



The Influence of a Sensory Room on School-Aged Children’s Focus, Mental Health, and Engagement in the Classroom

Hannah Higgins, OTS; K. Megan Carpenter, OTD, OTR/L

Department of Occupational Therapy | University of Alabama at Birmingham

Michelle Coppedge, M.ED | Thorsby High School

Introduction

- Sensory processing disorders impact 5 to 16 percent of school-aged children.
- The performance of a child in the classroom may suffer because of sensory challenges and increase negative behaviors.
- Understanding the advantages of sensory rooms and how they can effect a child’s behavior in the classroom is important to help practitioners make treatment plans.
- Previous research shows the most affected sensory areas are auditory, tactile, olfactory and visual.
- Previous research shows positive effects after using a sensory room:
 - Behavior benefits
 - Increase attention
 - Increase mood

Methods

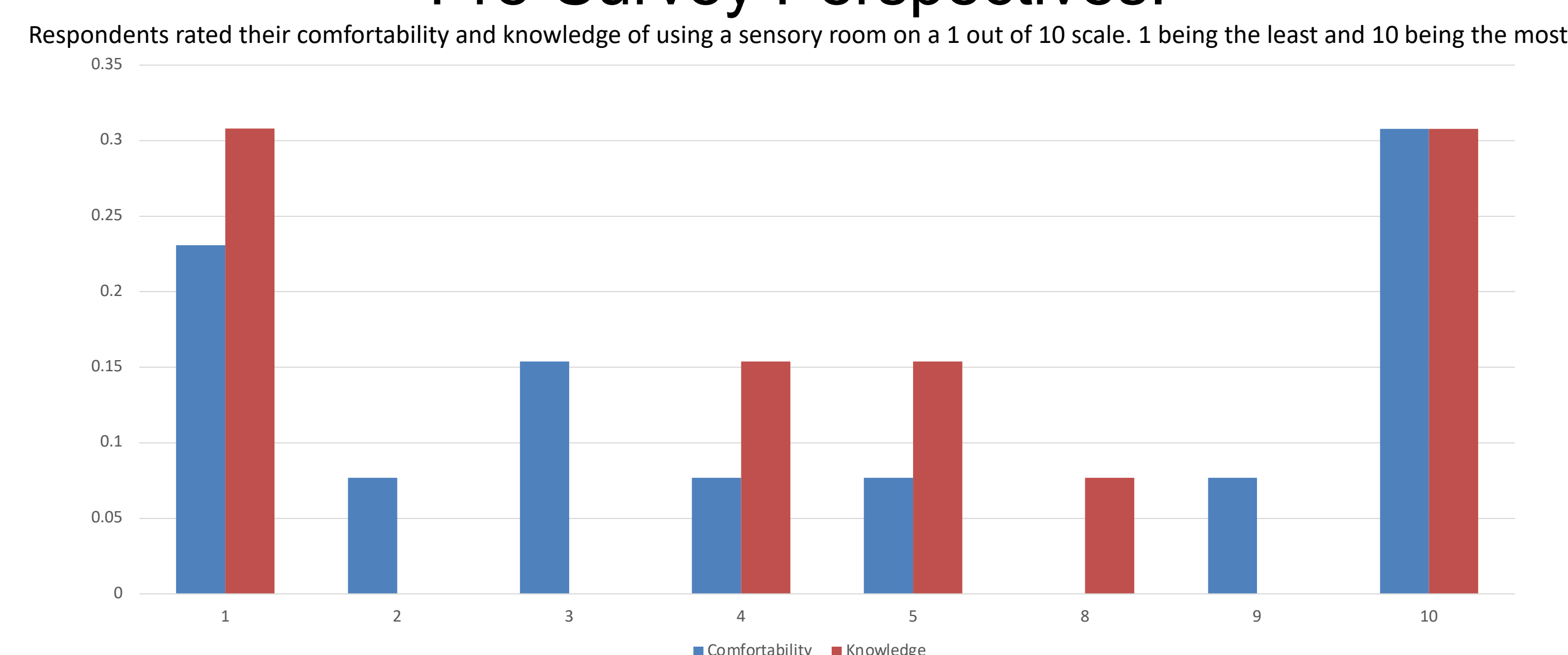
- Project funded through a donation to Thorsby High School
- Collaboration between Chilton County special education director, Thorsby High School principal, special education teachers, and occupational therapy student
- Participants
 - Teachers at Thorsby High School (K-12)
- Initial survey
 - Determine sensory room needs
 - Comfortability using a sensory room
 - Knowledge of a sensory room
- Once the sensory room was completed, video modules were made and distributed to teachers to use as basic training on how to use the sensory room with children in the school. Once teachers watched the video modules, they completed a post-survey.
- Post-Survey
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the video modules.
 - Determine additional equipment needs

Results

PARTICIPANTS:

- 92% Female
- 8% Male
- 46.2% aged 46 years or older
- 38.5% aged 36 – 45 years
- 15.4% aged 26 – 35 years
- 53.9% had not previously used a sensory room
- 46.2 % had previously used a sensory room

Pre-Survey Perspectives:



This information was used to "build" and implement a sensory room. Video modules were then created to provide training on how to appropriately use the sensory room. After completion of the video modules, participants were then asked to complete a post-survey on the effectiveness of the video modules.

Post-Survey

- 11 teachers completed
- 54.55% reported feeling extremely comfortable
 - 36.36% reported feeling most comfortable
 - 9.10% reported feeling very comfortable
- 81.22% reported the videos were extremely helpful
 - 18.18% reported the videos were most helpful

All respondents reported that there was no additional equipment needed for the sensory room and no additional information needed to know about sensory rooms.

Discussion

SURVEY RESPONSES

Pre- survey

- Common diagnoses: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Specific Learning Disability, Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), developmental delay, Specific language disorder
- Equipment needs: swing, LED lights, bean bag, sound machine, rug/floor tiles, and bubble tubes

Post-Survey

- Most respondents reported feeling extremely comfortable after completing video modules
- Most respondents reported that the video modules were extremely helpful

LIMITATIONS:

- Small sample size
- Limited budget for purchasing equipment
- Small room space
- Location of sensory room

Conclusion

IMPLICATIONS:

- OT practitioners to enhance the knowledge of school faculty on use of sensory rooms.
- Data supports use of video modules to educate school faculty on sensory rooms.

FUTURE RESEARCH:

- Survey at faculty meeting to allow for questions
- Incorporating more schools
- Create on standard sensory room equipment
- Create video modules with other healthcare professions

References

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Acknowledgement & Contact information

Contact Info: Hannah Higgins: wilsonhl@uab.edu