



Effectiveness of semantic therapy for word-finding difficulties in post-16 students (16-18 years) with persistent language disorders

Lisa Campbell & Susan Ebbels

Contact Details:

Lisa Campbell

Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist

Moor House School & College

Hurst Green, Surrey, United Kingdom

Twitter: @campbellchats @susanebbels



Presentation Outline

- Background and Rationale
- Phases of project
- Word Finding Intervention
- Outcomes
- Questions



Background and Rationale

- Little published evidence regarding the effectiveness of speech and language intervention for students with language disorder (LD) within a post-16 Provision.
- Word Finding Difficulties (WFDs) are a common feature of LD.
- Previous study (Ebbels et al., 2012) showed that four hours of semantic intervention on discrete semantic categories led to significant gains.

References: Ebbels, S.H., et, al. (2012). IJLCD, 47: 35-51



Phases of Project

25 participants aged 16:4-18:4

Mean SS on TAWF = 67 (all participants <85)

Assessment 1 – baseline assessment

Other Intervention – baseline period

Assessment 2 – pre therapy assessment

Word Finding Intervention period

Assessment 3 – post therapy assessment



WFD Intervention

- 1 x 30 minutes per week for 8 weeks (4 hours)
- Intervention as per Ebbels, S.H., et, al. (2012)
 - Semantic Categorisation
 - Discussion of attributes and comparison of images
 - Twenty Questions
 - Strategy game
- Each session followed a similar pattern of activities progressing from week to week using specific photo cards



Semantic Categorisation

Student divided the provided set of photo cards into **broad** then **detailed semantic categories**. Image attributes and reasoning of groupings were discussed with SLT and recorded.

Hair & Beauty

Face

Hair

Body

Skin care

Make up

Men

Women

Shower

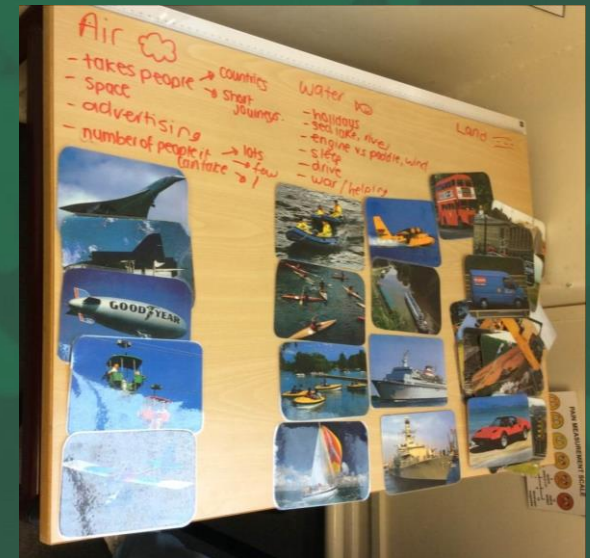
After shower





Discussion of Attributes

Students or SLT recorded the students reasoning for broad and detailed groupings and their comments regarding the similarities and differences between the images.





20 Questions

Student and SLT took it in turns to ask **yes/no questions** to guess the other person's photo card.

Hair & Beauty items

- Is it something you use in your hair? No
- Is it something you use on your face? Yes
- Is it make-up? Yes
- Do you use it on your lips? No
- Do you put around your eyes? Yes
- Is it kept in a container? Yes
- Is it black? Yes





Strategy Game

To support students semantic categorisation and representations of words, 'The Dice Game' was played.

Who?

When?

What does
it look like?

How does
it feel?

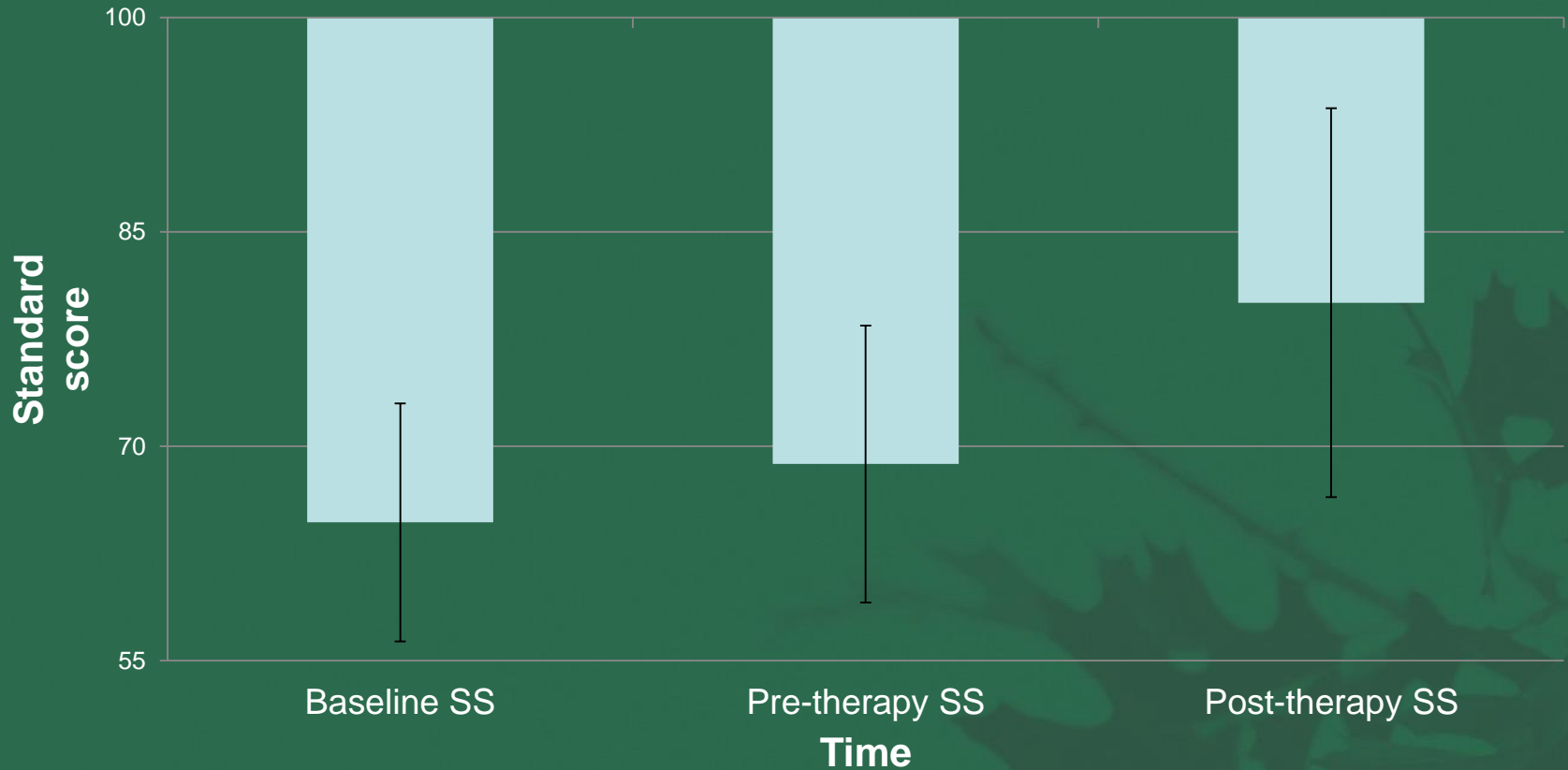
Where?

Why?



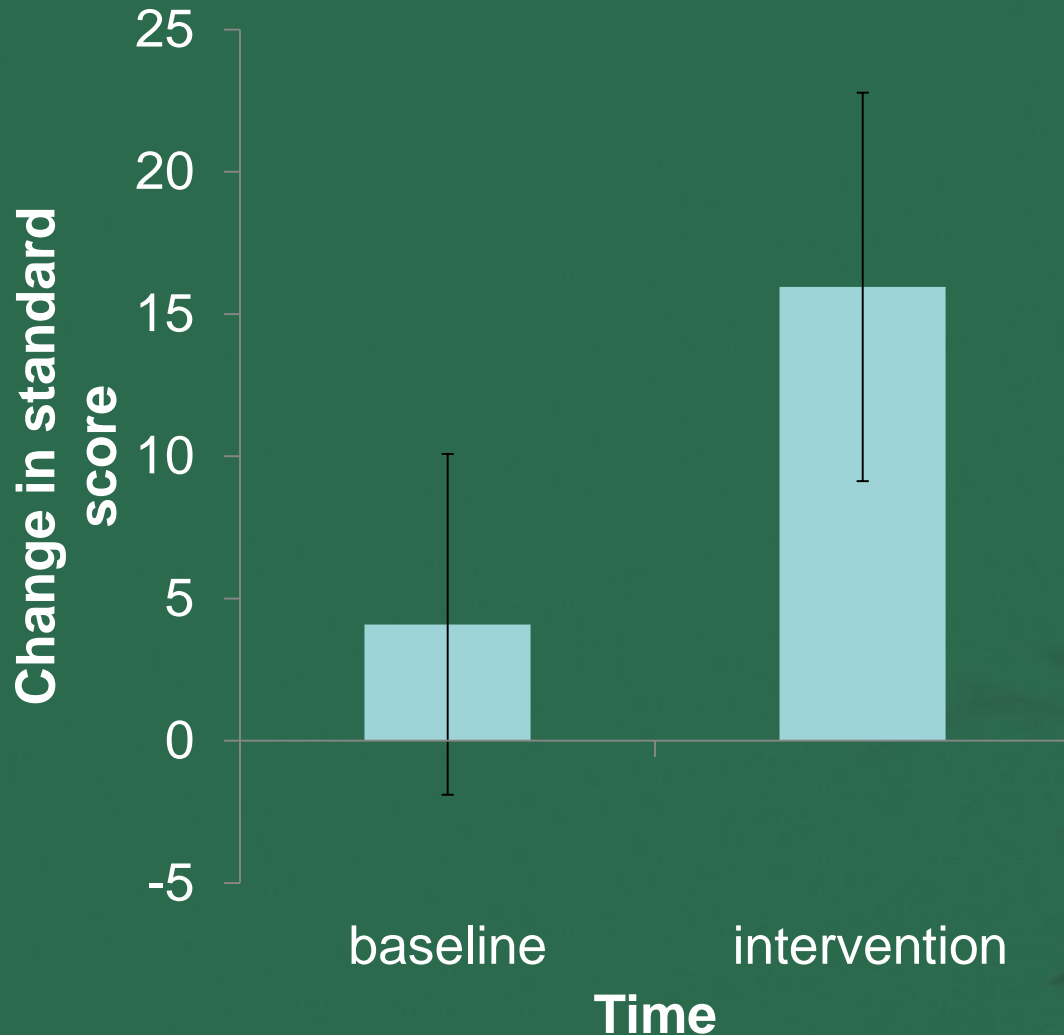
Outcomes

Mean Standard Scores on TAWF at Different Time Points





Results



- Significant progress during baseline ($d=0.7$) and with intervention ($d=1.6$),
- Progress with intervention significantly greater than during baseline ($d=1.3$)



Conclusion

- Four hours of semantic intervention led to significant gains.
- Average increase in SS was 15 points.
- 9 participants achieved a SS >85 on TAWF post-intervention.
- Intervention enabled the participants to begin to close the gap.
- A small amount of intervention can lead to significant gains with post-16 students.
- SLTs can have a positive effect on the language skills of post-16 students with LD.



Further Post-16 Research

- Effectiveness of 1:1 vocabulary intervention
- Effectiveness of Social Skills and Language Skills group therapy
- Longitudinal Outcomes



Thank You

- Speech and Language Therapists:
 - Jemma Colclough
 - Lauren Cox
 - Hannah Leniston
- Speech and Language Therapy Assistant:
 - Susan Pope

Website: www.moorhouseschool.co.uk

Email: campbell@moorhouseschool.co.uk

Twitter: @campbellchats