A Collaborative Handwriting Intervention Model
An Educational Course for School-Based Occupational Therapists

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SETTING & BACKGROUND

Setting
- Atlanta metro school system
- Eight school-based occupational therapist participants
- Kindergarten and first grade classrooms

Background
- Majority of school-based occupational therapists provide intervention outside the classroom.
- District recommends collaborative methods, but therapists do not have a model, or evidenced-based handwriting curriculum to use.
- Children do not receive daily handwriting instruction because teachers are unfamiliar with a handwriting curriculum (Asher, 2006 & Pfeiffer et al., 2015).
- Multiple students are referred to occupational therapy for handwriting delays (Case-Smith, 2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critically appraised 14 quantitative and qualitative research articles published from 2002-2015

Themes that emerged from the literature
- Effectiveness of educational courses (Fosterlund et al., 2009)
- Current state of handwriting instruction in schools (Donica et al., 2012)
- Effective collaborative intervention(s), such as the Size Matters Handwriting Program and other handwriting curricula used to support handwriting instruction (Pfeiffer et al, 2015; Ohl et al., 2013; Campbell et al., 2012; Case-Smith et al., 2012)
- Positive outcomes for students with handwriting after OT collaboration with teachers (Case-Smith, Holland, Lane & White, 2012)

DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Mixed methods design
Pre-and-post-intervention outcome measure designed by project implementer
Six week intervention
Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance Model

OUTCOMES

Quantitative Outcomes
- Mean Pre and Posttest Survey Questions
- Comfort level with providing in class collaborative handwriting instruction
- Understand the importance of letter size for handwriting instruction
- Knowledge of a handwriting curriculum that allows students to score their own work
- Knowledge of an evidenced-based collaborative handwriting curriculum
- Knows how to provide collaborative handwriting instruction
- Knows most effective handwriting instruction approach
- Familiarity with Size Matters Handwriting Program

- RATING SCALE
  - 1-VERY LOW 2-LOW 3-MEDIUM 4-HIGH 5-VERY HIGH
  - Pre-test  Post-test

- * Statistically significant positive difference on each question between pre and posttest scores on the one sample paired t-test and the sign test *

Qualitative Outcome Themes
- * In-class collaboration improves teacher/therapist relationship
- * In-class collaboration for handwriting instruction improves student performance
- * Using Size Matters for collaborative instruction has several advantages

SIGNIFICANCE TO OT

- Increase school-based OTs knowledge of implementing an evidenced-based handwriting program that can be used by general and special education teachers for all students.
- Improves the collaborative relationship between teachers and school-based OTs.
- Focuses the work of school-based OTs from individual intervention to intervention in the classroom, the natural context.
- Correlates with AOTA’s Centennial Vision elements, expanding collaboration for success and the power to influence (AOTA, 2007).

PIO QUESTION

Do school-based occupational therapists report a change in their ability to implement collaborative handwriting instruction after participation in an educational course?

SUMMARY

- An educational course is an effective tool that can be used to change knowledge, comfort level, and professional practice.
- School-based OTs’ knowledge about Size Matters and collaborative handwriting instruction skills significantly improved after participation in the educational course.
- School-based OTs and teachers recognized the value in collaborating and using the Size Matters Handwriting Program.