EMERGENT CURRICULUM

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• In education, a **curriculum** is broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process. The term often refers specifically to a planned sequence of instruction.

• Emergent- the process of coming into being or becoming prominent.
Emergent curriculum is a philosophy of teaching and way of planning curriculum.

• The focus is on being responsive to children's interests to create meaningful learning experiences.

• It can be practiced at any grade level.

• Activities and projects are planned by teachers based on the specific group of children they are working with, taking into account their skills, needs, and interests.

• Side by side classrooms will look different because of the varying skills, interests, and needs of the children within those classrooms.

• The teacher plans according to what she knows about individuals and the particular group of children she teaches.
This philosophy encourages active participation, relationship building, flexible and adaptable methods, inquiry, and play-based learning.

Curriculum is child-initiated, collaborative and responsive to the children's needs

Proponents of this style of teaching advocate that knowledge of the children is the key to success in your program
A preschool program based on emergent curriculum will look like the following:

- Children in each room are engaged in a variety of different activities and projects.
- In one room, a group of children would be constructing something out of cardboard.
- Individually and in small groups in making elaborate block structures.
- Retelling the story from a favorite book.
- Writing work in another room.
- A small group of children in the block area are figuring out which angle of ramp helps small cars go the fastest.
- At the easel, children are experimenting with mixing colors.
- In the math area, children are forming sets of seven using small interlocking blocks.
- Teachers observing and jotting down notes on what the children are doing.
Why should curriculum be emergent?

- The changing world - living complicated, vast amounts of information being loaded onto children – no time for fragmented subject matter teaching of each area

- Adaptability skills, social skills need to be established - require schooling which is more flexible, open, allowing children to use their own thinking strategies

- Brain researches - holistic way in which synthesizes the learnings from the 2 hemispheres - resists isolated pieces of information. So the typical singular content based work sheets are not compatible with the holistic way the brain functions in acquiring and storing knowledge

- Multiple intelligence - recognize and nurture all varied human intelligence and their combinations, need to address individuality
Emergent Curriculum

• The goal of emergent curriculum is to respond to every child’s interests. Its practice is open-ended and self-directed. It depends on teacher initiative and intrinsic motivation, and it lends itself to a play-based environment. Emergent curriculum emerges from the children, but not only from the children.

• Curriculum is co-constructed by the children and the adults and the environment itself. To develop curriculum in depth, adults must notice children’s questions and invent ways to extend them, document what happens, and invent more questions. The process is naturally individualized.

Standardised curriculum

• In contrast, standardized curriculum comes from unknown experts outside the classroom. It relies on generalization rather than on an individual teacher’s creativity and attentiveness to individual learners.

• What it permits is linear planning and assessment that is responsive to bureaucratic needs in a large nation with large educational systems.

• In this approach, responsive teaching is sacrificed to efficiency, and only outcomes are measured.
• Planning an emergent curriculum requires observation, documentation, creative brainstorming, flexibility and patience.

• Emergent curriculum starts with the observation of the children for insight into their interests.

• The classroom environment encourages independent learning skills through learning centres.
Teacher as Facilitator of Learning

• Learning happens as a consequence of the children's genuine interest, response, and connection to the subject
• In order for this to happen, the teacher must consider their position as a facilitator in the classroom.
• This role involves careful observations of the children and their play
• Flexibility and creativity in order to develop learning opportunities that align with their interests
• The teacher is constantly going through the process of observing and documenting, planning learning experiences, implementing plans, documenting and beginning the cycle again

• Because the curriculum is continually changing, developing and growing, teachers need to ensure that they make time to reflect on their observations and strategies implemented.

• Reflection allows the teacher to think about what happens next in the child's learning, how to proceed, and what to look for in future observations.

• It is important for teachers to be aware of their own knowledge and where it is lacking, as this type of environment can lead to investigations in an unlimited number of directions.
Planning an Emergent Curriculum

• Interest “emerging” - brainstorm ways to study the topic in depth. Observations and brainstorming - emerge activities that compliment and build upon the emerging interest, with opportunities for play at multiple ability levels.

• Activities are implemented - the teacher observes the children's use of them.

• Constantly modifying them to accommodate increasing interest or change in direction of the learning.

• The teacher documents these observations and reflects on the effectiveness of the activities.

• Then the process begins again.

• The teacher may be at different levels of this planning cycle for multiple activities or learning outcomes at once.
• Learning plans are often more of a loose outline allowing for spontaneous changes and supporting engagement
• Flexible schedules and flexible groupings
• Whole child teaching and learning-joint development across domains
• Use questioning, discovery techniques, manipulating, exploring
• Integrate material and activities-art and writing
• Lot of visual, audio visual, multi sensory material
• Webbing initiates the process
• Parents may worry about learning
• Teachers still plan according to age group objectives and appropriate content including school readiness skills such as letter and number concepts.
Sources of Emergent Curriculum

Children’s interests
Teachers’ interests
Developmental tasks
Things in the physical environment
People in the social environment
Curriculum resource materials
Unexpected events
Living together: conflict resolution, caregiving, and routines
Values held in the school and community, family, and culture
Learning centers

Classrooms are organized into core learning centers-
• aligned to the theme and student interest e.g. restaurant-literacy/math
• items and materials that are stored are easily accessible to the children visually and physically.
• things are usually labeled with words and pictures to assist children
• there is opportunity for children to be part of different social groups- size
• opportunity to interact with material in different ways- quite corner vs dramatic play
• opportunity to involve all the senses, challenge creativity, hear and use oral and written language, explore art media, practice solving interpersonal problems, conduct investigations and ask questions, explore and order material, and acquire various physical skills
Emergent learning classrooms still maintain much of the structure of a regular classroom. It is important for children to still experience schedule and organization.

In these classrooms you will often still find large and small group instructional times, but the implementation of them is more flexible.

How material is presented is very important- learn inattention, intellectual resignation, undesirable attitudes, prohibit intellectual development.

Teachers see learning as a process through which children first engage in exploration and physical action which then leads to mastery of skills.

It is normal to have multiple children or groups interested in completely different content. This makes documentation and preparation very important.
Documentation

• Assessment - tools use by teachers are sticky notes, observation baskets around the room to collect small anecdotal notes, file folder systems for each student or area of the classroom, clipboards, digital recorders, photography, and video and audiotaping. The use of student portfolios can be a great way to assess learning and share it with parents/guardians.

• Planning - Use of webs and other graphic organizers, each learning or interest center in the classroom usually has its own plan, as well as activities facilitated by the teacher.

• Students - students being collaborative partners in their learning, it is important to incorporate children in displaying and documenting their learning, audio and visual recordings, samples of children's work, photos, learning logs, and display boards.

These approaches can help students develop pride in their work, show off skills to parents/guardians, and display their interests.
Webbing

• A powerful tool in emergent curriculum is webbing.

• **Webbing** is a method of generating curriculum based on a starting point.

• While webbing a concept that was introduced through student interests, current events is put at the core.

• The students and teacher come up with more ideas that are connected to this central concept, each of which may in turn lead to more ideas.

• The teacher and students decide which of these ideas they want to explore, and how they can connect the idea to a learning outcome.
Sum up

- **Key features of emergent curriculum**

- Emergent curriculum is not a linear process.

- An emergent curriculum is constantly evolving in response to children’s changing needs and interests, parental and community interests and concerns, and teachers’ priorities. Each of these key elements shapes the direction for future learning.

- Emergent curriculum is cyclical.

- As teachers get to know children and their families they observe children’s learning, discuss and share ideas with colleagues and families, interact with children and continue to monitor learning progress and document learning. This process is repeated continually.

- Emergent curriculum is flexible and responsive.

- Teachers plan flexibly with children, as curriculum is constantly evolving in response to children’s interests, building on children’s strengths, needs and interests.

- Emergent curriculum is collaborative.

- Emergent curriculum provides opportunities for adults and children to contribute to decision-making processes.

- Emergent curriculum makes children’s learning and teacher’s thinking visible.

- Teachers document learning with children, colleagues and parents. They engage partners in discussion and reflection about their learning experiences and document learning through a range of tools to make the learning process visible. In the process, teachers’ own thinking, planning and decision-making is made visible.
• recognition of children as agents of their own learning
• opportunities for children to make choices about and begin to take increasing responsibility for their learning
• purposeful curriculum planning with children that builds on their interests, questions, queries and wonder about the world
• exciting, challenging and motivating learning experiences
• opportunities for sustained and focused interest in learning by children
• enhanced opportunities for the development of children’s self-expression, oral language and creative abilities.

• authentic participation by parents, families and other partners and community members, which uses their diverse understandings, capabilities and knowledge
• strong communication about children’s learning, and opportunities to contribute family and community priorities and ideas
• engaged and enthusiastic children in a child-responsive program.

• use authentic assessment practices that are linked to children’s personal understandings, capabilities and dispositions in purposeful contexts for learning
• integrate learning across the five areas of learning and development through play, real-life engagements and routines and transitions
• build continuity by connecting children’s prior knowledge to new learning, leading to deeper understandings about topics of interest
• challenge thinking and support children to engage in alternative ways of explaining and representing their ideas
• teach from a dynamic and evolving curriculum.
• Remember it is not just a free-for-all.
• Teachers must plan this methodology like any other.
• They are to set goals and objectives and to try to meet these goals.
• The difference is in how they reach the learning objective.
• Traditional curriculum is designed around an outside expert telling the teacher what the student should know and the teacher planning a lesson, activities, quizzes, or essays to try to achieve this objective.
• In emergent curriculum, the teacher still has a learning objective, but they utilize their own interests, the children's interests, their environment, current events, or the social environment to guide the lesson.
THANK YOU