The impact of live streaming module-wide events in student engagement and motivation

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Introduction

S111 "Questions in science" is an online-only, introductory, interdisciplinary module. It has a series of labcasts (one hour per subject discipline), delivered by the central module team. The aims of these events are to help build a science community, provide opportunities to engage with central academics and their research, as well as helping with subject choices.

This eSTEeM project evaluates the 17j and 18b labcasts by analysing students' feedback from the widgets on StadiumLive as well as their responses to a post-labcast questionnaire.

What is a Labcast?

A labcast is a live, evening web-broadcast that integrates video streaming, widgets and instant messaging to enable an interactive experience for participants across multiple locations.

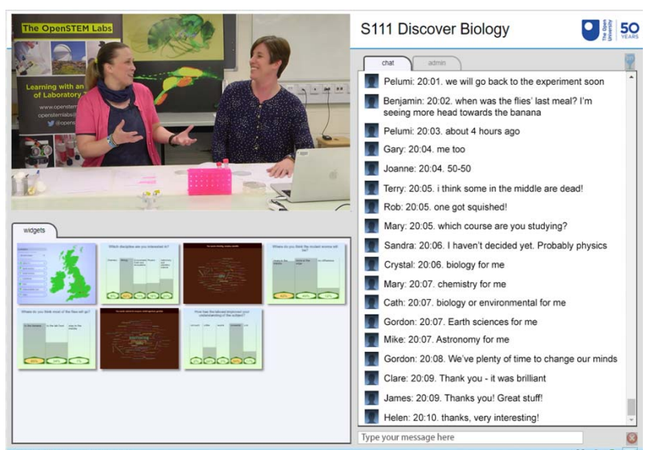

Figure 1: An example of StadiumLive screen for S111 Biology labcast.
Note: names have been changed.

Evaluation of S111 labcasts

> *"I think that attending a live session gives you the opportunity to actively participate in the experiments and the discussions."*

On average 7.6% of our student cohort engaged with each live event and 9.2% of students watched the recorded labcasts.

During live events students interacted with widgets and a chat-box an average of 9-10 times. Chat conversations covered science, maths, module choice and social themes. Responses to a word cloud widget are shown in Figure 2.

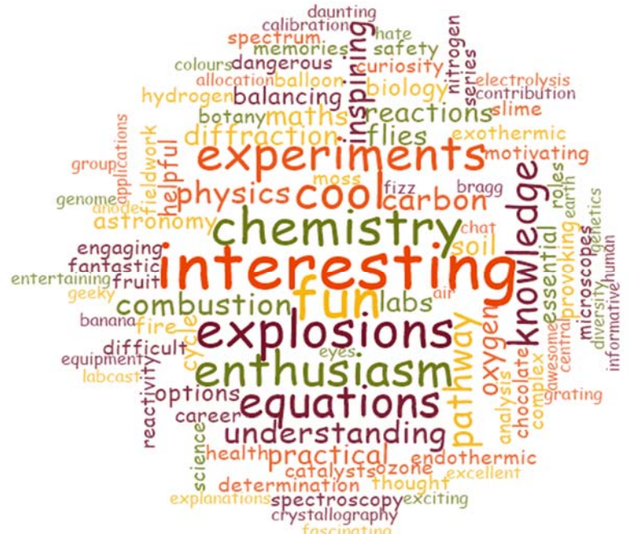

Figure 2: Student descriptions of labcasts from widgets responses.

Student engagement:

Over two thirds of the respondents stated that their main reasons for attending or watching were:

- *"to learn more about subject areas"*
- *"because labcast descriptions sounded interesting"*

Half of respondents were looking for help with subject choice while a third wanted to feel part of the student community and to engage with researchers and general module team staff.

Live experiments and scientific content were felt to be particularly relevant, useful and well enjoyed.

> *"…well worth seeing and hearing (and smelling) the experiments for real"*

Impacts of labcasting on learning:

- 66% of respondents felt that the events increased their sense of being part of an OU science community.
- At least 58% reported being more, or *much* more, motivated after watching a labcast.
- Figure 3 shows what students did as a result of watching the labcasts.

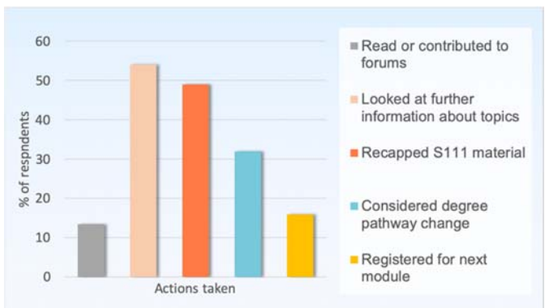

Figure 3: Student responses about actions taken after events.

Conclusions

This project shows that students who watch labcasts feel deeper engagement with the wider OU science community. These events encourage greater understanding of module science content and influences students' future study pathways.