

Developing the Skills of Education Staff to Support Children's Speech, Language and Communication Needs: An Evaluation of Hertfordshire SLT Service's Implementation of Elklan 5-11 Training

Abbie Bude, Team Leader and SLT, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (abigail.bude@hct.nhs.uk)

INTRODUCTION

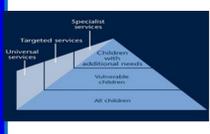
Training school staff in speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) is generally regarded as an important part of the SLT's role (ref: 'The Balanced System' Marie Gascoigne, 2010).

Advantages include:

- supporting staff to provide communication friendly environments
- developing awareness leading to early identification of SLCN and appropriately/timely referrals to SLT
- enabling staff to implement universal and targeted strategies to support children's access to the curriculum
- releasing SLT time to work at targeted/specialist levels.



Elklan courses are accredited, evidence-informed speech and language training programmes, using strategies listed on the What Works Database. The packages provided by Elklan include everything needed to deliver a course (powerpoint, teaching notes, DVD clips) and contain a balance of theory and practical elements to facilitate staff in implementing strategies in the workplace.



As part of the implementation of the new three-tier model, the SLTs at Hertfordshire Community NHS have rolled out Elklan training programmes for school staff. Between January 2014 and July 2016, 42 Elklan courses were delivered across Hertfordshire and West Essex, with over 280 schools in these areas sending a member of staff

METHOD

- SLTs attended the 2 day training course to become licensed Elklan tutors.
- Training delivered to school staff at a subsidised cost for the first 2 years.
- Training delivered as 10 sessions on a weekly or fortnightly basis or as a 2 day intensive course. Different days, times and venues to suit school staff.
- Between 6 and 24 months after completing a course, participants were asked to complete an online survey using Survey Monkey.
- 47 participants responded.

RESULTS

Overall, participants felt they had increased their knowledge of SLCN, increased their confidence to support children's skills, maintained and, in some instances, further developed their skills since attending the course. They also reported they had particularly noticed progress in the children's willingness to engage and/or verbally interact with them.

Qualitative feedback was organised into themes as follows:

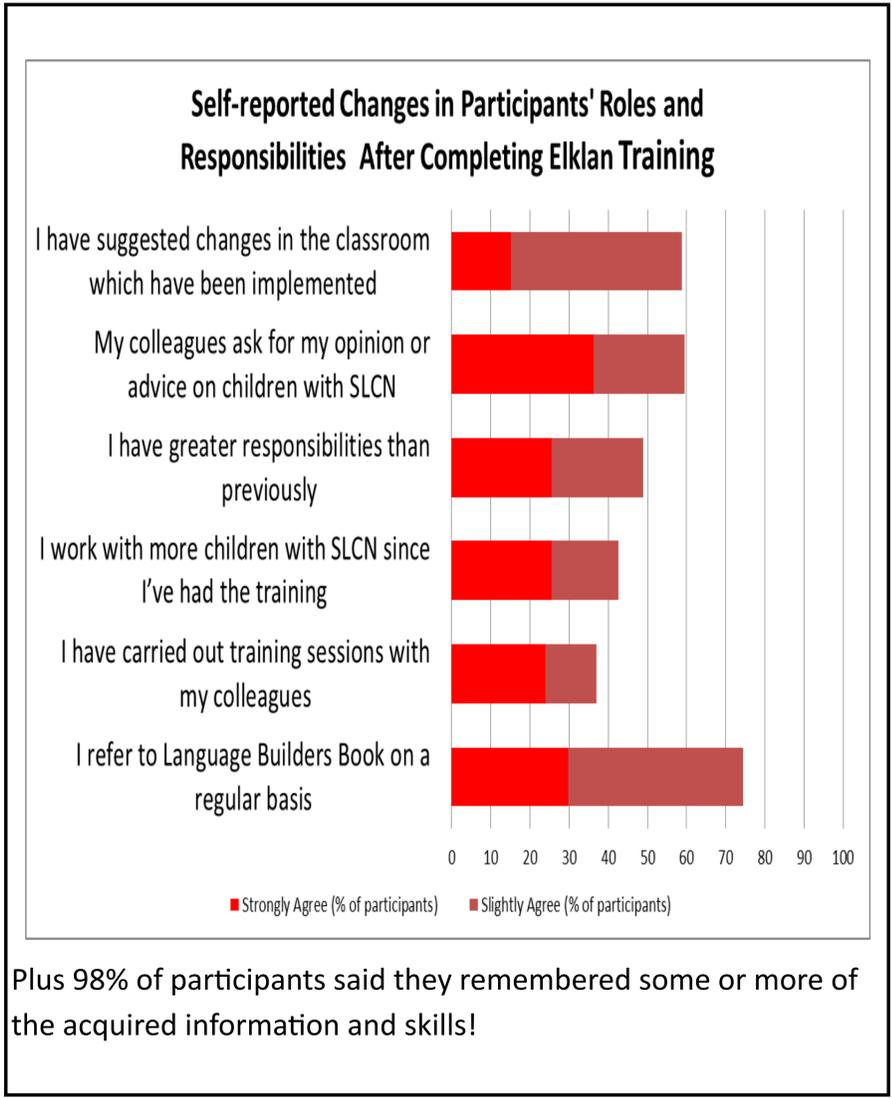
CONFIDENCE: *'The course has dramatically improved how I teach.'*
'I also work better with the SLT as we now have a common vocabulary.'

TIME-SAVING: *'I used to spend a long time thinking and making resources and this course has shown me this does not have to be the case at all, a whiteboard and pen and quick word connections can help me see if the child has understood what I have been trying to teach them.'*

PROGRESS: *'The children have made better progress than anticipated as a result of things I have learnt on the Elklan course.'*
'His target level was a 1a and he has now been assessed as a level 2c writer, and he now uses connectives regularly.'

EAL: *'I feel much more confident in working with children who have English as an Additional Language.'*

QUALITY: *'Very helpful, interesting and inspiring.'*



DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

Benefits to SLTs- Link SLTs can now:

- make reference to Elklan in child's SLT programme and report
- support trained staff to set up self-sustaining groups e.g. vocab groups
- advise staff to make use of their Elklan trained staff member
- encourage schools to gain whole school Communication Friendly Status

Challenges

- Getting staff to sign-up to a course that is a significant time commitment (10 hours of teaching plus 6 hours planning/implementing activities with children and writing up portfolio, each week.)
- Elklan can only be delivered by SLTs who have attended the 2 day Tutor course.
- Capacity issues affected the opportunity to offer joint training with colleagues from Education

TOP TIPS!

- Be aware you will have to keep training new staff as tutors
- Limited impact of training one LSA in a school. More effective to target SENCOs to ensure some whole-school changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS : Thanks to Marion Ziff and Nicki Witkin, SLTs.
For more info please contact **Abigail.Bude@hct.nhs.uk**