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Enthymeme

It isn’t very difficult to make the argument that as a society our attentiveness is continuing to decline. Now, some may say that this is has to do with increasingly reliance on technology. Or that school curriculums are teaching students to try to memorize and regurgitate so much information that kids can’t focus on any one idea at a time. I on the other hand will be arguing that it is the implementation of chairs in every aspect of our lives and the relaxation brought about by them that is causing attentiveness to decrease.

In this paper I want to ask, what are the effects of relaxation on the attentiveness people in the education system, work environment and miscellaneous everyday activities. And to what degree chairs bring about this state of relaxation. To find out whether the usage of chairs is irrelevant or whether they reduce the attentiveness of the user by cause of relaxation.

To begin I must start off with defining a couple of terms, what do I mean by the term ‘relax’ and to what degree must one be relaxed in order for it to qualify as being in a “state of relaxation?” What does I even mean by the term “state of relaxation?” According to *dictionary.com,* ‘relax’ has a couple of different meanings. “To make less tense, rigid, or firm. To diminish the force of. To slacken or abate, as effort, attention.” To name a few, for this paper we I will be referring to the 3rd and the 8th definitions. “To slacken or abate, as effort, attention, etc.” and “To reduce or stop work, effort, application, etc., especially for the sake of rest or recreation.” When I say that some object is causing a person to be put into a state of relaxation, I am saying that said object is causing the person to be relaxed. Or the object is causing the person to slacken in attention, to reduce or stop work/effort.

Define B

The next term that I need to define is attentiveness. Both what it means definition-wise but also what all falls under attentiveness, so you understand all that is being encompassed when I use the term attentiveness. Attentiveness is the act of giving something your “attention” and *dictionary.com* defines attention as “a concentration of the mind on a single object or thought, especially one preferentially selected from a complex, with a view to limiting or clarifying receptivity by narrowing the range of stimuli.” Simply put this refers to being concentrated or focused on a single idea, object, or task at a time, in other words not letting your mind wander. So when I use the term “reduces attentiveness” this refers to whatever decreases concentration and increases the chance of one’s mind wandering.

Before I can get to the crux of the argument, I must first explain the correlation between relaxation and attentiveness, because without this correlation the whole argument is as good as invalid. Though while it may be necessary to prove the correlation between increased relaxation to decreased attentiveness, I do not think it is a terribly difficult argument to prove. I will mainly be using examples of mine and others personal lives along with some logical conclusions to prove my point.

The evidence I would like to give, is a personal experiment of mine own on this very subject. Recently I conducted a little experiment for this paper. I was working late on a Thursday night, and I just gotten off of work at 2:20am. Not wanting to miss my 8am English class that morning I chose to drive to UVU and sleep in the parking lot for about four hours rather than head home. This way I guaranteed to make it to my class on time and not sleep in. Consequently I was very tired, though having just went through one of the worst nights of sleep in my life to attend this class I was determined to pay attention no matter what. The professor was engaging enough, and the class was interesting enough that it wasn’t particularly difficult to stay awake. I was actually surprised at how attentive I was sitting down and listening to the professor. Once class reached the half-way point, I was to stand up in the back so that I could compare my attentiveness to sitting and standing. I was tempted not to do it as I was completely engaged in that class and didn’t see any need to. However, I opted to do it anyway and so I stood up walked to the back of the class and continued to listen. And I was honestly amazed at the subtle but significant difference I felt. I felt a lot more focused when I was standing up, my mind felt slightly more focused, and I found it easier to concentrate. While sitting I didn’t realize that my previous nights lack of sleep was hitting me harder than I realized. It didn’t even occur to me until I looked back on it but while sitting I my mind would occasionally wander to the thoughts of sleep, and I would find myself trying to get more comfortable in my chair. It wasn’t until I really looked back on myself in detail trying to find what caused the change in focus did, I realize I was subconsciously doing this. I hadn’t realized that while sitting there was a lot of small little things that would slowly take my mind away from what it was focused on. It wasn’t until I stood up that a weight, I didn’t know I had, had been lifted from my mind.

Now, you may be asking what does the correlation and effects of relaxation have to do with chairs specifically? It is that chairs are the main vector of relaxation that I bring them into this. Chairs are everywhere, they are consistently in nearly every part of our lives. And in being in every part of our lives this means that they are causing increased relaxation in every part of our lives and therefore decreasing attentiveness throughout every aspect of our lives.

Before I get to much into the effects of chairs, I must first define what exactly a chair is. Because when I use the term chair, I don’t simply mean a seat that has four legs and supports someone. I am going to be using a much broader definition, to say anything that “transfers the majority of the stress of supporting the user’s body mass from the user’s own appendages to something else.” In simple terms, anything somebody can sit on, this is because anything that can serve the functionality of a chair might as well be a chair for the sake of this argument.

To prove that sitting in chairs makes one more relaxed let me give a bit of a mental image. This guy let’s call him Branson works construction, he has been working out of town for the past week working 10–12-hour days. He just got home and what is the first thing he does? You might say Branson goes to chillax on his sofa and turn on some TV. Maybe he goes to his bed and read a book before falling asleep. He might play some videogames, or maybe browse social media on his phone. Notice all of these situations involve Branson and some form of chair. Afterall, we would have a hard time imagining Branson’s first choice to be to head to the gym or go on a four-mile hike. It is because nearly everything that involves relaxing involves a chair that says a chair causes relaxation.

As you can see, sitting in chairs make people less attentive because chairs allow the person to relax. This isn’t to say chairs are a bad thing, this is simply a conclusion that I have come to. And it may prove useful to those who are struggling with attentiveness, as it is not the most difficult thing to test for yourself.