

November 23, 2014

Diane Gelok, President
Pompton Lakes Education Foundation
237 Van Avenue
Pompton Lakes, New Jersey 07442

Dear Ms. Gelok and the Pompton Lakes Education Foundation,

As the school year progresses into the second marking period, I wanted to send an update on the success of the alternate seating options in my classroom. The immediate and sustaining results of these simple changes has far surpassed what I expected when requesting the grant last year.

The school year started, as usual, with all seating options in my classroom being traditional student seats. I obtained baseline data on four students to use when determining how successful the seating options were after a two month period. The students were chosen based upon data collected during the first two weeks of school. There were two girls and two boys, collectively representing both first and second grade students. During the task of small group instruction and independent work, these students were observed to determine the length of time exhibiting "on task" behaviors. This behavior included active listening, participation in discussions and completing classwork.

Before the introduction of the choice of seats, the average time these students remained "on task", without redirection from the teacher or a classroom aide, was five minutes. This varied in terms of which day of the week they were being observed and the time of the day.

After introducing the seats through modeling and practiced safe sitting, the students were allowed to choose the seats they preferred when joining small group work. By far, the preferred seat was the Hokki Stool. It has a concave bottom (which allows for some discrete movement) and no back support. This last feature necessitates the activation and development of core muscles when the stool is being used.

The stability ball, which looks like a yoga ball with feet on it, proved to be more difficult for some students to use properly. The gentle give of the stability ball when in use does provide sensory input and promotes alertness, but the students have needed extensive support to prevent misuse in the classroom. Some students also tend to avoid the stability ball since it requires more concentrated body coordination to remain seated properly. This level of activity can quickly cause fatigue in some of my young students.

After using the seats for a few days, I again collected data from the same four students and noticed a marked improvement in their "on task" behaviors in small group work. The average

went from five minutes to eleven minutes after only a few days! By the end of eight weeks of use in the classroom, the Hokki stools and stability balls provided 17-20 minutes of "on task" behavior. That length of time allows me to complete direct instruction for a small group before sending them off for independent practice. This is priceless.

At this point, the students seem to have their preferred type of seat and gravitate toward what works best for themselves when approaching the small group table. This independence and the ability to make personal choices is an added benefit to the entire process.

In retrospect, I may have chosen to only purchase the Hokki stools due to the ease of use and flexibility. I am considering sharing some of the larger stability ball seats with a resource room teacher to determine if it would be helpful for her students as well. What I appreciate the most from this entire experience was the chance to see a long held desire of providing these options for my students come to fruition.

Thank you again on behalf of the students, the impact will be felt for a long time to come.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Q. Kachur

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