Toys in the Classroom: Refocusing Attention

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Hypothesis, Objective, and Goals

**Hypothesis**
- The use of fidget toys will refocus student concentration and attention on in-class topics.

**Objective**
- Recognize the contribution of fidget toys in directing student attention to learning.

**Goals**
- Determine the value of fidget toy use in the classroom.
- Develop a technique to focus student attention on in-class topics.

**Images of Fidget Toys Before Use**

Presentation, Problem, and Solution

**Presentation**
- Summarizes and analyzes data collected from Fall 2008 through Fall 2009 (i.e., three semesters).

**Problem**
- Student in-class distractions to include: laptop computers, iPods, cell phones, text messages, cross-word puzzles, newspapers, other class assignments, and math puzzles.

**Solution**
- Fidget toys were used to refocus student attention to in-class topic material and to create a productive, focused teaching and learning environment.

Fidget toys used, and provided to the students during class, were small, squeezable, spongy, twistable hand-held items.

Data Collection, Presentation, and Value

**Data Collection**
- Utilized a twelve question Likert Rating Scale (LRS) survey with the following:
  1 = Terrible, None, Never
  2 = Poor, Low, Seldom
  3 = Neutral, Medium, Occasionally
  4 = Good, High, Frequently
  5 = Excellent, Highest, Always

**Presentation**
- Utilizes the LRS to display fidget toy survey data.
- Survey questions illustrate the alignment of in-class student focus.
- Trends from the students’ perceptions of learning are summarized.
- Faculty observations.

**Value**
- Determining how survey data collected from both the beginning-of-course and the end-of-course assist in identifying strengths, improvements, and insights for course management, design, and teaching processes.

**Frequency of Use**

**Construction Management Course**

**Frequency of Use**

**Computer Science Course**

Sample Survey Form

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**Study Conclusions**

**Improvements**
- Additional/enlarged data base.
- Study on which fidget toys are most effective in refocusing students’ attention.

**Insights**
- Method of distribution can affect use.
- Not all students use fidget toys the same way.
- Differences in fidget toy affect student in-class behavior.

**Future Research**
- Possible relationships to student learning disabilities.
- Possible relationships to the movement center in the brain.
- Possible relationships to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- Possible relationships to Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis.

**Images of Fidget Toys After Use**

Acknowledgements

- Fidget toys (i.e., hats) for the Construction Management course were donated for the study by:
  - New South Construction
  - Kiwuit Construction
- Fidget toys (multiple items) for the Computer Science course were obtained/donated by:
  - ABET Ideal Scholar Training
  - New South Construction
  - Kiwuit Construction
  - Purchased through Trainer’s Warehouse