

Evaluating the effectiveness of the Elklan course
June 2010
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Introduction

Sandwell PCT delivered the Elklan course "Speech and Language Support in the Classroom" over the summer term of 2010. The course was attended by 12 learners who came from different school settings, all of whom were employed as Learning Support Assistants in schools.

Our Speech and Language Therapy managers Nicki Holmes and Nibbhaya designed a pre vs post questionnaire to measure the change in confidence of the learners to use strategies to support children's communication skills in the classroom. The questionnaire items were related to the Elklan learning outcomes. Learners were also asked to give specific examples of how they use strategies in the classroom.

A total of 12 questionnaires were given out and 10 were returned fully complete. Therefore we had a return rate of 83 %.

The Questionnaire

The same questionnaire was given out pre and post attendance on the Elklan course. The learners did not have access to their previous answers therefore reducing the likelihood of learners consciously altering their ratings.

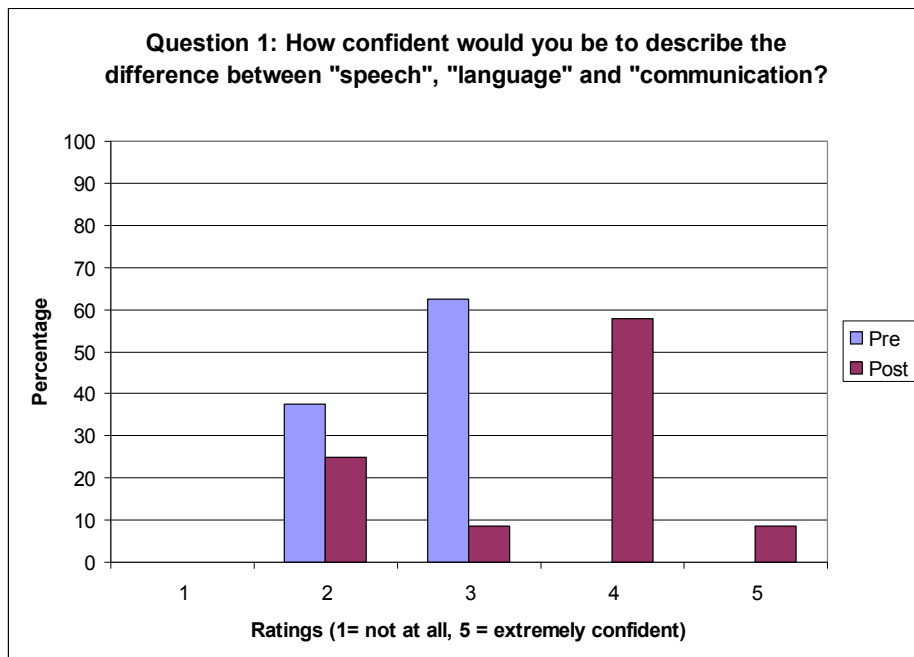
The questionnaire had 13 questions, each relating to a learning outcome. The following confidence rating scale was used:

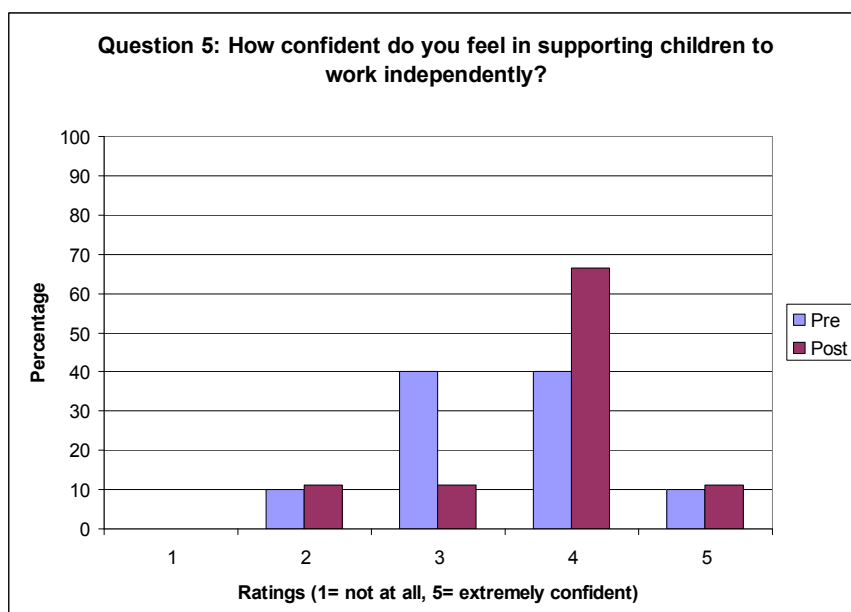
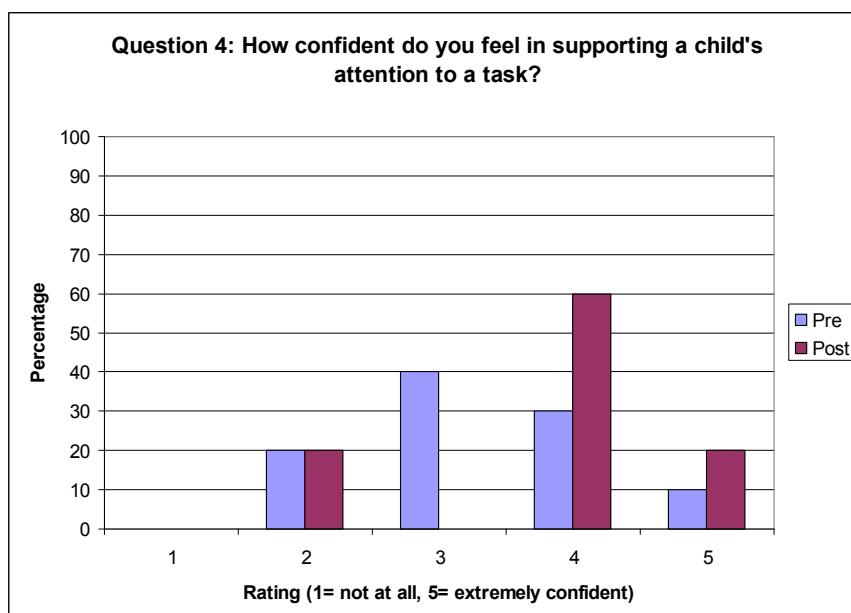
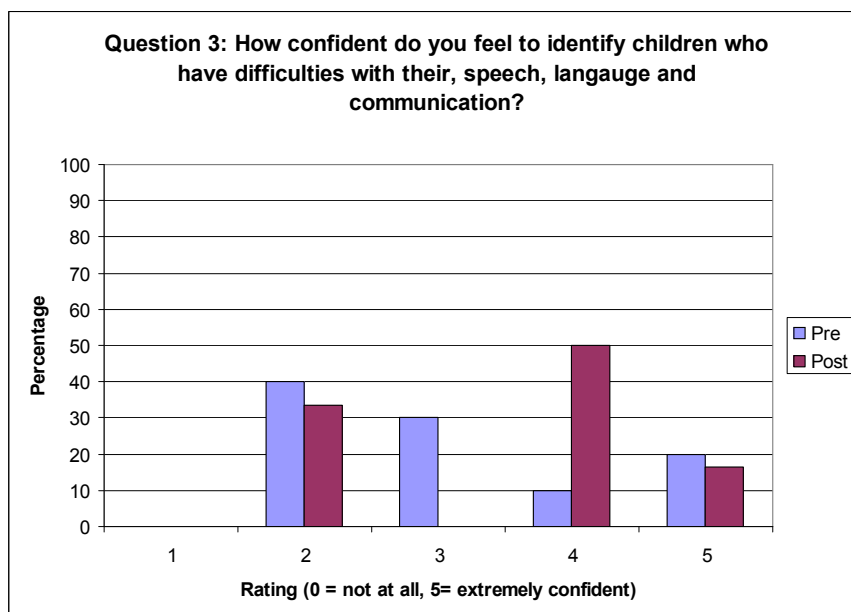
- 1- Not at all confident in this area
- 2- A little confident/limited skills in this area
- 3- Reasonably confidence/I feel there are some gaps in my knowledge
- 4- Confident/I often feel that I support children effectively in this area.
- 5- Extremely confident/ I do this routinely and I could support others in this area.

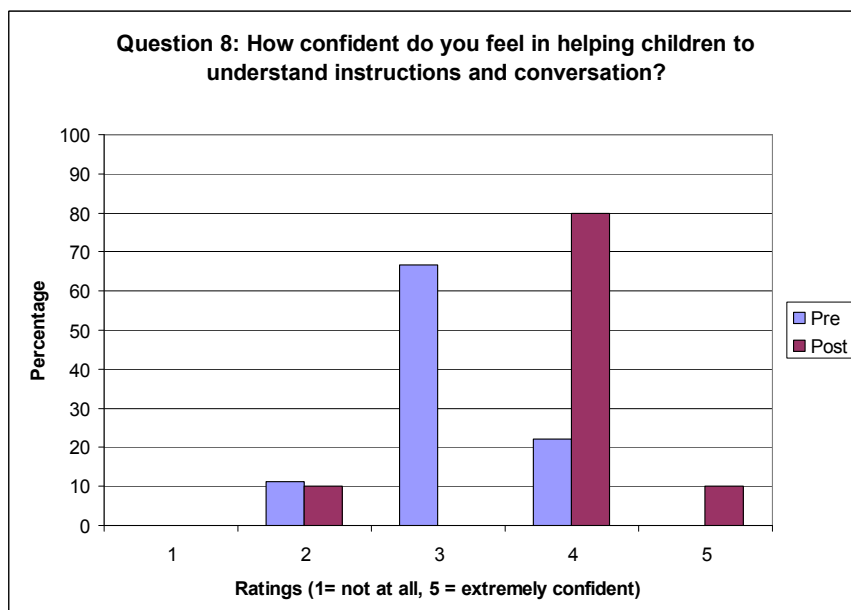
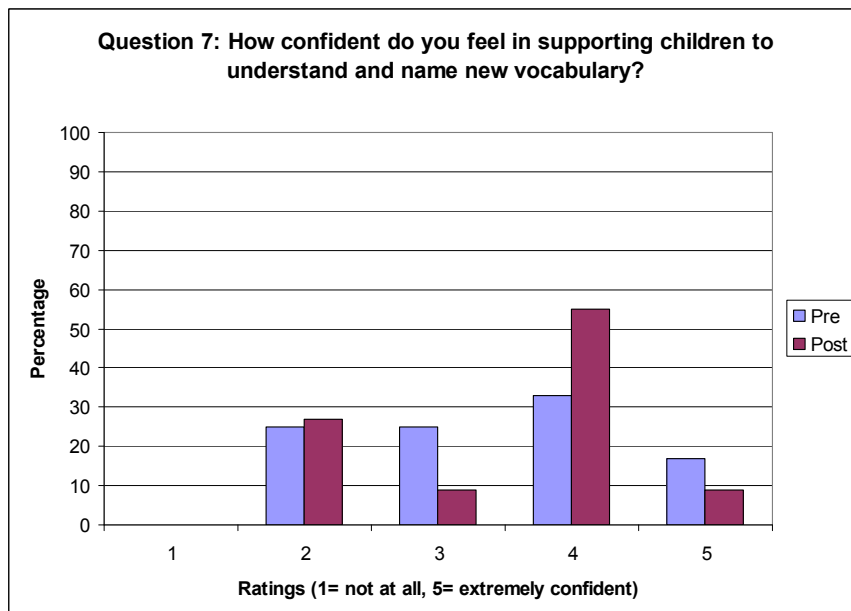
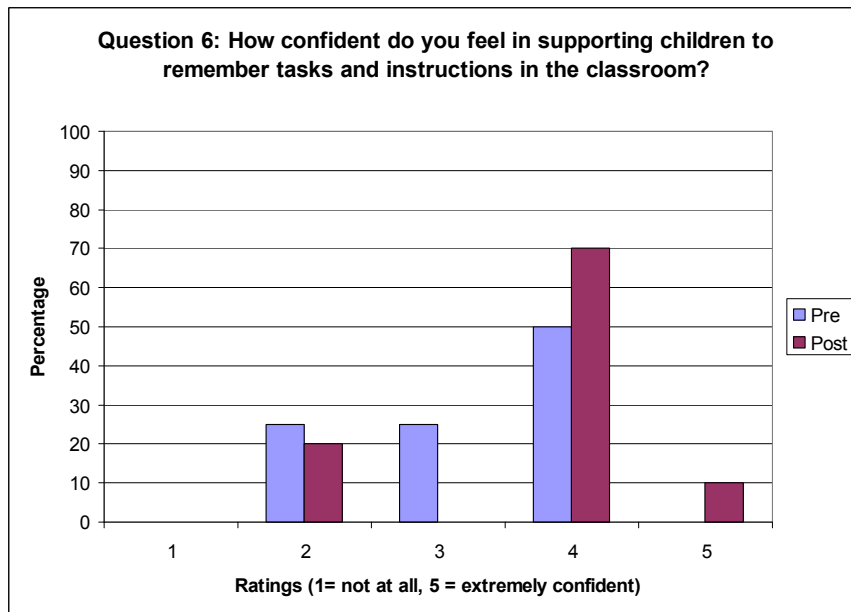
Results

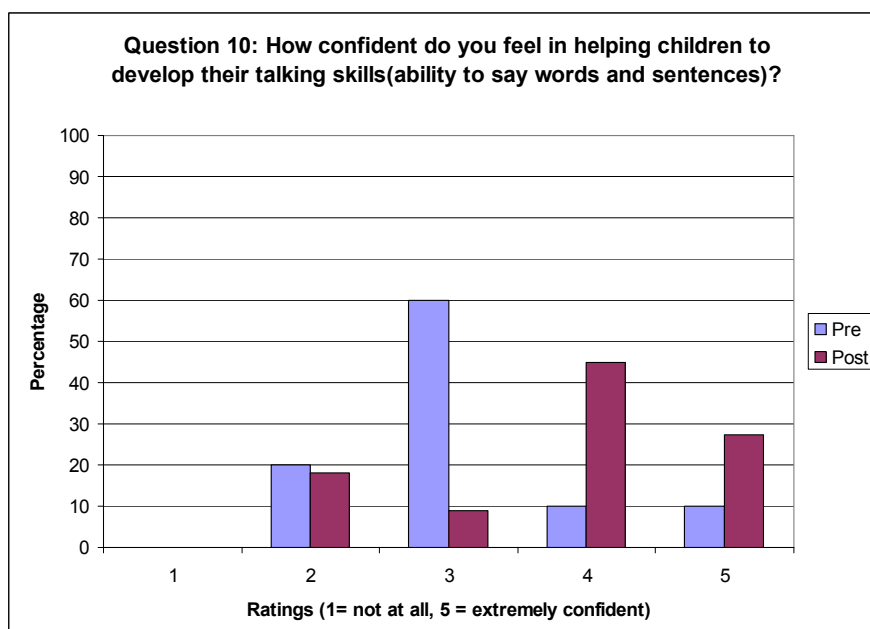
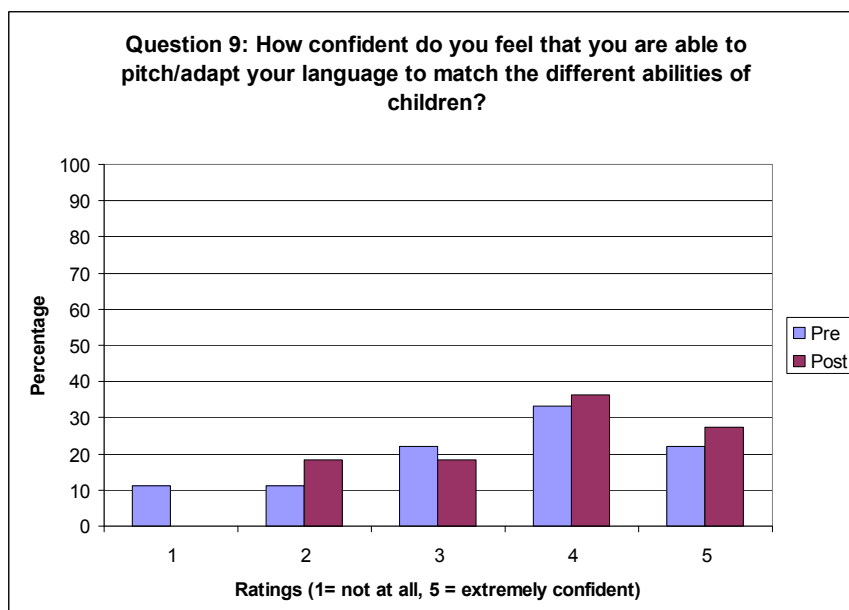
The results from the pre vs post feedback questionnaires showed an overall increase in the learner's confidence to support speech, language and communication in the classroom. There was also an increase in the number and quality of specific strategies learners identified to support children in the classroom with their communication skills, for example:

- there was an 80% increase in learners giving at least 2 examples of how they adapt their language to match the different abilities of children pre vs post attendance at an Elklan course.
- there was a 70% increase in learners giving at least 2 examples of strategies how they used strategies to support children's speech sound difficulties pre vs post attendance at an Elklan course.
- there was a 60% increase in learners giving at least 2 examples of strategies they used to help children to help children to understand and name new vocabulary pre vs post attendance at an Elklan course.









Conclusion

The results from this small study of learners, show that attendance at an Elklan course improved their confidence and knowledge of how to support children’s communication skills in the classroom. These results will contribute to the growing body of evidence in using Elklan courses to improve collaboration between speech and language therapy and education settings.