Using Video to Assess Student Attention in Virtual Class Meetings

**Don’t Do This**

- Connect students’ video use and eye contact time to participation points, grading, or school attendance.
- Remove students from the meeting if their videos are not on.
- Trick students into turning on their videos (e.g., class dance party w/ no opt-out).
- Give extra credit to students who have their video on.

**Do This!**

- **CHOICE.** Let students decide whether to turn on, or keep on, their video. Allow them to use virtual or blurred backgrounds and fun filters (e.g., be a banana or potato!). [https://bit.ly/virtualmtgfilters](https://bit.ly/virtualmtgfilters)
- **REAL-TIME CHECK-IN.** Ask questions often to assess student understanding. Allow students to respond via audio or virtual meeting tools (e.g., chat box, polls, nonverbal reactions - “thumbs up”).

**Why Does It Matter?**

**PRIVACY.** Students might be uncomfortable displaying their living space to their peers.

**SAFETY.** Students (and their family members) may not want their image captured, recorded, or shared. Students could be cyberbullied if a classmate takes a screenshot of their video.

**EQUITY.** Students might have unreliable Internet access, low bandwidth, devices without video capabilities, limited data, or limited access to a device.

**PERSONAL.** Students might feel shy or anxious to be on camera. [https://bit.ly/zoomcams](https://bit.ly/zoomcams)

**“But I Don’t Like Teaching to Blank Screens”**

Teach students to setup their Google Meet or Zoom profile picture as a bitmoji, school photo, or a favorite selfie. When the camera is off, the students' profile picture will show up, giving you a virtual audience to talk to.

**Ask Before Assume**

This is a challenging time for everyone. If students are struggling to show attentiveness, ask questions rather than make assumptions about their actions or punish them for lack of engagement.

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