

# Teaching essays - objective of curriculum



## **Objective of Curriculum**

The main focus of this curriculum is to incorporate elements of children's developmental domains which contribute to the holistic being. Our activities are designed by taking into consideration the children we have observed for our child study. Although we recognize the concept of play in the curriculum, we feel that it is also important to provide pupils with a structured curriculum that would supplement their developmental needs. The curriculum aims to develop the children's socio-emotional development, cognitive - language development and physical development through the integration of play as well as the inquiry, project and thematic approach.

In doing so we have ensured that children are provided with an avenue for aesthetic and creative expression, language and literacy development, practice for numeracy skills, motor skills development along with creating an awareness of the self, the environment and the social sphere.

As part of our design objective, we aim to ensure continuity from what children have learnt in preschool to the primary school curricula. We feel that this would ease pupils into making the transition from an environment which they have developed a sense of familiarity (i. e. the kindergarten setting) and the one which they are being initiated into. Partnered with the other key approaches, our team firmly belief that by encompassing our curriculum around play, it would supplement children's developmental needs which in our view have been neglected in the current school curricula.

Our Curriculum

Having observed the children at the various kindergarten settings, our group have decided to build our curriculum around the concept of “ learning through play”. We recognize that play is an integral part of a child’s holistic development and it should not be omitted as the child progresses into the primary education system. From our child study we observed that each of these children displayed varying interests and abilities which can be extended through a curriculum centered on the concept of play. Play, as we know it, has been defined in many ways by various theorists. One of the many definitions is by Van Hoorn (2007) who affirms that “[p]lay plays a big part of young children’s development and expression of the child’s developing personality, sense of reflect, intellect, social capacity and physicality.” (p. 4). The activities that surround our curriculum are aimed to address these vital domains of the developing child. Van Hoorn (2007) also theorizes that the concept of play exists in a continuum which ranges from “ spontaneous” to “ guided” to “ teacher-directed play”. We have adopted this concept throughout the entire design of this curriculum. Through the integration of both individual and group activities, we are taking into consideration each child’s learning needs as we acknowledge their different learning styles.

In our planning, we aim to invigorate this concept of play into our curriculum by integrating other key approaches used in the current school curricula. The curriculum is designed such that it is centered on the concept of “ learning through play” while at the same time utilizing the thematic approach, inquiry approach and the project approach. We have developed the following

tripartite diagram to illustrate how we have incorporated the various approaches in our curriculum.

### *Thematic Approach*

We have chosen to implement the thematic approach as it keeps our curriculum design focused. In view of what has been stated by Wortham (2006), we agree that since the “ thematic curriculum is completed over a period of time, there is opportunity for exploration, investigation, and representation of learning in an unhurried environment” (p. 299). Ideally, the curriculum should be executed through a span of eight weeks, within a term. This is to ensure that children would be given ample time to develop skills and knowledge surrounding the adopted theme. We felt that the thematic approach would also aid in children’s learning as they build up experiences based on an ongoing theme which stimulates children into meaning-making as they acquire skills and develop in the different domains.

### *Inquiry Approach*

The inquiry approach has also been interwoven into this curriculum because we believe that pupils should be given the opportunity to explore for themselves the learning possibilities through inquisitive questions. Much of the activities designed in this curriculum has been targeted at children in honing their inquiry skills. Pupils are encouraged to seek solutions using the open resources made available to them.

### *Project Approach*

The project approach was also adopted in this curriculum as a way of assessing pupils' learning. Through this mode of assessment, where pupils are given free reign of the project that they could work on, pupils would be exposed to a variety of activities that taps on their various abilities. Both Vygotsky and Piaget believed that it is through personal manipulation and discoveries that children are able to construct an understanding of their learning experiences. Additionally with this project approach pupils will be able to work in a social context where they can learn through a partnership with the teacher.

### Suggested Activities

As an illustration the suggested activities in the framework we have included is based on the theme of *Occupation*. We planned these activities with the assumption that it is a theme which the children have collaboratively decided on as a whole class. The activities incorporated in this curriculum development takes into account the interests and strengths of the children we have observed during our child study. For instance, we have given pupils the choice of their mode of presentation for the role play which can be done through dramatization or a musical performance. Moreover this would encourage pupils to form a self awareness of their personal strengths and interests.

The Career Day is essentially a whole day event where children will be given an opportunity to exhibit the product of the projects in which they have undertaken within their groups. We have implemented this concept of a career day as we feel that this would encourage children to take

responsibility and pride of their achievements and what they are capable of creating.