

Students' and Educators' Perspectives on Camera Use in the Classroom: Thinking Through Issues of Inclusion, Equity, Engagement, and Safety on Screens

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Abstract

The global pandemic created by COVID-19 has altered the landscape of education creating the need for flexible methods of teaching and learning and a reliance on technology that many educators and students were not prepared for. Educators have adapted their instructional methods to include shifts in pedagogy and the emergency of remote, hybrid, and flipped classrooms became commonplace. While the summer of 2020 allowed for a transition from the emergency online instruction to a more planful approach to reorganizing for the coming academic year, this was contextualized by uncertainty related to the course of the pandemic and when education as usual would resume. Despite the additional preparation time, educators have found themselves grappling with issues related to how to create communities that are inclusive to all students, decisions about how to incorporate technology, and how to ensure that students are engaged. Without the presence of clear research and guidance, decisions such as whether students should be mandated to have their cameras on during class time exist with educators trying to balance their obligations to track learning with concerns about increasing equity gaps, access issues, and systemic challenges that are disproportionately experienced by marginalized populations. In an educational environment where video conferencing has become the norm, it is important to explore the requirement of camera use by students through the eyes of students and educators and its role in building hybrid and remote classroom communities.

Keywords: equity in education, humanizing pedagogy, learning communities, supportive environments, technology in classroom,