

Supporting learning

Talking about thinking with Feedback

Why talk about thinking?

When children learn to talk about their thinking, they are more successful at learning. Talking about thinking is not easy. Preparatory children can learn simple ways to talk about thinking as they explore how they know or why they feel, imagine or believe things about their world.

How do children 'talk' about thinking?

Young children often talk about what they did (their actions) when they talk about their thinking. As they mature, they change the way they talk about their thinking.

- 1 Initially, children might **find it difficult** to explain their thinking. They might find it 'funny' that people ask about their thinking.

e.g. When you ask: *How did you know? How did you work that out?* They might say: *Because!* Or: *I just knew.* Or: *I just guessed.*

- 2 Next, children may begin to **experiment** with thinking as they do things/use objects and ideas. They might:

- try out different objects/actions until something works or a problem is solved (trial and error)
- say: *I just moved this here and then it worked* (explaining actions).

- 3 Help children to show interest in thinking by talking out loud about their/your own thinking.

e.g. You could say: *I think you remembered what we did yesterday, so you tried that idea.*

Children might show interest in talking about thinking by saying:

- *I wonder how I did that!*
- *Why did that work better than the first idea?*
- *I think I used a different idea/way.*

- 4 As children mature, they will begin to try to talk about their thinking and respond to questions about their thinking. They will also try new ways of thinking and doing things. They might say:

- *I had to remember to try different pieces because that's what I did last time.*
- *I kept testing it out until it finally worked.*
- *I put it together and checked that it worked/looked right.*
- *Next time, I might try using the glue instead of the tape.*



How can you help children to talk about their thinking?

Help children learn to talk about their thinking by:

- asking questions about their thinking
- providing words or examples of how to talk about their thinking.

Asking questions about their thinking

How did you know that would work/what to do?

How did you choose/decide to use/do that?

Why do you think that will work/that's a good idea?

What helped you decide where to put that piece?

What did you think about when you were choosing/doing that?

Are you sure? How could you check that idea?

Tell me what you did/thought about.

Remember what we did yesterday. Could you try to do that again?

Could you draw/list/write ideas to help you think about/do it a different way?

What is the same or different about these parts/ideas/bits of information?

Note: Allow plenty of time for children to answer questions about their thinking or reword the question to help children answer it.

Providing words or examples of how to talk about their thinking

Model (show) children ways to talk about their/your thinking.

I noticed that you tried/did ...

If I was working that out, I would have thought about ...

This problem is like the one you solved this morning.

Think about another time when we/you ...

First you noticed ..., then you remembered ...

Drawing the plan/making a list can help you to work out problems/sort your ideas.

You seemed to find the parts that went together

You worked out which ideas were the same or different.

I made this by doing ... first. That made it easier.

Feedback

Talking about thinking 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

When the child spoke for different purposes/reasons during the activity, they could:

	Confidently	With some confidence	Not very confidently
describe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
compare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
explain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
imagine/pretend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
tell/retell stories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Feedback

Talking about thinking 2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Tick or write to show how confidently the child used different types of thinking to:

	Confidently	With some confidence	Not very confidently
recall/remember	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
choose/decide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
predict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
find similarities and differences/compare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
work out what happened and why	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
imagine/create	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
try to solve problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:
