our cameras off. There's no point even trying to like compete with that. So yeah, I think there's like an age gap between us that showed whether you'd have your camera off or on.

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Ffion Neal 17:20

That's really interesting. Thank you. Um, has anyone else got anything they'd like to add? Okay, so now I'm going to ask, why may you not want to use a webcam or prefer to have it turned off? I know, we've already covered some of that. But has anyone got any reasons that haven't already been mentioned about why you may not want to have your camera on during a class? Participant 4?

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Participant 4 17:48

Yeah. So if it's this session, I'm not really well prepared for I think I'll just prefer to hide behind. Yeah, Thumb nail, I don't want to be seen. I want to just disappear. But then I still want to get the credit for being there. So yeah, if I didn't want to participate? No, I wouldn't want to talk to my congressman.

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Ffion Neal 18:08

Great, thank you, Participant 3?

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Participant 3 18:10

Alright me again. Yeah, so I'm always in my bedroom. I always make sure my beds made. But my bookcase next to me is full of all kinds of uni bits. I just shoved on there. So I try and strategically angle it so the light glares because I don't know how to put these fancy backgrounds on. But I know I did have a lot of distractions when I've got exams and things I've got all sort of stuck to the walls behind the bed. And I know that could be distracting for some. Just because my screen froze to the previous question you asked. I definitely saw a difference between those who are willing to be on webcams you see when some of the younger ones and

they come in looking fresh as a daisy even though you know they've been out on the night before. And then there's like me, so I think, god I woke up like 20 minutes during the night with a toddler and like I've been in a 3 day drinking binge or something. It's but I think as an adult and having kids, it's like, I'm here. That's all that matters. And I'm dressed. But yeah, no, I think yeah, I think background distractions, if anything, I mean, I'd love to have an office where I could just you know, have a fancy background, but I can't afford an office. I don't really like being like when the bedroom but if I try and cover up what I can.

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Ffion Neal 19:32

That's great. Thank you for sharing that. Participant 5, do you want to add to that?

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Participant 5 19:37

Um, yeah, basically, some of the obvious reasons about just illness or sickness or you're just not feeling great, but you still want to attend and you might want to send something in the chat but you just don't want to look at the camera. There's also just if you have like a very loud, loud household or like a very busy household, like you just don't want to portray that on camera. Like say for example you're in the library at the same time, you don't want to show people like walking in the background and things like that. So all these different reasons about why we wouldn't want, you know, for comfort or anything like that.

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Ffion Neal 20:13

That's great. Thank you. Participant 2, do you want to add to that?

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Participant 2 20:18

Yeah, I was just thinking about, like, the time that I could have had my camera on. I still didn't like doing it, because it's quite vain. But I always thought that like when on camera, I need to have like a full face and makeup. And I just need to look really presentable. So it was like, to the point that I wouldn't be paying attention to what's going on in like the lecture, anything. I was just like, so conscious of how I look. And I was like, like, are people looking at me? Do I look good. But then when I turned my camera off, it was more comfortable for me, because I could have like my notes out. I wasn't bothered about like, how I'm looking on the screen, because no one could see me. So for me, it was like, my own comfort. I just prefer like people not being able to see me.

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Ffion Neal 21:00

Do you think there's a pressure around looking presentable on camera, especially for like, students?

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Participant 2 21:05

Participant 2 21:05

Definitely, I think, because when you speak it, like highlights you and you know, everyone's looking at you. So it's that like internal pressure you put on yourself like, oh, do I look good enough right now? Yeah.

F Ffion Neal 21:18

Yeah. Brilliant. Thank you. Participant 4?

P Participant 4 21:21

Yeah, so just going back talk about backgrounds, there are some days where I've got to be somewhere. So maybe I'm joining a meeting on the go, right. So I don't want people to see my background see that I'm on the street. Right? That doesn't even make sense. Why are you joining the Zoom meeting? So it took a while for me to discover the background theme. But then if a message cuts off part of your face, or my hair and what if I just said about you being conscious, like what do I look like? Yeah, so if you're in a place like the library like someone said, well actually if you're on the go you're outside there say Piccadilly that would be crazy, right? But it's possible you never know maybe the bus is late. And you have to join the Zoom meeting you just don't want people to see you because you just be like you're bad at time management and stuff like that and don't want to put that out there. So backgrounds and I've found the background thing on Zoom and Microsoft Office useful you just put a picture in your background and it makes you people know you're not there right but at least they don't know where you are.

F Ffion Neal 22:30

that's great. Thank you. Um, has anyone got else got anything else to add to that? No? Okay, so what might potentially make you feel more comfortable using a webcam? And are you comfortable with being asked to put a webcam on?

P Participant 4 22:56

Yes, I see my hands still up so I'll have a go at this. So I think it depends on my mood at times when I just need that knowledge I just need that person to encouraged me to turn on my webcam on and I'll do it but then if I already have good reasons like participant 5 said, privacy reasons. Yeah, I I really don't want to contribute today. I feel really pressured to I just would want to disappear and not be in the Zoom meeting if I have to turn my camera on. So it depends on what my personal circumstances are at that time.

F Ffion Neal 23:31

Brilliant. Thank you. Participant 3?

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P

Participant 3 23:34

Yeah, we'll start with my webcam on. I just make sure my mic's turned off because of background noise. But then I'll look and can see if everyone else is got the webcam turned off and like Oh, am I the only one of y'all watching me being distracting? Then I'll turn it off. I'm not bothered about it being on really. I think part of the course I'm on as well is like you can't you're not supposed to judge people so I'm not bothered appearance and whatnot. Exactly. Got a scruffy as I say scruffy got a fleece on this one. I'm days is it hot? Is it cold? Which is another thing as well then I'm taking if it's a particularly warm day, but that's on the back of my neck or a jacket off jacket on? That's distracting. But yeah, no, it doesn't. It doesn't bother me either way really. I think sometimes though if we are in a long lecture though, and I feel like I'm starting to get a little bit sleepy and fidgety than I'm like right let's turn it off now because I don't want to look disrespectful or anything.

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Ffion Neal 24:36

That's great. Thank you. Anyone else got any reasons why? How they can be made more comfortable to have the webcam on. Okay, um, so I've got one more question. Does using or not using a webcam affect your perception of the online environment? So does it make you enjoy it more or less? Participant 5?

P

Participant 5 25:10

It definitely does affect it. To some extent, I think it also depends on just the cohort that you're with, or the group that you're with, because sometimes it's you know, on online environment in different modules, or just a different classes, you have different perceptions about, say, for example, one class, I know that this class, everyone's really engages with the lecture material, and they're all really put their camera on, and everyone's in different situations. So someone who's really comfortable, someone who's like in the library, someone in different places. So I think, Oh, that's a good class. Whereas if there's another class working with no webcams, and I know it's the tutorial leader, or there's just the lecture there is really trying to get people to engage, and it's very, like dry, and it's very hard to engage with the content. That's a bit I'm a bit dreadful of that one. But my best case scenario, if it's if it's mixed, like if there's some people with cameras on some people not, I know that some breakout rooms are good, some breakout rooms are not but it's like a good amount of balances, and not too much expectation, enough that I, you know, engage with the material, but not so much that it's stressful. I don't know, I think it just kind of depends on how much engagement actually happens in that class.

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Ffion Neal 25:32

That's great. Thank you, Participant 3?

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Participant 5 26:11

Yeah, I think so much just covered pretty much what I was going to say. I forgot what I was going to add. What was the question again? Sorry?

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Ffion Neal 26:49

It was do does using or not using webcam affect your perception of the online learning environment? And does it make it more or less enjoyable?

P

Participant 3 26:56

Yeah, I think with webcams on, or even if it's if it's mixed, it's definitely more engaging. I think if you just see names on screen, it feels a bit isolated. Especially because like I said, I'm on two days a week uni as well as on placement. And then sometimes it could be weeks before you see anyone on campus and then you forget started forgetting what people like and names and faces. And then I spend most of my time when I'm studying at home, just sat here where I am now. So it gets a bit lonely sometimes I'm wanting to put music on in the background. So we I think it just feels a bit more comforting when you've got reviews because see faces they're only that there are real people behind this screen.

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Ffion Neal 27:36

That's brilliant. Thank you. Anyone else got anything they'd like to add? Participant 4?

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Participant 4 27:47

Yes, I agree with both speakers. It makes it more enjoyable because it's just like you in the classroom with this people. You can see them you also feel present. You feel more present if you've got your cameras on. Yeah, so I think he's more enjoyable for me. It improves the learning experience.

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Ffion Neal 28:08

That's great. Thank you. Anyone else? Craig, have you got anything else you'd like to ask or add?

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Craig Morley 28:23

No, no, no questions. I saw I've just been been furiously taking notes on what everyone saying. So yeah, I think if suppose now, we've got to the end of our questions, just if anyone else has got any in that they sort of wanted to say about webcam, use any sort of opinions or anything that the questions have asked haven't given you the chance to say so it's for free, free forum free space, if anyone wants to add anything else that we haven't had a chance to discuss yet?

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Participant 4 29:06

Yeah, so I think something came up during the discussion that wasn't really talked about deeply

enough, in my view, and it's just been about privacy. I know that students are not maybe allowed legally to record sessions, but I would be worried if a student has a recording of a session in which I am you know, so that's something I also think could Yeah, make me feel reluctant about turning my cameras on because if you've got my voice, yeah, it's just voice. But then if you call my face and do even type of faces I didn't even know I wasn't making that would really bother me. So I think I learned that there are certain software's that allow you to record zoom sessions even if the host doesn't permit that. So, that's something that worries me. Yeah, yeah. About turning my cameras on.

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Ffion Neal 30:07

That's great. Thank you. Um, Participant 2?

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Participant 2 30:12

Yeah, I was just thinking back to a negative experience I had where we had like a session with students from all different courses. And one of them would go back to the same breakout rooms, but she'd have a different friend sat at the camera pretending to be her. And then some of them will be taking pictures of the screen. So after that, like me and the other people in the group, we spoke to the lecturer, like, we're not comfortable with what she's doing, because she's obviously taken up pictures. So that was like a really isolating experience, because it's like, you know, the people that have their cameras off, you don't know what they're doing. And the people that have their cameras on because it's so easy to just hold your phone up and take a picture. And that was just a really annoying experience, because it ruined the session. And it was also like, you know, there's no guarantee she's got, like, deleted those pictures. I don't know that the shop. So it was just like, a frustrating experience.

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Ffion Neal 31:08

Yeah. Do you think it made you more cautious to turn your webcam on in future sessions?

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Participant 2 31:12

Yeah, it just made me realize, like, sort of the power you have what is online? Because it's so easy to like, screenshot or take pictures or, you know, edit someone's name, like it just, like sort of reminds me of the Freedom people have when you're online?

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Ffion Neal 31:29

Yeah, that's brilliant. Thank you, Ashley.

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Participant 3 31:33

Yeah, I think for from what they just said, we've had instances of students where we're not

convinced they're, they're actually sat at a laptop, they're just on the call. And then they're doing something completely different. Especially when the tutor is asking questions, and she's picking out some of us and then you've got that deathly silence when no one replies and it's a bit awkward. Yeah, around the privacy. I mean, you don't know if people take screenshots. I mean, I have sometimes, if I know the presentation is not been uploaded to Blackboard, and was doing the presentation, I've took screenshots. I've not done it with people or I've done it so it's my personal use our crop it down afterwards, if they've got that little panel down the side with faces on. But yeah, you don't know if anyone else is doing that I if you've pulled a weird face or somewhere and someone's just caught that at the time. I think though, it must be difficult for actors as well. It's harder to going to control the engagement and gauge of reactions as well when you've not got webcams on. So I think they feel probably just as much as pressured as we do. Think that was everything I was going to say.

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Ffion Neal 32:43

That's brilliant, then thank you. Anyone else got anything they'd like to add? Welcome back, Participant 1.

C

Craig Morley 32:55

And yes, I'll just stay and just explain to Participant 1, since he's, since he's just come back in case there's any nuance to it, I hope but no pressure. And so we came to the end of the questions and then we were just we just put it out there for sort of sorts of freephone freeform discussion if there's anything in particular you wanted to raise about your experiences or thoughts on using webcams not using webcams and how this might affect factor engagement. So just if there was anything that you sort of definitely wanted to input into the project and make sure that that was here then contributed now as to sort of the chance for you to add anything any any of your own thoughts with questions if you wanted to do that as well .

P

Participant 1 33:41

I can. So so basically from all my experience as a as a student, and then as a also called files facilitator with evictions in COVID. Online. It I feel like it the online, like sessions are quite like a niche thing, because it's like it seems like it's it can be very good for a specific group of people, for example, for PGI as I feel like because they are also familiar with meetings, probably they have to like meet people from overseas that they can really like personally meet that they have zoom and we can zoom them out for a meeting. It's very, very nice for like online conferences, I guess, when there is like a lot of people from different parts of the world. From the university perspective, I feel like it like I mean, we didn't have a choice but there is certain things like lectures, for example, that I for example, wasn't very convinced that the online teaching really worked. Even if it was well done by the person that this is not only the person but like the format how it's like basically done. It was still like less engaging than then than a normal session. But there again, sometimes it happened. And when people had their, their their cams off on lectures, they've been more keen to ask questions, at least in physics, that's a basic, that's my background where I'm coming from. Or maybe there'll be like less afraid to, like, ask or discuss, like certain things because it can come back to what P5 said, having your face out there and asking questions. And, you know, there is always this like, for that like, or asking a

dumb question. But if you don't have the face on you, just your name and your voice, it feels more it feels like easier to ask, if you feel like it question is dumb. Even though like, we all stress out that there is no dumb questions, there is only dumb answers. Maybe even not that sometimes the Yeah, no dumb questions. It's, I feel like people are less afraid to, to ask questions. And but then, again, there is also people who are more likely to answer when they're on the webcam, as actually as, as I said, that they're like, little bit peer pressure to us, like, as are these casts or interacts with the people in the room. So it really depends what the session is, and what's the point of the session. For example, I found that that non interactive session, very can very well online. Because everybody can either turn the webcam on or off, and also their mic, but they don't interact with the facilitator, for example, for I know that some services at the university like cats, or some of these sessions that are non interactive, and I feel like they work very well. In this matter. Yeah, but for example, break shows on physics on like, just the q&a sessions, I feel like, unless there was not like a lot of break from the facilitators side done beforehand, to like, set a structure. For example, I had a professor who specifically said, we'll look at books certain times, if we send him an email, and he made like a one on one. With us, I very much liked that I was in favor, or that there will be professors who just like put us in, like, a room, all of us. And then, you know, some people don't feel comfortable asking, it's like academic question. Some people just need like that one on one time. Because, I mean, they are here at the university. And I feel like everybody's should have that chance to, to have like that office hour with somebody or like, ask questions, one on one with the professor. So that's like, different points of view from different academic, like, positions, I would say, as a as a as like biotech, which for university at the same time as a student as as well. So thanks. That's the sort of thing.

F

Ffion Neal 37:57

That's brilliant. Thank you. Participant 3, would you want to add to that?

P

Participant 3 38:02

He makes a very good point. I've actually got a lecture this afternoon on Hypno birthing, I'm a student midwife. And what they've put on Blackboard, as part of the notes for that is get yourself comfortable, because we'll be going through that. So I'm thinking if it was in a classroom environment, it would be a bit more awkward. Whereas I've got the comfy chair here, I can relax and really engage with that lecture. But we've had some lectures, like on knowledge and research is one of my units at the moment, which is part of the reason why I was quite keen on doing this, by the way. It's just blank white PowerPoint with right black text, there's no images, there's nothing like that on. And I'm finding it so difficult to engage into it. Because it's I mean, for the most part, it's pre recorded as well. And every couple of weeks, we have a live lecture. And the way she just goes over them same PowerPoint slides, and it's like, no, not this again. And I think that it'd be better in a classroom environment, where it's like, raw data. It's not. I don't want to say it's not fun, but it isn't. But yeah, I definitely think it's the lectures. The other thing I was going to add as well, because I'm obviously with that our sciences have been with midwives. I think like the online lectures are good. With webcams on or not, with the changes in how healthcare, a lot of GPs and things at the moment is via email, you pop them a message through an app or something now you don't have much telephone things. And we don't know if we'll ever have a full lockdown to it. We could have another like 10 years or so another pandemic with another virus, but hopefully touchwood doesn't happen but

you never know in this day and age now. But I think then with us it helps prepare us for that, that that environment you know, if we go back on lockdown again, do we do antenatal appointments online? And I think then with webcams with complete strangers that will be more are daunting as well, you know, if you're there in uniform and everything. So I think from that perspective, it does set us up for the future as well.

F Ffion Neal 40:09

That's great. Thank you for sharing that. Has anyone else got anything they'd like to add to the discussion? No. Okay. Am I alright to sum it up then, Craig? Well, thank you everyone, for coming. Again, we've really enjoyed the discussion with you all. And it's been really interesting listening to everything you've got to say, in terms of what we're going to be doing next, we have one more student focus group tomorrow. And we've already conducted two focus groups with members of staff. And after the group tomorrow, we will be starting to analyze the data. So the transcripts from these focus groups and our surveys that we conducted earlier in the year, and start to pick out some of the common themes and approaches on the best practices with regard to using webcams during synchronous lessons. The idea we then have is to share it widely across the university in different formats. So like workshops, written reports and infographics, so keep an eye out for those. We'll try and send those out to everyone who's got involved with the focus groups and the surveys first, so you'll get to read on what we've put together before everyone else. And yeah, I think that's everything. Thank you again for coming. And I hope you all have a great afternoon!

C Craig Morley 41:31

everyone, thank you. Thank you.

P Participant 3 41:35

Thank you have a nice day, everyone.

C Craig Morley 41:37

Internationally, thanks for coming.