Mar 11th, 4:00 PM - 5:15 PM

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.

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, crossword 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.

Images of Fidget Toys Before Use

Fidget Toy

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

At the beginning and end of each semester.

Students estimated the value of use of the fidget toys in redirecting their attention to in-class topic material.

Courses involved were:

- Georgia Southern University construction management course.
- Coastal Carolina University computer science course.

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.

Images of Fidget Toys After Use

Frequency of Use

Construction Management Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fidget Toy</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Terrible, None</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Poor, Low, Seldom</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neutral, Medium, Occasionally</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Good, High, Frequently</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Excellent, Highest, Always</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency of Use

Computer Science Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fidget Toy</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Terrible, None</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Poor, Low, Seldom</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neutral, Medium, Occasionally</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Good, High, Frequently</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Excellent, Highest, Always</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Survey Form

Fall 2009

Value

- 1 = Terrible, None, Never
- 2 = Poor, Low, Seldom
- 3 = Neutral, Medium, Occasionally
- 4 = Good, High, Frequently
- 5 = Excellent, Highest, Always

Usually do you have a fidget toy available at home?

On the days when you have a fidget toy available at what level are you using it?

How often should the fidget toys be available in class?

Please make any comments here.

Freqency of Use

Construction Management Course

Percent of Students

Frequency of Use

Computer Science Course

Percent of Students

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 toys 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.

Acknowledgements

Fidget toys (i.e., hats) for the Construction Management course were donated for the study by:

- New South Construction
- Kiewit Construction

Fidget toys (multiple items) for the Computer Science course were obtained/donated by:

- ABET Ideal Scholar Training
- Kiewit Construction
- Purchased through Trainer’s Warehouse