

**SUSTAINED SHARED THINKING
AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING -
SSTEW**

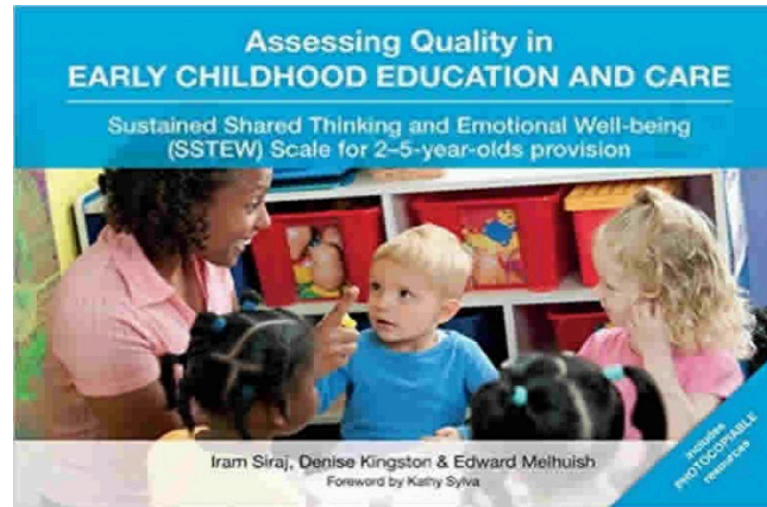
MARY MACKENZIE

WHAT IS SUSTAINED SHARED THINKING?

An episode in which two or more individuals “work together” in an intellectual way to resolve 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)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCALE

- What is the evidence base and background?
- Why a new scale?
- Current research using, and on the SSTEWS scale



INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EVIDENCE

Early experiences:

- Lay the foundation for all learning (Sylva et al., 2004: Allen, 2011)
- Can reduce inequalities linked to parental background and socio-economic status (West et al., 2010: Manning et al., 2010)
- Can have a profound effect on economic growth and prosperity generally (Melhuish et al, 2010: Field, 2010: EIU, 2012)

SO WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- What aspects of early years provision and practice constitute high quality
- What is the impact of this?



WHY THE EARLY YEARS?

“If the race is already halfway run even before children begin school, then we clearly need to examine what happens in the earliest years”

(Epsing-Andersen, 2005)

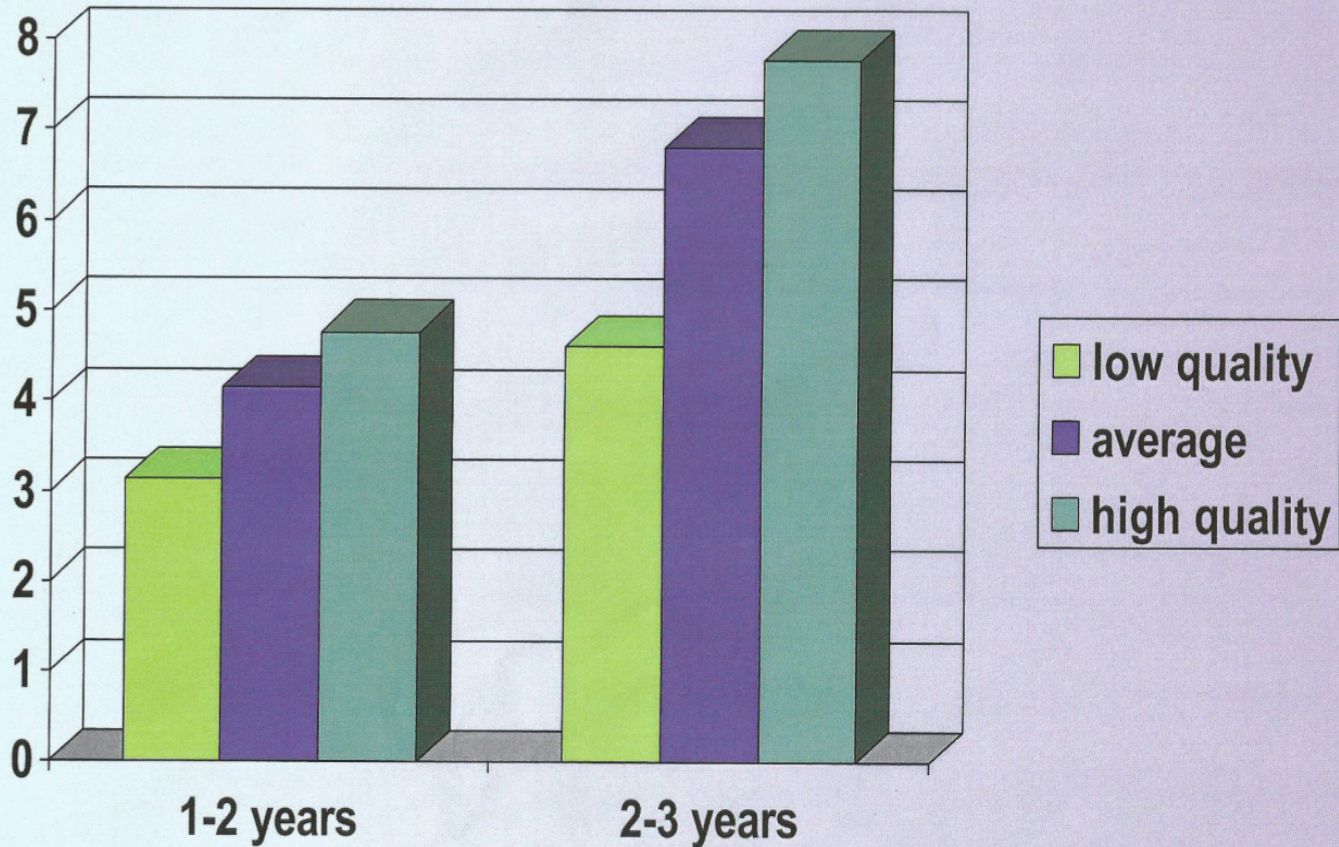
“Like it or not, the most important mental and behavioural patterns, once established are difficult to change once children enter school”

(Heckman & Wax, 2004)



Quality and Duration matter

(months of developmental advantage on literacy)



EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALES

ECERS-3



ITERS



ECERS-E



- A 'family' of documents
- All grounded in validated research
- Can be used as an audit tool – for assessment
- Can be used as a self-evaluation tool – for identifying improvement

QUALITY, PEDAGOGY & PRACTICE

New understandings of early childhood development and practice from REPEY (Researching effective pedagogy in the early years) showed that children benefit when:

- **Strong leadership and relatively little staff turnover**
- **Adults have warm, responsive relationships with children**
- **High quality interactions including Sustained Shared Thinking**
- **Trained teachers are amongst the staff**
- **Parents are supported in involvement in children's learning**

Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2001



STUDY OF EARLY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT (SEED)

Includes a longitudinal study of 5,000+ households with a two-year old child

- Interviews with parent when child aged 2, 3 and 4
- Questions on family, child's health and development
- Assessment of child's cognitive, language and social development from 2 to 7 years

Parents as Home-based Pedagogues

Early years Home Learning Environment (HLE)

- being read to
- painting and drawing
- going to the library
- playing with letters/numbers
- learning activities with the alphabet
- learning activities with numbers/shapes
- learning activities with songs/poems/nursery rhymes



THOUGHTS ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT – WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE...

For two year olds?

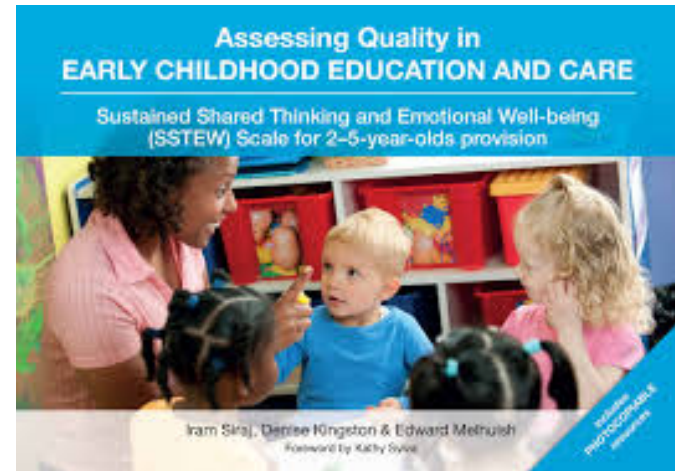


For three and four
year olds?



NEW SSTEW SCALE

- It is another scale in the current 'toolkit' of quality assessment rating scales
- It is for use in settings with children aged 2 – 5 years
- Has a focus on observing interactions
- Is an aspirational tool



NATURE OF THE SSTEWS SCALE

- Builds on ECERS R & ECERS E/ITERS R
- Considers high quality interactions with and between children.
- Needs to be used by someone with knowledge of child development and appropriate practice



SUSTAINED SHARED THINKING – HOW DO WE SUPPORT THIS?

They may include the adult:

Tuning in: *listening carefully to what is being said, observing body language and what the child is doing*

Showing genuine interest: *giving your whole attention, maintaining eye contact, affirming, smiling, nodding*

Respecting children's own decisions and choices

inviting children to elaborate: *'I really want to know more about this'*



.....MORE ON SST

Inviting children to elaborate: *'I really want to know more about this'*

Recapping: *'so you think that...'*

Offering your own experience: *'I like to listen to music when I cook supper at home'*

Clarifying ideas: *'Right Darren, so you think this stone will melt if I boil it in water?'*



.....MORE ON SST

Suggesting: *'You might like to try doing it this way'*

Reminding: *'Don't forget that you said that this stone will melt if I boil it'*

Using encouragement to further thinking: *'you have really thought hard about where to put this door in the palace but where on earth will you put the windows?'*

Offering and alternative viewpoint: *'Maybe Goldilocks wasn't naughty when she ate the porridge'*

Speculating: *'Do you think the three bears would have liked Goldilocks to come and live with them as their friend?'*



Think. think. think.

Adult – Child Interactions

A few four-year-olds were sitting together. Three of the children were wearing trainers that would light up when they stepped down on them:

Teacher: Wow! Look at your shoes! That is so cool. They light up when you step down.

Child 1: Yes, they do this. [Jumps up and down several times]

Teacher: How does that happen? How does it light up?

Child 1: Because they are new.

Teacher: Um. Mine are new too but they don't light up.

Child 2: No, because they light up when you step down on them. [Steps down hard several times]



Teacher: [Steps down hard several times] That's funny. Mine don't light up when I step down.

Child 3: No, no, no, you have to have these holes [points to the holes]

Teacher: [Pointing to the holes in her own shoe] But I have holes and mine still don't light up, and Josh has holes in his trainers too and his do not light up either. I wonder why?

Child 4: I think you need batteries. Kids, you need batteries.

Child 1: Yeah, you need batteries to make them work. [Thinks for a while]. But I did not see batteries when I put my toes in.

Child 4: I think they are under the toes.

Child 2: I can't feel the batteries under my toes.

Teacher: I wonder how we can find out about this?

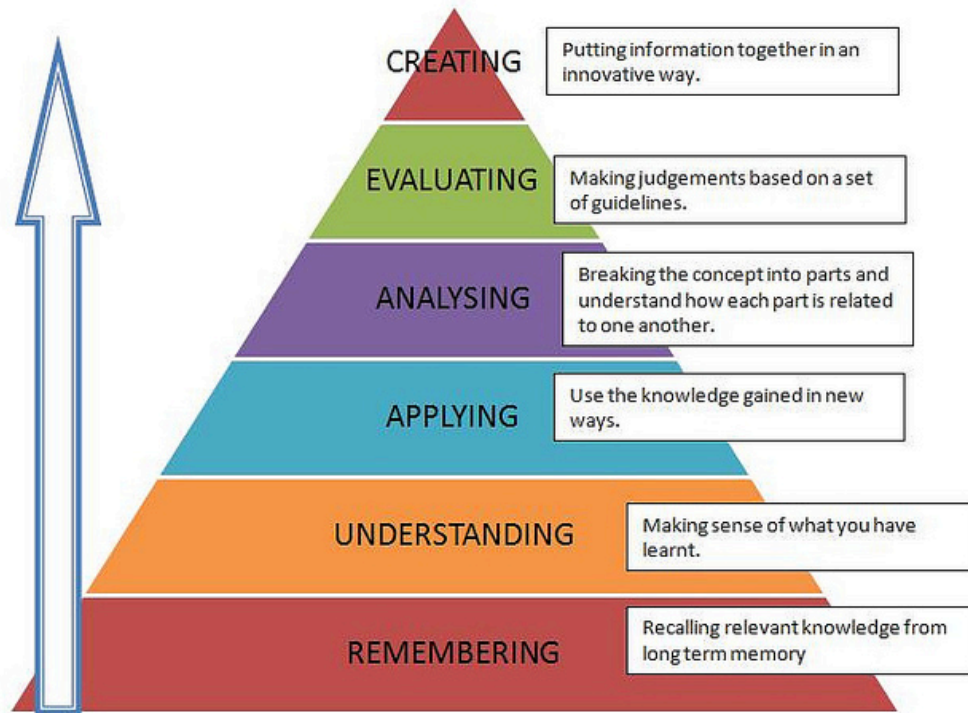


COMMENT, COMMENT, COMMENT, COMMENT & QUESTION ?????

- High Scope method advocates sparing use of questions. The adults use comment and only question when this stimulates the conversation.
- They ask children to explain their thinking, and engage in 'metacognition', talking about their own thinking and reasoning.



BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



LET'S LOOK AT SUBSCALE 1 - ITEM 1

Subscale 1 – ‘Building trust, confidence and independence’

- Item 1 ‘Self-regulation and social development’



Item 1. Self-regulation and social development

Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
<p>1.1 Staff do not appear to agree about the boundaries/ rules/expectations or apply them consistently.*</p> <p>1.2 Some children are left, even though they are obviously confused or distressed.</p>		<p>3.1 Expectations and boundaries are made explicit and shared by all staff.*</p> <p>3.2 Staff are respectful and professional around the children, parents/carers, and each other.*</p>		<p>5.1 Staff explain carefully to the children what they need to do and pre-empt any difficulties.*</p> <p>5.2 Staff show empathy and understanding when children do not want to follow rules or get upset.*</p> <p>5.3 Staff show an awareness of individuals and their needs, giving additional support and allowing some flexibility.*</p> <p>5.4 Staff redirect inappropriate behaviour by stating what the children should do rather than what they should not.</p>		<p>7.1 Staff congratulate children when they follow the rules well – e.g. I saw you help put the tractor away. And/or the children are encouraged to tell staff how they followed the rules etc.*</p> <p>7.2 Staff have agreed processes that they follow when conflicts arise. The processes include engaging the children in problem-solving and finding solutions to disputes, together.*</p>

LET'S LOOK AT SUBSCALE 4 - ITEM 10

Subcale 4 - 'Supporting learning & critical thinking'

- Item 10 'Encouraging SST through storytelling, sharing books, singing and rhymes'



Sub-scale 4. Supporting learning and critical thinking

Item 10. Encouraging sustained shared thinking through storytelling, sharing books, singing, and rhymes

Inadequate		Minimal		Good		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.1 Very little individual interaction during story/book time, singing, or rhymes.		3.1 Staff respond to children asking for stories, books, singing, or rhymes by helping them recall stories, locate and read books, singing with or engaging in rhyming, and word play as appropriate.		5.1 Staff encourage the children to hold and 'read' books or retell familiar stories, including their own 'stories', sing songs, or join in with rhymes and word games.		7.1 Staff use factual books to support children's understanding of concepts.*
1.2 Staff involvement with stories, books, singing, or rhymes is limited to whole group time.		3.2 Staff invite children (individually or in small groups) to join them to sing, engage in word and rhyme play, or tell stories or read books.		5.2 Staff use props/puppets/ the children themselves to support storytelling, engagement with songs or rhymes.		7.2 Staff engage children with stories, singing etc. They support anticipation of familiar words, actions etc., make comments, evaluate stories/songs etc., and ask a few simple open-ended questions.*
		3.3 Staff engage children in choosing songs, rhymes, stories, or books and ask them about their choices.		5.3 Children are given access to props and puppets to support retelling stories and use in free play.		7.3 Staff encourage children to make links between the story, book, song, or rhyme and their previous experiences.
		3.4 Staff show that they know the children's preferred books, stories, songs, or rhymes.*		5.4 Staff sing and engage in rhyming and word play while playing and interacting with the children during other activities.		

THE ROLE OF THE OBSERVER ...

Looking at/for interactions between children and adults, as well as children with children.

Considering how the adult/s support and extend learning which will include their responsiveness to individual children as well as to small groups and all of the children.



CURRENT RESEARCH

- Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)
 - UK based study following 2 year olds using ITERS, ECERS & SSTEWS
- Research in Australia & New Zealand using the SSTEWS scale



AND FINALLY

- **Level 3** – changes to **physical environment, routines and adult role** occur in a **planned and cohesive way led by intended change to child outcomes**; professional dialogue relating to pedagogical principles underlying how children learn (the ‘enacted curriculum’)
- **Level 2** - changes to the **adult role and support for children’s learning**, professional dialogue about the purpose of change and how it supports children’s learning and development
- **Level 1** - changes to the **physical environment** (e.g. room layout, resources) **or welfare requirements**, beginnings of reflective practice

Adapted from Coburn and Russell’s levels of depth of change [2008]



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THANK YOU – ANY QUESTIONS?

