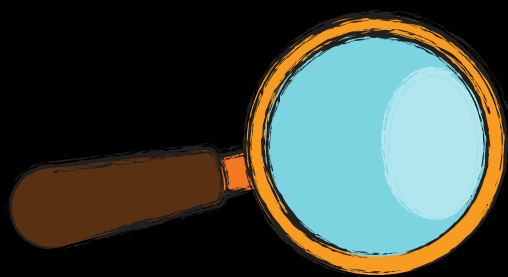


FOCUSING ONLINE DURING A PANDEMIC

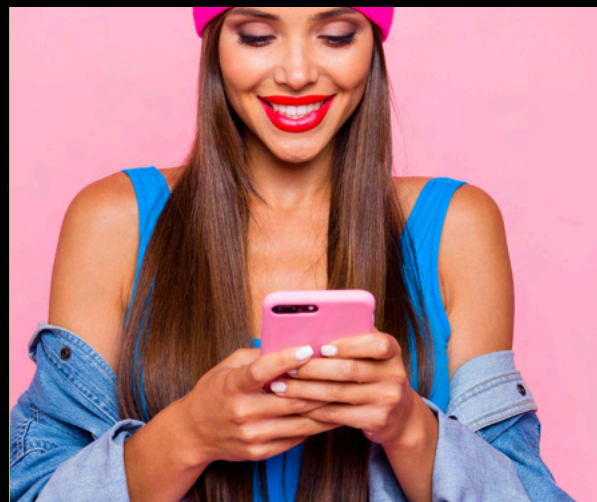


38 incoming undergraduates took part in focus group sessions in November 2020

What was the impact of remote learning on student focus?

CAMERA ON OR OFF?

Students missed seeing and being seen by peers and educators. Yet they found keeping a camera on during lectures intrusive. And seeing into the rooms of students who weren't paying attention was demotivating.



POSITIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING LECTURES

Social isolation led to social media use during lectures. Scrolling through feeds provided the stimulation needed to keep students at least partly engaged in the lectures they didn't enjoy.

ONLINE PROCRASTINATION GOT OUT OF HAND

Pre-recorded lectures allowed a far more disruptive use of social media: bored students would pause the lecture and stream video content instead.



TECHNOLOGY DOESN'T GUARANTEE INTERACTION

Students appreciated chat facilities and online breakout rooms. But when lecturers didn't respond to questions in chat, or if starting a conversation in a breakout room felt awkward, students would lose motivation to engage in this mode of learning.

WHAT CAN UNIVERSITY LECTURERS DO?

Use online quizzes and live polls! For the students we interviewed, interactivity was useful for helping to avoid distractions, and even more so for maintaining focus on lecture content. They wished that polls and quizzes were more often incorporated into online learning.



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