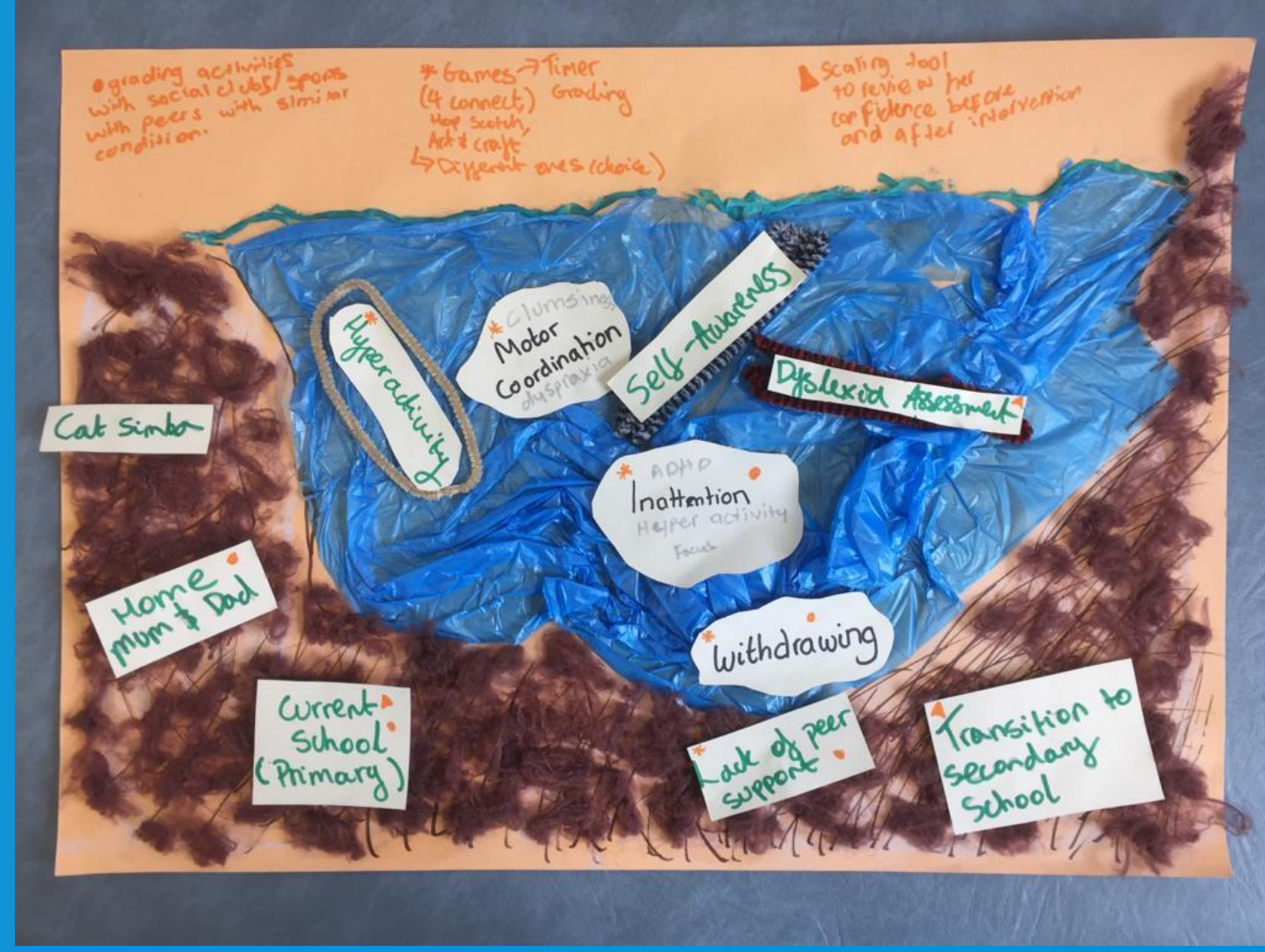


From online to in real life (IRL): making the shift post-pandemic on an occupational therapy degree apprenticeship.

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Above: Image of a Kawa River model cross section created by OT apprentices

Enquiry-based learning group work

What?

For enquiry-based learning (EBL), a blend of both virtual and IRL group work has supported a diverse range of learners with developing their compassionate group work skills Gilbert et al. 2018).

So What?

Online EBL group work using Zoom breakout rooms allows learners to share screens to discuss their research findings with ease.

On campus sessions have enabled learners within their EBL groups to co-create images applying conceptual models of OT practice such as the Kawa River Model (Iwama, 2006).

Now what?

A blended model of delivering enquiry-based learning incorporating a mix of both online and IRL group sessions is now the norm.



Right: OT apprentices creating their Kawa River model cross section for a case study.

The Occupational Therapy (OT) degree apprenticeship commenced in January 2021 with all teaching carried out online. Some sessions did not run IRL until the second iteration of a module the following academic year.

Activity Analysis session

What?

Activity analysis is a core skill and apprenticeship standard which OT apprentices must meet (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, 2023). Practical workshops enable learners to experience and reflect on the demands required for a person to successfully engage in different daily occupations.

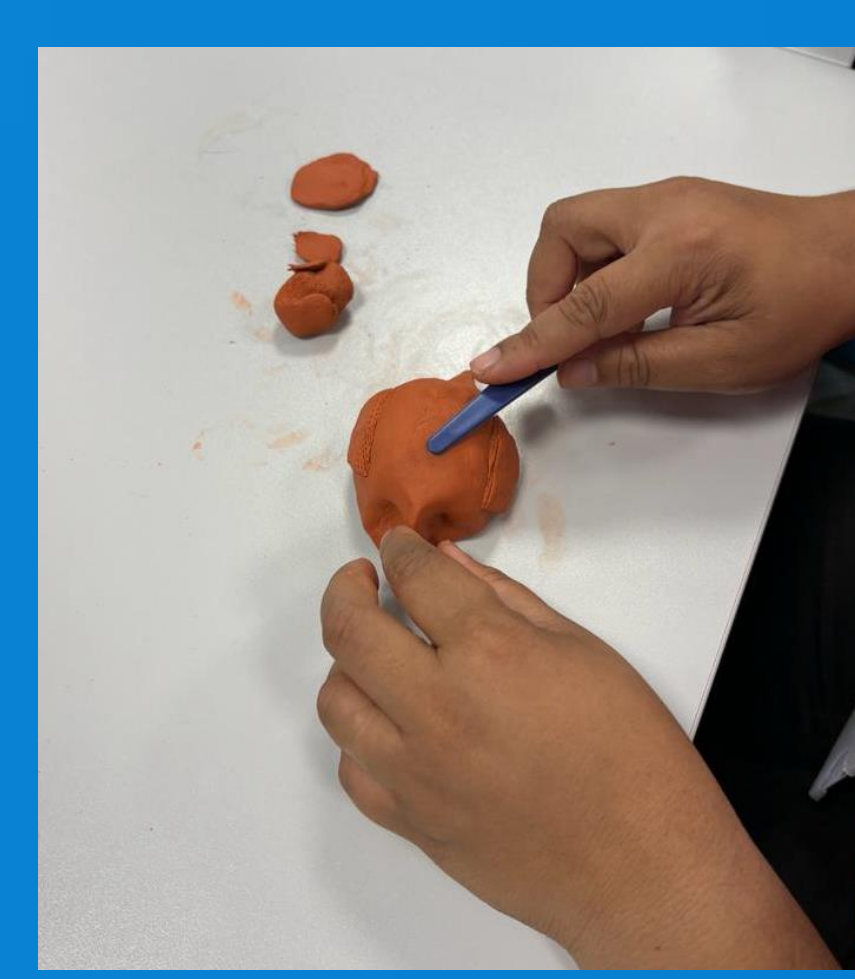
The first experiential activity analysis workshop ran online in February 2021 and involved building a spaghetti and marshmallow tower at home. The September 2021 workshop was IRL and involved building newspaper towers in small groups. Subsequent years have all been held IRL increasing the range of activities analysed by apprentices. In September 2023, OT apprentices participated in either Dance Fit, gardening or clay pinch pots.

So What?

IRL experiential learning opportunities have supported the application and understanding of this fundamental OT skill, particularly when considering the social environment and interpersonal skills required in many daily occupations.

Now what?

The IRL sessions in groups is the preferred option for delivery to enable peer-learning and discussion during their shared experience of an activity. Online delivery using video clips of different activities from Box of Broadcasts will remain a virtual option going forward.



Above L-R September 2023 Activity Analysis workshops- gardening and clay pinch pots



Left: Image of OT apprentices playing table top games for child development session

Child Development session

What?

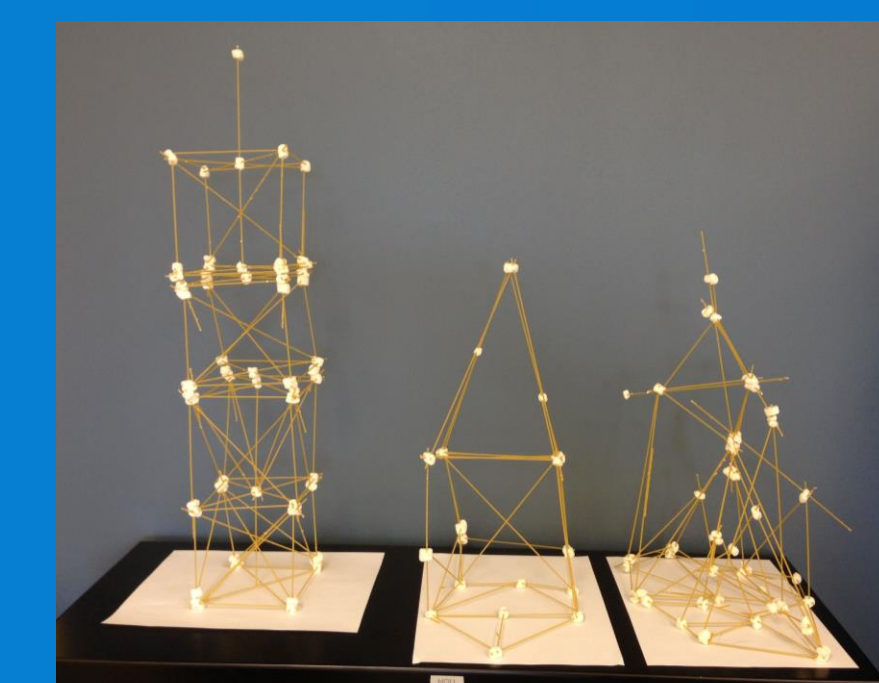
The session had previously run online utilising comprehensive teaching slides and a range of media resources including videos from Box of Broadcasts and group discussions. The session took place IRL for the first time in 2022 and a small amount of work had been done to transfer to the classroom setting, for example bringing dolls and toys in for practical demonstrations.

So what?

It was felt that not enough consideration had been given to how the session could be adapted in person. There were too many slides for an in person setting where generally more conversation and questions occur. Not enough interactive activities were incorporated to illustrate and scaffold the learning. More examples were shared from work-based settings/experience by apprentices IRL.

Now what?

In future sessions some of the foundation information will be provided as online pre session learning to allow more time for interactive learning in the face to face session. Further practical resources will be provided to develop more active learning in the group work.



Above L-R: Spaghetti marshmallow towers, September 2021 newspaper tower building

Take home reflections:

- A flexible approach to both teaching online and IRL has enabled us to support the diverse range of learning attributes of apprentices (Baker, 2019), and facilitate learning in adverse circumstances including snow days and train strikes.
- IRL teaching facilitates active and flexible learning (Brown et al., 2022), and offers more potential for apprentices to apply their understanding in practical activities reflecting occupations of daily life.
- Both online and IRL teaching require planning and thought to ensure there are sufficient opportunities to apply learning and check understanding.