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Toys in the Classroom: Refocusing Attention

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Fidget Toys in the Classroom: Refocusing Attention
Fall 2008 Through Fall 2009
Dr. Donald Slater, P.E., Georgia Southern University • Jean French, M.B.A., Coastal Carolina University

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

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

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.

Frequency of Use

Construction Management Course

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Level</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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Computer Science Course

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</tbody>
</table>

Sample Survey Form
Fall 2009

Frequency of Use

Construction Management Course

- Percent of Students
- Task List
- Images of Fidget Toys After Use

Future Research
- 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
  - New South Construction
  - Kiewit Construction
  - Purchased through Trainer’s Warehouse