

# Occupational Therapy Assessment and Intervention for Children with Cognitive Challenges in Community-based Health Services

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## Background:

Internationally, there has been a substantial increase in clinical activity related to identification and treatment of children with inefficient use of cognitive strategies.

In Norway, the community services are expected to provide services for children experiencing activity limitations due to cognitive impairments.



## Objective:

*The study aimed to investigate how Norwegian community-based occupational therapists work with children who have challenges in learning new skills.*

## Method:

Digital survey: fixed & open-ended questions.

Distributed to Norwegian occupational therapist through various channels.

## Participants descriptive characteristics:

- Number of participants: 104
- Gender: 97% female 3% male
- Age: Range: 22 – 61 years
- Work experience: Range 1 month - 36 years
- All regions and all sizes of municipalities represented

No financial disclosures

# Results

## Participants' perceptions of reasons for children's learning difficulties:

- Motor Challenges: 68%
- Cognitive/Sensory challenges: 68%
- A combination of motor, cognitive/sensory challenges: 97%



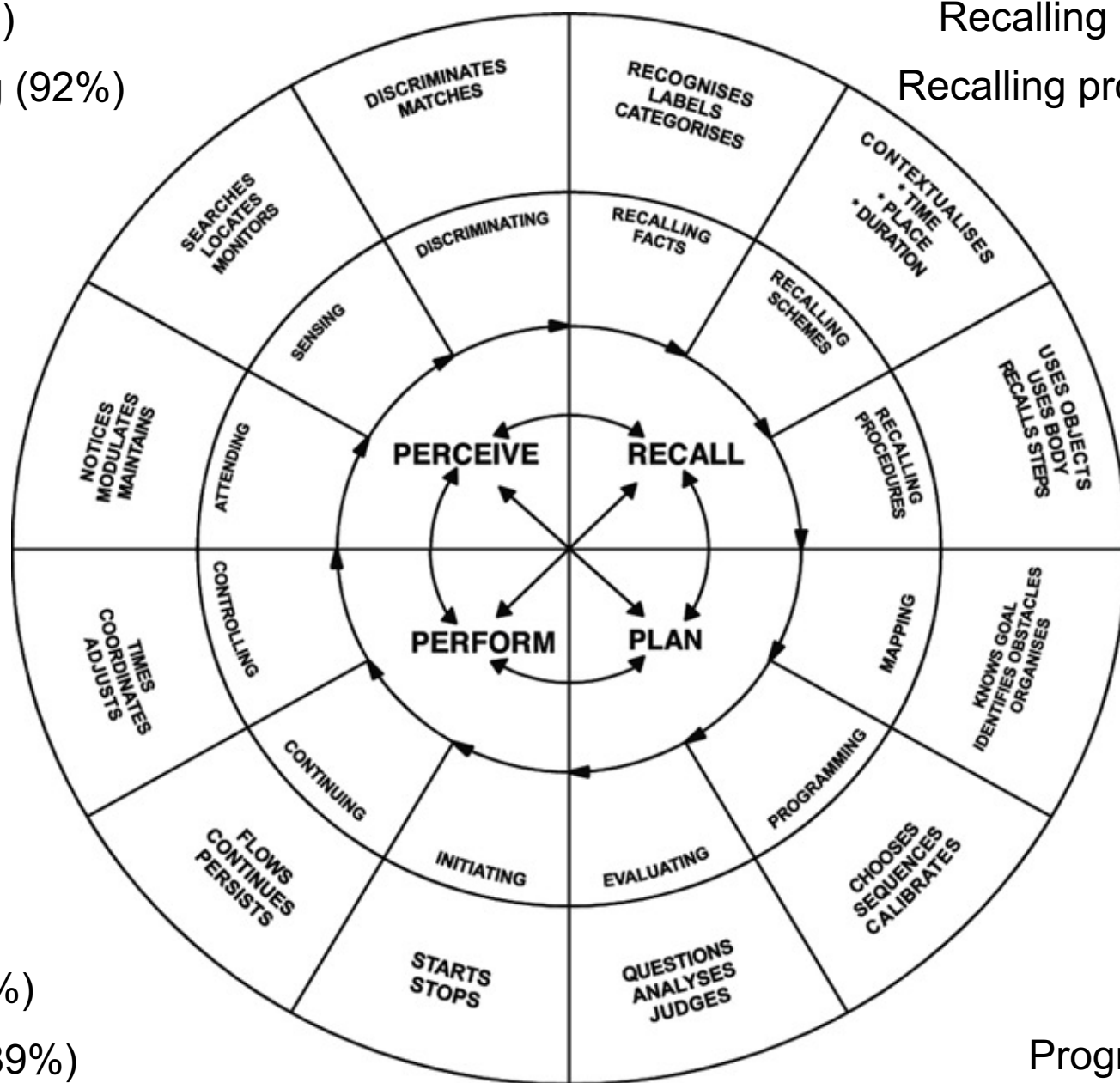
- Participants indicated the frequency with which they observed children experiencing challenges with various cognitive strategies, using the response options never, sometimes, often, and don't know.
- During data analysis, the responses sometimes and often were combined, and their frequencies responses were converted to percentages, interpreted and categorised within the **Perceive**, **Recall**, **Perform**, **Plan** system of task analysis.

### Perceive

- Attending (95%)
- Sensing (91%)
- Discriminating (92%)

### Recall

- Recalling facts (81%)
- Recalling schemes (88%)
- Recalling procedures (96%)



### Perform

- Initiating (91%)
- Continuing (89%)
- Controlling (82%)

### Plan

- Mapping (90%)
- Programming (90%)
- Evaluating (90%)

PRPP, Stage 2 Conceptual model (Ranka & Chapparo, 2010)

**When asked, occupational therapists reported the following regarding their work with children with cognitive challenges across the process:**

**Assessment:**

- Variability in Practice: The Use of Unstructured Assessment  
Interviews or conversations and informal activity observations.
- Use of Multiple Assessment Methods  
Standardised assessment tools in interprofessional assessment and discussions and observation methods.
- Missed Assessment Under Conditions of Limited Capacity and Expertise  
“...assessment most often concerns evaluating needs related to housing and assistive technology within the area of mobility and occasionally cognition- such as time management and planning”

**Intervention:**

- Tailored Interventions within Interprofessional Practice  
Environmental adaptations, assistive devices and ADL training.
- Guiding and Supervising  
Instructing in adapting activities and optimising the use of assistive devices.
- Absence of Intervention  
Limited resources to prioritise paediatric cases and constrained expertise.

**Take Home notes:**

- A substantial number of children experience difficulties using cognitive strategies during activity performance.
- Norwegian Occupational therapists advocate for an enhancement of competence through the implementation of standardised tools for both assessment and intervention regarding children's use of cognitive strategies.