

Improving children's retention of subject specific vocabulary in Design Technology

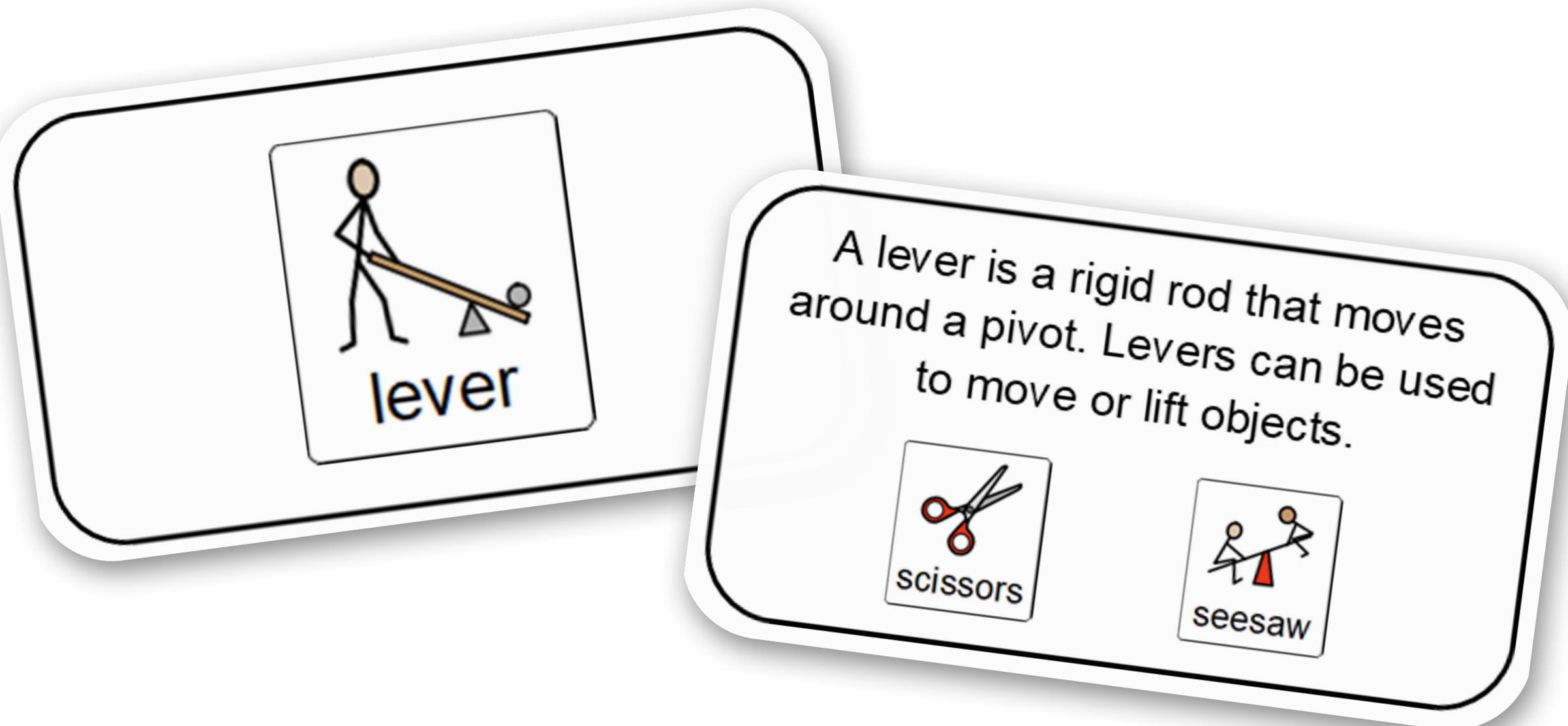
Aim

As a Design Technology subject leader I frequently find that children struggle to understand, use and retain many of the often challenging subject specific vocabulary required to excel in DT lessons. With vocabulary and spaced learning being a key priority for my school I wanted to find a manageable way for teachers to support children with their vocabulary retention within DT.

Leitner Box Technique

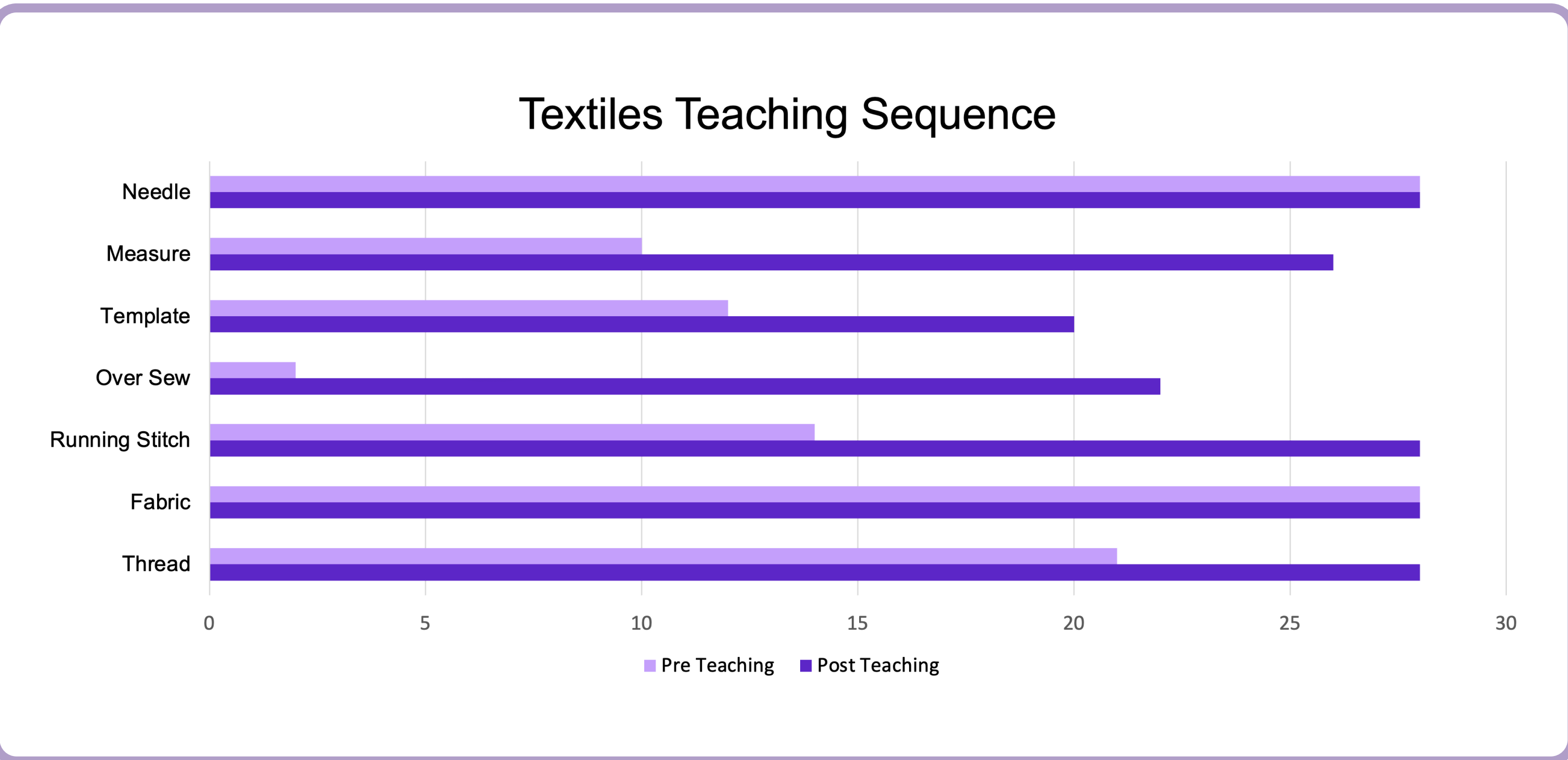
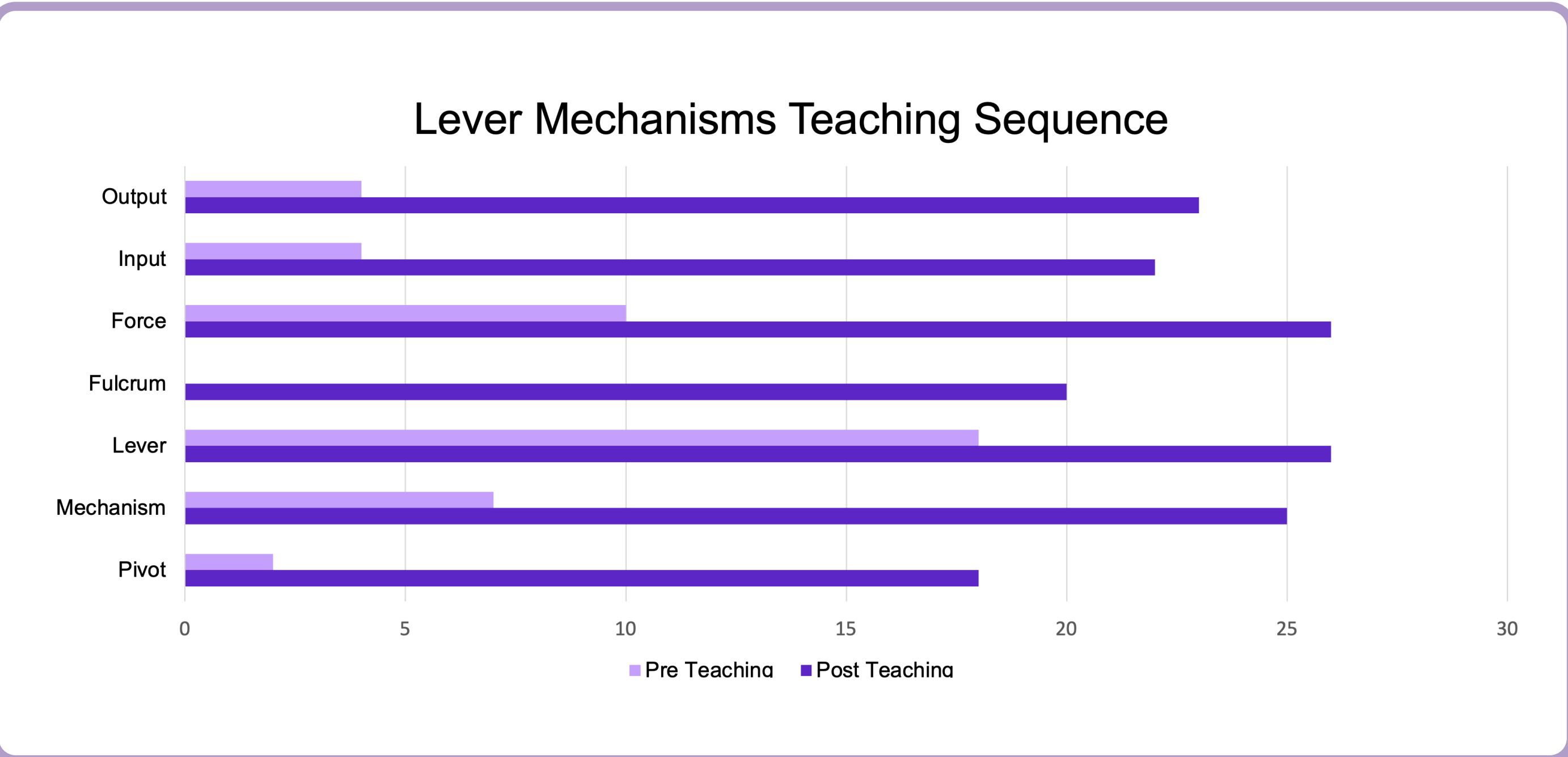
The Leitner Box system employs the concept of spaced repetition using flashcards in order to improve the learning and memorisation of vocabulary. Vocabulary cards are introduced and practiced firstly everyday, then every other day and finally once a week. If errors are made then the cards return to being practiced daily.

This is an example of a flash card used with the children during the learning phase. It includes the vocabulary and an image example on the front and a definition on the back.



Method

I completed the action research with my own class of 28 Year 1 and 2 pupils alongside our lever mechanisms and textiles DT Projects. I chose seven key words from each unit and used the Leitner Box system to teach the children the vocabulary. I completed an initial assessment of each child's vocabulary knowledge and then a second assessment after each teaching sequence to see if the vocabulary had been understood and retained.

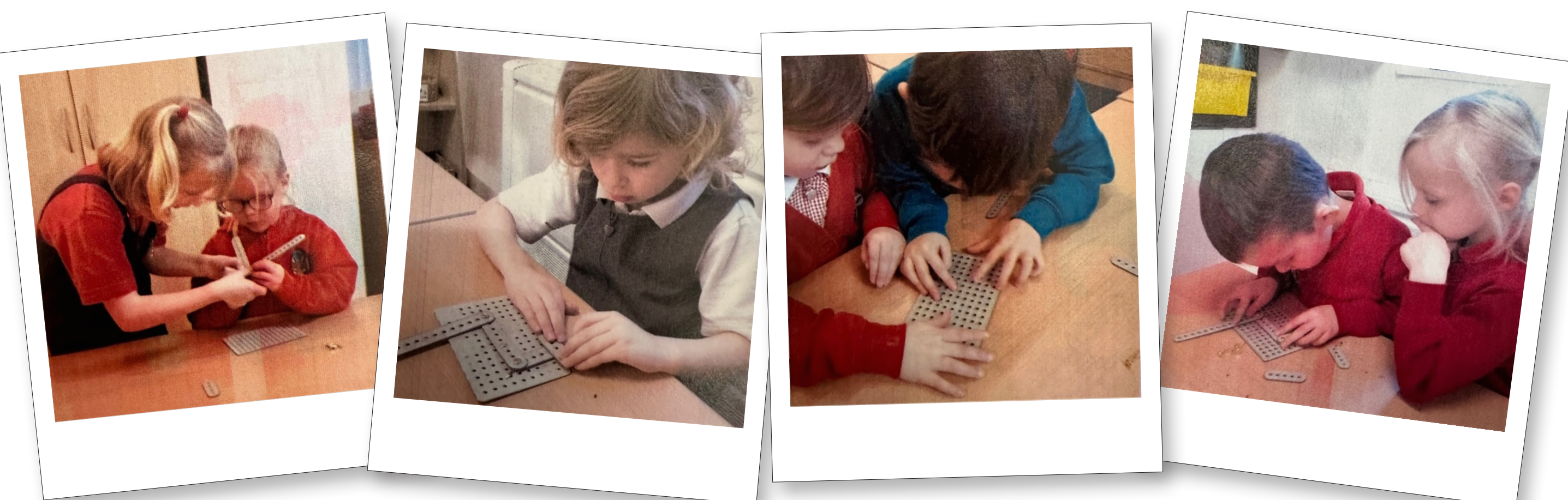


Results

I found that the Leitner System had a very positive impact on the children's vocabulary understanding and retention. The results showed a significant increase in vocabulary knowledge for all 14 of the subject specific words.

Conclusions

Moving forwards I feel that the positive results from this research could be transferred into many other subject areas within school and have similar success. This process can be adapted for children throughout school and used as a tool to further support the understanding and retention of vocabulary.



References

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