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The Fidget Chair

Project Proposal Version 3 - April 22, 2024

Senior Project in Digital Media

IDM NYU

Spring 2024

Professor Nathanson

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Project Statement Goal

What is your project about?

Children often have trouble sitting still in a classroom setting. They have energy that when not addressed properly can become a distraction to themselves and their peers. My project is a fidget chair that would let users move without putting themselves in danger or posing as a distraction to others, allowing for better focus and more productivity in school. It will also aid teachers in classroom management by reducing the number of times they must remind a student to stay on task.

What are your project's theme(s) or conceptual underpinnings?

My project themes and conceptual underpinnings are classroom tools, neurodivergence, and promoting fidgeting as a productive activity.

What is your project's "elevator pitch"? Think phrase or 1 sentence maximum.

The fidget chair is a tool that will help students stay focused by giving their energy an appropriate channel to be released.

What is your short project description? Write a 200-300 word paragraph that addresses four of the five essential questions: why (see motivation and influences below) what (see related projects, research, design, and development below) who (see target audience below) and how (see resources, project milestones, and risks & challenges below) about your project.

My project is a fidget chair that would allow elementary school students to fidget at their seats while in the classroom. Growing up with a passion for education, I've spent considerable time in school settings, currently working in a first-grade classroom. Many students struggle to stay focused due to their inability to remain still, a challenge I face to this day. Through personal experience, I've found that controlled fidgeting aids my focus. Recognizing young children's lack of motor skill development, I aim to design a chair that facilitates productive fidgeting, minimizing distractions for improved classroom focus. My target audience is elementary school students and subsequently their teachers and parents. The chair will provide a safe outlet for movement without causing distractions to others, ultimately helping teachers with classroom management. It revolves around themes of classroom tools, neurodivergence, and promoting fidgeting as a productive activity. My project will offer a solution that benefits both students and teachers. I will use materials like wood, metal, a bosu ball, workout bands, hot glue,

fabric, and stuffing. The chair will be designed to facilitate controlled movement while ensuring safety and functionality. Through diligent research, prototyping, and testing, I aim to deliver a practical and effective tool that supports a conducive learning environment.

Motivation

Why are you doing this project?

As someone who has grown up with a love for teaching and education, I have spent my fair share of time in schools. I currently work in a first-grade classroom and have a large handful of students who have difficulty staying on task because they cannot keep their bodies still. It is something even I struggle with at a college level. Throughout my years of trying to stop fidgeting, I have found that controlled fidgeting actually helps me focus better. I am old enough to know what will or will not be distracting to my classmates, and I have the motor skills to control my movements. However, young children haven't fully developed these skills and can be a distraction to themselves and others. I want to design a chair that guides children in how they fidget so that they may do so without causing a distraction or getting visually distracted themselves.

What are you exploring or discovering here? What questions are you asking? Do you love your idea? Does it feel right on instinct? Are you willing to commit to this project? Are you willing to live, sleep, and eat with this project?

I am exploring the ways in which children tend to fidget. I am discovering the differences between neurodivergent and neurotypical children and how fidgeting affects them. I am asking how can I design a chair that meets the needs of students? How can I make the chair fit seamlessly into a classroom? How do children expel their energy? What features can I design to guide children to fidget effectively? What defines effective fidgeting? And many more questions that will arise during the process of executing this project. I do love my idea because it is something that I would have loved to have as a child. It feels right on instinct because I have the opportunity to help children in the future be able to better focus on their schoolwork. I am willing to commit to this project. I am willing to live, sleep, and eat with this project.

Prior work as evidence of my ability to engage in this project:

My prior design work can be found on my portfolio website, www.rileygriem.com. Some of my proudest and most researched projects are my UX designs. Particularly, a [Zara](#)

[website redesign that can be found here](#). I spent several weeks researching competitors, interviewing and testing users, and designing a website that stayed true to the brand while making the user experience far more enjoyable.

My prior work experience in education is extensive as well. At age 10, I spent recess helping second graders at my elementary school learn how to read. At age 13, I spent hours after school volunteering at a local elementary school teaching science at an after school program. From age 14 to 20 I spent my summers as the head first grade counselor at my local summer camp. At age 21, I spend my weekdays as a first grade teacher aide at an elementary school in Brooklyn. I have worked with lots of elementary-aged children throughout my life and I have seen firsthand their similarities and differences in behavior.

Influences

Artists, designers, creative technologists, and/or entrepreneurs & their work that influence my work:

Emily Murphy is a graphic designer and illustrator that I look up to. [Her work on the Lowewkey branding](#) is one of my favorites because it feels young, playful, cohesive, and professional. Emily was a great guide for me when I first started working in graphic design.

Dayla Green is a UX designer that I take inspiration from. Her use of gradients in [her portfolio](#) is an aspect that I would like to incorporate into my portfolio website. I also like the typography that she uses. It feels modern and professional.

My inputs from Ideation & Prototyping:

I took the IDM class Ideation & Prototyping in my freshman year of college. One of our semester-long assignments was to keep a “constant input blog” on which we would post each week about something new we took in. I wanted to try lots of new things and gain experiences in New York that I hadn’t been able to do back home. My inputs consisted of cafés, food, people, films, exercise, museums, restaurants, parks, music, art, and tattoos.

Target Audience

Who is this project for?

This project is for elementary school students (K-2).

Who cares? Who will care? Who is your target audience?

My coworkers and I care. Students, teachers, and parents will care. My target audience is elementary school students (K-2).

What do you want your target audience to experience when they interact with your project?

I want my target audience to experience an elevated ability to focus through the freedom to fidget. I want their peers to experience a lack of distractions and thus improved focus as well.

Related Projects

Compare and contrast similar projects by other artists, designers, or creative technologists to yours.

[Fidget by Sandra Turner](#) is a plastic modular chair for 3-6-year-old children who are fidgety. The chair's rounded base allows for rocking and can be rotated to turn the chair into a table. It features handles and a short backrest. Like my project, it fits seamlessly in the classroom and is safe for users.

[Kids Wobble Chair by Studico ActiveChairs](#) is a plastic stool that allows children to rock in circles and spin. Unlike my project, the stool is slightly dangerous because it is at risk of tipping over.

[Wiggle Wobble Chair Bouncers by Therapy Shoppe](#) are attachments you can add to the legs of standard classroom chairs that allow for bouncing in the chair. I like that this is a modular product rather than its own chair because it would be easier to integrate into classrooms.

[CanDo Plastic Mobile Ball Chair by Fabrication Enterprises](#) is a plastic chair with a yoga ball that sits in the center. The feet have wheels for movement and the yoga ball allows for bouncing. Like my project, the yoga ball is a large feature of the chair. Unlike my project, the wheels would allow for too much movement around the classroom.

Who or what are your competitors? How will it be positioned (branding) and differentiated (market and competitors or like works)?

My competitors are projects like the ones featured above. It will be branded differently because I have the ability to promote the product with my experience in social media advertising. The projects above have little to no modern marketing and exist primarily on Amazon or school product websites. My project is a combination of the elements featured in the similar projects.

Resources

The types of resources most appropriate for my project:

Brainstorming, scholarly articles, blog posts from teachers, talks/podcasts, material research, user research, user testing, observation, and interviews.

Design

The types of resources most appropriate for my project:

Design sketches, concept boards, 2D models, 3D models, videos, images, and physical construction.

Development

Types of Prototypes most appropriate for my project:

Sketches, 3D Models, and physical models.

Project Versions:

Low Res: Sketches and drawings
Alpha: 3D model
Beta: Physical model
Gold: Physical model

Final (Archive) Documentation

How do you anticipate documenting your work? What mediums are you anticipating using?

I anticipate using physical materials like wood, a stability disc, a workout band, multipurpose glue, fabric, foam, various bumpers, spray paint, and furniture nails to execute this project. I anticipate documenting my work by sketching designs, rendering 3D models, and taking pictures of any physical objects. This documentation will live on my process blog and my project website will be a page on my portfolio (www.rileygriem.com/fidget-chair). Post-showcase, I will give the chair to my co-teacher for future use in her classroom.

Risks and Challenges

What are your risks of failure? (lack of tech, time, knowledge, money, etc.) and how will you overcome them?

My risk of failure is a lack of money as I will need to purchase materials in order to construct the chair. I will overcome this by saving my money from work and putting it towards materials. There is also a small risk of lack of space as I will need somewhere to construct the chair where I can use power tools. I will overcome this by utilizing my time at home and the MakerSpace as often as possible.

What are the holes or gaps in your project?

The current holes or gaps in my project are my gaps in knowledge. I must do more research into the neurological component of my project. I am currently relying on the knowledge I have gained from my own experiences, but I must also take into account the research that has been done by professionals in the field.