

Emergent Curriculum

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“Our challenge is not to prepare children for school, but to prepare schools for children.”

- Docia Zavitskovsky

Learning Outcomes

After this course participants will be able to:

1. Define “Emergent Curriculum”
2. Identify three 21st Century learning skills
3. Connect the practice of observation to “Emergent Curriculum”



Joyful Childhood



“Starting from birth, babies learn who they are by how they are treated. Loving relationships provide children with a sense of comfort, safety and confidence.”
- Zero to Three

“Play is often talked about
as if it were a relief from
serious learning.
But for children play is
serious learning.
Play is really the work of
childhood.”
- Fred Rogers



Emergent Curriculum

- is a way of teaching
- is responsive to children's interests, needs and motivations
- invites teachers to apply their deep understanding of each child
- is an opportunity for teachers to co-create meaningful learning experiences with children

“Our flexibility and willingness to follow a child’s lead will allow remarkable things to happen,”

- Bev Bos

Through Emergent Curriculum, the Child

- Plays
- Explores
- Investigates
- Is intrinsically motivated to learn
- Constructs knowledge through experiences

Play builds cognitive knowledge by offering countless opportunities for sustained attention, problem solving, symbolic representation..., memory development, and hypothesis testing.

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy Golinkoff, Roberta Michnick, Laura Berk, Dorothy Singer
(A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool)

21st Century Learning Skills

- Creativity
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking

Creativity
Collaboration

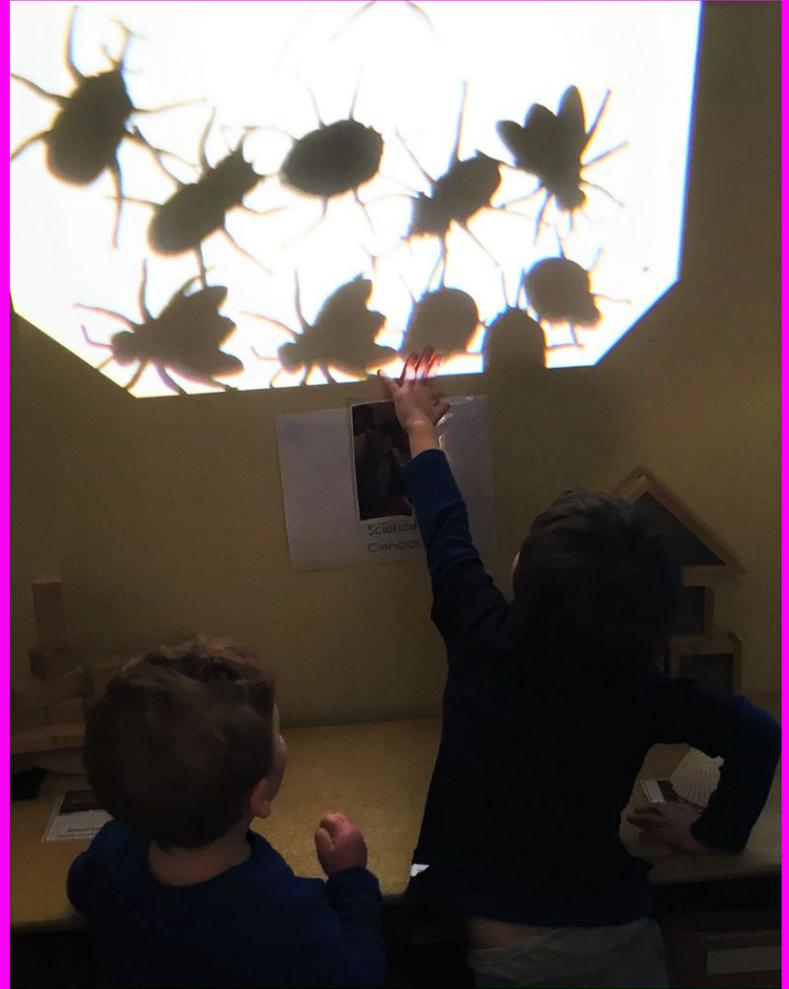


Communication
Critical Thinking

How 'bout Them Apples?



Young children's learning comes from research, not from instruction.
Hands-on, experiences through play support learning.



Children
and
Teacher
investigate
Bugs

Observation

- Looking AND seeing
- Listening AND hearing
- Observe children's play
- Where do they choose to play (work)?
- Whom do they choose to play (work) with?
- How do they choose to move play (work)?
- What do we think motivates the child?



What is this child's method of investigation?

What might these photos tell us about how this child pursues learning?





How might an observant teacher respond to this child's demonstrated passion for tree climbing?



“I observe you and while I observe you, I “capture” you, I interpret you. But at the same time I also modify my own knowledge. So observation is not only an individual action. It is a reciprocal relationship.”

- Carlina Rinaldi



“I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.”
Confucius



Provocations

- Teachers design the learning environment informed by their observation of children's play
- Activities encourage children to more deeply explore, practicing new skills
- Good design "provokes" children to investigate their big ideas; this further develops their skills
- Children's learning comes from researching with peers and their teacher, not being instructed by a teacher



The babies are interested in touching the glass and in the sticks they liked to find on the playground. The teachers added paint! What skills are displayed?

Let's revisit this child:

The teacher has observed this girl loves to be outdoors.

The teacher has observed this girl loves to move her whole body.

The teacher has observed this girl prefers to explore alone or with only one or two peers.

How will a teacher respond to their understanding of this child by setting up an indoor provocation that honors her interests and preferences?





An observant teacher could bring elements of the trees indoors: provoking the child's creativity developing small motor skills with tools no chair to confine her body in a workspace for no more than three, the child may confidently engage with peers





Teachers design activities that “provoke” the child to investigate materials, increasing their skills and expanding their knowledge.

“Stand aside for awhile and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different than before.”

- Loris Malaguzzi

Resources:

Bos, Bev *Together We're Better: Establishing Coactive Environments for Young Children*

Boyd Caldwell, Louise *Bringing Reggio Emilia Home: An Innovative Approach to Early Childhood Education*

Daly, Lisa and Beloglovsky, Miriam, *Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children*

Stacey, Susan *Emergent Curriculum in the Early Childhood Settings: From Theory to Practice*