

The classroom of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is quite a different classroom from the classroom of years ago. Students are coming to school with many unique needs; academically, emotionally, and physically. We, as teachers, are expected to prepare children to become critical thinkers, good collaborators, and excellent communicators. While society has changed and children's needs have become more intense, our classroom physical space has not changed. We still have traditional hard chairs in our classrooms with rectangular tables. The expectation that children can sit all day in this environment and learn well is becoming harder to meet. Students who struggle with ADHD often have a hard time sitting still without falling off their chairs or getting out of their chairs. Other children are more kinesthetic learners and need to move in order to attain optimal learning. Adults also do not like to be stuck at a desk for the entire day of working. I often find myself feeling wiggly after a few hours of sitting for district professional development! Therefore, I believe that having the FriendsOffice wobble chairs in my classroom will help many of my students become more successful learners.

A study done by Erin Messinger, Southern Adventist University, showed that there were many positives to having stability ball chairs in the classroom. One positive according to a 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom was that focus was increased for the students and the students saw the chairs as tools to help them succeed (Dungca, 2014). Angela Hanscom writes that, "Ironically, many children are walking around with an underdeveloped balance system today-due to restricted movement. In order to develop a strong balance system, children need to move their body in all directions, for hours at a time. Just like with exercising, they need to do this more than just once a week in order to reap the benefits (Strauss, 2014)."

I believe that by having the FriendOffice wobble chairs, my students will be able to be more focused, and I will be able to better meet their needs. My students will be able to move around in the chair while they are working; therefore, helping develop their balance systems as well. The wobble chairs will also help those learners who are constantly out of their seat. I believe these chairs will help "ground" them so to speak because they will allow the students to "wiggle and wobble" while they work.

When my students are working, I find many are usually leaning back on their chairs (which is dangerous), or leaning across the table while working. This shows that students need to "wobble" or "wiggle" as they work. I don't see them as "off task" per se, but sometimes falling off the chair or leaning over someone else can become problematic.

I have observed other classrooms with alternative seating (ball chairs, wobble chairs, etc.). What I have seen is an environment that is catered to the *child*, not the child that is catered to the environment. I believe that in order to teach 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, we as teachers not only have to look to change some of our teaching strategies, but also change the physical space in which children learn.

Even after 19 years of teaching elementary children, I am still looking to grow and learn in order to become a better teacher. I believe in my heart a classroom that is ***child centered*** is the best learning environment for all children to succeed. I've been working hard to improve upon my teaching strategies, and I'm excited to change the physical space with the help of FriendsOffice wobble chairs!

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