

Action Research – Sensory Swimming

Focus

Junior students – Te Matatini 1, Te Matatini 2 and Salford

Strategic Aims

Students offered more sensory and play based activities in the pool will be able to better regulate their sensory needs during swimming sessions. Students will have improved well-being and engagement when participating in structured sensory swimming sessions.

Annual Aim

Students will increase their level of participation in pool activities to support wellbeing and self regulation. Students will be able to better participate in learning tasks following swimming sessions.

Reported to the Board of Trustees.

Targets

100% achievement across Terms 1 and 2.

Increased engagement, well being and self-regulation across three junior classes.

Context

There is a growing number of students within Ruru School who are referred or seen independently / consultatively by Occupational Therapy for Sensory and emotional regulation. Most students who are based on site at Ruru Specialist School attend swimming sessions approximately 3-5 x per week and many teachers report positive outcomes for students in the pool. With swimming already being a sensory based occupation, Occupational Therapy team trialed a sensory swimming programme to offer the students more structured sensory activities to help support individual needs both in and out of the classroom. Three areas were focused on within the research – Student engagement, well-being and self-regulation. These three areas were rated on a scale from 0-5 based on the class.

Gathering of Information/Action

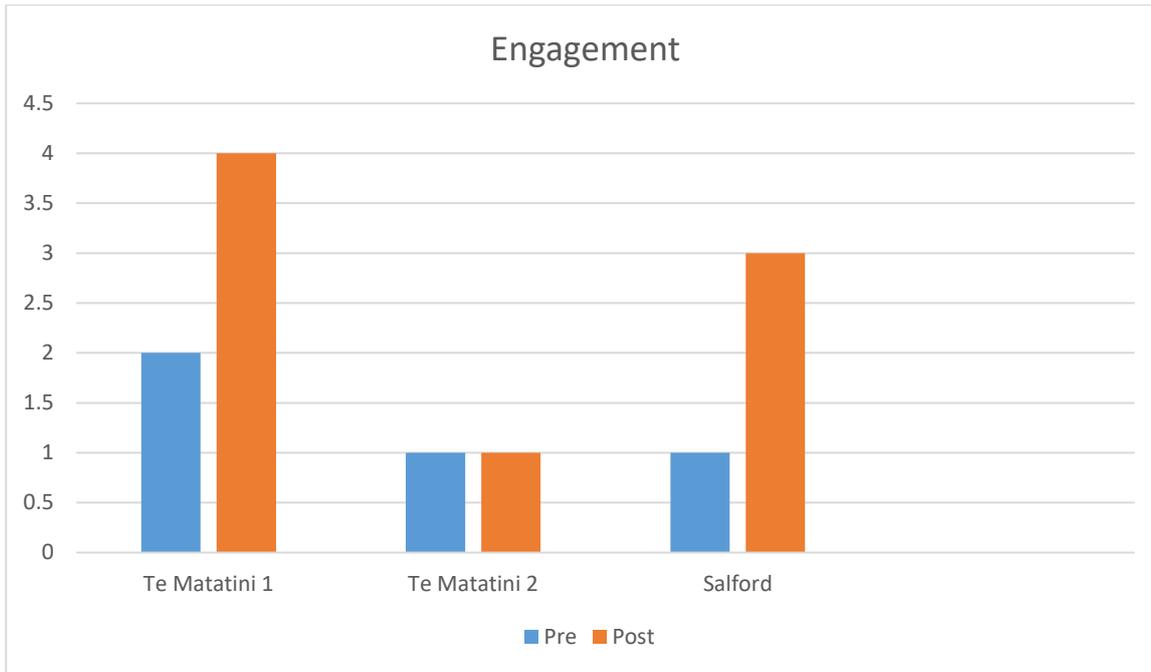
The teachers of each class were asked to rate the class on a scale from 0-5 under the three categories Engagement, well-being and self-regulation. These scales were completed at the beginning of term 1 and again at the end of term 2.

Outcome

Engagement:

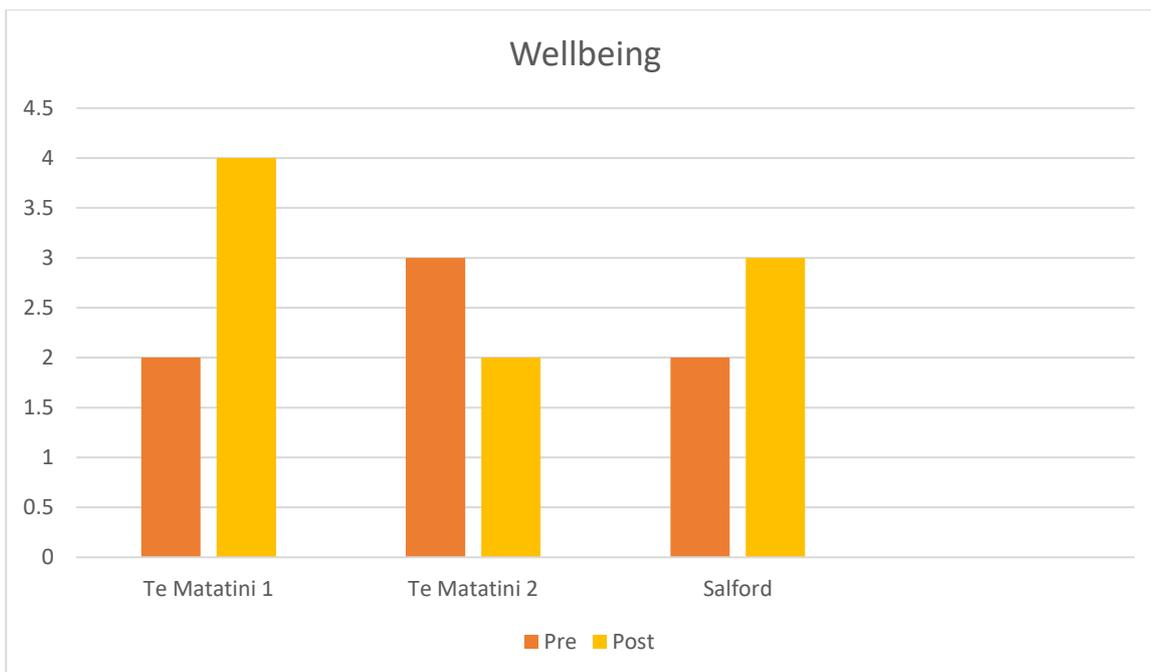
Overall the sensory swimming programme seen an increase in participation for 2/3 classes who took part. Both Te Matatini 1 and Salford noticed a 2 point increase on the rating scale and upon observations were noticeably more engaged in pool sessions. Te matatini 2 however, did not see any change in regard to student participation and the teacher reported that students often enjoy their free time in the pool. Occupational

Therapy trialled different activities and techniques with this class however, encouraging participation remained difficult.



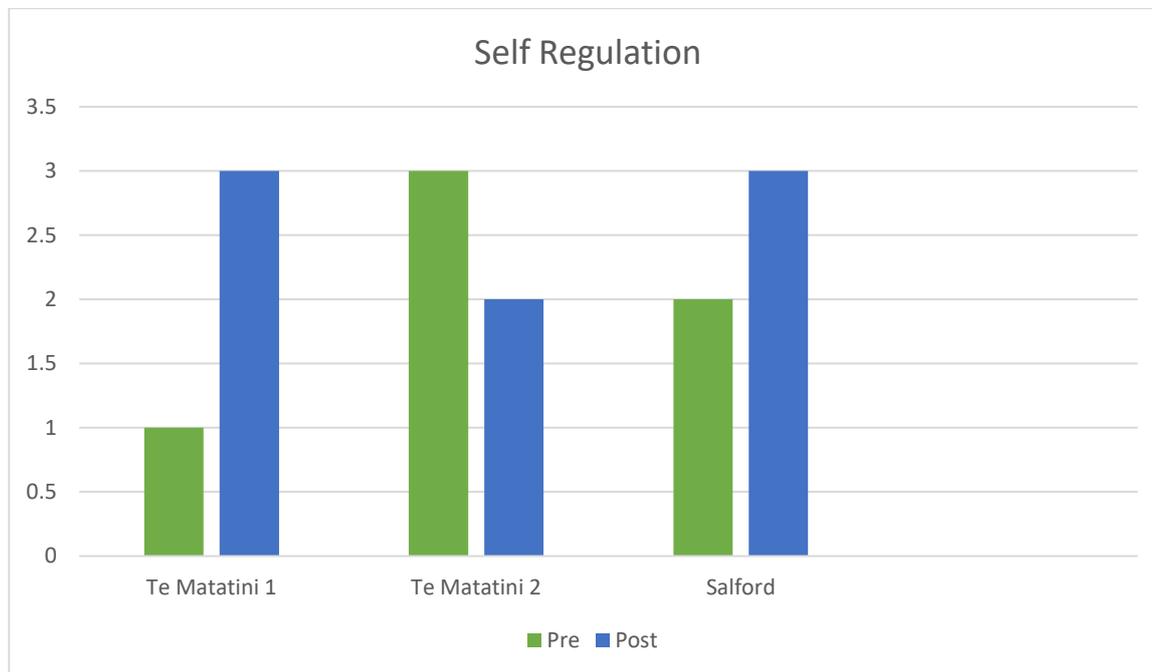
Well-being:

When focusing on the pool programs effect on student's wellbeing there was again a mixed response from the classes. Te Matatini 2 reported a decrease in students well-being and upon discussion it was recognised that students only get a small amount of time in the pool each day and by trying to encourage activity participation they were not able to participate in the same activities that they usually enjoy. However, both Salford and Te Matatini 1 reported an increased in students well-being and teachers reported that with more structure in the pool program students were interacting more with peers and observed laughing and smiling during sessions.



Self-regulation:

Similar to student wellbeing, Te Matatini 2 noticed a decrease in students ability to self-regulate and the class teacher reported that again due to students not being able to participate in the usual activities they noticed and increase in emotional outbursts post swimming. When this was reviewed with Salford and Te Matatini 1 however, there was a positive change noted with students appearing more regulated when returning back to the classroom or when getting on the GoBus to go home when swimming was at the end of the day.



Reflection/Reason for Variance

Upon reflection, the reason for Te Matatini 2 having either no change or a decreased values upon the scales may be due to their increased sensory needs and ability to sustain attention compared to Te Matatini 1 and Salford. Te Matatini 2's programme was reviewed and adjusted throughout the two terms to incorporate visual timetables, visual timers, music-based sessions, and student's interests. In some sessions, some increased engagement was noticed but this was still minimal.

When reflecting on Te Matatini 1, they appeared to benefit from group participation and structure, and students seemed to respond well to working as a team and social activities. Te Matatini 1 appeared to have to most benefit from the sensory swimming programme which may be due to the age and ability of these students.

Salford also appeared to benefit from the programme, however, there was a less noticeable change in the graphs variant when compared to Te Matatini 1. Salford seemed to respond well to the visual timetable and structured sessions, however, were more likely to participate in activities independently as opposed to Te Matatini 1.

Evaluation

- Te Matatini 2 will be offered two sensory programmes in Term 3; one being pool-based and the other gym-based, focusing on proprioceptive and vestibular activities. These two programmes will be completed and reviewed over Term 3 and Term 4.
- The Sensory Pool Programme will be ongoing for Te Matatini 1 and Salford, however, the focus will be on personal cares and life skills following swimming sessions.

Jo O'Neill & Rebecca Brown
Occupational Therapists.

2021 Analysis of Sensory Pool Programme – Ministry of Education Report

Focus: Engagement, Wellbeing, and Self-Regulation in the pool			
Strategic Aim: Students who participate in the sensory pool programme will have increased engagement, wellbeing, and self-regulation that will translate to the classroom.			
Annual Aim: Students and staff will have a better understand of students’ sensory needs and how to support these both in and out of the pool.			
Baseline data: Pre and post surveys were sent to class teachers. 2/3 classes reported increased values when completing the scales across all three areas.			
Target: 100% achievement across Terms 1 and 2.			
Actions (what did we do?)	Outcomes (what happened?)	Reasons for the variance (why did it happen?)	Evaluation (where to next?)
<p>The teachers of each class were asked to rate the class on a scale from 0-5 under the three categories Engagement, well-being and self-regulation. These scales were completed at the beginning of term 1 and again at the end of term 2.</p> <p>On reviewing pre-test results all three classes scored under three in all three areas (engagement, wellbeing, self-regulation). From here, class-specific pool programmes were formed where students took part three times per week.</p> <p>The Occupational Therapist met with teachers to discuss class/individuals needs and to get understanding of their current interests to encourage participation.</p>	<p>The sensory swimming programme seen an increase in participation for 2/3 classes who took part. Both Te Matatini 1 and Salford noticed a 2 point increase on the rating scale and upon observations were noticeably more engaged in pool sessions. Te matatini 2 however, did not see any change in regard to student participation.</p> <p>When focusing on the pool programs effect on student’s wellbeing there was again a mixed response from the classes. Te Matatini 2 reported a decrease in students well-being, however, the other two classes noticed positive change.</p> <p>Te Matatini 2 noticed a decrease in students ability to self-regulate Salford and Te Matatini 1 however, there was a positive change noted with students appearing more regulated when returning back to the classroom.</p>	<p>Upon reflection, the reason for Te Matatini 2 having either no change or a decreased values upon the scales may be due to their increased sensory needs and ability to sustain attention compared to Te Matatini 1 and Salford. Te Matatini 2’s programme was reviewed and adjusted throughout the two terms to incorporate visual timetables, visual timers, music-based sessions, and student’s interests. In some sessions, some increased engagement was noticed but this was still minimal.</p> <p>When reflecting on Te Matatini 1, they appeared to benefit from group participation and structure, and students seemed to respond well to working as a team and social activities. Te Matatini 1 appeared to have to most benefit from the sensory swimming programme which may be due to the age and ability of these students.</p> <p>Salford also appeared to benefit from the programme, however, there was a less noticeable change in the graphs variant when compared to Te Matatini 1. Salford seemed to respond well to the visual timetable and structured sessions, however, were more likely to participate in activities independently as opposed to Te Matatini 1.</p>	<p>Te Matatini 2 will be offered two sensory programmes in Term 3; one being pool-based and the other gym-based, focusing on proprioceptive and vestibular activities. These two programmes will be completed and reviewed over Term 3 and Term 4.</p> <p>Te Matatini 1 and Salford sensory pool programme ongoing</p>

