The SSTEW scales – cognitive development

Practicalities from the SEED research programme

The spiral curriculum

Delving ever deeper into the heart of what matters in supporting children’s learning and thinking

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SSTEW

Subscales

• Supporting and extending language and communication
• Supporting learning and critical thinking
• Assessing learning and language

Practicalities

• Know what you are looking for
• Wait – not immediately apparent
• Look across contexts
• Consistency across staff members?
• Combining observation with exploring records – planning and assessment; on paper, or reality?

How do adults support learning and critical thinking?
Item 6: Staff support children’s language use

5.3 Staff provide running commentaries to model vocabulary and to display their own thought processes for children while they play.

7.1 The staff support individual language development using correct forms, recasting.

7.2 The staff scaffold and model language with individual children that is slightly above the child’s current level.

Item 7: Sensitive responsiveness

5.1 Staff ensure that every child receives extended individual attention more than once during the session. Y/N

7.1 All children are given “one on one” interactive attention more than once during the session. Y/N

7.2 Any comments or requests from children are responded to or dealt with promptly…

7.3 Although staff members may wish to focus on an individual child, no other child in the group is made to feel excluded.

Subscale 4: Supporting learning and critical thinking

Item 9: Supporting curiosity and problem solving

• Continuous provision
• Enhanced provision
• Routine – adult-supported activity
• Age-appropriate? (7.1 Visitors)

• Challenge and support – pose or invite children to solve
• Metacognition – model, plan/do/review

Encouraging sustained shared thinking…

Item 10: … during storytelling, sharing books, singing and playing with words/rhymes

• Engaging (3), Interactive (5)
• Dialogic style (7) – comments, evaluating, open-ended, links to previous experience

❖ None in observed period – 1?

Encouraging sustained shared thinking…

Item 11: … in investigation and exploration

3: Open-ended activities and resources to encourage exploration; Discuss with children; Encourage making connections to previous experiences

5: Encourage imagination and creativity, moving resources; Model exploration, excitement, wonder; Share and explain actions and children’s interests, introduce concepts; Build on previous activities.

7: Model and support scientific; problem solving approaches; Use scientific words linked to experiences; Involve parents.
**Item 12: Supporting children's concept development and higher order thinking**

3.1 Staff set up resources and run adult led sessions that support children to think critically such as sequencing, comparing, contrasting and problem solving.

5.2 Planning shows evidence of learning intentions that lead to activities and questions designed to support or extend thinking or problem solving (not content/knowledge) – **how, not what**

7.2 Planning shows progression, develop concepts previously explored e.g. though schemas, interests

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**Subscale 5: Assessing learning and language**

**Item 13: Using assessment to support and extend learning and critical thinking**

**Item 14: Assessing language development**

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**Planning for sustained shared thinking:**

*continuous and enhanced provision, adult-planned activities*

- Open-ended, accessible resources
- Reflecting children’s current interests
- Flexible spaces
- Quiet spaces
- Both familiar and new, unusual resources
- Flexible routines
- Opportunities to revisit

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**Planning ‘in the moment’**

Young children are in the here and now.

In that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the ‘teachable moment’ – the skilful adult makes a difference.

By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be **always**

- Observing
- Assessing
- Planning

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**wait, watch, wonder**

- What might the play be about?
- What is the child’s purpose?
- Is there a role for me?
- What could I add?
- How can I join the play?

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**Gone in a moment …. but lasting impact?**