

Focus group 1

Researcher 0:00

So that's on, because I don't want to write anything down when you're talking to me and I won't remember anything that you say, so that's why I'm taping it, is that ok?

Participants [all] 0:10

Yes

Researcher 0:11

Hang on. Here we go. Oh please work. Right, let's just make sure this works. So it should be recording. And then, I'm ready to go. And you guys can ask me any questions first, and then I will ask you some questions afterwards. So...

Participant 0:37

What are we gonna be doing?

Researcher 0:38

Well we're going to be talking, actually. That's it, just talking. What do you think about that?

Participant 0:44

Well I'm like, my parents say I'm a chatterbox.

Researcher 0:46

Are you? Are you chatterboxes?

Participant 0:47

Even though Miss [name removed] our teacher says that.

Participant 0:52

Yeah like me and her especially.

Participant 0:54

Focus group 1

Yeah, all the teachers I've been in every class, they always say before I go, I've been told that you're a chatterbox.

Researcher 1:01

They all say that you're a chatterbox? Well you're waiting very patiently, because I'm trying to do this and the things aren't waiting very well, so let's see if this is working. Hopefully I'm going to be able to catch you on some of this, and let's just make sure this is...ok, so what room is this that I'm in now?

Participants [all] 1:19

Music room.

Participant 1:23

Where our music teacher Mrs [name removed] teaches us music.

Researcher 1:26

Oh ok. And do you like coming in here?

Participants [all] 1:28

Yes.

Researcher 1:29

It looks great with you all on here. So, who wants to ask me some questions first, before I start asking you some questions? I'll start this way and work that way. You first.

Participant 1:38

So what are we going to talk about?

Researcher 1:40

I don't know. What do you want to talk about? Have a think, and I'll go to everyone else's and then we will start talking about...well I've got a couple of questions, but I'd rather hear what you've got to say first. So have a think about what you'd like to talk about. What was your question?

Focus group 1

Participant 1:50

Usually on Thursdays we come here and sing some songs. We usually sing old songs like from year 3 with Miss [name removed] our music teacher, and tomorrow's Thursday and that's music day but I'm not here tomorrow because tomorrow's Eid.

Researcher 2:15

Oh, so what do you do for Eid then? Why don't you come to school?

Participant 2:21

We don't come to school because, like right now it's Ramadan, and for Ramadan we have to do fasting, and usually we do it for a long time, usually we do it for 30 days, but this year we did it for 39 days.

Researcher 2:33

Oh. How come?

Participant 2:35

I don't know.

Researcher 2:28

Oh ok. And what do you do? Do you mind me asking, what do you do?

Participant 2:42

For Eid, on Eid, we usually like, we go to our Mosque usually and we do like our Ede pray and we like pray there. And I remember, like, before the Coronavirus, I remember our Mosque gave all of the children presents. The boys had one big bag of toys and the girls had bags, rings and...

Researcher 3:07

Oh wow, that was generous.

Participant 3:11

And they also gave money to children.

Focus group 1

Participant 3:15

So in my country, usually the next thing we celebrate is called Ramadan, usually in August or July or September, yeah, two Ramadan's'. On the second one I usually go to Bulgaria because like, the summer holidays and everything. And then in my Dads country, we usually go there and like, well we knock at the door, and we do it like Halloween, but it's not Halloween, it's our religion. We knock on the door and we say, we do this, and we do something like that, and we go back to their homes and get a bag of sweets and pour it into our baskets.

Researcher 3:54

Oh wow, so busy times. Yeah so Halloween is that, and you do that on another celebration. Thank you so much for sharing. Let's go over to this table. What do you guys want to talk about?

Participant 4:07

I would like to know, why did you come to Middlesex University specifically?

Researcher 4:16

Why did I go to Middlesex? What to work? Or to do as a student? Because I work at Middlesex, I'm a lecturer there, but I'm also a student there, I was doing some research actually, and I came to this school to learn from children, because I wanted to learn what children wanted to talk about in school, and I wanted to know what children like about school, not like about school, what do you think about Covid. I wanted to learn about all those things. So I'm at Middlesex and I'm teaching...you know new teachers who want to be teachers? I kind of help them and I teach them. But I need to come and work with children first so that I can hear what you are saying so that I can take it back to teachers so that when they come to practice, they know what children are saying. So that's kind of why I'm at Middlesex. Let's come back to this table, any questions at this table?

Participant 4:59

What's your name and like how [inaudible] are you?

Researcher 5:08

Yeah. My name is Angela. I'm Angela Scollan and I work at Middlesex University but I also do research for the Child-Up project, which is what I'm doing at the moment, and that's to learn about children in England, in Italy, in France, in Poland, in Germany and lots of other countries in Europe, and other people like me, like other Angela's, go into other schools in all those other countries, and come in to talk to children to ask you what you want to talk about.

Participant 5:35

Focus group 1

Why are you doing this?

Researcher 5:58

I'm doing it so I can learn about what children think about what's happening in school and about what you think about Covid. That's what I'd like to ask you about in a minute, if that's ok?

Participant 5:47

Do you travel a lot?

Researcher 5:49

Do I travel a lot? Well, when I was younger, maybe not so much. I used to go to Ireland a lot. And then I came from Ireland to England, so I did travelling between two countries. And then as I got older, I did go to Spain and America and then to China and Mexico. But I did that over the years, because I'm a lot more years older than you guys, so it's given me more time to do stuff. But yeah. Do you travel a lot?

Participant 6:15

No.

Researcher 6:17

Would you like to? Yeah? Where would you like to go?

Participant 6:21

Spain.

Researcher 6:22

Oh yeah. Deffo don't blame you, it's a nice part of the world, ain't it? Ok.

Participant 6:29

So, right now, can I talk about school?

Researcher 6:32

Focus group 1

If you want to. This is your time, you can talk about anything. So yeah. What do you want to tell me about school?

Participant 6:36

Well, I like school. And I like my teacher Mr [name removed]. He always tells us jokes and makes us laugh even in Maths, English and any like, even in subjects like, if we're doing Maths, he makes us laugh and in English he always makes us laugh. We have a really fun time. And I know he sometimes says, "what will I do without you when you go to year 6?"

Researcher 7:05

Ah, he will miss you. And why do he make you laugh? Why is he always pranking?

Participant 7:07

I don't know.

Researcher 7:10

You don't know? What do you think?

Participant 7:13

It's kind of like a way to motivate us all. Because when he makes us all...when we're all answering questions, he always finds a way to make it fun, and he makes our learning much more fun to learn about, and what to learn at home as well as school, and what to do well too.

Researcher 7:34

Oh wow. So you've got a good connection then, do you think? You like talking to him and you can learn from him? Is that what you mean?

Participant 7:40

Yeah. And every teacher, like, every teacher I've had, right, all of them are funny and lovely and kind in a different way. Like our last teacher was very fun and she's always doing...I enjoyed the Science lessons a lot and her English lessons and Maths lessons, because she always made us all motivated, and we all talked to our partners. Shout out the answers when she says, "what do you think this means?" and then we shout out the answers. And then, when the other children are having tests, she somehow makes it so there's mystery, like "let's be quiet because it's sort of like this whole school is like a game, and when you win the game, you've passed your test."

Focus group 1

Researcher 8:34

Oh, so kind of making it a game, but making it fun and like you're involved in it. Wow, powerful.

Participant 8:39

I think I like this school better than my old school. It's because, in my old school it was a much bigger school. This is a smaller school. Because it was a bigger school, they don't really care about the children in the bigger school. And then, the children that needed help, they didn't really help them. They would just like walk around the classroom and check the children's work.

Researcher 9:11

And what help did they need, do you think? The children.

Participant 9:14

I think the children needed help, like, even the teacher put me in the group to help the children...

Researcher 9:27

What, to help the other children?

Participant 9:29

Urm, no, the children that needed help. Because there's children, he's never helped them, and I remember, they were sitting at the table, and I remember the teacher would barely come to us. They would only help us when marking [inaudible word].

Researcher 9:45

Ok. So how do you think those children felt, not being helped? And what help did they need, do you think?

Participant 9:53

I think they needed help in their work and because like, none of those children, there was less children smarter children than the children that needed help.

Researcher 10:04

What's multi children?

Focus group 1

Participant 10:06

Urm...

Researcher 10:13

Is it maybe where they speak different languages?

Participant 10:17

There were about two children that came from different languages...countries. But there was like, there was less children that were very smart and there were lots of children who needed help.

Researcher 10:27

Oh ok. Yeah. Oh wow.

Participant 10:33

But the children never came and helped them.

Researcher 10:36

Wow. Ok. And what could the teacher have done, do you think? What should the teacher have done?

Participant 10:38

I think the teacher could have done, like in this school, the children that really need help, they come early in the morning to do the Maths, like me, [name removed] and [name removed] and [name removed] used to need to but now she doesn't.

Researcher 10:55

Oh, so you come into the school early to do extra work?

Participant 10:58

Yeah, like at 7 o'clock, we, like, I'm not telling like everyone wakes up at 7 o'clock, but the children, like I wake up at 7 o'clock and then get dressed up and eat my breakfast and then at 8 o'clock we have to arrive at school, and not all of the children are at school still. Probably the year 6's are at

Focus group 1

school at like our time, and like Mrs [name removed], she's in year 6, she used to be our teacher Mr [name removed], she used to be our teacher's teacher. And now she's a teaching assistant and she teaches us.

Researcher 11:35

Oh, so you come in for extra help sometimes?

Participant 11:37

Yeah. And Miss [name removed] teaches me, [multiple children's names removed] for our Maths, like to improve our Maths.

Researcher 11:52

Do you like that? Having extra help?

Participant 11:56

Yeah.

Researcher 11:57

Why?

Participant 11:58

I feel more confident at Maths, and like I'm improving my like Maths and everything. Like, all of the children in the group, Mr [name removed] said they are improving.

Researcher 12:12

Wow, so everyone's doing well? It's motivating you to do it? So you had your hands up, I'll come to you, what were you saying?

Participant 12:18

I like school as a whole. I only have one tiny nit-picky thing. It's about the reading diary. The way it is is it's fun, when you don't have to do it. I like sitting down, reading like, I don't have to do this, I'm doing this because I want to do this...

Focus group 1

Researcher 12:38

So you want to choose to do it, choose to read when you want to rather than when you're being told to? How does it feel when you're told to read and you don't feel like it?

Participant 12:45

Honestly, I feel a bit procrastinate-y because I just leave it for about an hour, come back to it, and just do it.

Researcher 13:02

Oh wow. And you come back to it when you feel like doing it? Oh ok, thank you.

Participant 13:06

Mr [name removed] also made this group for children who need help as well. And like, there was only a few spaces in the morning group and my mum said I don't need to go there anymore, so she sends me to Mr [name removed] after school group.

Researcher 13:26

Ok. And is that helpful?

Participant 13:28

Yeah.

Researcher 13:29

What do you do?

Participant 13:30

We do Maths and [inaudible word].

Researcher 13:34

Ok. Why do you like going to extra classes? You've been at school all day, and you think "I'm going to go to an extra class". What motivates you to want to do that?

Participant 13:42

Focus group 1

It's because Mr [name removed], he makes learning fun. He helps with us learning a lot.

Researcher 13:48

Oh ok. And what makes learning fun, because I might need to learn that, you might need to help me make learning fun for my students. I might need your help. [hand dryer in adjacent room blows] Ooh let me just close the door.

Participant 14:00

Yeah, it's the hand dryer. It's the toilet. In the toilet there are hand dryers and it's so loud. We can't even hear ourselves.

Researcher 14:08

I know, I couldn't hear just now. You had your hand up, yeah...

Participant 14:11

Mr [name removed], my teacher, he makes learning fun because, he always calls us a donut if you do mistakes, and always makes jokes and...

Researcher 14:24

Is it ok to be called a donut, do you mind, is he joking? You're not really a donut, he's not gonna eat you, is he?

Participants [all] 14:31

[laughing]

Participant 14:33

Sometimes he will tell someone like, there was a boy today, a girl called [name removed], my teacher told her to do like this calculation on the whiteboard, and the teacher said, "if you don't do it correct, then this boy called [name removed], he will die."

Researcher 14:50

Oh wow. But he knows that he's joking?

Focus group 1

Participant 14:54

He is.

Researcher 14:56

You all know he's joking?

Participants [many] 14:58

Yes.

Researcher 14:59

Phew, that's handy.

Participant 15:02

And then, she got it correct, so she didn't die!

Participant 15:08

I thought she actually got it wrong.

Participant 15:11

She got it correct, but then my teacher rubbed out...

Researcher 15:14

Oh he's a pranker, isn't he? He's a joker. So he made her feel like she got it wrong?

Participant 15:19

Yeah.

Researcher 15:21

Did she have to argue with him and say, "no I got it right?"

Participant 15:24

Focus group 1

No, she understands.

Researcher 15:26

She knew? Ok. And how did you guys feel when you weren't able to come to school? When there was no school because of Covid, how did you cope?

Participant 15:40

It was really bad because I didn't really learn that much. For me, I actually came to school for about an hour with some other children [name removed] and [name removed], and I was learning with a different teacher, I'm not sure what her name is. And like...

Participant 16:00

Yeah, I also came and there was only me and [name removed]...

Participant 16:06

Yeah, and after school finished for an hour, I came back home to do some online lessons and then yeah...

Researcher 16:17

And how did you all cope with online lessons? How did that work?

Participant 16:19

Honestly, when the first wave struck, I was like 'hmmm yay, I get to do a bit of relaxing.' But then online work hit me like a truck.

Researcher 16:32

Because I was just thinking, I'm gonna be honest, I wasn't expecting it, I was just like 'I'm gonna sit around, maybe look at some stuff once in a while, do some work, do some spelling, keep myself educated.' But they'd already planned it.

Participant 16:53

Oh wow. And was it planned well?

Focus group 1

Participants [many] 16:54

Yeah.

Researcher 16:57

And what sort of stuff did you do?

Participant 17:01

Our teacher Mr [name removed], what he used to do was, he would record his lessons, he worked extra hard, he told us all about it, how he had to work after school to record the lessons and during his lunch break, he had to record the lesson for the afternoon.

Researcher 17:18

Oh wow. A lot of preparation.

Participant 17:20

We were very thankful because all of our home learning books were filled with work and it was so fun. We got to draw. We got to, when we did Maths, personally I loved Maths and English because, on the documents, we could do English and then submit it onto something called Google Classroom, and if we wanted to, we could post it on the stream, and people could read it if they want.

Researcher 17:51

Oh so you could read each other's work? That's really clever.

Participant 17:53

And if, during school, if we needed help, Mr [name removed] would always help, we just would send a message and Mr [name removed] checks the stream and answer questions.

Researcher 18:04

Oh ok. Thank you.

Participant 18:07

Honestly, me, I don't really like online meeting. Because like, I felt like I was stuck in a prison. I have my brother, but like, he's small and he doesn't even understand me. Like I try to play with him, he doesn't understand, he goes and plays with himself and watches tv. I personally don't really like

Focus group 1

playing by myself, I really like playing with my friends at school, and I feel like I was just prisoned in my own room.

Researcher 18:43

Sure. Did you miss your friends?

Participant 18:44

Yes, I did. And then, my mum got a mail on parent mail from Miss [name removed] saying Miss [name removed] let's me come into school, because...

Researcher 18:57

Oh wow. Were you happy about that?

Participant 18:59

Yeah, I was really . It was on Sunday. Because my brother, he was going to school, because he doesn't really like doing online meeting, same as me, so he went to school, so if he went, I had to went as well. And it was only me and [name removed] and [name removed] as well.

Researcher 19:18

Was it weird being in school without lots of people?

Participant 19:21

Well, there was only about 8 children.

Researcher 19:25

Really? How did you feel?

Participant 19:27

At first, at the first quarantine, everything was online, we didn't have online meetings like Google Meetings. So we did everything by ourselves. Even my parents didn't have time to help me, so I did everything by myself. And then, as like, sometimes I wouldn't even know what to do, so because I didn't know what to do, my parents would just tell me to teach my brothers.

Focus group 1

Researcher 19:57

And did you do that? Did you teach them? Yeah. And what did you think about that?

Participant 20:00

Urm, I would say my brothers, they didn't really listen to me.

Researcher 20:14

So it's hard to be a teacher? Mm.

Participant 20:19

A bit off-topic. What is your opinion on Bubble tea?

Researcher 20:21

Bubble tea? That is when I went to America to a place called Seattle, and my niece told me to 'have some of this Angela, it's lovely', and I drank some of it and it was like drinking bogey and snot. I didn't like it at all. What's your opinion of it?

Participant 20:34

I never really tasted it. But it looks really tasty to me.

Researcher 20:40

It was very, it was nice...my cousin loves it. I drank it and thought it was like eating bogeys. I didn't like it. I was trying to drink it through a straw, and it was all bumps coming through, I was like 'ughhh.'

Participant 20:54

What do you find, why do you think it's like eating bogeys?

Researcher 20:57

Well, maybe when I was little a had a little rummage around and ate some, but as an adult I don't think I like them. No, I don't want to eat bogeys. What about you, do you want to eat bogeys?

Participant 21:07

Focus group 1

No.

Researcher 21:10

They are a bit sticky. But they are there, they must be there for a reason. We must check out why we have bogeys. Does anyone know? Who knows why we've got bogeys? Yeah, why?

Participant 21:20

Basically, it's kind of like, we have this saliva that's made up in our bodies, and sometimes we need to take them out, so it goes up here into our nose. And some saliva and bogeys in our body are actually very helpful because they are actually a part of our body. But extra ones that are created by food will go out from here.

Researcher 21:48

So we can get rid of them? Do you know what, I've loved speaking to you guys so much. It looks like we've got some other children coming in now.

Teacher 21:55

But they can wait if you're not finished.

Researcher 21:57

Does anybody else have anything else, one or two last things? Maybe we'll be one minute, is that ok? Nice to see you.

Teacher 22:02

Yeah, no problem. Nice to see you too. How have you been?

Researcher 22:05

Yeah not too bad thanks. Ok, what were you gonna say?

Participant 22:08

I just wanted to talk about online...

Researcher 22:10

Focus group 1

Sure.

Participant 22:12

I don't really like online learning because like, sometimes, there were problems and sometimes I couldn't log on on the register, so I was absent.

Researcher 22:25

Yeah, so was that a bit frustrating and disappointing for you?

Participant 22:28

Yeah. And when I was late, there was nobody in the meeting anymore, and so I was sitting there alone until like, Mr [name removed] joins then after a few minutes...

Researcher 22:43

Was that Mr [name removed]?

Participant 22:45

No that was his older brother.

Researcher 22:46

Oh so there's two Mr [name removed]?

Participant 22:48

Yeah. He's called Mr R. And their mother is Mrs [name removed], and she is the deputy head.

Researcher 22:55

Oh my, it's a family run place, isn't it?

Participant 23:00

Yeah. Mr R teaches Year 6.

Researcher 23:01

Focus group 1

Ok. So what were you gonna, finish off, and then we will have to go because the other children are coming in.

Participant 23:06

Can I tell you something too? I think, sometimes I felt there was more than there should be, because I felt that I couldn't really concentrate on my work when everything was distracting me at home, because we have a little puppy and he likes to play a lot.

Researcher 23:27

Yeah, so it's hard to get it done. I can imagine.

Participant 23:31

I agree on the puppy bit, because I have one, she's very young, and she's just like a tiny baby. I pick her up and she just falls asleep. And sometimes when I throw her the ball, she doesn't even get it.

Researcher 23:49

Oh that's so sweet. Ok one more bit and then we've got to go. I could talk to you guys all day, I'm gonna miss you.

Participant 23:53

So I want to talk about online meeting again quickly. So like, the amount of children there were, there was probably about 10 children. So there was Miss [name removed], she's our teacher as well but she's a teacher's assistant. And there were probably me and [multiple names removed], yeah, I think 5, and Miss [name removed], she's a teaching assistant in year 1, and she teaches [names removed], one time, I was with Miss [name removed] when it was snowing, and we had to...

Researcher 25:01

Oh wow, right guys I'm gonna have to stop because there's another class coming in now, so...

[End of transcription]