

TAKE A SEAT

Studies show the impact school seating has on a student's posture and academic performance



By Rey Kam & Trevor Mieczkowski
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & STAFF REPORTER

In a world where there is more weight than ever placed on a student's academic performance, there is only one thing that can save your GPA. Or, according to a BuzzFeed list, there are 11 things. The fact is, while there are innumerable "Top 10" lists and "For students, by students" resources out there, learning is so highly individualized that no single silver bullet tip can guarantee anyone a better grade.

But things can be done to make your brain work more efficiently, which could in turn lead to better information retention and recall. Ironically, it's connected to some of the most eye-roll-worthy parental advice ever to be ignored

by teenagers.

Classroom posture, or the way one sits in his or her desk, could actually contribute to how well he or she perform in any given class, according to the research staff at University of Manitoba Kinesiology and Recreation department.

"The comfort of your chair can affect not only your physical body, but your psychological well being," psychology teacher Jennifer Weisbrodt said. "It makes sense that if you are uncomfortable in your chair, it will affect your mood. We know that mood can certainly affect learning and how well you do in school."



ABBIE CADIEUX

A stunning forest green, these chairs clearly set themselves apart from other chair/desk combinations—quite literally, in fact, as the chairs aren't attached to the desks. Unlike other free-roaming chairs, these sturdy seats are neither absurdly static-y nor are they as unstable or uncomfortable as their science-wing counterparts, the four-legged lab stool.

Apart from their relative hardness, there are virtually no comfort-based disadvantages to this style of classroom seating, as it allows for variable layouts and for students to choose their own orientation in relation to the desk. Additionally, the uprightiness of the seat back and relatively small size of the seat promote alert posture without forcing it. Occasionally, one of these chairs will develop a slight wobble, and they are admittedly less quiet than habitually tardy students may desire, but overall, the science wing chairs are a stellar example of classroom seating.

While very iconic and useful for keeping students from absconding with chairs, the overall experience of a student sitting in one of these institutional contraptions will invariably be characterized by at least moderate discomfort. The attachment of the desk surface to the chair does not allow for very many sitting positions, as it creates obstacles for feet, legs and knees. In addition, attempts to make these chairs more comfortable for taller students created desks with absurdly reclined seat-backs, leaving the issue of knees hitting the gum-covered underside of the desk unsolved, while removing back support for those who don't lounge in the classroom.

Molded plastic seats afford your rump absolutely no friction, meaning that the possibility of sliding slowly into poor, slumped posture becomes more likely. Wooden models are 1) old and creaky and 2) falling apart at the edges.

(Hello splinters?) Possibly the worst chair/desk combo imaginable exists in the desks that incorporate both plastic-coated desk surfaces and plastic chairs, which only maximizes unintended static electricity generation.



ANNA POST



ABBIE CADIEUX

Like the science wing chairs, these chairs are among the forest green color family. According to www.lifehacker.com, the ideal angle for that backrest part of the chair is about 135 degrees. However, these chairs feel like they are a perfect 90 degrees, which causes the spine to arch and can cause future health problems.

Aside from them not being the proper 135 degrees, these chairs are still relatively comfortable, but it is easy to slouch in them. One major positive feature to these chairs are that they're unattached to the desk. Being unattached from the desk allows the student to scoot as close or as far away from the desk as they want, allowing comfort.

Old world meets new Senior foreign exchange student leaves home country to experience American culture

By Mora Downs & Ritika Sanikammu
EDITORS

For Italian foreign exchange student Beatrice Di Cintio, pursuing the American Dream meant leaving her homeland behind. After learning English for more than 10 years and vacationing multiple times in the United States, Di Cintio was ready to take the leap to experience an intimate look at the country.

"I always wanted to do an exchange program or something like that," Di Cintio said. "I come to this country without knowing no one, in new school, also the language and all that. I mean, it's an experience of life, basically. You learn something that's really important ... you can count only on yourself, and I think that this is one of the most important things. You have to start new relationships with new people that you never even imagined to meet in your life."

Although this is her first time in Michigan, Di Cintio is no stranger to the New World. She has travelled to major cities such as New York, Miami and Philadelphia.

Di Cintio started school at the beginning of the second semester. Before officially starting school, she shadowed senior Piper Perkins and grew accustomed to the environment.

"I took her to all my classes and explained little tricks and tips that I have for her and took her to all her teachers and classes," Perkins said.

Her peers have taken an interest in her because she is from a foreign country, but she understands their fascination, as the same situation would arise for an American in Italy.

One of hardest adjustments Di Cintio made was learning how to use a locker. Di Cintio never had a locker in Italy and struggled with remembering her combination at first.

Another major difference Di Cintio has noticed is the amiable relationships between teachers and students.

"I mean, they are really, really, really helpful. They are like friends. In Italy it's different because we can't do that. It's like our teacher is someone bigger than us, and we have to respect them every single time we have to talk to them in the third person."

Di Cintio does not see the differences as a hindrance.

An aspect of North that Di Cintio enjoys is tutorial.

"It's a huge invention," she said. "In Italy, we don't have that. We only do six hours of lessons, 50 minutes each one. This tutorial hour is great because you can do your homework, so in the afternoon you are free."

In her time here, Di Cintio has formed a close relationship with not only Perkins, but her house mother Tracy Sanders as well.

"I found that she is a very mature young lady," Sanders said. "I think our relationship is very good. She's fun. She's very knowledgeable. She (knows) about everything from art to different cities. She's very interesting, and we have a very close relationship," Sanders said.

Although she has connected with her house family and classmates, Di Cintio still finds life in America a bit difficult.

Speaking a different language all the time has been challenging, and Michigan's ever-changing weather has been confusing for Di Cintio.

"In Italy, and in my city, we are used to (having) snow couple of (times) of year, so I know how to manage that," Di Cintio said. "But sometimes here, it's really crazy. One day you have the sun, and you can wear your light coat, the day after you'll have to wear five (or) six pairs of scarves, three, four, five pairs of socks. It's strange."

Despite the struggles, Di Cintio would not trade her experience in America. She sees herself returning to complete a higher education. As much as she loves life here, Italy will always be her home.

"I don't think that I will settle down (in America) forever I will always be traveling between Detroit and Italy because I mean, Italy (will) always (be my) country," Di Cintio said.

"If you go to another country, you will always have your place and that's why I also like to hear from my friends from Italy when it's possible because they are a piece of (me) that will always belong to you."

Diving headfirst into the foreign exchange program has allowed Di Cintio to hone her interpersonal speaking skills while she visits tourist attractions and expands her perspective of the country.

She sees multiple ways the foreign exchange program will shape her personality for the better.

"I will be more independent and less scared, and I will always know wherever I will go, I will settle down, make new friendships and start a new life," Di Cintio said. "And for me, this is one of the most important things in life—that you are sure of yourself."



PIPER PERKINS

ABOVE: Di Cintio (left) with senior Piper Perkins at Five Guys Burgers & Fries. "She's like, 'Uh what is that thing that's called?' and she asked me how to say hamburger when she was ordering," Perkins said. "She was like 'How do you pronounce it again?' and I'm like 'Hamburger'. It's cute."

BELOW: Di Cintio poses in front of Lake St. Clair. "I love Grosse Pointe, especially going around Lakeshore," Di Cintio said. "It's a really beautiful road."



BEATRICE DI CINTIO