

## **Sustained Shared Thinking: An Exceptional Teaching Strategy**

### Handouts

#### **HANDOUT 1:**

- If you went into an environment where Sustained Shared Thinking was being used effectively what would you expect to see the adults and the children doing?
- During continuous provision what do you currently spend the majority of your time doing? Think about how much time you spend:
  - \* Teaching
  - \* Narrating and modelling for children
  - \* Policing the environment
  - \* Taking photos and observations

#### **HANDOUT 2:**

‘Sustained Shared Thinking is an episode in which two or more individuals work together in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend.’ Siraj-Blatchford et al 2002

**HANDOUT 3:**

**SUSTAINED**

**Discuss...**

- What type and length of interactions do you have with your children?
- How often do you leave the same resources out for children to return to so that they can practise, extend and further their learning in different contexts?

**HANDOUT 4:**

**SHARED**

**Discuss...**

- How much time do you actually spend talking to children?
- The relationships that you have with your children. Do they enable you to play the role of a critical friend?

**HANDOUT 5:**

**THINKING**

**Discuss...**

- How often you talk to children about thinking and how you do this?
- How do you challenge children's thinking?

**HANDOUT 6:**

**Sustained Shared Thinking Sentence Starters**

I really  
want to know more  
about...

Maybe you could...

I wonder why...

I'm thinking  
about...

You really made  
me...

I like the way  
you...

So you think  
that...

I don't  
know what do you  
think...

You might like to...

I wonder if...

**HANDOUT 7:**

**15 Sustained Shared Thinking Techniques**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuning In</b></p> <p>This involves listening carefully and observing children’s non-verbal communication. It is how you use your own body language and voice e.g. eye contact, nodding, smiling. You need to be on the same “wave length” so you can share children’s interests and understand what motivates them/fires their imagination.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Modelling Thinking</b></p> <p>This is where you give a running commentary about thinking processes. Talk out loud about what you are doing, how you are doing it and why you are doing it that way. It is important to use the word “thinking” in your talk.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Offering Alternative Viewpoint</b></p> <p>This will often start with the word “Maybe...” and it lets children know that other people have different thoughts, opinions and ideas. It challenges children to reflect on their own thinking and how it might differ from that of others.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Offering your own Experience</b></p> <p>Children love to hear about our experiences and this is really important in modelling vocabulary, language structures and sequencing. Talking about our own experiences can provoke children to make comments, develop narratives and ask questions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Open Ended Questions</b></p> <p>Asking “what” “where” “how” and “why” questions are recognised as open ended questions and should be used in conjunction with Sustained Shared Thinking language.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reciprocating</b></p> <p>This involves responding not only to what children say but also to what we see them doing and how they are thinking. It doesn't require an answer from children and is a great way of modelling turn taking which is a vital skill that children need when learning to communicate.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Inviting Children To Elaborate</b></p> <p>This is a way to encourage children to share information, ideas, feelings and thoughts without them feeling that there is a wrong or right answer to a question.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Clarifying Ideas</b></p> <p>By repeating a child’s thoughts and ideas back to them you can unpick their thinking with them. By listening to their own thinking it can lead them to refine their ideas which can then move their learning forward.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recapping</b></p> <p>This is summarising the key points of what a child has said or done so that they can become more aware of their thinking processes.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Encourage Further Thinking</b></p> <p>To encourage deeper level thinking we need to narrate a child’s thinking and then challenge them to take their thinking further towards their next steps in learning.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Respecting Children’s Decisions &amp; Choices</b></p> <p>To facilitate deeper level thinking we need to respect and respond positively to children’s decisions and choices, encouraging them to talk about and reflect on the decisions and choices they have made.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Suggesting</b></p> <p>By making suggestions to children we can model new ways of tackling problems and finding solutions which will expand their thinking, broaden their experiences and develop their skills.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reminding</b></p> <p>This helps children to draw on their past experiences and previous thinking so that they can make connections in their learning.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Speculating</b></p> <p>This helps to model thinking that may be outside of your children’s experiences and of a more abstract nature that can lead to deeper level thinking.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Showing Genuine Interest</b></p> <p>The way we use our body and voice tells children how “genuine” we are. Getting down to their level, the tone of our voice and facial expression e.g. smiling are all cues for children.</p>

## HANDOUT 8:

# Digging Example

These children have weak upper body strength and struggle to manipulate writing tools.

Next steps in learning: **Physical Development**

- **Skills:** I am learning to control and manipulate tools
- **Knowledge:** I know big muscles need to be strong to support the smaller muscles in my body



**HANDOUT 9:**

## Match the Pairs

Draw a line to match the Sustained Shared Thinking strategy with the description

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Tuning in</b>	Listening carefully, observing body language and what the child is doing
<b>Modelling Thinking</b>	Thank goodness that you were wearing wellies when you jumped in the puddles. Look my feet are soaking!
<b>Reciprocating</b>	I am thinking really hard how to solve this problem. We have some visitors today and that means there are 23 children but only 20 biscuits.
<b>Inviting Children to Elaborate</b>	You might like to try doing it this way.
<b>Clarifying Ideas</b>	Do you think that the three bears would have liked Goldilocks to come and live with them as their friend?
<b>Reminding</b>	I really want to know more about this.
<b>Suggesting</b>	So you think that...
<b>Speculating</b>	Don't forget that you said that this stone will float if I put it in the water.

**HANDOUT 10:**

## **Reflect on Your Practice**

**Look at the techniques and sentence starters.**

- Which ones do you currently use?
- Which ones do you need to develop?
- What have you got in place that supports you developing SST as an effective teaching tool?
- What barriers, if any, have you got that prevent you from embedding SST as an effective teaching tool? What actions will you take?