

---

---

# Where Did All the Desks Go?

— Vicki Cann & Caroline Welch —

---

---

# Things to consider....

- Does everyone learn the same way?
- How do you learn best?
- How long can you sit, listen, learn and retain information?
- What strategies do you use to help maintain your attention throughout the day?





# What is Alternative Seating versus Flexible Seating?

Alternative seating - Classroom modification technique that can increase the amount of sensory stimulation a student receives when seated (Gochenour, Poskey)

Flexible seating - gives students a choice in what kind of learning space works best for them, and helps them to work collaboratively, communicate, and engage in critical thinking (George Lucas Educational Foundation)

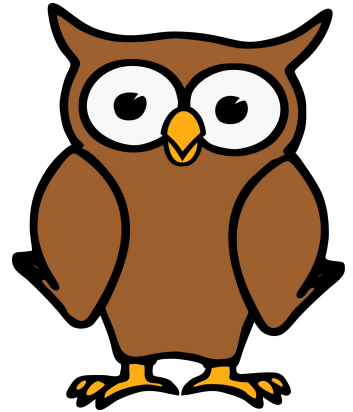
## Are they interchangeable?





# Who could Benefit from Flexible/Alternative Seating?

- Not every student may require alternative seating to learn:
  - Some students learn best when seated at a desk in a standard chair
  - Alternative seating can be a distraction
- Potential student populations may include, but are not limited to:
  - Attention Deficit Disorder
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
  - Sensory Processing Disorder
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - Hypotonia





# Why is Flexible/Alternative Seating used in the Classroom?

- Boost performance
- Improve attention
- Increase motivation and engagement
- Higher academic performance





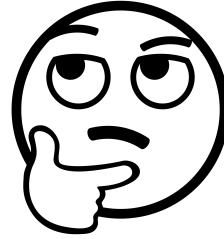
# General Benefits of Flexible/Alternative Seating

- Burning calories
- Using up excess energy
- Improving metabolism
- Increasing motivation
- Better oxygen flow to brain
- Improve core strength
- Improve posture
- Improve behavior
- Overall better health
- Better attention with less restlessness
- Increased participation
- Multi sensory approach to help foster learning
- Problem solving



gg77727069 GoGraph ©

# Food for thought...



- What happens if items are not introduced properly?
- Should students be given options or assigned a spot?
- Is flexible/alternative seating a replacement for movement breaks and recess?
- Are we expecting our kids to sit for too long during the day?
- Are there too many options for students in the classroom?
- Do students utilize alternative/flexible seating as task avoidance?
- Does seating have to be “equipment” or can it be alternative ways to sit?
- Should alternative/flexible seating be used as a reward?



# Guidelines for Flexible/Alternative Seating

- More seating options than students - allows for students to pick best learning spot for them
- Set rules and expectations
- Allow for switching of seats
- Model how it should be done
  - For example:
    - feet on the floor when on the therapy/yoga ball
    - little bounces on the ball
    - seating should not make noise

# Set Rules for Flexible/Alternative Seating in the Classroom

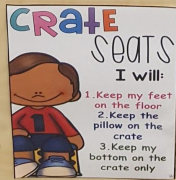
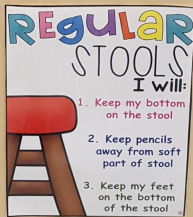
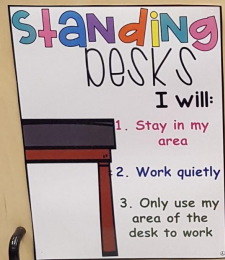
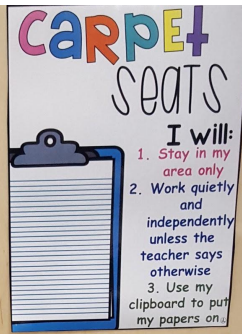
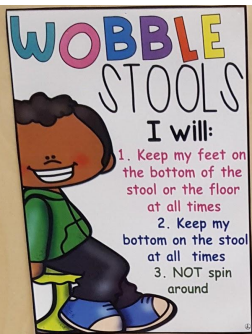
- Use seating options the way they were intended
- Treat seating with respect
- Choose seating that will feel best for your body and help you do your best
- If seating being misused, they will be taken away



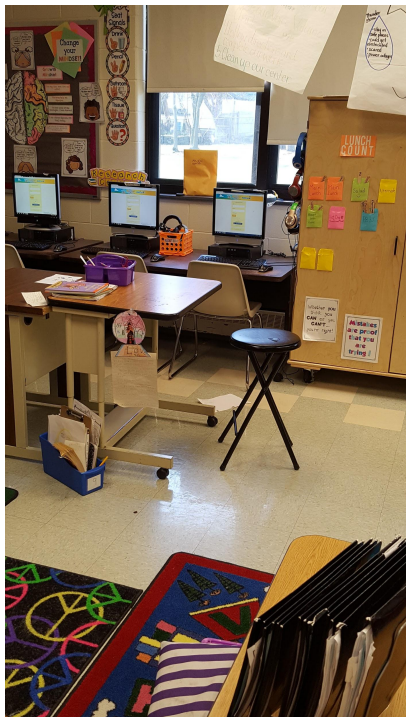
Displaying the rules for flexible seating will help students utilize the seating properly.

Each type of seating may have their own set of rules to follow.

If students do not or cannot follow the rules, then the seating may not be appropriate for them.







# Funding and Liability

Who should pay for it?

- School responsibility?
- Teacher's responsibility?
  - Out of pocket
  - Donors choose
  - Grants

What is the liability if you make it and bring it in?



# Evidence

Just like anything else you are going to find opinions about whether it works or does not work.

Research is limited and what is found does not support or dispell if it works.

No difference in standardized test results for students who utilized alternative/flexible seating versus those who did not (Merritt, 2014)

Data collection is essential when utilizing alternative or flexible seating.



# Common mistakes when introducing seating

- Introduce it all at once
- Poor explanation of how it should work/flow
- Do not give students a chance to trial it or allow for trial period to learn rules
- Do not make a plan for those who flexible seating may not work for
- Do not take into consideration your teaching style, behavior management, and classroom management style

# Personal Experiences

- Has anyone utilized flexible/alternative seating in their classroom?
- How has it worked or how has it not worked?
- What benefits do you see? What obstacles do you see?
- How was it funded? Did you seek board or district approval?
- How did the students respond?
- Recommendations?





# Discussion

# COMMENT





# Resources

- <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/whole-body-listening>
- <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/guided-discovery-in-action/>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/responsive-classroom-everyone-so-nice-joan-murphy>
- <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/alternative-seating-classroom/>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/flexible-seating-student-centered-classroom-kayla-delzer>
- <http://ajjuliani.com/work-the-problem/>
- <http://legacyelementary.blogspot.com/2016/02/all-in-on-flexible-seating-and-why-you.html>
- <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2016-03-01-10-tips-for-using-brain-based-methods-to-redesign-your-classroom>
- <http://blog.teacherspayteachers.com/before-you-buy-discarded-rocket-ship-seat-cautionary-tale-flexible-seating/>
- <https://flexibleseatingclassrooms.wordpress.com/tag/flexible-seating-research/>
- <http://www.teachhub.com/classroom-management-faqs-flexibleseating>
- <https://acculturated.com/kids-dont-need-wiggle-chairs/>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/no-grade-is-too-early-flexible-seating-john-s-thomas>