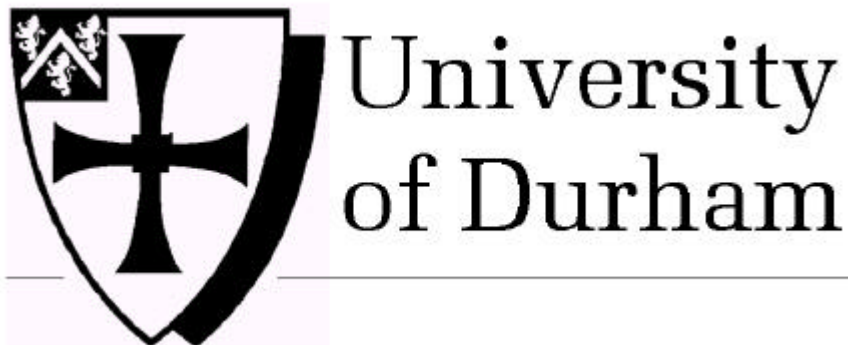


Evaluation of BBC Digital Curriculum

Summary of Findings May 2002

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Executive summary

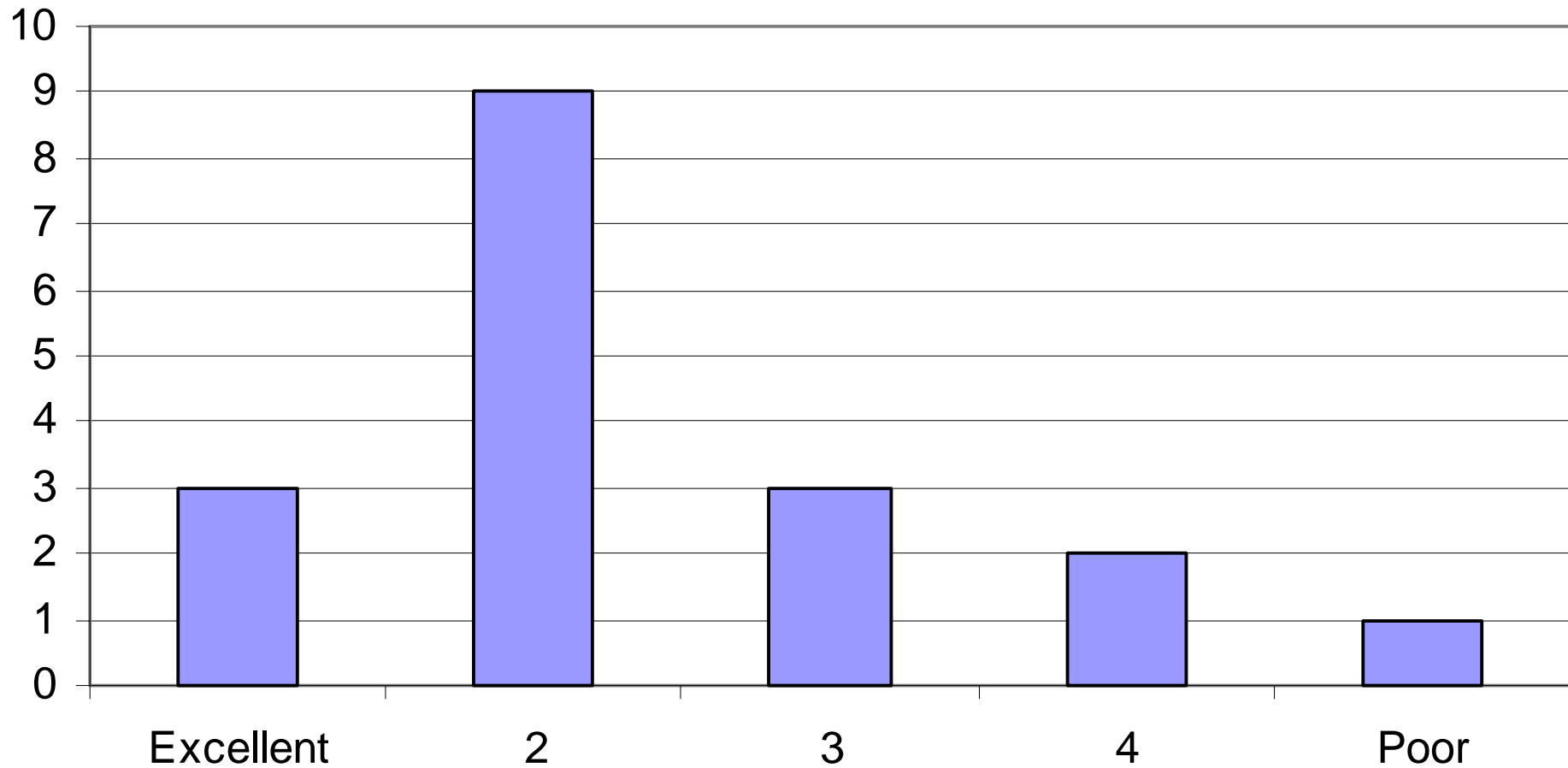
- Pupils and teachers enjoyed using the resource and believed it was motivating
- The content of the resource was generally thought to be good
- Teachers believed that pupils' learning, motivation and behaviour were generally improved during the trial, especially those in primary schools, and particularly for those pupils whose normal behaviour was worst
- Technical problems were a factor for many schools, particularly secondary schools
- Objective evidence of learning gains and attitude changes was inconclusive, given the constraints on the evaluation

Methodology of the evaluation

- 21 of the 23 trial schools were visited and 26 lessons were observed. Interviews with teachers and pupils were conducted.
- Teachers were asked to rate the learning gains, motivation and behaviour during the trial for individual pupils, and to complete a short questionnaire about the resource.
- Pupils in the literacy and mathematics trials completed attitude questionnaires before and after the trial.
- Pupils in the mathematics trial, and some in a control group, completed an assessment on the content of the resource before and after the trial.

Teacher ratings: overall

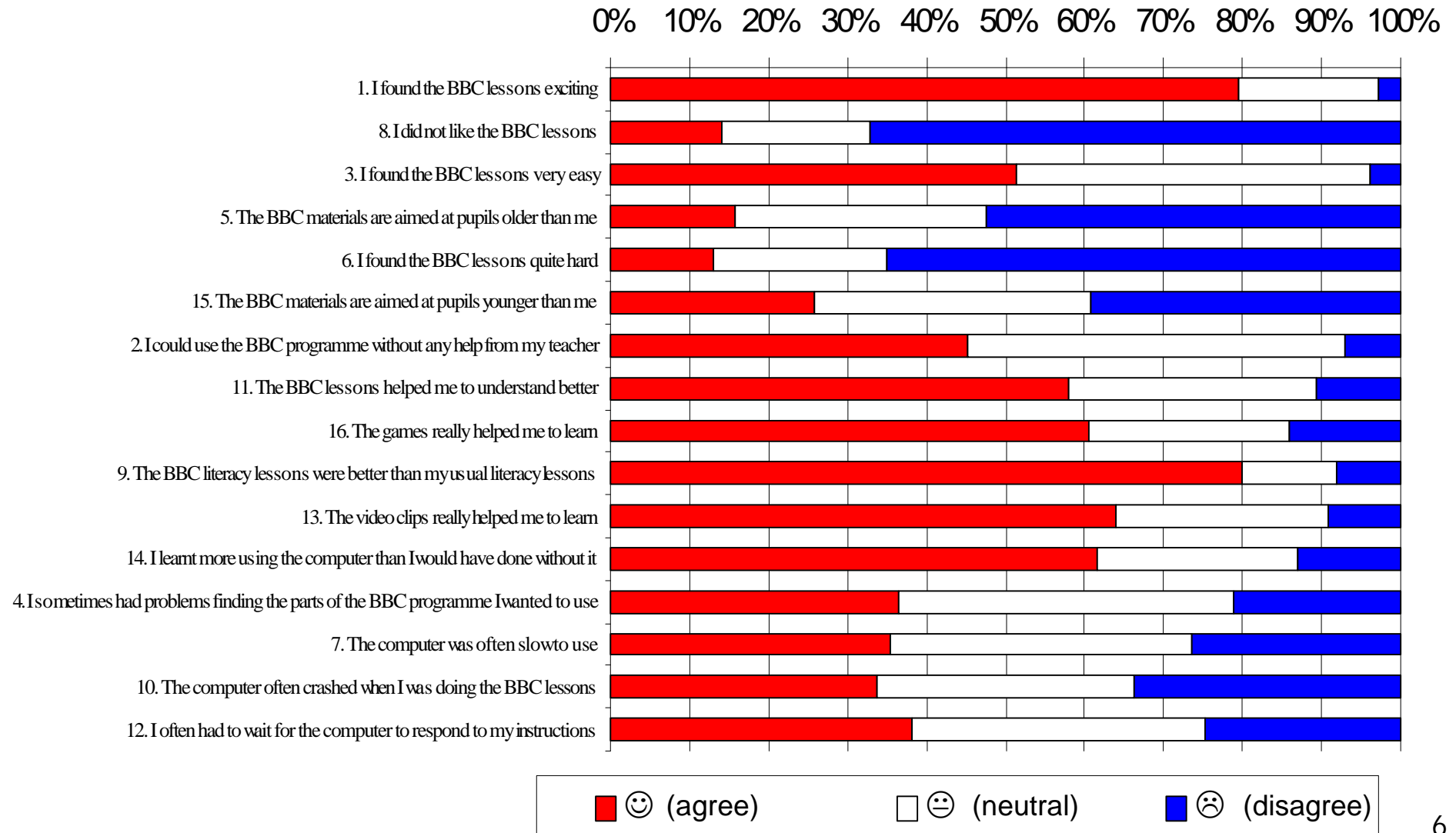
Overall, how would you rate the BBC materials?



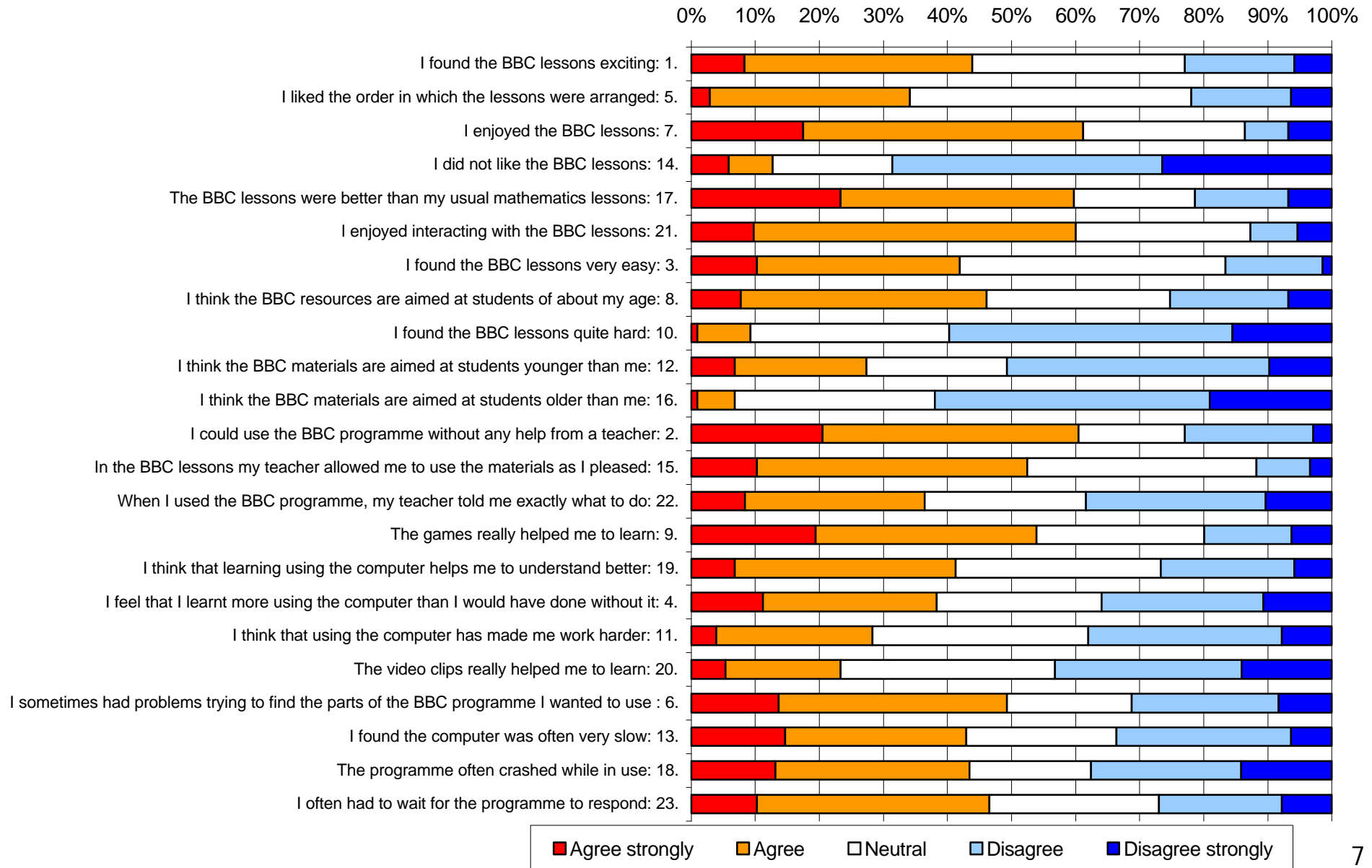
Pupil attention, interest & motivation

- Pupils enjoyed using the resource
 - “They love it, they absolutely think it's wonderful.” (literacy)
 - 80% of primary and 44% of secondary pupils said they found it exciting
- Teachers believed it was motivating
 - 70% of pupils in numeracy, 69% in literacy and 43% in mathematics were judged to have been more motivated than normal during the trial (compared with 0%, 1% and 10%, respectively, judged less motivated)
- Graphics, games, animations, videos, interactivity were all appreciated
- Some made criticisms
 - “Less text would improve it.” (mathematics)

Pupil attitudes to the literacy resource

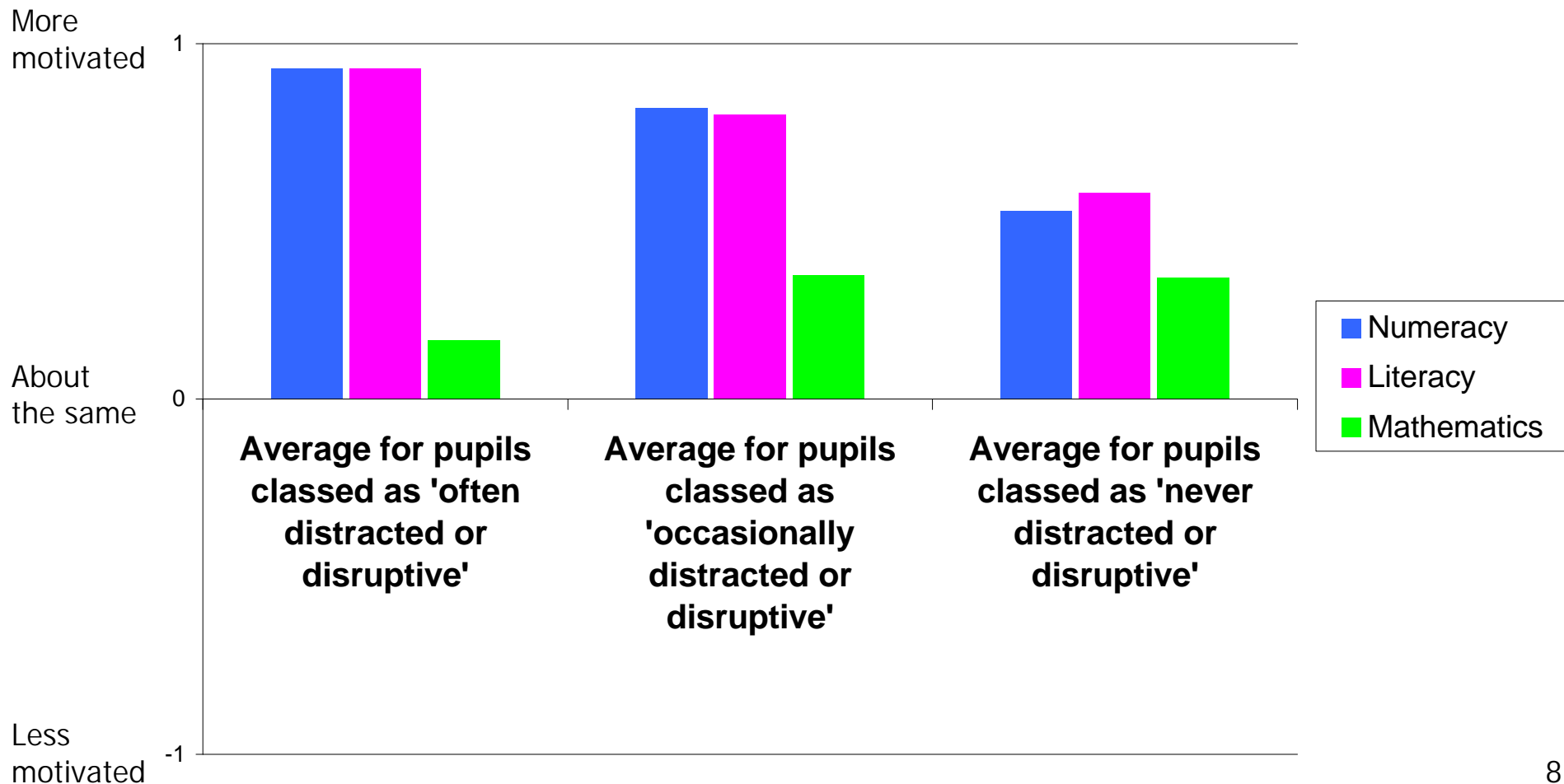


Student attitudes to the mathematics resource



Teacher ratings of changes in motivation for pupils with different usual behaviour

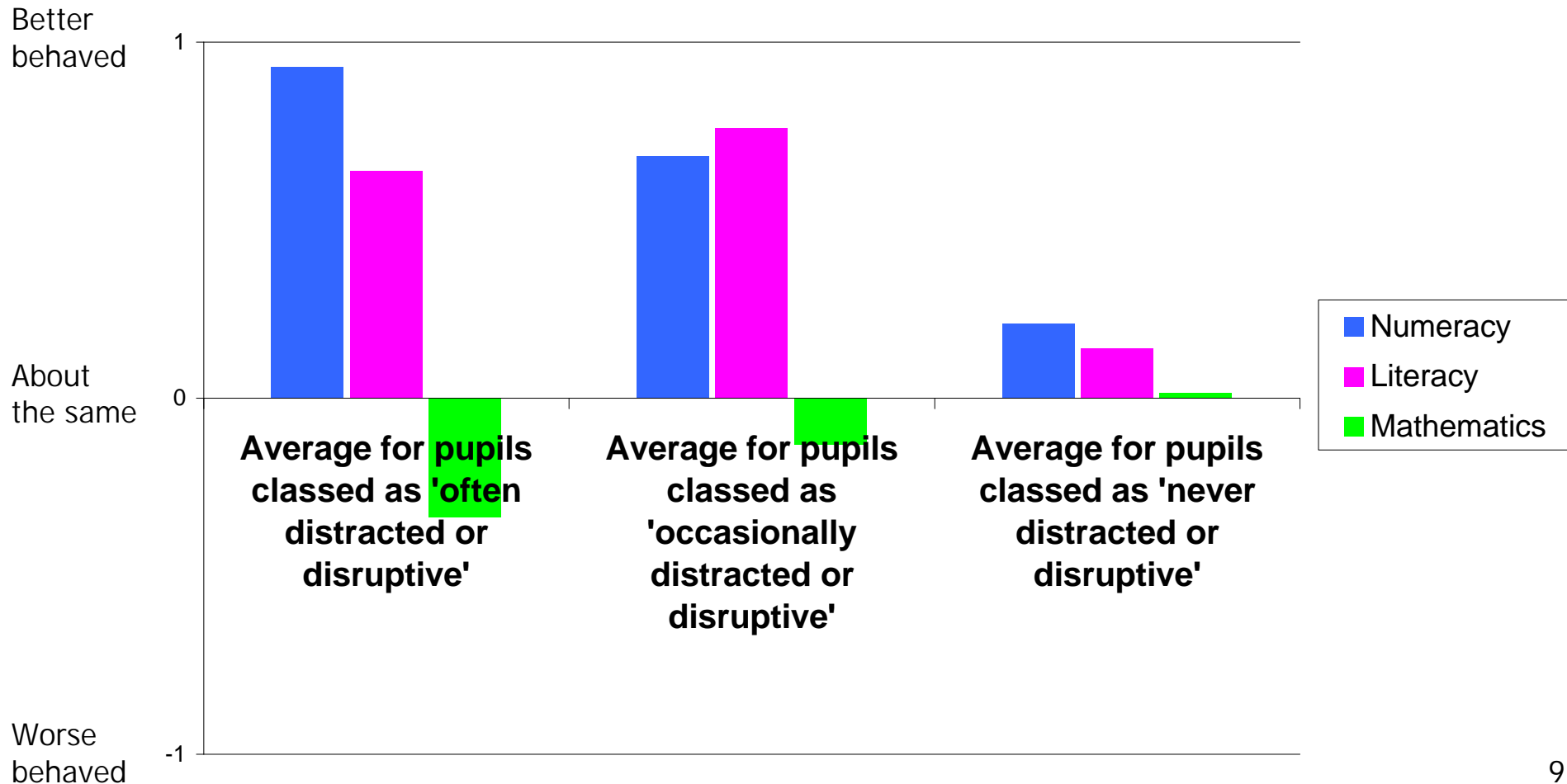
Trial motivation compared to normal (1=more motivated, 0=about the same, -1=less motivated)



Teacher ratings of changes in behaviour for pupils with different usual behaviour

Trial behaviour compared to normal

(1=better behaved, 0=about the same, -1=worse behaved)



Content of materials

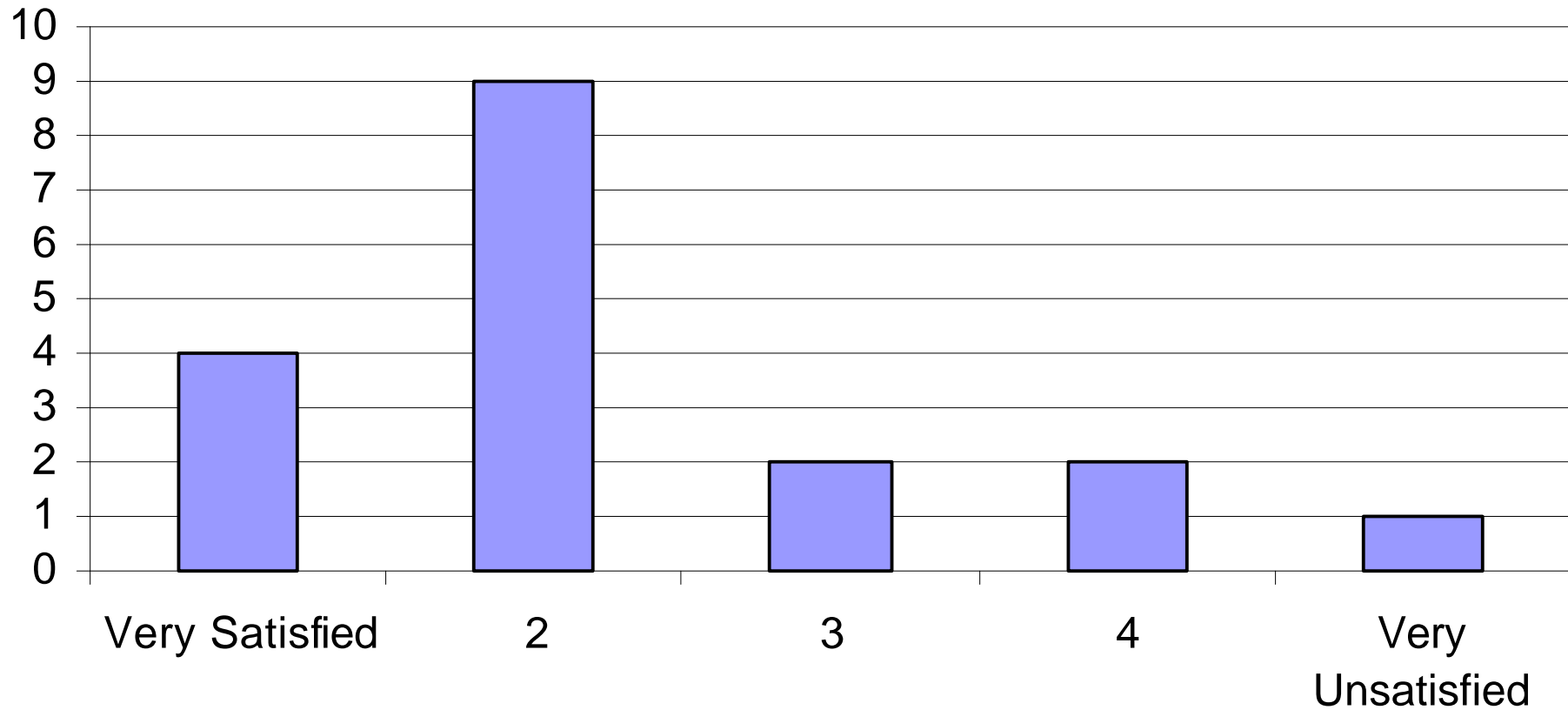
- The content was frequently judged to be very good
 - “We would definitely use the materials again ... a valuable addition to the resources we already have.” (mathematics)
 - Two-thirds of teachers rated the overall content ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’
 - Teachers in all four nations believed the content was appropriate to their curriculum
- Most pupils thought the level was about right, though some secondary pupils thought the appearance was a bit childish
- Many teachers thought the resource catered well for different abilities, but others felt it did not adequately support the less able
- Some constructive criticisms were made
 - “More worked examples would be an improvement.” (mathematics)

Quality of learning

- Teachers believed many of their pupils made learning gains
 - 37% of pupils in numeracy, 43% in literacy and 42% in mathematics were judged to have learnt more than normal during the trial (compared with 0%, 8% and 10%, respectively, judged to have learnt less)
- There was evidence of some high quality thinking
 - “Imaginative ideas and explanations coming from whole class activity and the plenary discussion.” (literacy)
- The quality of the learning experience depended on the way the resource was used, and a range of levels of pupil engagement was observed

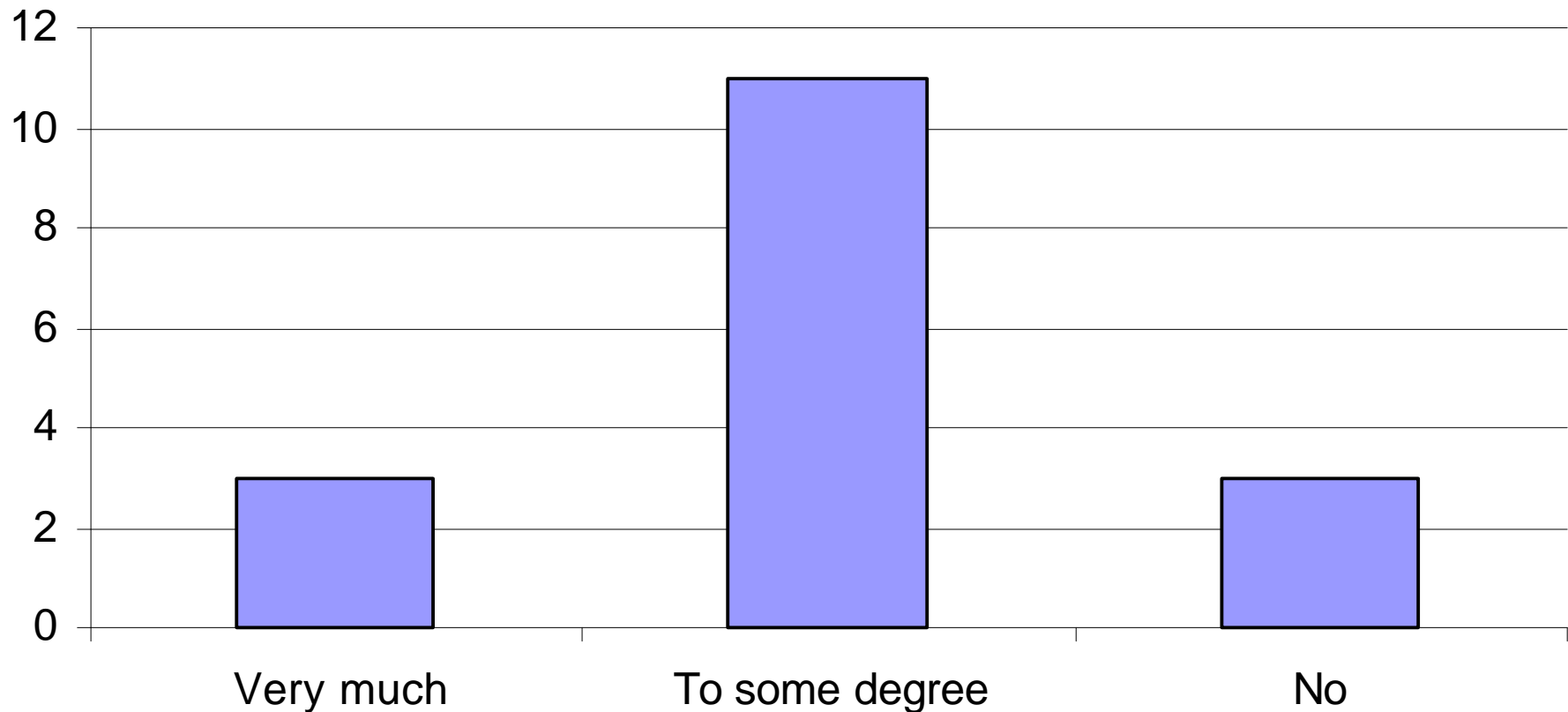
Teacher ratings: progress

Overall, how satisfied were you with the progress your pupils made?



Teacher ratings: effectiveness

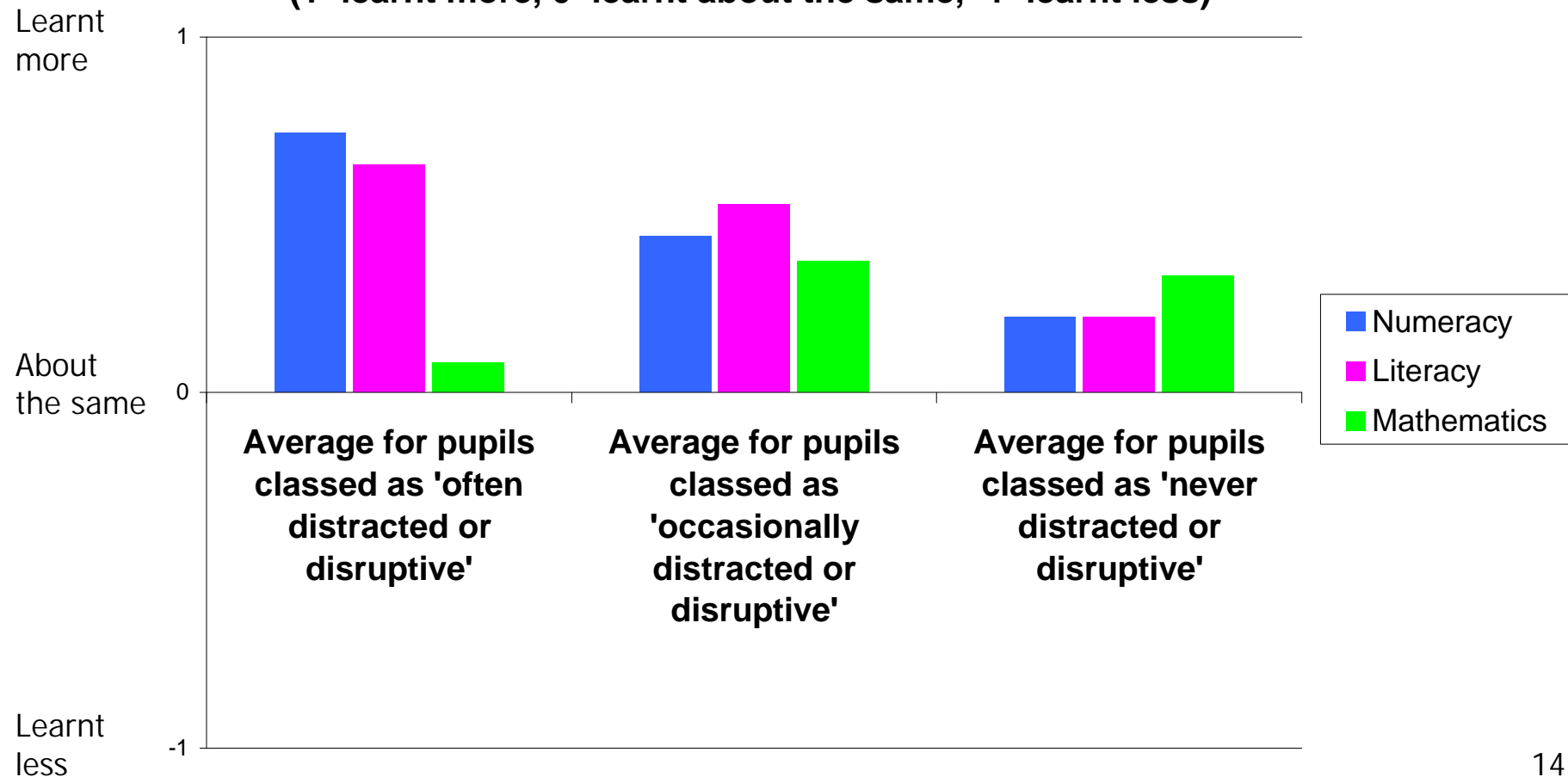
In general, have the BBC materials increased the effectiveness of the teaching process?



Teacher ratings of learning gains for pupils with different usual behaviour

Judgement of learning gains during trial compared to normal

(1=learnt more, 0=learnt about the same, -1=learnt less)



Impact of the trial on learning and attitudes

- An attempt was made to assess the learning gains and attitudinal changes of pupils in the trial. However, the evaluation was constrained by limited time for preparation, pressure of time on the teachers and pupils, and the relatively short duration of the trial.
- 157 (40%) of the students in the secondary mathematics trial, and a control group of 60 students, completed an assessment before and after the trial. Trial students' scores went up from 59% to 61%, which was a little less than the gain for those in the control group (from 56% to 64%).
- 181 (58%) of the pupils in the primary literacy trial completed a questionnaire before and after the trial. For these pupils, attitudes towards reading were slightly less positive at the end than they had been at the beginning.
- Given the extensive caveats, these results must be seen as inconclusive.

Lesson organisation & planning

- Schools had to deal with limitations in their infrastructure, e.g. usually fewer computers than pupils
 - 'One set of headphones per group immediately excluded others.' (mathematics)
- The interactive whiteboard was highly valued
 - "That's great because it's so big and clear." (literacy)
- The flexibility and potential of the system for managing pupils' learning was appreciated
 - "What I like though is how I can select just one or two lessons for them to do. It means it's easy for the kids to find the activities, they don't get lost in lots of options." (numeracy)
- The amount of new content and different functionalities meant that, for some, the new system did take some time to get used to
 - "The [management system] is quite cumbersome and long-winded and does not make lesson design easy." (numeracy)
 - A number of specific suggestions for improving the system were made

Technical and design issues

- As with all new applications, there were various frustrations and glitches and a number of constructive design suggestions were made
- About half the primary schools reported no significant problems, with quick access and very few freezes
- For some schools, particularly secondary schools, the technical problems were a significant feature of the trial
 - “The server crashed yesterday which meant the whole lesson was a write-off.” (mathematics)
- Teachers commented on the excellent support from the Help Desk and BBC technicians

Teacher ratings: use

If the BBC materials were made available, would you use them?

