Jessica Ludwig

November 5, 2019

Alternate Seating Interview Summary

The research that I did for my project provided lots of information in regards to how alternate seating can affect students' behavior and focus in class.  However, through carrying out interviews with multiple elementary teachers who are using alternate seating in their classrooms, I was provided with firsthand experience and answers to specific questions I am looking at. For my interviews, I asked three elementary teachers (two kindergarten teachers and a grade 4 and 5 teacher) four questions about alternate seating. I also made sure that they were aware they could answer as many or as few questions as they would like and add any other information that I should know.

The first question I asked the teachers was “how long have you been using alternate seating in the classroom?” For this question I had a mix of reviews. The amount of years alternate seating had been used ranged from 3 to 12 years. Some of the teachers introduced a wider range of alternate seating options about three or four years ago.

The second question I asked was “what types of alternate seating is used in your classroom?” Each teacher had a variety of alternate seating in their classrooms. The types of seating that they use are upside down milk crates with cushions, a child size rocking chair, wobble stools and wobble cushions, stadium chairs, stools, lounge chairs, and blankets. One of the teachers even built their own tent, made out of wood and sheer fabric with cushions on the bottom for the students.

The third question I asked was “how has your students focus and behavior changed from the use of alternate seating?” The answers for this question from the teachers were generally very positive. Alternate seating, which allows the students to choose their seating, increases their focus because each student can choose which type of seating, or standing position helps them learn better. Most people have a hard time sitting in one spot for long periods of time - this especially hard for children. As a result, providing students with the option of different seating or standing during class time can increase their focus. Not only this, but having a rocking chair in the classrooms helps students with ADHD, ASD, or students who have experienced trauma, focus better. For kindergarten students, it can be very difficult for them to self-regulate during class time. However, alternate seating can help students struggling with this. Alternate seating can give students a way to quietly move or wiggle, or be more comfortable when learning. Because of this, it will result in more focus and better behavior from students when they are learning.

Finally, the fourth question I asked was “what obstacles have you encountered with students using alternate seating?” For this question I received a bunch of mixed answers. For the teacher of grade four five split class, there were not really any obstacles that were encountered with using alternate seating. This is because if you outline the rules for students on how to use alternate seating when you are introducing the seating and enforce these rules, students will use the alternate seating as a serious tool for learning. Students also know that some seating is more beneficial for others, so they know who needs to use a certain type of seating. However, finding alternate seating that is affordable can be really tricky. It can also be hard to outline the rules of alternate seating with younger students. Older children also have their own supplies, so making space in the classroom for storage can be difficult because you lose storage with some changes in desk styles.

Through doing this project and carrying out interviews with teachers, I learned a lot of benefits that come with the use of alternate seating in the classroom. Hearing about the experiences that the teachers I interviewed have with alternate seating makes me want to introduce alternate seating in my classroom when I become a teacher.