



Sensory Processing and Self-Regulation Training Workshops for Teachers in General Education

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Vibrant Minds Charter School

- Sanctioned public school chartered under Anaheim Elementary School District and California Department of Education
- Serves 252 scholars ranging from TK - 6th grade

Mission: "To provide a Common Core standard and strength-based, comprehensive, academic program with enrichment in athletics, visual/performing arts, career exploration, and service learning"

Vision: "To develop well-rounded, self-confident, community-conscious involvement, and citizenship"

Identified Needs

- Implementing a school-wide emotional regulation program through teacher trainings
- Assistance with after school programming
- Generalization of self-regulation skills in a variety of contexts

Literature Review

- Between 5-16% of school-aged children in the US general population experience sensory processing challenges (Ahn et al., 2004; Ben-Sasson et al., 2009)
- Sensory techniques and sensory environmental modifications have demonstrated positive outcomes and have been used to improve participation of children in daily activities (Bodison et al., 2017)
- Teachers/caregivers play an important role in contributing to their students' self-regulation development to build skills to monitor and manage their behavior and meet their sensory needs (Moos & Ringdal, 2012)
- The Zones of Regulation® curriculum is a cognitive-behavioral treatment approach to teach students how to regulate their feelings, energy, and sensory needs (Kuypers, 2011)
- Teachers perceived a positive change in self-regulation and gain in emotional competence after students' participation in the Zones curriculum (Dunn, 2019)

Learning Objectives

- Create and implement a teacher training program on sensory processing and self-regulation
- Create and implement a holistic summer wellness program
- Develop an online organization system for teachers and staff to promote students' sensory processing and self-regulation development

Project Description

- Total of 10 TK - 6th grade teachers
- 45-minute training workshops, 1x/week, for 4 weeks
- Training sessions addressed sensory-based self-regulation tools, strategies, and techniques to better meet needs of their students
- Material delivered in forms of presentation lectures, training workshops, questionnaires, discussions, and self-assessments

Teacher Training Session Topics:

- Sensory Systems & Sensory Processing
- Self-Regulation
- Zones of Regulation Introduction
- Zones of Regulation Schoolwide Implementation

Scholarly Deliverables

- Teacher training presentation slides
- Videos of training sessions
- Summer Academy wellness program group protocols
- Newsletter to parents / caregivers of future implementation of the Zones of Regulation curriculum
- Research articles and additional resources for sensory-based strategies and self-regulation tools and techniques

Project Outcomes

A 10-question survey was disseminated after each training module evaluating quality of course structure, instructor, and the course's contribution to teacher learning

Survey Results:

- "The workshops helped me to understand the material clearly"

Sensory Systems & Sensory Processing	Strongly agree – 33.3% Agree – 66.7%
Self-Regulation	Strongly agree – 42.9% Agree – 42.9% Neither – 14.3%
Zones of Regulation	Strongly Agree – 40% Agree – 60%

- "What is your perceived utility of the information you learned today?"

Sensory Systems & Sensory Processing	Extremely useful – 16.67%, Very useful – 50%, Somewhat useful – 33.3%
Self-Regulation	Extremely useful – 28.6%, Very useful – 42.9%, Somewhat useful – 28.6%
Zones of Regulation	Extremely useful – 40%, Very useful – 40%, Somewhat useful – 20%

- "How likely are you to adopt these strategies into your classroom instruction?"

Sensory Systems & Sensory Processing	Very likely – 16.67%, Likely – 83.3%
Self-Regulation	Very likely – 28.6%, Likely – 57.1%, Neither – 14.3%
Zones of Regulation	Very likely – 40%, Likely – 40%, Neither – 20%

- "The training improved my skills and knowledge on the topic"

Sensory Systems & Sensory Processing	Strongly agree – 16.7% Agree – 66.7% Neither – 16.7%
Self-Regulation	Strongly agree – 28.6%, Agree – 57.1%, Neither – 14.3%
Zones of Regulation	Strongly Agree – 40%, Agree – 60%

Evaluation / Discussion

Overall data analysis shows:

- The instructor..
 - was well prepared for class
 - explained course material clearly
 - inspired interest in the subject
- The course materials were helpful and appropriate
- Teachers' skills and knowledge increased after receiving training
- Teachers reported the utility of the information learned to be useful
- Teachers were likely to adopt self-regulation strategies into their classroom

Limitations:

- Limited sample size
- Time constraints
- COVID-19 precaution restrictions

Future Directions:

- Follow-up with teachers and staff at Vibrant Minds after schoolwide implementation of the Zones of Regulation curriculum
- Teacher trainings

Implications for OT

Occupational therapists could expand their scope of practice by conducting teacher trainings to better meet students' needs in the classroom

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References

Available upon request