



Impact Report

2021-2022

Foreword



The last two years have been a whirlwind and I honestly could not tell you where the time has gone. We started 2021 by entering a third national lockdown in the UK; something none of us thought we would see at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. Personally, I entered the second year where I was unable to return home to see my family as Australia had imposed very strict immigration restrictions.

*GriffinOT grew massively throughout 2020-21. As our resources were already online, we were immediately ready to support schools and families when lockdowns hit. **We did not need to pivot or change; we were ahead of the curve.** At the end of 2022, it feels foreign to think that online training was an anomaly historically, and the reason I started the online arm in 2017.*

Reflecting on the initial growth of students followed by the slowdown in 2022, I think the primary difference is time. During the school closures, education staff had more time to dedicate to personal development. Once life was back in full swing, this time was quickly eroded. Some training will also have returned to face to face, reducing the need for an online resource.

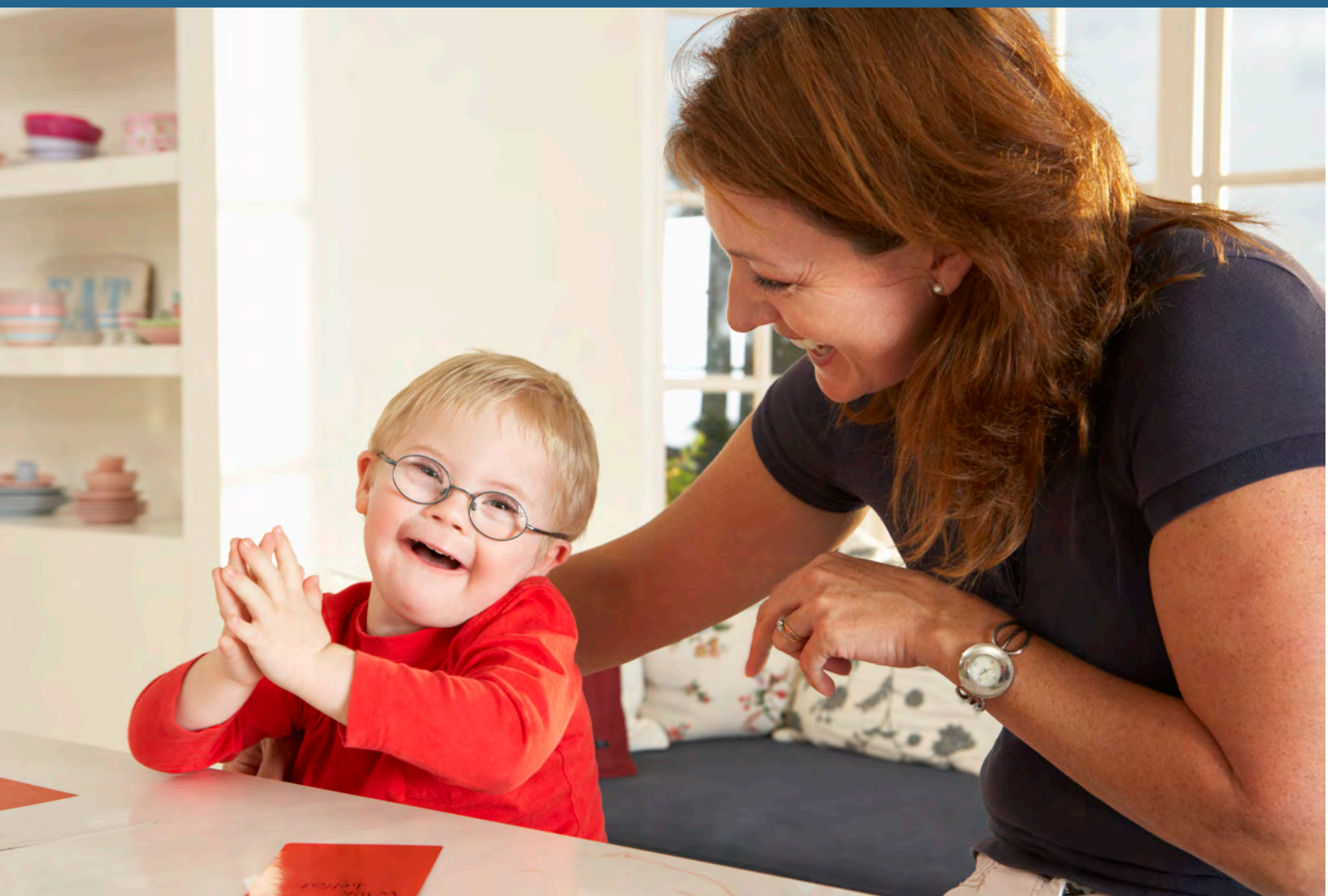
*In 2022 I released **Write Rules**, the handwriting resource I have had in my head for many years. I'd like to express a huge Thank You to the teaching staff who helped to test the materials. It would not have been possible to complete the resource without their help.*

It was also the year GriffinOT took a bit of a back step in my life. Once Australia removed the weekly arrival restrictions, and finally opened its borders, I was able to go home for the first time in three years. I spent some time supporting my family and was able to catch up with friends who I had not seen for many years. It was a real privilege that I was able to take the time.

My goal for the next two years is to make the online training and resources even more accessible. There are several tweaks which I know will be helpful. I am also providing live online training for occupational therapists to help them to expand their knowledge. It's going to be a busy two years and I look forward to sharing it with you in the next impact report!

-Kim Griffin, Founder of GriffinOT





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1. What we do

Griffin Occupational Therapy (GriffinOT) aims to provide **affordable, high quality**, online children's **occupational therapy support** for educators and parents. We are on a mission to ensure that all adults supporting children with additional needs have immediate access to **occupational therapy expertise**. We make advice on **sensory processing differences** and **motor skill delays** accessible to everyone.

Our online resources include: website articles, online **sensory training** and fine motor skill programmes. All materials are created by our founder, UK registered **occupational therapist Kim Griffin**. Kim has over 20 years' experience supporting children with additional needs. She designs GriffinOT's resources to **help educators and parents** understand how they can support children's sensory differences or motor skill challenges.



GriffinOT's **resources** support adults helping children who have **sensory issues**, motor skill or developmental delays, autism, dyspraxia or ADHD. All of our resources, including our **online training**, are designed with parents and educators in mind, and include ideas for home and school. We encourage educators and parents to use our resources to **support children** of all ages, regardless of if they have a diagnosis.

2. Timeline of achievements

2021

January 2021

FEA Incubator



July 2021

We employ a Kickstarter employee who stays with us for a year

August 2021

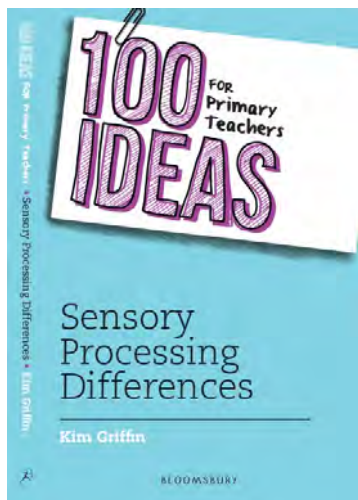
Kim presents her fine motor skill research at the Inclusive and Supportive Education Conference



Kim wins the Cambridge Social Innovation Prize



Kim's first book with Bloomsbury publishing is released



December 2021

GriffinOT has helped over 15 000 students on our training

2022

February 2022

Kim shares her knowledge on the OT in Focus and Classroom Secrets podcasts

March 2022

Kim presents at the LinkLive conference



April 2022

Our handwriting programme Write Rules is released



October 2022

Kim shares her OT knowledge on the SEND in the experts podcast



November 2022

Kim presents two posters at the OT Show, showcasing GriffinOT's work. She wins best poster for the sensory one.



November 2022

Kim shares her knowledge on the SENDcast



December 2022

GriffinOT has helped over 19 000 students and receives almost half a million visits to the website annually.

Thanks so much for this hugely helpful and insightful online training Kim, what a great resource for everyone (professionals and parents/carers alike) to equip them with a better understanding - I will 'see' sensory challenges in a far more informed way now.

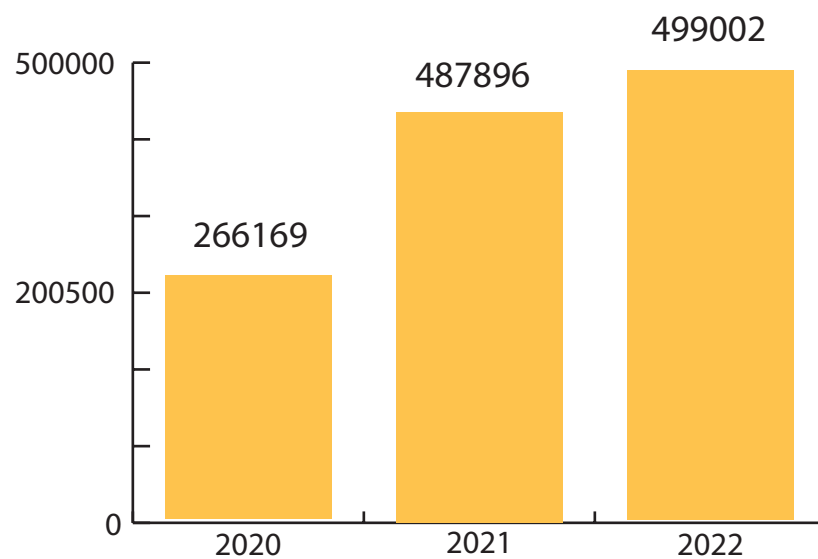
-Allied Health Professional, England

3. Reach

Our Website

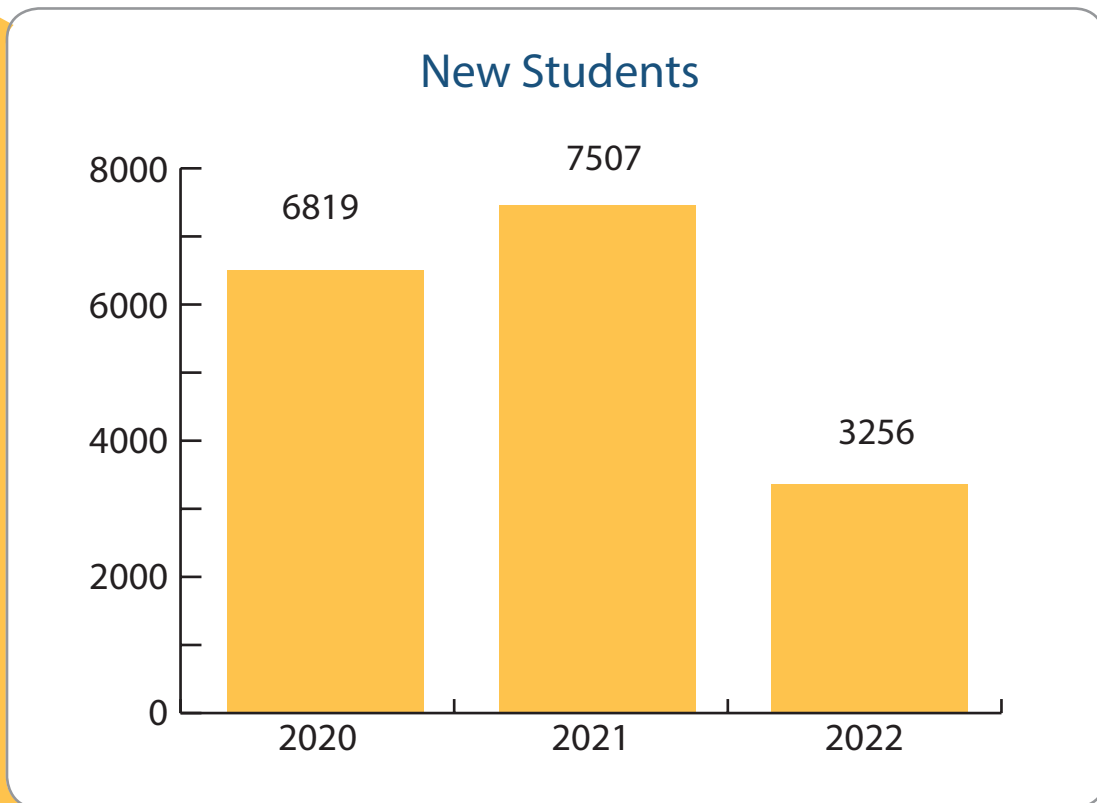
The GriffinOT website is designed to offer immediate help to those searching for information on sensory processing and fine motor skills. We are now helping almost half a million people annually.

Number of people receiving support from our website

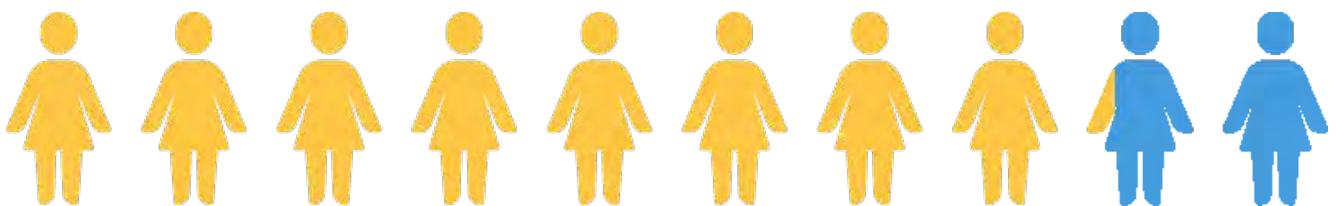


4. Course feedback

Our courses offer even more support to those who need it. We saw huge growth in our enrolments during the Covid-19 school closures as people shifted to online resources for support. Enrolments declined in 2022, but we still supported three times more students than in 2019. Educators continue to be our most frequent course participants.



82% would definitely recommend our training to others



The average rating for quality on our training is 4.5/5



"I love the way it has been developed and that it is so easy to use and absorb."

"The course gave me a good level of understanding and has opened my eyes more to how I can support my son."

"Thank you, I'm working with primary school age children for the first time, and this course has given more confidence."

"Very informative and eye-opening session which was helpful and easy to understand."

"A brilliant course, so informative and interesting."

"Very interesting and informative course, well presented and easy to follow. It has given more insight to the children I work with and will help me to help them adjust to our setting."

"Working in adoption support I see a lot of children with sensory processing difficulties and this course has been useful for my work."

"The course is wonderfully set out, so informative and user friendly."

"Thank you for making training available and affordable."

"It was an excellent learning experience."

-Feedback from students on our free sensory introduction

5. Future developments

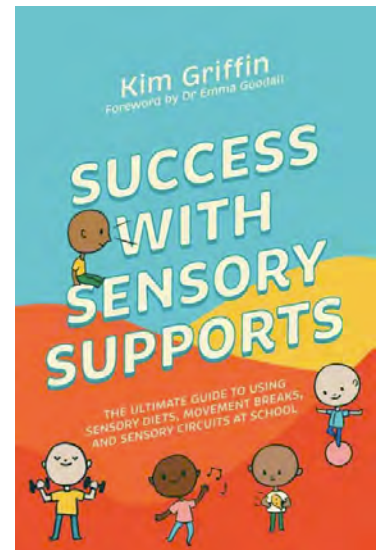
The focus for the next two years will be to reorganise our existing content and to increase our reach within education and occupational therapy.

Upcoming content

- ✓ Forthcoming title 'Success with Sensory Supports'
- ✓ Feel It Change It self-regulation curriculum
- ✓ Sensory Series: Live training for OTs

Planned evaluations

Over the next few years we would like to demonstrate the impact that training has on student outcomes in education. We would also like to look at the impact of approaching handwriting from a motor first, rather than phonics first perspective.



Time for a reset

The following year will be a time for a reset and reevaluation of our existing content and structure. Whilst we know that there is a huge need for training within education, the challenge is how to make this a priority and focus within schools when there is such little time available. We want to make our resources as accessible as possible to increase the number of children they support.

We are always looking to create partnerships with relevant organisations. Please feel free to contact us if you feel you have an alignment with our mission.



Evaluations/Posters

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Auditing the impact of online sensory training for educators, professionals and families

Background

Sensory processing differences impact children's school **participation**¹ and ability to engage in **meaningful occupations**². Sensory strategies are one way to support participation in meaningful occupation³.

Online training can provide an immediate and easily scalable, **universal support**. In line with RCOT guidelines⁴, it can build capacity among those supporting children with Special Education Needs, and extend the profession's reach to the maximum number of children. **To help more educators and parents** understand and support these children, GriffinOT began providing online sensory training in 2017.

AIM

To audit the impact of online training on participant's knowledge, confidence and practical application of sensory regulation strategies when supporting children at school and home.

About SPWGOT

Sensory Processing with GriffinOT⁵ (SPWGOT) is an online training course for teachers and parents. It aims to help them to **understand** how sensory differences can impact their child's day-to-day **regulation and engagement**. The training is divided into three levels.

Level 1

An introduction to the senses and how they support participation in occupation.

Level 2

Explores the relationships between arousal, self regulation, sensory differences and how they, along with other factors, impact participation in everyday life.

Level 3

Develops the participants' understanding of how to safely use environmental, personal, occupational and sensory strategies with children to facilitate their self regulation and successful participation at home and school.

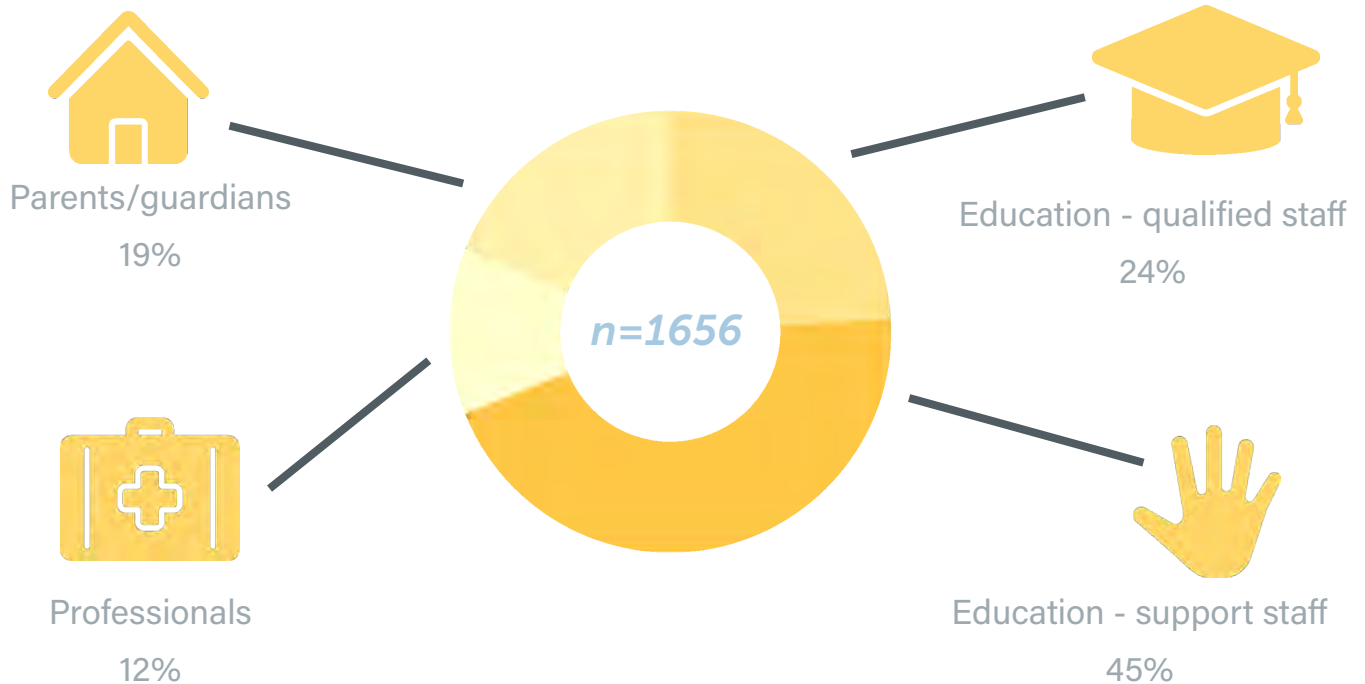
Methods

Optional anonymous **pre and post evaluation** questionnaires are embedded into each Level of SPWGOT. The questionnaires collect both qualitative and quantitative data that track changes to participants' **knowledge, confidence, use** of sensory supports, and their satisfaction with the training overall.

This poster presents a preliminary analysis of the data from participants who have consented to the sharing of **anonymised data**. Ordinal data has been analysed using medians and percentages. Qualitative feedback has been summarised.

Results

Demographics

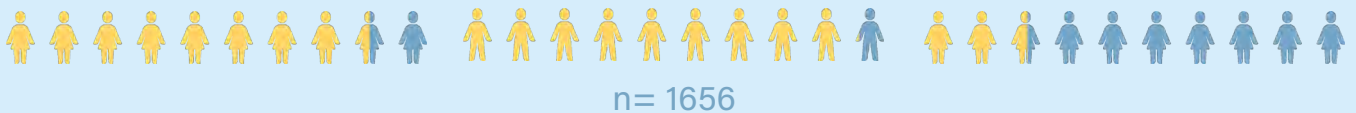


Participants baseline experience

Percentage of participants who have access to sensory regulation equipment
85%

Percentage of participants using sensory strategies at least occasionally
91%

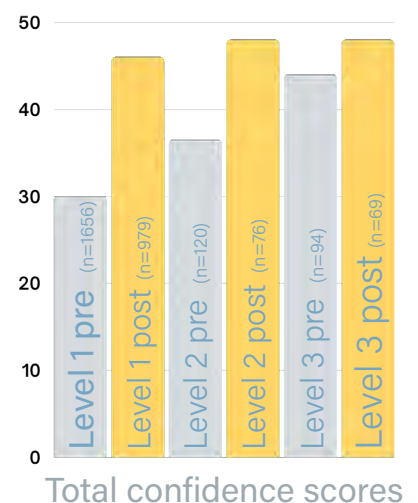
Percent of participants who have previously attended training on sensory processing
26%



Changes to knowledge and confidence

Multiple choice questions tracked changes to **knowledge** in each Level. (Example: Sensory Processing Disorder is a stand alone medical diagnosis - True/False.) Participants' **knowledge scores increased** after each Level.

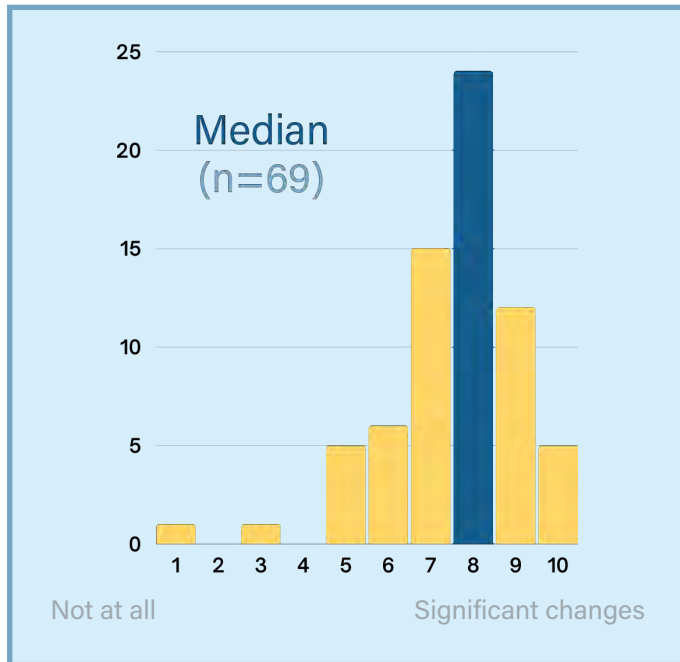
Confidence was measured using a ten point rating scale. Participants were asked the same five non-standardised questionnaires in each level. (Example: How would you rate your ability to use sensory strategies/supports correctly and safely? Rate from 1-10). There was a **large increase** in reported confidence scores **after the first hour of training**.



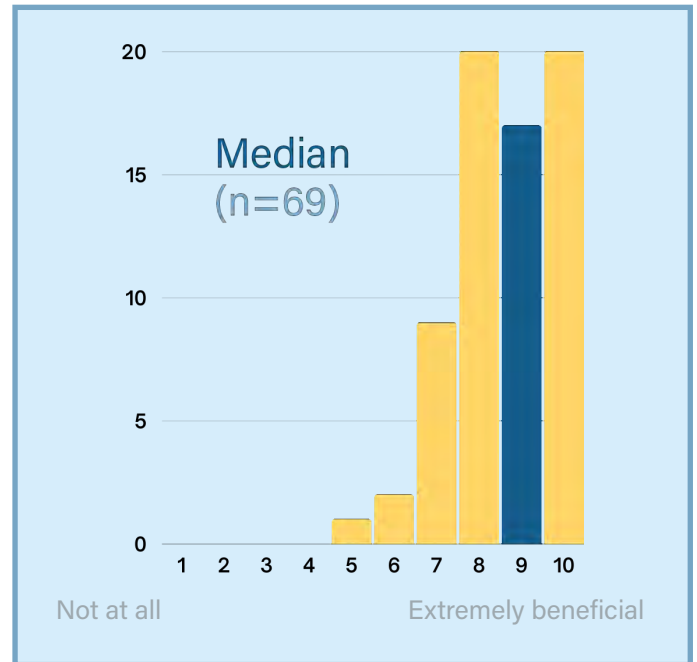
Impact on practice

At the end of Level 3, participants were asked **how they have been using the information** they learnt in the training. They reported making significant changes to their practice and felt these changes have been helpful for their children.

How much do you think you have changed your practice?



How beneficial are supports to children's learning and attention?



Regulate
Ideas Knowledge
Certain Processing Work Behind
Greater Different Look Autism
Needs Help Child Much Lots
Class Experiencing Class Practice Difficulties
Classroom Triggers Things Practice
Causing Practice
Awareness able
School Support Behaviours
Better Area Children
Working aware Behaviour
Strategies Pupils Consider Become
Possible
Looking Implement Issues
Adapt Using

Understanding sensory

Going forward

Participant feedback

"Loved the course and found it really **practical** and useful"
Teaching Assistant

"Kim is a great teacher I like that the **course builds** over the levels and although the desire is for quick solutions and strategies to help, it is so important to **understand** what and why you are doing things that I am glad the **strategies** are embedded in the learning"
Teaching Assistant

"This course has given me a **fantastic foundation** to move forward with both in terms of supporting the young people whom I work with and in terms of allowing me to pursue further knowledge, thank you"
Teaching Assistant



82.2% highly recommend SPWGOT (n=219)

Implications for practice

Preliminary data indicates **positive changes** to knowledge, confidence and application following online sensory training.

A significant number of participants report that, although **they have access to and use** sensory supports, they have **not received any training**. Increasing training availability, to ensure individuals **understand** the impact of sensory differences and **use sensory strategies safely**, is recommended.

Future recommendations

Online training should be considered as a **scalable way** for occupational therapists to **make training accessible** to school staff and families and to **close the reported training gap**.

Whilst sensory and regulation supports are perceived to be helping children's learning and attention, further investigation is required to **quantify** and fully understand the **impact** they have on children's **participation and engagement**.

References

1. Sleeman, H.R.G., & Brown, T. (2021). An exploratory study of the relationship between typically-developing school-age children's sensory processing and their activity participation. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. May 2021. DOI: 10.1177/03080226211020651
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5. More information about SPWGOT is available at www.GriffinOT.com under the training menu

Auditing how educators use and monitor sensory strategies in schools

Kim Griffin
UK OT Show
24 Nov 2022



Introduction

Sensory differences impact children's school participation (1) and ability to engage in meaningful occupations (2). Requests to support sensory needs make up **48-94% of referrals** to occupational therapists (3,4,5). Occupational therapists utilise **sensory strategies** as one way to support participation in meaningful occupation, including education (3).

To help educators to understand and support sensory needs in their classroom GriffinOT provides online training – **Sensory Aware with GriffinOT** (6). This poster **audits** data collected from **education staff** regarding their knowledge and confidence before they complete the training. It includes a description of the current use of sensory supports in schools and how educators are **measuring the impact** of the sensory strategies they are using.

Methodology

An **online questionnaire** including both qualitative and quantitative methods was designed and administered pre and post training sessions. Participants **consented** for GriffinOT to use anonymised aggregated data in impact measurement audits.

Closed questions were analysed using **medians** or percentages. A **word frequency** count and thematic analysis was completed to summarise text based answers.

Results

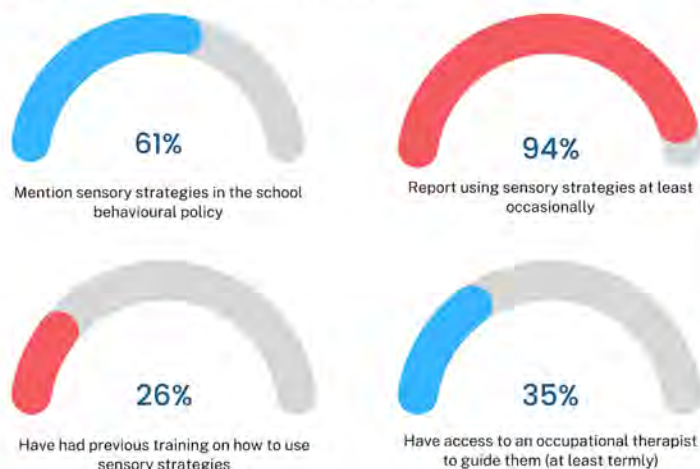
Demographics

A total of **758 educators** completed the questionnaire, only **528 UK based educators** consented to their anonymised data being used in audits. **Teaching assistants** are the largest group of participants and many of them are based in **mainstream schools**. Educators had from **0-50 years of experience** working in schools (median = six years). Most educators worked in **primary schools** (54%) with secondary schools being the next frequent place of work (26%).



Use of sensory strategies

A high proportion of educators (94%) report they **use sensory strategies at least occasionally** and most report they have access to sensory strategies in their school (96%). Educators report they typically help five children with sensory needs/week (range 0-100, median 5). Two thirds (61%) report their school **behaviour policies mention sensory strategies**. However, only a quarter (26%) have had previous access to training and only a third (35%) currently have **access to occupational therapy support**.



Self-report of knowledge and confidence

Participants were asked to **rank their knowledge and confidence** on a scale from 1-10. The median score for all questions before starting the training was 5/10. Questions included:

- How would you rate your overall **knowledge** of sensory processing and sensory strategies?
- How would you rate your **confidence** when supporting individuals with sensory needs?
- How **equipped** do you feel to support learners with sensory needs in your classroom?
- How confident do you feel that you are able to use **sensory strategies correctly and safely**?



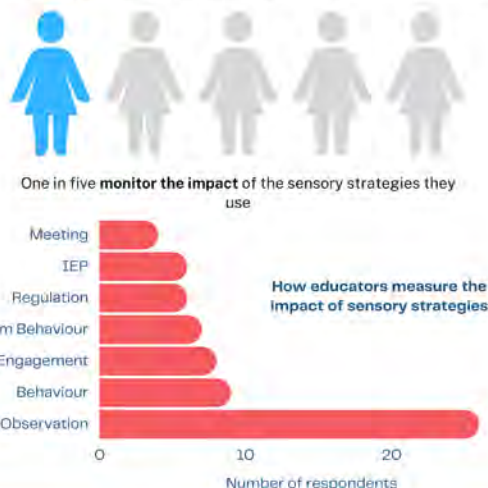
Types of sensory supports

Fidget toys are the most frequently used tool by educators using sensory strategies (34%). The next most frequently used sensory tools were **wobble cushions** (12%), **balls** (9%), weighted products (8%), a calm space (7%) and a sensory room (5%). Chew toys, ear defenders, trampolines, dough or putty and a dark space were supports used by 3-4% of educators.



Evaluation of sensory strategies

Only a fifth (19%) of respondents gave a relevant response to the question 'How do you monitor the impact of the sensory supports you use?' Most participants **left this question blank** (73%), some responded saying they don't use them or they don't know how they monitor the impact, or that it is not applicable. Some respondents listed sensory strategies rather than an outcome measure. **None** of the participants who responded provided a standardised measurement tool.



Discussion & Conclusions

The responses in the questionnaires indicated a **huge discrepancy between the number of educators who report they are using sensory strategies, and the training and access to occupational therapy support they receive**. When similar discrepancies in training and application of sensory strategies were reported by SENCOs (7), it was recommended sensory training is included in their SENCO qualification. As teachers and teaching assistants are usually the staff who are implementing sensory strategies, it could be argued that it is just as important for them to receive training and ongoing support.

Alarmingly, **only 19%** of educators in the sample reported that they **monitor the impact the sensory strategies** have on their students' performance. This could be because 60% of the respondents were teaching assistants, rather than the qualified staff typically responsible for measuring student outcomes. The responses indicated that **no systemic or formal measures were being used to monitor impact**.

Overall, the audit indicates that sensory strategies are **used frequently** in schools, but there is limited training, support, and outcome monitoring. **More research** is required to understand the impact of sensory strategies on learning and how educators and therapists can measure this.

References

1. Swettenham, K. R. G., & Brown, T. (2021). An exploratory study of the relationship between typically developing school-age children's sensory processing and their activity participation. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 85(1), 1-10. DOI: 10.1016/j.bjot.2021.02.001
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Co-creating a handwriting programme (Write Rules) for reception and year one classrooms

AUTHOR:

Kim Griffin Occupational Therapist, GriffinOT
Presented at UK OT Show, November 2022



INTRODUCTION

Handwriting is an essential occupation for primary school children (1). It is a **complex task** which relies on language, visual perception skills, motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination (2,3). Occupational therapists are often asked to support children with handwriting difficulties (3).

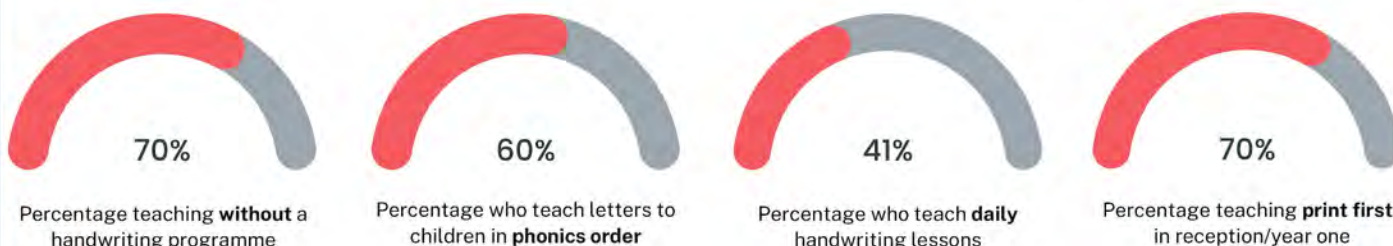
Current evidence advocates for **explicit teaching and practice** of handwriting (2). There is also evidence that teaching **print first and letters in formation patterns** is best practice, particularly for children with developmental coordination disorder (2,4). This does not always occur in schools (1), particularly when schools use phonics programmes to teach handwriting. This poster explores the initial development of a print first, formation order handwriting programme called Write Rules (5) designed by an occupational therapist.

Write Rules is designed to be used as a universal OT support (6) to teach handwriting in classrooms. **Write Rules** was developed to help schools embed best practice and support all children with learning the foundations of handwriting. It is a 60-week handwriting programme which includes **songs**, whole body **movements**, **fine motor** activities and **explicit letter formation** practice. There are also **training videos** to up-skill teachers.

PART A: UNDERSTANDING CURRENT PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS

Methodology: A questionnaire asking about **current handwriting practices** in schools was sent to teachers on the GriffinOT mailing list and distributed on social media on GriffinOT pages and into teacher facebook groups in February 2021. Frequency of participants' responses was collated for the results.

Results: Fifty-one [51] teachers completed the questionnaire, the majority of them taught in **primary school** [85%]. Most of the teachers did not use a specific programme to teach handwriting and the majority taught letters in phonics order. Less than half of the teachers said they teach daily lessons.



PART B: DEVELOPING WRITE RULES WITH TEACHERS

Methodology: Teachers who completed the initial questionnaire were given the option to **support development and testing** of the Write Rules handwriting programme for the **2021/22** academic year. Teachers provided initial feedback on the outline of the programme and then half termly feedback on Write Rules content and how they **used it with their class**. Feedback was provided via email and was used to make changes to content.

What worked well

My class **love the songs** - they sing them as they form the letters.

The kids are absolutely **loving the programme**, and always ask for the Crocodile Snap song....I'm singing it in my sleep now!

The **training videos** were **great**.

I think the programme was **incredibly useful** for me to **understand all of the background** to the art of writing.

It's **fantastic** - a visiting OT commented on the excellence of this program too.

I really enjoyed using the **Moves with Jessie videos** (gross motor movements) with the children and felt they were very **beneficial**.

It was good for **building fine motor skills**.

It was good to have a **range of resources** and a structured programme that I can just hand to a teaching assistant to follow.



What could change

The site is quite **tricky to navigate** and find what you need.

It would be great to have some **more support with holding a pencil**. Maybe some more videos to support getting the pencil grip correct.

I think it would be good to **develop letter formation a little sooner** as mine really struggled towards the end of the year getting to where they needed to be.

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION

Write Rules is a **universal occupational therapy** support which aims to **up-skill teachers** and embed occupational therapy handwriting support into the mainstream classroom. Teachers testing Write Rules **valued the training videos and variety of resources**. The resources were used differently by each teacher, and some did not have capacity to test the programme fully. Whilst **initial feedback from teachers is positive**, further evaluation is needed to measure the impact on children's handwriting outcomes.

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