

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE
USE OF DOCUMENTATION IN EMERGENT PROGRAMS:
ISSUES, BENEFITS, BARRIERS AND QUESTIONS**

LISA HARRIETHA

Mount Saint Vincent University

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Abstract

Early Childhood Educators' Perceptions of the Use of Documentation in Emergent Curriculum Programs: Issues, Benefits, Barriers and Questions

Lisa Harrietha

This study was developed to determine early childhood educator's perceptions of the use pedagogical documentation in emergent curriculum programs. In this qualitative study, 16 educators were asked a series of questions regarding emergent programming, documentation use, and reflective practice. The questions were developed utilizing major themes found in a literature review and from questions developed from my own struggles and successes in using emergent processes. They were designed to discover how long educators were using the approach, what types of documentation was used, and their perceptions of the benefits and difficulties associated with the documentation process.

Twelve of the participants answered questions via face-to-face interviews, while four completed an on-line survey. All data was coded and analysed for themes and major findings. The results showed that participants felt there was not enough time to complete documentation effectively, and that most were not formally trained in the approach. The majority of participants had questions about documentation. The documentation process was found to be a highly collaborative approach which could be used to enhance program planning, parent/teacher relationships, and children's learning. The participants in this study did not view professional development as an important aspect of documentation. Findings were consisted with results from past research and literature except for those related to professional development. Results showed that although there are a number of

benefits to using the documentation process in emergent curriculum programs, there are a number of barriers that may interfere with achieving those benefits.

The need for formal training in college and university classes was evident from the data. It is also recommended that directors of child care centres support their staff in the documentation process by allowing for more paid time outside the classroom for programming and documentation, and ensuring that the centres' have materials needed for documentation on hand. Directors should also be clear with their expectations as to how much activity should be documented. If educators receive further education in emergent curriculum practices and directors provide support and guidance to enhance the process, the use of pedagogical documentation might be strengthened, leading to an enhancement of early childhood programs.

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Chapter 1

Issues of Documentation in Early Childhood Education

“Our task, regarding creativity, is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible. No one can do more.” - *Loris Malaguzzi*

I discovered the above quote about three years ago. I cannot remember the exact instance or the exact source but I do know that it has had a profound effect on me, and its meaning has resonated within my heart. There are many ways to teach children. One program philosophy which has been gaining popularity over the years is the emergent curriculum approach. Yu-le (2004) pointed out that the use of this approach allows both teacher and student to construct meanings and knowledge of what is being studied while optimizing creativity in students because of the lack of “pre-defined outcomes” (p. 4). It is from my own experiences using an emergent program (inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach) that I have discovered just creative children can be, and why I have dedicated myself to using this approach and sharing its values with others.

It was in the 1990s and the early part of the twenty-first century that use of emergent practices became more widely known. The first book using the term “emergent curriculum” was written by Elizabeth Jones and John Nimmo, and published in 1994. It was three years earlier that the Reggio Emilia schools were made known across America when Newsweek named the Dianna School the World’s best preschool. Guyeveskey (2006) reported that after this article was published over two thousand American’s visited the schools in Italy. It was also noted that it was in the later 1990s that Canadians began visiting the schools in Reggio and publishing their reflections on these visits. A major text devoted to exploring the Reggio approach in a Canadian context was

developed in 2002 by Susan Fraser and Carol Gestwicki. Kocher (2004) attributes the increased awareness of, and interests in, the Reggio schools to the Newsweek article and the exhibit “The Hundred Languages of Children” that showcases projects and documentation from Reggio schools and is shared around the world. As educators study these ideas they are led to reflect on their own practice which leads to change in how programs are delivered (Fraser and Gestwicki, 2002).

Change occurs in our lives on a regular basis. It can include moving, switching jobs, or changing one’s marital status. If we think about changes that have occurred in our own lives, we might see that most did not happen without some resistance and stress. We may have questioned things before making the change. Clearly, this process also happens when making changes in early childhood classrooms. As early childhood educators began shifting their focus from theme based programs to emergent child-centered styles, it likely brought about resistance from seasoned educators, questions from those who may not have had background knowledge in the new approaches, and stress as they tried to figure out how to do things “right.”

Becoming an Emergent Curriculum Practitioner – Personal Reflection

I have worked with children in daycare settings since 1998 (practicum and volunteer work included). For the first twelve of those years I used a traditional theme based style of teaching such as teaching children about apples, animals, food, colors and shapes. It was common to have children “do a craft” using pre-cut shapes, and to conduct a circle “all about the theme.” This type of programming was teacher directed and teacher informed. In 2008, when I took a position with Children First ¹ I began using emergent programming including using documentation. At that point Children First was

¹ The centre names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

just beginning to develop a program based on the Reggio Emilia approach. This approach requires that teachers plan program activities that are based on observations and documentation of the children's interests and work. There is a view that children are capable and competent. The children's views and ideas are taken into account while preparing program plans. At Children First, the early childhood teachers made anecdotal notes while the children were playing and while they were completing art projects. These were taken for the purpose of discovering the children's interests and their mastery of skills, as well as for planning. The notes were discussed at weekly staff meetings and the children's common interests were used for creating new activity plans. Photographs of the children were taken while they were working and the actions and conversations they engaged in were noted and discussed. Children First had an art room (a studio) that the children were free to use as they wished. A variety of materials were available to them and teacher-directed activities within the studio were those that developed from the children's interests, and were open-ended. The children's art was often documented through the use of photography and notes of what the children said as they were creating, and of the process they used to complete their projects. Each child had a portfolio that contained their work along with explanations of the activity completed, the importance of the enclosed and anecdotal notes of what the child had said during the activity. Each portfolio also contained copies of general notes about the child and photographs of play and work times.

After six months at Children First, I took a position with the preschool class at Live and Learn Children's Centre.² This program also used a Reggio Emilia approach. Numerous notes and photos were taken of the children's work and play. Although

² This is a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of the centre involved.

portfolios were not created, at the end of the 2008-2009 year each child was given a CD containing photographs of the children (at work and at play), and of the work that had been completed over the year. Documentation panels were created throughout the year that included photographs, work samples and write-ups of projects along with explanations of the skills the children had learned.

Some of the work at Live and Learn was documented for others to view. This was the case with the children's focus on birds. From October 2008 until May 2009, during which they read about birds, went bird watching, made bird feeders, visited the bird display at the museum, made 3D birds and turned the art studio into "Bird Land." This project was documented and displayed on panels through photographs and notes. At the end of the project the centre hosted an "Emergent Curriculum" meeting at which a coworker and I presented our documentation and described our project to other early childhood educators who were employed in emergent programs in Nova Scotia.

In another instance, a co-worker and I wrote a "curriculum story" for the Saint Joseph's College of Early Childhood Education newsletter (Jollimore and Harrietha, 2009). It described how an exploration of coconuts emerged from reading "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" and led to a bowling trip!

In September 2009, I began working in the toddler room at Live and Learn. Documentation in the toddler room included a daily log book for parents which held photographs taken throughout the day, work samples, and short write-ups about what happened each day. The log book showed parents what was happening each day in the classroom and what new skills their toddlers were learning. Documentation panels were also frequently displayed in the classroom. These included work samples, write ups, notes, children's verbal expressions, and photographs. The children's art work was often

displayed in the classroom along with explanations as to why the activities were carried out and documentation of what the children said while creating the art. In addition, the beginning stages of portfolios were completed focusing on the children's art work.

Since participating in emergent programming I came to appreciate as well as to enjoy documentation for the purpose of showing the learning process of the children with whom I work. However, as a full-time teacher I often felt overwhelmed trying to carry out the documentation process as there never seemed to be enough time to get it done. I have sometimes wondered, "Is this important to document"?

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

As educators prepare programs, they must keep in mind best practices for optimizing the development of the children. One way to do this is by referring to the guidelines of "developmentally appropriate practice" [DAP] as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]. The NAEYC first developed the framework for DAP in 1986. The framework has been reviewed and revised as new research emerges. The latest version was published in 2009 as "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through 8" (NAEYC, 2009). The guidelines were developed to help teachers ensure the learning and growth of all children they work with (individually and in groups), and to inform decision making. The Association makes it clear that in order for teachers to make decisions based on best practice they must first have background knowledge on children's development, their behavior, and the ways in which the environment shapes the development of the child. They also speak of the importance of asking children to achieve goals that are in their developmental framework. The

guidelines of DAP were developed by focusing on every area of child's development, individual differences in developmental rates, cultural differences and other influences on development and the importance of relationships. There was also consideration given to the importance of play, and of various learning techniques.

There are five major guidelines to consider when using developmentally appropriate methods of teaching. A summary of the 2009 NAEYC revised DAP guidelines(<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/position%20statement%20Web.pdf>, (p. 17-25) are as follows:

1. "Creating a caring community of learners"- It is important for early childhood educators to ensure learning environments provide loving caring relationships between all involved. In doing this, teachers must ensure that all children, parents, and teachers in the school are respected, loved, and valued. There must be positive communication, small and large group work, and a safe environment. In creating a community of learners, teachers must also consider the cultural backgrounds of the children they teach, and include cultural differences in lesson plans.
2. "Teaching to enhance development and learning"- Teachers must work to ensure the children have opportunities for growth. This is argued as best done by providing an "optimal balance of adult-guided and child-guided experiences" (p. 17). Teachers must create learning environments that stimulate children's curiosity and allow them to learn through exploration and interaction with the environment, and others around them. Teachers can enhance positive experiences in a variety of ways, and through the use of a number of teaching methods. Some ways early childhood educators can enhance learning

are by allowing children to learn at their own pace, planning programs that are based on goals and learning outcomes in all areas of development, and meeting the needs of every child.

3. “Planning curriculum to achieve important goals” - Programs for children are to be developed with specific goals in mind. These will include basic learning goals, learning goals as developed by government, and the development of important learning milestones. Teachers are to ensure learning goals are met by having background knowledge of child development, and providing children with rich learning experiences.

4. “Assessing children’s development and learning” - Teachers are to ensure they have methods in place to assess the children’s learning. They should use age appropriate methods to collect information on the children’s development. The information collected through assessments is to be used to develop programs, enhance the learning of the children, and evaluate the classroom.

5. “Establishment of reciprocal relationships with families”- The child’s family is considered a very important part of their development, therefore it is necessary that early childhood educators include families in their program development. Relationships developed between parents and teachers are to include communication, respect, and shared responsibilities in the development of programs and sharing. Educators should help families find information resources on child development and other issues when necessary. In a classroom where there are to be reciprocal relationships, a family’s ideas and feedback will be acknowledged and implemented.

It is clear that there are a number of areas to consider when developing programs for teaching young children. As child care directors develop programs for their centres and consider teaching philosophies, they must consider DAP guidelines as well as guidelines set out by their local government.

The Department of Community Services of Nova Scotia bases their early childhood education program requirements on the use of developmentally appropriate practices (Government of Nova Scotia, 2011). The section in the Nova Scotia day care regulations based on programming states that the children must have time for play in a program which fosters growth in all areas of development. The regulations also declare that educators must provide programs that are culturally appropriate and that address the needs of both individual and groups of children. The Nova Scotia Government suggest that there be more programs that are child-centered and play based, and that they are developed with children's interests in mind.

Emergent Curriculum and the Reggio Emilia Approach- Theory and Practice

Through my experience as an early childhood educator, I have learned that an important part of any early childhood program is "the program"! The early childhood educators have an important role in creating and implementing the curriculum programs at their centres, and they have many styles and philosophies they can choose from when planning developmentally appropriate programs. The emergent curriculum has gained recent attention and popularity as one of their choices.

Stacey (2009) has identified a number of points to consider when defining an emergent curriculum. These include creating plans that are based on children's interests; planning that is child-centered but that also utilizes the insights of teachers; observing the children to help teachers bring meaningful learning experiences into the classroom;

planning that is on-going; and making learning visible through documentation. One can see how the term “emergent” curriculum was derived from these practices as its proponents take into consideration that in these types of programs plans are not pre-designed and do not come ‘in a box,’ but emerge and develop from observation and knowledge of children’s needs and interests. Bisback and Kopf-Johnson (2007) stated that the emergent process is not an immediate one, but develops “over time” and incorporates the “social and physical environments” as well as the “cultural practices and values of the children and families in the program” (p. 257).

An approach that encompasses the emergent principles but also stresses the importance of the image of the child, the role of the environment and the importance of relationships is the Reggio Emilia approach [REA]. There are early childhood educators all over the world that try to incorporate the principles developed in Italy in their teaching. The schools in the city of Reggio were built in the 1940’s after the war destroyed all that was in existence in the city (Fraser and Gestwicki, 2002). The new schools were built because the people of the city wanted something different. The goals were to build schools that helped children grow into good citizens who would participate fully in society (Kocher, 2004). Thornton and Brunton (2010) stated that while the first school was being built in 1945, funds gained from sales of the city’s properties were donated for rebuilding the school, as it was believed that the children would rebuild the devastated city. It was in the 1960s that the city’s municipality began managing many of the Italian schools.

Loris Malaguzzi played a large role in forming the REA as it is today. Malaguzzi is one of the founders of the approach and dedicated his life to the schools in the small

Italian municipality. Thornton and Brunton (2010) stated that Malaguzzi wanted to help working mothers while ensuring children received the highest levels of education possible.

When looking at the use of emergent practices in early childhood education programs, one might ask where these practices are in terms of being developmentally appropriate. Breaking down the principles and guidelines of DAP shows that emergent practices definitely fit in the framework for best practice. Emergent programs include the use of learning with others, a focus on relationships, learning through experience and assessment through the use of documentation. This type of program is child-centered and includes both child initiated and teacher directed activities. Crowther (2011) has emphasized that the emergent curriculum is effective in acting on the needs of all children involved. The following section gives an overview of some of the theories and the background on the beginnings of emergent practices.

Emergent curriculum is not a program that was simply pulled out of a hat; in fact there are numerous educational theories that have been used to develop this curriculum. In regards to the REA, the schools were created, and their principles are based on theories of a number of psychologists, educators, and artists from around the world (Thornton and Brunton, 2010). The use of emergent styles of programming are based on a constructivist and social learning context with many of the principles of learning developed by Lev Vygotsky acknowledged.

In a Reggio- inspired classroom in British Columbia, (Canada) Susan Kim and Linda Farr Darling (2009) showed that children learned through their relationships with

teachers and peers. They reported that children constructed ideas and understanding of concepts through interactions with their peers in small groups. Through the use of Reggio principles during a discussion about a famous painting, the children were able to learn more about the painting as well as learn to work better with others. Fraser and Gestwicki (2002) have learning from skilled others, learning through experience, and learning through social experiences have all become part of the emergent curriculum approach.

Another educational theorist that is acknowledged in the development of emergent principles and Reggio philosophies is John Dewey. Fraser and Gestwicki (2002) describe Dewey's ideas as being popular in the early 1900s. One of the most important ideas that Dewey contributed to the field was that children have rights, and that their ideas are to be valued. He argued that children learn through experience, and that listening to children is key to creating positive learning experiences. These ideas are a major part of emergent approaches, and are interwoven throughout the main principles of Reggio-inspired programs.

Jean Piaget's constructivist ideas are also evident when reviewing the principles of emergent curriculum, especially his argument that children create and construct their own knowledge, and that children learn through manipulating objects in the environment (Crowther, 2011). This is evident in emergent programming's emphasis on inquiry and learning through experience with a variety of materials. In addition, Piaget emphasized the social aspect of learning and the importance of play activities (Crowther, 2011), both important parts of emergent programs.

Other theorists and childhood educators included in the background of emergent practices are Eric Erikson and Barbara Biber (Fraser and Gestwicki, 2002). Erikson is known for his psychosocial stages of development, the notion of continual growth, and a

positive image of children. Erikson viewed children as capable and full of ideas. Biber is recognized for her acknowledgement of the need to teach the whole child and to work to enhance all areas of development. Howard Gardner and Jerome Bruner are also contributors to the REA (Thornton and Brunton, 2010) and both have been directly involved with Reggio schools. They have conducted research based on Reggio principles and have added to the approach. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is consistent with the notion that children learn in a variety of ways and communicate through a multitude of languages (part of the Reggio way). These theorists are only some of the contributors that have helped emergent programs become what they are today. When Guyevskey (2006) wrote about the theories that underlie the Reggio principles she named over forty theorists, and noted that Loris Malaguzzi spoke of the importance of past research and educators for helping inspire his work.

Some name Loris Malaguzzi as the founder of emergent curriculum in its true nature. Crowther (2011) listed Malaguzzi as one of the main developers of theory related to play. Crowther also recorded Malaguzzi's ideas of children as active learners, families as partners, collaboration among all to create learning opportunities, the importance of documentation and the use of projects as the main points of emergent curriculum. It is clear that the process of emergent curriculum is based on educational practices that have been tried and tested.

What do children learn from emergent programs?

Some might think that these programs are not best practice as they can be viewed as being unplanned and therefore not educational. However, Shipley (2008) has argued that although there are no themes or specific topics planned, the program grows out of

observation of children's play, and the teachers must constantly provide materials and experiences to further learning and development of each child. Bisback and Kopf-Johnson (2007), Stacey (2009), as well as Jones and Nimmo (1994) have stated that it is important to provide "loose parts" (a variety of open-ended materials being available to the children), and an interesting environment in order to promote and invoke learning. Cassidy, Mims, Rucker and Boone (2003) have stated that in emergent curriculum programs children learn a number of academic skills and become ready for school. They also take into account all areas of children's development within the program. Emergent curriculum approaches include the Reggio Emilia and the "project based" programs.

A number of articles that describe emergent curriculum programs and show them in action demonstrate how they develop out of children's play and interests, involve teacher planning, and meet academic goals. Cassidy, Mims, Rucker and Boone (2003) describe how children's requests to draw treasure maps led to activities in reading maps, field trips, classification activities, and group activities. In addition, children's bookmaking activities led to building language, reading and vocabulary skills. Maple (2005) described how his social studies students' interest in mail carriers led to a post-office trip and to the children building their own "post office" – a project that went on for nine weeks. In another classroom, the children's finding of an insect that was unknown to them, led to their learning about insects and making a "bug documentary" that was shared with other classes in their school (Harada, Lum and Souza, 2002/3). Mitchell, Foulger, Wetzel and Rathkey (2009) have stated that emergent programming motivates children to learn, builds their self-esteem, helps their problem solving skills, and allows teachers to keep up with learning standards and curriculum requirements.

The Use of Documentation

Documentation use is an important component of early childhood education programs. This includes both administrative and program documentation.

Administrative documentation refers to attendance records, health records and other business related documents while program documentation is designed to show others what is happening in early childhood programs. It is an integral part of emergent programs as it supports the curriculum by providing the basis for understanding children's process of learning and communicates what is happening in the classroom to others (Bisback and Kopf-Johnson, 2007). This can also be labeled as pedagogical documentation. Shipley (2008) defines "pedagogy" as "the science or the study of techniques and approaches that facilitates learning" (p. 440). Researchers as well as experts in the field have noted a number of positive reasons to include pedagogical documentation in emergent programs.

Reasons for documentation include its usefulness for program assessment, for communication, and for help with the learning process. Gandini and Goldhaber (2001) have noted that documentation was useful for facilitating children's learning, understanding how children learn, and helping with the educators' professional growth. Displayed documentation can facilitate communication to and among parents, the community, and colleagues (Gandini & Goldhaber). Furthermore, Gandini and Goldhaber, and Kinney and Wharton (2007) have argued that documenting and displaying children's work helps children to know that their work is valued, creates opportunities for them to re-visit their work, forms memories, and builds on the learning process. Kinney and Wharton (2007) have noted that documentation helps educators determine what comes next in program plans. Documentation helps in teacher/parent

communication, and can facilitate child/parent communication as it gives parents a starting point to discuss their child's schooling with them (Kroeger & Cardy, 2005).

Krocher (2004) stated that documentation "provides a focus for concrete and meaningful adult and child reflection on children's learning processes" (p. 23). Shroeder (2008) has argued that using documentation allows children to be involved in the planning process, gives value to completing final projects, helps lead to policy change and to changes in educational systems.

Many methods of documentation are used in emergent programs. These include the following:

- Anecdotal notes are a brief summary that can describe behaviors, something that happened, or show a skill (Helm, Beneke & Stienheime, 1998). They are beneficial because they can be quickly completed and serve as a draft that can be later expanded (Kroeger & Cardy, 2006).
- Photographs are often taken of the children at work or play. These are used for display (Kroeger & Cardy, 2006) and serve as a way for children to re-visit their past work and experiences (Helm, Beneke & Steinheime, 1998; Kinney & Wharton, 2007).
- Audiotapes are used to document and later transcribe conversations (Kroeger & Cardy).
- Videotapes are used to capture a whole project and evaluate teaching (Kinney & Wharton, 2007).
- Documentation panels are used to display photos, notes, children's work and conversations as well as songs, stories and to show the overall daily activities

within the classroom (Kline, 2008). Panels can be displayed in or around the classroom for viewing by students, teachers and others. In addition, Schroeder (2008) has stated that documentation panels aid in the aesthetics of the classroom but their main purpose is use to show others what has been going on in the classroom.

- Portfolios are created to show children's learning, to document their work, to support the learning process, to show accountability over time (Saltz & Bartholomew, 2008) and to help show growth in skills over a period of time. According to Heim, Beneke and Stienheime (1998) portfolios can also be used for sharing the ongoing learning process with others.
- Letters to parents are an important documentation tool as they can encourage parent/child communications and encourage parent participation in the program (Shearer, Dettore & Cyphers, 1996).

Research Findings on Documentation in Early Childhood Programs

There have been several studies conducted that revolve around the use of documentation in emergent programs. This research has helped practitioners see the benefits and struggles of documentation use. The following section will highlight some of the major studies conducted to date.

Kocher (2004) studied a number of Australian teachers while they undertook the process of creating pedagogical documentation. The educators in the study reported that the use of documentation helped them understand the strengths of the children they taught and also made visible the learning processes of the children involved. The teachers

reported that the documentation process helped them to become more reflective, better listeners, and better observers.

One of the major studies, conducted in 2003 by Project Zero at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, was with children of different ages and at different levels of learning (Project Zero, 2003). The researchers found that documentation of learning lead to further learning and development. Children can create documentation on their own. It took about two years for documenters to begin to feel comfortable with the documentation process, and comfort levels only grew when documentation was a regular part of the classroom routine. The researchers found that when the children constructed their own documentation pieces it helped them create meaning for, and answer questions about the activities they were engaged in and the teachers often learned with the children. The documentation produced had better quality when it was created in a collaborative manner, and involved reflective practices. Notably, the researchers stated that teachers were more comfortable with the documentation process when they had administrative supports, funds for resources, and time to meet and create documentation. The Project Zero researchers suggest that teachers cannot do everything on their own, and that it is important to start out small, and to realize that they cannot document everything.

Carla Rinaldi is the president of Reggio Children, and a professor at a University in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Rinaldi (2006) argues that documentation is an educational tool which can be used for assessment of one's self as well as evaluation of the children. She speaks highly of the Project Zero research and points out that through documentation teachers and students can evaluate learning, reflect on experiences, and make learning visible. Rinaldi states that during the documentation process items are collected for

recording to be used at the end of a project, and through reading and interpreting the data collected, they are able to “interpret,” “reconstruct” and “reinterpret” the learning experience (p. 47). It is through documentation that educators are able to listen to the children. Rinaldi spoke of the importance of paying attention to the way children express themselves beyond the use of words. Educators, when documenting, should also pay attention to drawings, paintings, play episodes, and how the children function in the daily routine. Additionally, the use of documentation is thought to help the children see the value of their actions. As work is displayed the children see that their experiences are important to others (Rinaldi). Rinaldi makes an argument for the many values and benefits of using documentation in educational programs for children.

Victoria Guyeveskey (2006) conducted research based on documentation, observation and emergent curriculum in a preschool classroom. As part of her Master’s research, she followed a learning project based on “Wild Animals” that involved eight children in a Reggio-inspired classroom in a large Canadian city. Guyeveskey reported that documentation helped her plan the next steps of the project, helped make the learning concepts of the children visible, gave answers to questions about the children’s work, helped the research, and helped her to develop conversations with other teachers in the school. She has found that through documentation, she was able to become more reflective, and to be a better teacher. After studying documentation, Guyevskey considers the process as a valuable teaching and learning tool.

Researchers studied the use of documentation (created by graduate students studying the REA at the Child Study and Development Centre at the University of New Hampshire) between 1992 and 2001 (Moran, Desrochers and Cavichhi, 2007). They reported the value of the use of documentation, how documentation has changed the

school, and how documentation has changed in style over time. After studying nine years of documentation it was found that there was more variety in documentation types; documentation became more reflective and collaborative in nature; and eventually children were able to create their own pieces of documentation. Moran et al. reported that it was through reflection (via teacher's meetings and discussions about the process) that the documentation was able to be transformed. The teachers reported that after consistent use of documentation they were able to use it as a means to plan activities and programs. Documentation also lead to more shared responsibilities in the classroom, and program planning became more flexible.

A careful review of the literature and study of the results of past research focused on the use of pedagogical documentation shows that there are a number of benefits to the use of these processes. It also helps educators discover what struggles may be involved in the process and can help to identify ways to overcome these struggles.

Reflective Practice as Part of Documentation

Reflection should be an important part of an early childhood educator's life. Educators must often reflect on the day, the curriculum, and why things are happening as they are. Callaghan (2002) reported that reflection is a major part of the early childhood profession and reflective teachers make better educators. Callaghan reported that as teachers reflect, they become empowered. Reflection builds on collaboration, helps program planning and aids in decision making. Reflection is especially important in emergent programs. It is used to help build on the children's interests in order to develop the next steps of a project and as a part of the documentation process. Cadwell (1997), Fraser and Gestwicki (2002), and Callaghan (2002) have written about the importance of

reflection in Reggio programs. In Italy there is great value placed on teamwork, dialogue, reflection and collaboration.

Reflection can occur in various ways. It might be done alone or occur as a group process. Some individuals chose to reflect on the work on their own time through journal writing, while others predominantly use collaborative reflection such as in meetings or in dialogue with colleagues. Callaghan (2002) stated that reflection can occur between all staff in a child care centre. Reflective practice may be included in a centre's philosophy statement. It can be done by having meetings to discuss problems in the centre, or scholarly readings related to the centres' practice. Callaghan suggests that parents and teachers work together to reflect on the centre's philosophy. Another way collaborative reflection can occur is through meetings of educators from various centres who use the same approach. This type of reflective practice helps teachers learn, aids in listening skills, and builds community. Through reflecting with others educators are able to assess their own practices, change them if necessary, and have their questions answered.

Alice Wong (2006) based her thesis research on dialogue engagements, examining what happens when educators are given time and space to share and discuss their ideas about using documentation. Wong discovered that the educators in her study welcomed the time to talk together. Even after the study was over they wanted more time to dialogue. Through dialogue, they were inspired to create documentation, change documentation they used in their programs, and become more confident in the development of documentation pieces. Wong also found that as time went on the dialogues became more meaningful. Participants began to share more as they continued to meet with each other. It was reported that with continued reflection the teachers had more of a desire to work with children's interests, and to plan programs based on the

children's ideas. Reflective dialogues included discussions, debates, and ensuring educators had a chance to get questions answered. This study shows that reflecting with others on a regular basis will be a positive addition to the practice of early childhood education. Educators may be able to learn more about reflective practices through the study of Reggio practices.

New (2007) described the Reggio schools as a "Catalyst for Reflection and New Relations" (p. 8). Reggio schools take pride in sharing their knowledge, and spreading their ideas. They do this through study tours and with the use of their "100 Languages of Children" traveling exhibit. As this knowledge is viewed by others, they are inspired to think about their own practices, and about views on the education of children. New stated that as people went on study tours to the city of Reggio they were able to see learning that occurs in Reggio schools leading to discussion, and observation of their own teaching practices. As teachers work together to create change, reflection is at its finest.

Stacey (2011) stated that reflection and dialogue is a direct part of the emergent curriculum cycle noting that reflective practice and sharing stories can be used for the purpose of professional growth. As teachers tell each other their stories they learn from each other and learn ways to further develop their own practice. Stacey gave ideas to enhance reflective practice in emergent classroom. These include sharing ideas in a classroom log, meeting during lunch hours and discussing learning activities and speaking about documentation. There are many ways to reflect and as educators decide to engage in these types of practices, it may become beneficial to them.

Questions About Emergent Curriculum, Documentation and the Reggio Emilia

Approach

Although the use of documentation is recommended in early childhood education programs, particularly emergent and Reggio Emilia curricula, the process poses a number of questions. After studying teachers using a Reggio- inspired program in the Canadian context, Nguyen (2010) found that participants did not feel fully competent in using the approach as they thought they did not have enough background knowledge in delivering it. These educators felt unsure of how to document and how to get everything done given the behavioral issues that occurred at their centre. Nguyen also reported that the teachers wondered how they were to find enough time to document within the busy daily routine.

In regards to documentation, Helm, Beneke and Steinheime (1998, p.25) ask the following:

- “How do teachers decide what and when to document”?
- “How extensive should the documentation be”?
- “How should the documentation be presented”?

The following questions were developed as I read literature related to emergent programs and through reflection on my own experience with the use of emergent curriculum and the documentation process.

- How has the documentation process lead to the growth of projects or more in-depth curriculum?
- How has using documentation changed teachers’ views of teaching and the learning process?
- How can children be directly involved in the documentation process?

- Are most teachers who are using documentation regularly comfortable with the process?

This review has examined Canadian, US and Italian literature based on the use of documentation and reflective practice in emergent and Reggio-inspired early childhood education programs. It has demonstrated that emergent programs fit into the guidelines of developmentally appropriate practices in the early years and that emergent curriculum is based on research theory and practice. Results of past studies have determined that the use of documentation in emergent programs has a number of benefits associated with it. These include increasing parent/teacher communication, making children's learning visible and aiding in program plans. There were also barriers associated with the use of emergent curriculum and documentation. These included time management and lack of knowledge of the process. The use of reflective practice was shown to help the documentation process.

From this review, I came to understand that it was not just me questioning how to become an effective documenter but that in other researchers and teachers have questions on the documentation process. I was also able to see that leading an emergent early childhood program is a complex process with many steps. From this understanding I was able to formulate my thesis purpose and aim.

Purpose and Aim of the Research

I have only been using emergent practices since 2008 and developed this research in hopes of answering some of my questions, and to help others with "the shift" to emergent programming by discovering what it is about documentation that educators need to know. I wondered if like me, they questioned the documentation process. As I began documenting, I wondered what I should document and what is the best from in

which to document? I asked participants about their questions- what they wanted to know about documentation. I wanted to know if participants had questions about the process as a whole, or if they had specific questions on what, when, where and how to document.

The purpose of this thesis research was to investigate how early childhood practitioners in emergent programs view using this approach. The emphasis has been on discovering the educators' perceptions of the use of documentation. It was also important to discover if the educators thought they were adequately trained prior to using the approach, and to learn their questions about the process.

The results of this study will provide support and guidance to emergent practitioners for successfully managing emergent programming documentation. The study provides insights to directors on the needs of child care staff in terms of program time, materials and knowledge of the values and practices of emergent programs. The results can be used to create professional development workshops and early childhood courses that cover the direct needs of emergent practitioners.

Specialized Terminology

Some terminology within emergent and Reggio methods is unique form that used in general early childhood education. The following provide definitions of terms used in this thesis.

Emergent curriculum.

The definition of emergent curriculum incorporates a number of key points including: creating plans that are based on children's interests; planning that is child-centered but that also utilizes the insights of teachers; observing the children to help bring meaningful learning experiences into the classroom; planning that is on-going; and making learning visible through documentation (Stacey, 2009).

Reggio-inspired programs.

The Reggio Emilia approach (REA) is the way of teaching used in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Reggio-inspired programs in this thesis refers to schools and child care centres that adapt the principles of Reggio Emilia schools but are located outside Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The approach is based on principles that children are active in the learning process and who communicate while they play, work and create (Cadwell, 1997). Cadwell stated that teachers in Reggio schools are researchers who use documentation to communicate and plan. Furthermore, parents in Reggio schools are viewed as partners. There is a great emphasis on the environment in Reggio schools. Environments are carefully constructed to aid the learning process, to be aesthetically pleasing and to uphold the principle of the environment being a third teacher (Wien, 2008). It is important to remember that the REA in its true nature can only be implemented in Italy. Individuals around the world who see the value in using the principles can create programs inspired by the philosophy but because of differences in culture, history and society values the REA will never be truly replicated outside of Reggio (Edwards, Gandini and Forman, 1998; Wurm, 2005; Wien, 2008).

Pedagogical documentation.

For the purpose of this study, pedagogical documentation is defined as the use of presenting children's work in a carefully constructed manner to communicate with individuals inside and outside the classroom (Cadwell, 1997). This type of documentation focuses on the study of how learning occurs. There are a number of ways to present documentation including but not limited to the following: panels, records of children's actions and conversations, photos, journals, portfolios. For the sake of brevity,

the term documentation will be used throughout the thesis when referring to pedagogical documentation.

Emergent practitioners.

Emergent practitioners are the educators using emergent or Reggio-inspired approaches to teaching within their child care centre.

General Terminology

Early childhood educators/teachers

These terms are used interchangeably to refer to those who provide out of home care for children birth to age 8.

Thesis Organization

This chapter served as an introduction to the current research. It includes information on why I have decided to examine this research topic, a review of the literature, and a short description of the purpose of the study. The literature review has revealed the history of emergent and main principles of emergent curriculum and how this approach fits in with current developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education. It has also shown that educators see many benefits and barriers to using pedagogical documentation in early childhood programs.

Chapter two identifies the methods used in this study. Qualitative research is defined. This chapter highlights the types of measures and data analysis procedures used in this study. Participant demographics are also reported. It should be noted that though all participants had formal training in early childhood education only a small selection of participants were formally trained in emergent practices.

Chapter three begins the reporting of qualitative findings in regards to the participants' use of documentation and emergent practices. This chapter unveils the

participants' history as emergent educators and discusses how long they have been using documentation in their programs, the types of documentation they use, what and why they document and who is responsible for completing documentation in their early childhood education centres. It will be revealed that main reasons for documentation use are to communicate with parents, to validate teachers and to make learning visible. This chapter also shows that participants in this study do not document solely for the purpose of professional growth. Results highlight that in most cases all educators in emergent program work on documentation pieces, however very few educators are given a specific amount of documentation that they must complete as part of their job requirements.

In chapter four data analysis continues. This chapter focuses on educators' use of reflective practice and building on documentation pieces in program planning. Analysis of the data highlighted that fact that reflective practice is highly collaborative in nature. Reflection also aids in the teaching process by helping teachers to create new programs, analyze children's behavior and ensure the teacher's voice is incorporated in the teaching process. This chapter also gives examples of how participants have used documentation to build on programs and create learning projects in their classrooms. Furthermore, it was revealed that as teacher's document children respond with enthusiasm and may also produce more work related to the topic.

Chapter five concludes the data analysis portion of the thesis. This chapter discusses in detail the barriers and issues associated with documentation. Some of the barriers to documentation are a lack of time to complete work, a lack of materials and a lack of knowledge.

The sixth and concluding chapter will begin with a summary of the study. The results will be analyzed in terms of major findings which lead to recommendations and implications for the early childhood education field.

Chapter 2

Method of Research and Demographic Findings

The goal of this study was to identify the ways in which emergent practitioners in the early childhood education field use pedagogical documentation in their programs, and their questions or issues about the process. The study examined educators' perspectives and experiences of documentation, and ideas about using documentation. As the intent was to learn the views and ideas of the participants, it was decided that a qualitative approach would be used for data collection. Wiersma and Jurs (2005) stated that in qualitative research, the researcher wants to discover the whole story based on the perception and the "meaning as perceived by those being studied" (p. 202). Furthermore, Wiersma and Jurs write about qualitative research as revolving around descriptions and words instead of numbers. There might be no beginning hypothesis, or theory during the initial stages of research, but this might develop later through the process of data collection and analysis. According to Weirisma and Jurs, "qualitative research is done for the purpose of understanding social phenomena" (p. 14). For the purpose of this study this has meant developing a further understanding of the use of emergent curriculum programs, and similar practices as well as the process of documentation in early childhood classrooms.

This chapter sets out the details of the method of research undertaken to examine uses and issues of documentation in emergent programs. I discuss the type of information collected and how it was collected. Demographic information of the participants' experiences with training and practice in early childhood education and in emergent programming is also set out.

Method of Research

The data for this study was collected through the use of semi-structured interview questions, and through a questionnaire, both asking participants for demographic information and open-ended questions pertaining to their experiences with documentation.

Measures

I developed a series of questions focussed on the participants' uses of documentation in their programs. The questions asked about the educators' thoughts on the benefits and limitations of documentation and their ideas about how to improve documentation practices. The questions were developed out of my review of literature focussed on emergent programs, from my own questions about the documentation process, and through conversations with other emergent practitioners. The following represent the main research questions:

1. How long have participants been using emergent programs and documentation processes?
2. What types of documentation were being utilized by participants?
3. What did educators see as the main benefits and barriers to using this approach?
4. What questions did participants have about emergent curriculum and documentation processes?

The complete set of questions for both methods used is set out in Appendices A and B.

Participant Selection

After the research was approved by the Mount Saint Vincent University Ethics Board, I contacted a number of educators using emergent and Reggio-inspired programs

as well as directors of known emergent early childhood programs. I directly contacted fourteen educators whom I know to be interviewed. I sent emails requests to eleven childcare directors of emergent programs in the Halifax Regional Municipality [HRM] inviting them and/or their staff to be interviewed. Susan Stacey, thesis committee member, contacted five persons outside of Nova Scotia and one individual from Tantallon (located in the HRM) and invited them to participate via on-line questionnaire. Through a Google search using keywords, “Emergent Curriculum Canada/US” and “Reggio Emilia Canada/US,” six centres were identified and I contacted their directors by email inviting them or their staff to complete the on-line questionnaire. A total of twelve interviews were conducted and four questionnaires were returned.

Responses to my requests were as follows:

11 of the 14 educators I know personally.

1 of 11 HRM programs contacted by email (program coordinator participated).

4 of 6 email requests made through Susan Stacey

0 of 6 email requests of programs identified through Google.

In summary, sixteen early childhood educators participated in the study. All were teaching children aged two to six years at the time of the study. Thirteen were from the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Twelve took part in face-to-face interviews and one completed an on-line survey. Three were outside the HRM (New Hampshire, Seattle, and London, Ontario), and they completed on-line questionnaires. (Please refer to the participant section in the results section of this thesis for further information on the participants’ employment, training and ECE background).

The 12 interviewees are employed by nine early childhood education centres. I currently work directly with two of them. I also interact occasionally with two, who work

at my centre's sister centre where I occasionally substitute teach and sometimes take part in professional development and staff meetings. Additionally, five interviewees were, at one time or another, co-workers of mine. One interviewee and all survey respondents were unknown to me.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

All participants were provided with a letter of consent that contained information about the study, methods and procedures that would be used to collect information, the anonymity of research findings, and assurance that participation was voluntary. Email participants were requested to answer questions directly on the questionnaire and return it via email. Those who were interviewed identified a time and place to meet convenient for them.

During the interviews I followed the order of the questions set out in the schedule. On occasion participants were asked to provide more information, or to clarify their answers. When interviewees did not understand a question, I gave examples or elaborated on the question until they indicated understanding. In addition to digitally recording the interviews I took hand written notes.

Each participant had a chance to offer extra information about their experiences at the end of the interview. In addition, all interviewees had a chance to review their interview transcript for accuracy before the data was analyzed. As a need arose for follow-up questions based on reflective practice, data was collected through in-person contact and emails.

Each digital recording was listened to three times prior to typing information. Each returned questionnaire was also reviewed several times before beginning data analysis. Each participant was given a code name and their audio file was transcribed.

After transcribing each file, a Word document was created for each question. Data from on-line participants was also added to these files. After reading each file several times, I began noticing several themes. As themes arose the data was placed into groups based on each theme. Information from each group was highlighted and color coded. Several notes were taken that included important quotes and information related to themes. Participants were also grouped based on years of experience in the field, types of programs they used, and educational background as I wanted to discover how these factors may have influenced the data. Consistent with Wiersma and Jurs (2005) the interview data resulted in a large amount of notes and transcriptions of recorded responses. These notes and pages were organized into smaller amounts of data and broken down into themes and categories. This process is called coding. The material put together after coding responses is then used to discover what the data has revealed, and an appropriate conclusion is then made.

Participant Demographics

All of the participants use an emergent curriculum program, a Reggio Emilia - inspired program, or the Play to Learn emergent curriculum program. Thirteen interviewees are female and three are male; all survey respondents are female.

Participants work with children aged 18 months to six years. Four work in toddler rooms with children aged 18 months to three years. Seven work in preschool rooms with children aged three to five years. One (Peggy) works in a combined junior and senior kindergarten room with children ages four to six. The other four – Betty, Linda, Melissa, and Ingrid work in multi-aged classrooms. Betty's work combines preschoolers and after-schoolers (grade primary) during the lunch hour and after school. She reports that the majority of programs at her centre occur in the morning hours and documentation at

the centre is not completed with the after-school group. Linda is the director of the centre where she is employed and reported working with children aged two to five years.

Melissa works in a classroom with children aged two to five years. Ingrid is the program co-coordinator at her centre which is licensed for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and after-schoolers; however, she works predominantly with children aged two to five years.

Participant Education and Other Training in Early Childhood Education

Formal Education in Early Childhood Education

Differences in participant training and background might affect their responses, including their experiences with different types of curricula, their education in emergent programming, and their years of teaching experience. The following table sets out the specifics of type of formal education and training received by each participant.

Participants Formal Education in Early Childhood Education

Type of Training	Participant Code
Nova Scotia Early Childhood Educator Equivalency Status (Prior to 2011)	Betty+, Freya, Joanne+, Kate+
Early Childhood Education Certificate	Peggy
Early Childhood Education Diploma	Conrad, Graham, Linda+, Melissa
Bachelor of Arts - Child and Youth Study	Anne, David, Hannah, Ingrid+
Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education	Nancy+
Child Care Associate Award	Olive
Post Graduate Certificate in Education	Emily

Participants with a (+) after their name have other degrees or diplomas in addition to their formal Early Childhood Education Training. Please see further information below.

Ten participants hold a Bachelor of Child and Youth Study or a Diploma in Child Studies. Six completed government determined equivalency programs. It should be noted that those who hold a government determined equivalency may also hold a diploma or degree in education or in an unrelated field; see below for notable mentions.

According to the Nova Scotia Daycare Act (NS Government, 2004), individuals deemed to have equivalency in the province of Nova Scotia must have completed high school, have two years work experience in a child care setting, have completed a course in child development or curriculum development, and have completed twenty-five hours of training and workshops not including their post secondary education. I determined from participants' responses that all are recognized as qualified early childhood educators as defined by this criteria. The guidelines for equivalency mentioned above were in place at the time of the interviews but between then and the completion of the thesis the Nova Scotia Daycare Act was changed. The new guidelines provide a classification of early childhood educators as follows: Entry Level, Class 1, 2 or 3 (NS Government, 2011). Entry Level educators are individuals working in child care programs but do not yet meet any of the criteria listed for further classifications. Educators will be required to complete orientation designed for new child care staff. Class 1 includes those who have not received a diploma or degree in early childhood education but who have completed courses in child development, behavior guidance, programming, and a practicum, or have been granted equivalency status in the past. Class 2 includes those who have completed a two year diploma in early childhood studies or other related courses and those who have completed one year certificate programs prior to March, 2000. Class 3 includes those who have completed a four year degree in early childhood education or a similar program, or who have completed Class 2 requirements and hold a Bachelor Degree. In considering these guidelines, I determined that all participants but one would be deemed as holding a Class 2 or 3 classifications; Freya would hold a Class 1 certification.

When participants described their training in early childhood education, some simply mentioned the details of their credentials, while others described their work history and volunteer experience gained prior to obtaining full training. Betty, Kate and Joanne have each completed the requirements for Nova Scotia's child care equivalency. Betty was always interested in working with young children. After working with children in her home, and then at a centre, she decided to complete courses towards equivalency. Kate was "grandfathered" into equivalency after working in the field for twenty years. In addition, Betty and Kate hold a Bachelor of Education. Joanne provided no further details as to how she became equivalent; however, she did explain that she also holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree, and is currently working towards a Master of Arts in Child and Youth Study.

Emily has a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from Bristol, England - equivalent to a Bachelor of Education degree in Canada.

Linda holds a Diploma in Child Studies, a Bachelor of Fine Arts, and a Bachelor of Arts in Art Education; she received her education and art training prior to taking her diploma. Of her diploma, Linda said, "I learned a lot about teaching younger children and was very glad that I did the course. My university training was not useful in the preschool situation and I feel that if I returned to the classroom now, my preschool experience would make me a far better classroom teacher."

Melissa and Olive (who were survey respondents) each hold a Diploma in Child Studies. Nancy holds an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education and is currently working toward a Bachelor's Degree in Child and Youth Study. Olive also holds a Child Care Development Associate Award – a US credential earned by those working with children aged five years or younger and who have shown competency in various areas of

teaching (Washing State Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2011). She has also attended many workshops and other training opportunities.

David has worked with children since he was in grade nine. He babysat, volunteered, and worked in camps to gain experience before obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Child and Youth Study from Mount Saint Vincent University. Ingrid earned the same degree after first having receiving a Diploma in Early Childhood Education -- she thought she might someday want to work with the government where holding such a credential would be required. She completed her studies in 2007, while also working full-time in the field.

Some participants worked in fields other then early childhood education before obtaining their training; for example, Graham worked in human services and Joanne was a social worker.

Training in Emergent Curriculum

Some participants obtained training specifically related to emergent curriculum practices through early childhood education centre programs, at workshops, by consulting experts in the field, and from visiting schools located in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Participants outside of Nova Scotia had more extensive training opportunities. I think this might be because emergent curriculum programming has been used for a longer period of time in their areas, or it is more accepted and valued in those locations. Another reason may be because the literature was more readily available in the US. It is also important to note that only three centres from Ontario and the US are represented in the study so further research might be needed in order to confirm this conclusion.

Graham, Ingrid and Joanne are the only participants who learned emergent programming as part of their formal educations. Graham and Ingrid were taught

emergent and Reggio Emilia programming at Kingstec College in Nova Scotia and Joanne learned emergent literacy and emergent programming as part of her equivalency program. Although Hannah, David, and Melissa have Child and Youth Study degrees or diplomas, they did not recall emergent curriculum programming and issues pertaining to it as having been included in their course work.

The provision of on-site training shows a centre's dedication to the emergent approach and to the professional development of their staff. It also shows the need to fill a gap left by formal educational programs. Nine participants received their emergent training through conferences and workshops. Anne, Hannah and Freya had no emergent program training as part of their formal education. Professionally, however, Anne remarked that she "went to a centre and jumped right into the emergent program." Hannah said she would be attending a workshop given by her director the night after she was interviewed, exclaiming it would be "the most I have learned about emergent curriculum ever!" Freya also mentioned attending professional workshops throughout her career.

Conrad and Kate have attended extensive, weekend-long workshops provided by their employer's parent organization. Their centre uses the Play to Learn curriculum and holds a workshop annually covering topics such as documenting, scaffolding, observing, and planning. Kate said that she finds these workshops help her network within the organization. The Play to Learn program provides its educators with a handbook which Conrad said he uses often as it explains "programming, the environment and how it all works."

David received training in a workshop provided by his director who had visited Reggio and who shared information she learned while there. Melissa said the majority of

training and workshops she attended were provided by her director. Betty, Joanne, and Linda reported that experts come to their centre to give workshops and to consult with staff.

The survey respondents had extensive training in emergent and Reggio programming. Peggy (from London, Ontario) reported that her centre “offers an extensive professional development program” and through it, she has attended a number of workshops and is participating in the Master Education Program [MEP]. The MEP enables staff centre to reflect on their work with the children, to be evaluated by others, and to attend workshops. It also requires participants to present at workshops, helping them develop reflective practice and interpersonal skills.

Olive (from Seattle) had a professional development program at her center. She has attended workshops and other training outside this program. Nancy (from New Hampshire) has presented workshops on “observation, reflection, connecting observations to curriculum, documentation, loose parts, and environments,” and other components of emergent programming.

Visiting Reggio appeared to bring great passion to educators who use this approach. Emily, Graham and Linda received components of their training through study tours and conferences in Reggio Emilia, Italy. They spoke highly of their experiences and said that conferences and workshops were very rewarding. Graham described his Reggio visit as “a training opportunity that I will never forget.” While in Reggio, Graham learned that one does not have to work on something for just one or two days, but that a project “may never be finished.”

Informal Training in Emergent Curriculum

There is a wealth of information available to practitioners on this topic and these sources may be of great importance in locations where formal training is not easily accessible. Betty, Emily, Joanne and Linda mentioned consulting experts in the field with Susan Stacey, Liz Hicks, and Carol Anne Wien named. Participants also often spoke with their directors and co-workers when seeking help with programming and documentation. Books were another source of inspiration and information, including those from Reggio Emilia or about Reggio programming; those on the emergent curriculum especially - *Emergent Curriculum* by Susan Stacey; the *Play to Learn* handbook; and those written by Deb and Margie Carter. Emily had used a child-centered approach similar to emergent, but noted that, “as soon as I discovered Reggio, I searched for articles, books, workshops, conferences, and other people (who use it). The information is very accessible, clear, and stimulating.”

Experience in Early Childhood Education and with Emergent Programming Emergent Programming Experience

The amount of time participants worked in the field of early childhood education varied from one year to 30 years, and have used emergent programming or various aspects of it, for varying lengths of time ranging from less than three months to over 20 years. The following table provides the numbers of years worked for each participant, as well as the number of years each has been using an emergent or Reggio- inspired program.

Participants - Years of ECE teaching experience/Emergent Program experience

Participant Code Name	Years Working in Early Childhood Education	Number of Years Using an Emergent Program
Hannah	2	Less than 3 months ³
Anne	7	3
David	7.5	2
Joanne	8	3
Graham	10	10
Melissa	13	6
Ingrid	13	9 (Used aspects of emergent programs for 13 years)
Conrad	13	10
Linda	13	10
Nancy	13	13
Olive	16	5
Freya	17	3
Emily	20	20 (Aspects of emergent/Formal Reggio-inspired Approach for 5 years)
Kate	25	4
Peggy	26	12
Betty	30	4

Hannah explained that her centre had only recently begun the transition from a theme based program to an emergent program. Hannah was working “both in the field and in emergent programming for about two and a half months...so brand, brand new.”

Anne, David, Freya and Joanne have used emergent programming for one to three years,

Betty, Kate and Melissa used emergent programming for four to six years. Conrad, Graham, Linda, Peggy have used it for ten to 12 years. Ingrid has used emergent programming for nearly nine years while Emily, Nancy and Olive used emergent programming for over 12 years.

Results show that for some, experience with emergent programs varies in relation to the time they have worked in the early childhood field, prior training, and their geographic locations. For example, Graham and Ingrid both learned about Reggio schools and emergent programs while attending college, and have used emergent styles since entering the field. The survey respondents (Peggy, Nancy and Olive) who are from the US and Ontario have also been using emergent programs for a longer period of time than the others. This is likely because they have had more training opportunities and literature on Reggio/Emergent programs available to them. Notably, although a number of participants have been in the field for 10 to 20 years they have only been working predominantly with emergent programs for less than six years. This is likely because prior to late 1990s emergent programming might not have been popular, and Reggio schools were not well known outside of Italy. Freya, Joanne, Linda, Kate and Anne have been in the field for more than five years but have only been working with emergent approaches for two to six years. This is also most likely because of “timing.” As the emergent approaches became more popular and workshops became available, child care centres in the HRM began to make transitions to its incorporation and these participants “jumped into” the approach, obtained more training, read about the subject and became fully emergent practitioners. In other words, in Nova Scotia emergent/Reggio-inspired programs are newer phenomena than in Ontario and the United States.

Using Non-Emergent Early Childhood Programming

Prior to using an emergent approach 11 participants used a theme based model, three used the High Scope curriculum, and two used Montessori methods. They have often combined theme based and child-centered programming. Some have used aspects of emergent programming without realizing they had done so until recently.

A number of differences between theme based and emergent programming have been identified. Theme based programming is teacher planned and “set.” Hannah mentioned that because themes are set they sometimes do not take into account the interests of the children. Emergent programming is more “open”; child-centered, and focuses on children’s interests. As such, emergent is more difficult to plan as the programming must change along with the children’s interests. Conrad noted the ease of planning ahead in theme based programming, because one knows when holidays are coming, it is taken for granted that the children will engage in activities related to them. One can also plan for these in an emergent program; the plans might be altered if the children show more interest in another topic. Hannah added that in a theme based program teachers pick, plan, and implement activities and this does not leave room for the children to be included in programming. She thought that theme based programs focus on a “one theme per week” with teachers moving on from one to another even if children are interested in continuing. When asked to describe the difference to the emergent approach, she explained that emergent programs are more interesting to the children because they will allow them to explore a topic they have chosen and stay with it for months, whereas in theme based programming once the “theme” is covered or the time allotted to it is complete, teachers usually end the topic.

Betty, Freya, and Ingrid have used themes based on the children's interests, but not in a fully emergent manner. They have used the children's ideas, but have planned activities directly. Ingrid described the move from theme based to emergent programming in great detail. She said:

Theme based [programming] is pre-planned. The teacher before you and the teacher still there, implement the same program. While those things can be beneficial at times, the implementation can be different. Now, we are looking more towards the reflective component of emergent curriculum. We call it a "continuum of journey" because it's evolving. That's kind of where I am personally, and that's where the centre is as well.

The child-centered dimension of emergent programming was made clear when compared to the limited amount of children's input in theme based programs. Linda has worked with the High Scope curriculum and with Reggio-inspired and emergent curriculum. She described some major differences between the two types:

High Scope is interesting because it encourages children to make decisions and make plans. It works with their ideas and it helps them re-call and remember things. Part of the problem with High Scope is that a teacher had the same small group all the time.

Linda said working with the same small group was hard because not all the children stay with the group until the end of the activity, and if some of the children are not interested in the topic being covered they would display behavioral problems.

Emily and Linda spoke positively about the Reggio method and said it was their preferred method of teaching. Overall, participants valued how emergent programming allows room for the children's interests and choices; how it is more flexible; and how it and is more "open" than some of the other models they had used.

Summary

This chapter has set out the details of the method of research undertaken to examine uses and issues of documentation in emergent programs. I have given information about the data collection methods used in this research project. This chapter also identified the demographic information of the participants. There are some factors related to participant backgrounds one may want to keep in mind when reviewing responses and analyzing data. These include their training credentials and teaching experiences prior to using emergent programs.

As noted, all participants had formal training in areas of child development/early childhood education either from university/college programs or from government created equivalency programs. In addition, four participants also held education degrees and two worked in other fields with children prior to entering the early childhood field. This previous training and work experience would help these early childhood educators become familiar with assessment, observation and child development. The fact that all participants were trained in early childhood education may also affect the participant's style of programming, the ability to create developmentally appropriate programs and understanding the process of children's learning in a positive manner.

It was my hope that the results of the study would "give voice" to the educators by allowing them to share their experiences, thoughts, and ideas about documentation use, and in this way provide new ideas for documentation practice. The following chapter reports on those participants' use of documentation in emergent programming.

Chapter 3

Experiences Undertaking Documentation

The previous chapter set out the primary demographics of the research participants, including their education in early childhood education practice, in emergent curricula, and experiences in emergent programming. This chapter focuses specifically on the participants' experiences undertaking documentation.

Documentation that is focused around the children's learning experiences is a very important aspect of emergent curriculum programs. This is called pedagogical documentation. Educators using emergent curriculum approaches take part in the science of pedagogy by studying the "techniques and approaches that facilitates learning" (Shipley, 2008, p.440). Educators using emergent curriculum approaches observe and record children's words and actions throughout the day and later these study notes can be used to create documentation pieces that tell a story of the children's learning experiences.

There are a number of reasons why documentation is useful for both program assessment and to learn about the children teachers are working with. Positive reasons to document have been noted both by researchers as well as experts in the field. Documentation has been shown to help children with the learning process, help adults understand the process of children's learning, and help educators grow professionally (Gandini and Goldhaber, 2001). Furthermore, displayed documentation is said to increase communication among adults in the classroom, community, and colleagues (Gandini and Goldhaber). As documentation pieces are displayed, parent/teacher communications as well as child/parent communication may be enhanced as the documentation piece may provide a starting point for conversations (Krocher, 2004 and

Kroeger & Cardy, 2005). Documentation pieces can also be used to help teachers plan programs (Kinney and Wharton, 2007) and allow children to re-visit their work to help them determine what comes next in a learning experience (Krocher, 2004 and Schroeder, 2008). These are only some of the benefits that may be associated with completing pedagogical documentation on a regular basis as part of an emergent curriculum program. Each educator may have their own ideas of why it is important to use the documentation process in their classroom.

One may wonder how to document effectively. Many methods of documentation are used in emergent programs. They include:

- Anecdotal notes
- Photographs
- Audiotapes of children's conversations
- Videotapes
- Documentation panels
- Portfolios
- Letters to parents
- Displays of children's work
- iDocumentation

This is not a complete list of ways to that educators may choose to document in the classroom. Educators may use a combination of these types or may come up with something all on their own. The educator will evaluate the work, the content of the documentation piece and decide what method will be most appropriate to use.

This chapter focusses on the participants experiences of documentation use. It

includes the length of time they have been using documentation in the program, a discussion of who is responsible for completing documentation in their programs, and information on what types of documentation is most frequently used. Furthermore, this chapter will identify why the participants document in their early childhood programs and how they choose what to document when first beginning a documentation piece.

Length of Time Using Documentation

Participants have used documentation for varying lengths of time in their current programs and over their careers; because one participant did not make a distinction between the two, I have merged the data. The following shows the range of years documentation has been used by each participant.

Time Using Documentation

Length of Time Using Documenting (in years)	Participant Codes
(<3)	Freya, Hannah, David, Joanne
(3-5)	Anne, Betty, Conrad, Emily, Kate, Olive
(6-8)	Melissa
(9-12)	Graham, Ingrid, Linda, Nancy, Peggy

Note:

David answered the question based the last two centres where he worked.

Hannah used documentation for only a few months.

Ingrid answered the question based on her entire early childhood career.

The length of time using documentation made a difference to the participants' level of comfort undertaking this work, their knowledge about different aspects of documentation, and how they undertook it. Four of the participants used documentation for up to 12 years, while two documented for less than three years. Betty has been

documenting for four years, and reports that the process “is always changing and evolving.” Emily, who has documented for about four years and who works with Betty, also noted how the process of documentation had changed at their centre over the past three years. She said it was now happening more frequently, portfolios are more developed, and documentation pieces are more sophisticated. Hannah has been undertaking documentation for only a few months and would like to document more frequently. She has taken many photos, but has not yet displayed them due to time constraints. In addition, her centre has only newly transitioned into this type of programming and it did not yet have everything into place. Hannah and her colleagues hope to develop a board of “daily adventures” to display children’s photos and stories. Linda has seen documentation at her centre change over the past ten years. She noticed that previously, when a project was completed, panel documentation was produced. She explained the change more clearly saying that “there is now more of a focus on the work in progress.”

Responsibility for Documentation

Thirteen participants reported that all educators at their programs are responsible for doing documentation.

Anne said she and her co-workers were responsible for completing individual documentation but they also worked as a team. If someone observes something important or interesting with a child in another’s group, they mention it to that educator. Joanne was unsure how documentation worked in other classes at her centre, but at her centre each of the three educators is responsible for documenting the activities of six children. They alternate groups of children throughout the year to allow each a chance

to work with all the children. Conrad said that at his program when someone is sick, or on vacation during documentation time, the others must develop that person's documentation based on the notes the person left, or on something they remembered happening with the vacationing person's group. Alternatively, educators might switch program days with another co-worker allowing them to complete their own documentation after returning to the centre.

Linda, a program co-coordinator/director, completes all the documentation because her staff does not have enough experience to undertake in-depth documentation. She said the goal was to allow educators to complete their own documentations once they became familiar with the process. However, it is evident that this might be difficult at Linda's centre because of time limits; becoming familiar with the process can only happen if educators have program time available, and Linda does not expect her staff to document at home.

Nancy, a curriculum coordinator, reported that her job is to "guide teachers' creative energies, and offer to provide support for them, such as printing and mounting photos, or typing words." She documents for the centre while the educators focus their documentation activities on their classrooms.

Ingrid said that while everyone in her program is responsible for undertaking documentation; she also mentioned the importance of team work and collaboration for ensuring that the workload is shared. Emily said collaboration is a goal they are working toward at the centre she directs. She said that educators at her centre do not have a certain amount of required documentation, but she thinks that they get excited about completing documentation pieces. She thought collaboration was a meaningful process, reporting:

Right now, each teacher completes documentation alone: however, collaboration is where your best results are. They achieved this [collaborative documentation] in Reggio, whether we can achieve it here, I don't know; I just don't know... In our culture -we tend to work in isolation. Hopefully, we will work towards collaboration because I think that is where we get the best ideas. Just like the children collaborating, I think that if staff can collaborate they will benefit from each other's ideas. It [documenting at the centre] has just kind of balanced out at this point, but again, it is emerging like our curriculum. I would like all staff to be involved in the process.

Types of Documentation Undertaken

Responses revealed that methods of undertaking documentation for emergent programming can change with experience, in how the individual and how the program approaches it. This often occurs when early childhood educators attend workshops and learn ways to undertake documentation. The practice leads to shifting ideas about how and why to document.

When asked what types of documentation participants used, some required clarification about what this meant. I gave examples such as panels, photos, notes, and books. This helped them to provide details of the types of documentation they have undertaken. The following table sets out the documentation used by each participant, and shows that all, but Hannah, have used more than one documentation type, and shows panels, photography, and written observations are the most popular types of documentation used.

Some forms of documentation combine types. For instance, panels and portfolios could contain observations, work samples, and photography. The researcher feels that regardless of what type of documentation and educator decides to use, ultimately it will be used to communicate what is happening in the

classroom to others.

Types of Documentation Undertaken by Participants

Type of Documentation	Participant Codes	Participants using Documentation Type
Photographs	Anne, Betty, Conrad, David, Emily, Freya, Graham, Hannah, Ingrid, Joanne, Linda, Kate	12
Panels	Betty, Ingrid, Melissa, Peggy, Conrad, David, Graham, Kate, Emily, Joanne, Linda, Olive, Peggy	13
Written Observations	Anne, Betty, Conrad, David, Freya, Kate, Linda, Nancy, Olive, Peggy	10
Portfolios	Anne, Betty, Emily, Ingrid, Joanne, Linda, Melissa, Olive	8
Books (made for the children) /Learning Stories	Betty, Ingrid, Melissa, Olive, Peggy	5
Daily Log Book	Emily, Betty, Freya, Linda	4
Video taping	Kate, Melissa, Nancy	3
Newsletters	Nancy, Olive, Peggy	3
Art Work	Anne, Linda	2
Daily Journal (for each child)	Conrad, Kate	2
Information from outside sources	Kate	1
PowerPoint Presentations	Linda	1
Published Work	Linda	1

The participants tended to choose specific types of documentation based on how they have learned to document and the amount of exposure they have had to documentation - both seeing and doing. The table shows that individuals who were in the field for less than three years reported using less documentation types than

the other participants. Hanna, who at the time of the interview had only been using documentation for about two months, had only documented using photography. Freya and David had been using documentation for less than three years and only reported using two types of documentation. Five of the six participants who documented for five years or more reported using at least three types of documentation such as art work, panels, daily log books and portfolios.

Linda has used the most types of documentation. Linda uses her background in art and draws upon her experience in graphic design when documenting. She has also worked with Carol Anne Wien and has visited authentic Reggio Emilia programs in Italy. Her ten years experience with emergent curriculum/documentation, her background in design, and her professional development experiences appear to have evidently affected her style of documentation and helped her to create varied documentation pieces.

There are other factors that might affect the variety of documentation used. These factors include the amount of experience participants have with documentation and the types of documentation that the participants are required to undertake. For instance, some centres require portfolios as a mode of assessment or the creation and display of documentation panels as a part of the centre's philosophy. The centre director might also choose what type of documentation is required. They might specify that documentation be in the form of panels or written daily in logbooks.

Reasons for choosing a certain type depend most often on why the documentation is being undertaken and what form would convey the point most clearly. For example, if teachers would like to show a child's parents that the child can now tie his/her shoes, they might record a video of the process, or take photos as the child is doing the task. If the teacher wants to show that a child can write

his/her name, the teacher might choose to show work samples as documentation.

David and Hannah use photography to help the children and their parents see what is being done in the classroom.

Some educators select how to document based on their personal preference, for example, one teacher might feel that photos with write-ups are very efficient while another might like to use work samples and written observations within their displays as a means to convey information. Graham and Joanne keep their documentation simple, using panels and anecdotal records. Graham thinks it is best to document “just enough to get your point across,” while Kate includes “outside sources” to provide more information. Outside sources, might include research by a specialist; for instance, if the class is working on the topic of massages, Kate would use information from a massage therapist.

No participants mentioned why they changed documentation styles or why their methods of documentation changed. When reviewing the data, I was inspired to think of my own experience with documentation. I was able to see how my own documentation pieces have evolved and become more elaborate over time. I also noticed that I have moved from using simple “panels” to creating books, using PowerPoint Presentations and writing letters to parents. I feel there are a multitude of references which have helped me to become a more sophisticated and varied documenter. I read books about documentation, reviewed documentation from centres other than my own (at emergent curriculum discussion groups), studied early childhood educator websites and documentation examples in books, reflected on co-workers’/parents’ comments, and attending workshops with a focus on documentation creation.

Choosing What to Document

Before educators begin using the documentation process in their programs, they must understand the reasons why documentation is important and develop the reasons why they consider documentation important in their program. As educators decide the main purpose for documenting in their centre, they will be better equipped to document effectively and to explain the process to parents and other colleagues. It might also help educators to have more passion for this demanding and sometimes difficult process if they know fully why they are doing it and the benefits that might occur. Some of the reasons to undertake pedagogical documentation are as follows: to help communication with parents, to allow children to re-visit their work, to share with colleagues, to aid in professional growth, to enhance reflective practice and to validate early childhood education programs and educators.

Documenting provides information that teachers can use to build on children's interests, or lack thereof, and to help with program planning. Teachers can decide to continue to work on a subject, to change the direction of a project, to add to activities, and to plan the next steps of an activity based on what the documentation reveals. The first step to beginning a documentation piece within an emergent program is choosing what to document, and this is related to why one is documenting. There are a number of reasons for documenting children's work, such as recording developmental milestones, showing children's interests, developing the teacher's interests, including all the children, and ensuring portfolios are up to date.

The following sets out each participant's reasons for documenting both in terms of initially beginning a documentation piece and the purposes of documenting as a whole. The first five reasons pertain to beginning a documentation piece. Nine of the 16 reported that they begin documenting when they observe the interests of the children. Seven identified observing developmental milestones. Three noted it as being for the purpose of telling a story, and for highlighting the skills of all children in the classroom. Four identified the interests of the teacher, nine gave two reasons, six gave one reason, and one gave three reasons.

The last six reasons in the table refer to why participants see documentation as an important aspect of their emergent program. Participants were asked why they document and were provided with a number of reasons including: communicating with parents, giving children opportunities to re-visit work, professional growth, sharing with colleagues, and aiding program planning.

Most educators had more than one reason for choosing to document. Two reasons for documenting that were given by participants, but not mentioned by the researcher, were to validate the learning that occurs in the centre and because documentation was a requirement of the educators position.

Fifteen of the 16 participants agreed that they use documentation as a method of communicating with parents. Respondents also frequently used documentation as a means of professional growth, and for program planning. Two used documentation to demonstrate that activities in the classroom are "not just play." Eleven participants remarked on how the documentation process aids in the planning process, and how it can improve communication inside and outside the

centre.

Reasons for choosing to document a learning event or project and purposes for documenting overall

Reason to Document	Participant Codes
Developmental milestones	Anne, Betty, Conrad, Emily, Freya, Hannah, Melissa, Peggy
Interest to the children	Betty, Conrad, David, Graham, Hannah, Ingrid, Joanne, Kate, Linda, Nancy
Interest to the teacher	Emily, Freya, Nancy, Olive
Highlight skills of all children	Joanne, Kate, Linda
To tell a story later	Joanne, Linda, Melissa
Communication with parents	Anne, Betty, Conrad, David, Emily, Freya, Graham, Hannah, Ingrid, Kate, Linda, Nancy, Olive, Peggy
Children re-visiting work	Anne, Betty, David, Freya, Graham, Hannah, Kate, Linda, Nancy, Olive, Peggy
Share with colleagues	David, Emily, Freya, Graham, Linda, Melissa, Nancy, Olive, Peggy
Professional growth	Anne, Emily, Freya, Graham, Ingrid, Linda, Melissa, Olive, Peggy
Program planning	Conrad, Emily, Freya, Graham, Joanne, Kate, Linda, Melissa, Nancy, Olive, Peggy
Showing others/Validating learning	Ingrid, Kate, Melissa

The discussion below gives further information regarding why the participants choose to begin a documentation piece and some of the benefits of documentation in regards to parent communication, aiding program plans, validating their program, and professional growth.

Documenting based on the children's interests.

Graham believes that recording children's interests is extremely important because, "being their primary teacher, you should know their interests and if you see them working on something related to an issue, that is the perfect opportunity

to document.” Ingrid, who is a program coordinator, explained that documenting the children’s interests can help make things meaningful for the children and can give them a sense of “pride and excitement.” When she comes into a classroom and sees learning occurring she encourages teachers to take pictures and to write things down to capture the moment, explaining that, “When it is meaningful to the children, you document.” In addition to documenting activities of interest to the children, David keeps records and documents activities that did not go well to show a child “was not a fan” of something. Joanne stressed the importance of capturing children doing things they do not usually do, and that doing so helps generate conversation with parents. Furthermore, she includes children [in documentation] who “might be fairly shy or have additional challenges” in hopes that it builds their self-esteem. Nancy also said that documentation can help children’s development of self-esteem, and in addition she documents to “tell the story,” to show the process of the children’s learning.

Communication with parents.

Communication with parents was identified as an important reason to document by all but one participant. Participants spoke with confidence about this use suggesting that it can aid in communicating and building relationships with parents in a number of ways, which include showing parents their child’s daily activities, giving parents a starting point to talk with their child about their day, and giving parents a reason to come into the classroom on a regular basis. All fifteen participants who regularly displayed documentation in their centres said it has helped improve parent/teacher relationships. Seven participants thought that conversations about the day’s activities between children

and parents were strengthened as a direct result of displayed documentation.

Anne thinks it “helps parents to see how their child is developing” and they [the portfolios] provide a book of memories for the parents to take with them after their child leaves daycare.”

Betty displays pictures, children’s work, and records of what the children are saying to show parents things that are “huge and emerging,” “group co-operations,” and “children’s interests.”

David finds that documentation helps show parents what their children have been doing. He explained that he tries to speak to every parent during pick-up time; however, when it is busy and he cannot, documentation pieces help parents to see their child’s daily curriculum.

Hannah thinks it is very important for parents to know what their children are doing and how they are developing. She said that because emergent programming does not have a definite theme, parents can find it difficult to know what is happening in the classroom, and that documentation illustrates for them the children’s interests, and what they’re learning. It gives them something tangible to take home and speak with their child about.

Graham believes documentation can show parents what is happening at the centre, and it also acts to include parents in their child’s learning, because it helps them “feel like they are a part of what is going on.”

Early childhood educators often believe parent involvement is important. It is common practice for them to speak to parents at the end of the day when children are being picked up. They might inform parents about daily programs, or update them on their children’s progress or behaviour. They might just have a simple chat about the

weather or upcoming events the community or child care centre. Five participants reported that documentation helped bring parents into the classroom, especially because parents might like to come in to look for their child's photos or displayed work, Betty and Freya both said parents focus on their own children within documentation pieces, but look at others as well.

Freya believes that parents sometimes become more involved after reading documentation. She noted that after she shares documentation pieces with parents, children might come to school with more information on the topic, or parents might voluntarily share information with the teachers. One example she gave was in relation to her class discussing spiders and spider webs. Parents subsequently told the teachers where they find spiders around the neighbourhood so the class could look for them during their daily walk.

Freya's example caused me to remember another instance of this occurring when I worked with her in a preschool classroom. It happened during gardening season. The children were very excited to see the cucumbers growing in our garden. They were very tiny pickling cucumbers. The children were able to pick some cucumbers and taste them during circle time. The next day, one student brought in a very large cucumber to school. The boy's mother explained, "He told us you were picking the cucumbers and they were tiny but you could still eat them." She had also mentioned seeing pictures of the children picking cucumbers in the daily log book. She said she let him take "the big cucumber from Superstore" to see if it tasted different than the small cucumber from the garden. This was a wonderful moment for Freya and me as we were able to see the family involvement in our programming.

Graham also thinks that parental involvement in the daily operations of the centre

is very important. He explained that documentation is used for more than just showing parents what their children are involved in, but it helps parents/teachers work as a team. He said he once displayed a documentation panel about “skin colours” and recalled that one particular parent came in and not only looked at all the photos but read all the descriptions. After the parent read the documentation, she went up to one of the centre staff and complimented them on the work that was done and the content in the panel. Graham feels that documentation can increase communication and helps build relationships and trust among parents and teachers. He described what happens when teachers and families speak about a documentation panel in this way:

My thoughts are, if the parent sees that his/her child is involved in, it is proof that we are working together - the mothers, the dads, the uncles, cousins and teachers work together and it also makes it more comfortable to approach us. Talking about a panel is a bonding experience.

Graham’s story and thoughts illustrate how a documentation piece can be a starting point for conversation and can deepen relationships between parents and teachers.

Joanne thought that documentation increases conversations between her and the parents she works with, and also helps families to get a better understanding of what is being taught to the children. She noticed this more frequently when working with children who speak English as a second language. When speaking specifically about working with families who do not speak English, the documentation pieces can help explain what is happening in the classroom. She said that sometimes parents and grandparents come and discuss what the children have done and the children show their parents documentation pieces and parents, in turn, get excited about what is happening in the classroom and get a deeper understanding of classroom activities. The photos used in

panels/portfolios can help portray what is happening when there is a language barrier between Joanne and the parents.

Nancy, a program coordinator, assists her staff in using documentation in order to increase parent involvement. She gave an example of including parents in documentation. Of the project describing how she included parents in the project, “Toddlers in Nature”: she said:

I asked the teachers what they wanted the children to get out of nature. They articulated their varying ideas and rationales concisely. Next I asked them, “What do you think their parents want children to get out of nature”? So, we mounted a specific photo of our toddlers “in nature” on a blank piece of paper with the title of “What Do You Hope your Child Will Get Out of Nature”? We then posted it with a pen on the daily curriculum page.

Parents wrote their thoughts, hopes, and dreams on this brainstorm page. After about a week of parent input, we brought the documentation to team planning and decided to document how we met the parent’s goals on the brainstorm list. Naturally more questions arose which we posted and mounted for parent participation.

Nancy’s story demonstrates how her staff used parent comments to help create plans, to continue documenting, and to further develop a project.

Study results show that displayed documentation helps build positive relationships between parents and teachers, help family members get involved in class functions, helps make a classroom welcoming for parents, helps parents have a clear picture of what has happened in the classroom throughout the day, and might inspire parents to become involved in program plans or to share resources. Displayed documentation also gives parents a starting point to have meaningful conversations with children about their school day. Responses also showed how including parents in the documentation process can provide insight for further documentation pieces and programs and can lead to long term projects.

Showing/Validating.

As educators create documentation, one thing they keep in mind is showing parents, and sometimes colleagues or others in the field, what children are learning during their daily activities. Two participants thought that documentation is an effective way to show what is happening within the classroom. The participants spoke about the importance of showing others that activities have a purpose and a positive outcome. Parents of children in child care programs (especially in pre-school programs) often want to know “what the children are learning.”

Displayed documentation pieces can be used to demonstrate that children are not “just playing,” but they are learning through play. Kate reported that documentation can be shared with everyone involved in the centre such as children, parents, staff, and classroom visitors. Kate uses documentation to visually show the children learning “ABCs and 123s.” She argues that documentation through pictures and explanations connect activities to specific learning outcomes, and show the purpose of a program. Ingrid said documentation can make learning visible and is used as a tool for validating programs and staff. She reported that documentation can show play in connection with different [developmental] theories and “makes it academic.”

Participants stated that documentation can validate a teacher’s programming, demonstrate how children learn through play, and give proof of program quality. All respondents discussed how learning is made visible through documentation. Documentation can be used for further explanation of the children’s development and to help parents understand the processes that occur as children master new skills. Anne, Conrad, David and Linda thought that when children look at documentation of their own work, they are able to see what they have done or what steps they took to complete a

project and that this often encourages continuing to work on a project. Conrad, David, Graham, Joanne, Linda and Nancy use photographs as a means to show the children's learning process and to enable parents and other teachers in the school to see what the children have been learning. Nancy tailors her documentation pieces to the audience she is writing for and sometimes emails pieces that capture an individual child's special moments to his or her parents. Linda uses photo documentations specifically to help children learn. Sometimes she takes close-ups of creations or children at work, in order in order to help the children see things from a different perspective. Teacher's ideas and thought processes might also become evident in displayed documentation, by including the process teachers used to help children develop projects, links to theory and practice, and reflections on what the teacher thought they learned during the documented project or activity. Melissa feels that both children and educators' learning is captured during all stages of documentation.

This type of documentation shows parents what their children are learning and might also show that the educators are "really teaching." Documentation is used to demonstrate the value in the program and will often validate playful, creative, or social activities that parents might see as only providing the children with time for fun.

Teachers want to show parents they are teaching; the field of early childhood education might not be a valued field and sometimes, people might feel early childhood educators are "just babysitting." Educators of young children want to prove to others their job is much more than just babysitting, that time and effort are put into planning programs for the children.

I often document for this reason. I work in a Reggio-inspired centre which puts a great deal of focus on creativity and free play. Parents often wonder if their children are

learning about literacy and math concepts and if the children will be prepared for school. I create documentation pieces to show exactly what the children did during an activity and to also highlight how the child has built on skills. For example, a few years back, the children at my centre loved to create things using large pieces of easel paper. The “Paper Project” began as the children decided they did not want to paint at the easel, but they preferred to draw on easel paper at the table. The children began working together and gluing paper together to create very large murals. Some of the girls used the paper to make dresses, some children made life sized boats, on another day; the children made “snail shells and trails” and put on show about snails. Some parents wanted to know why their children were doing art work all the time, some thought the paper going home was wasteful; however, the teachers saw the benefit in allowing the children to express their thoughts and creativity and encouraged the children because they were imagining, co-operating and problem solving. After a few weeks of the children working with paper, a documentation piece was created and placed in the hall which included pictures of the children working, work samples, examples of the children’s conversations and the teachers’ thoughts. At the end of the documentation, I created a poster that said “Paper is not just paper.” This poster went on to explain what the children did over the weeks and included a list of skills they developed by working on these art pieces. These skills included fine motor skills (cutting, gluing, painting, and drawing), language and literacy (writing words on their drawings, creating stories, and writing names), team work, problem solving, and creativity. Many parents commented on this documentation and acknowledged that they did not originally see the “Paper Project” as a learning experience, but they were thankful to the staff for taking the time to put together a piece which showed the educational experience.

Responses highlight how documentation can be used to show learning in the classroom and it can demonstrate how seeing the learning in progress can deepen the learning process. Seven educators in this study made reference to children looking at documentation and then remembering how they completed an activity, re-visiting the activity or taking the activity to a higher level. Notably, participants also highlighted ways that educators' learning might be more evident. The concept of "learning made visible" is an important and valuable aspect to documentation. Using documentation to share the process of learning can assist program planning, help children develop skills, validate programs and teaching staff by showing parents, centre staff and other classroom visitors what occurs in the classroom. Documentation helps teachers reflect, learn, and share their teaching and learning process with others. The educators' interviews gave evidence to support the theory that displayed documentation is more than a "show of learning," but that it also acts as a tool for learning. This evidence supports the notion that documenting children as they work and learn, combined with sharing these documentation pieces, can assist in creating better learning opportunities for the children and the teachers alike. Positive results of documentation can only occur when teachers have the time, resources, and training opportunities available to them.

In summary, the participants value communication with parents and have used documentation to ensure parents stay informed about what is happening in their children's program. Documentation is often used as a tool to show and communicate with parents, and with others, about the learning that takes place inside the classroom. It is used as a tool for validating programs and the teachers within programs. Participants explained that the use of pedagogical documentation is an effective tool for demonstrating what children have learned, their daily activities and their interests, as well

as increasing parental involvement in the program.

Children re-visiting work.

Eleven participants cited ‘children re-visiting their work’ as an important reason for completing documentation. Linda said when children see their activity has been documented it can inspire them to continue with it. Betty undertakes documentation so that the *parents* can see what their child did, but she displays photos so the *children* to see what they did, she explained that children sometimes like to revisit the activity after they see photographs of themselves. David noted that it is important to have documentation displayed at the children’s eye-level as pictures can sometimes excite them into asking to do an activity again. Hannah also mentioned this possibility:

It is good for the children [to see photos of themselves]; it might re-awaken something they have lost their interest in. [The interest] then comes back and they take [their work] further.

When children re-visit activities, they can learn more about a concept and take their learning to a higher level. Re-visiting work can also help build a child’s self-esteem, making them proud of their accomplishments. Ingrid spoke about the ways she saw children use documentation in the classroom and why she feels it is important to document and show children what they have accomplished.

It shows excitement in learning that the children have done. If the children see someone writing about what they have been doing, putting it all together and presenting it to them, it makes what they are doing more than “just play.” It makes the activities more important to the children and it makes the children more focused on how they engage meaningfully with their peers. For me, that is one of the most important reasons to document.

Professional growth and development.

Nine participants agreed that professional growth is a reason to document;

however, only one participant spoke in detail of documenting for the purpose of professional growth. Many participants seemed to agree that professional development was a reason to document *after* the researcher listed it as a possibility. Linda said she would not document solely for professional growth; however, she agreed that documentation can help educators grow professionally. She explained:

Professional growth and to share with colleagues is important, but if it was the only reason why I documented, then I would not do it. For people who haven't documented projects and therefore, seen how much [work/activities] they have done with the children, it is really important to go through that process and see how rewarding it is for them professionally. It is really as rewarding for you, as it is for the children; you act as their memory, but you also remind yourself of the success you have had in your programming. I think it's a big pay off.

Emily thought that professional growth was an important component of the documentation process. She spoke about talking with other staff and colleagues about documentation pieces. She thinks that a great deal of dialogue is starting in the area of documentation and each documentation piece put on display brings about more conversation. Kate also mentioned talking to others about documentation and learning from it.

Completed documentation can be used as a way for educators to reflect on their work; for them to learn and grow by reviewing completed documentation and by sharing their work with others. One might wonder why Linda and some of the other participants did not see professional growth as a major reason for documenting, and there might be a few reasons for this. It is possible that some educators do not see the value in professional development, feeling they already know all that is needed to fulfill their role. Some educators might feel their field is not valued. Even with professional development, learning and growth there are limited opportunities to excel further in

one's career. Some might think that professional development is selfish. They might not want to admit that they are doing something "to further themselves or to advance their career" but they would rather say they are doing the documentation to help their centre, or for the children and parents they work with. Future areas of research could look at why educators feel professional growth is not as important as other reasons to document, or to discuss feelings educators have about professional growth. It also would be useful to ask about experience sharing work with colleagues, or attending workshops related to documentation.

Job requirements, sharing with colleagues, and program planning.

Other reasons for documenting were job requirements, sharing with colleagues, and program planning. These were only briefly mentioned in participant responses, or included only when they agreed with the researcher's suggestions.

Only Kate and Conrad reported having to do documentation as part of their early childhood educator responsibilities. They must undertake two pieces of documentation per week. Presumably, it was only these two participants who are required to document in their job description. Participants at other centres complete documentation as part of the emergent style. The researcher thinks this is an "unwritten requirement" because if a centre stated that it works with emergent programming style, or a Reggio-inspired program, one would assume that documentation is part of the program. For instance, the director might not say: staff must complete X amount of documentation per week, month, and some type of documentation should be occurring might - panel production, portfolios, daily logs, or written observations. The small number of centres requiring documentation is worrying; it poses a problem as documentation is an integral part of emergent and Reggio- inspired programs. If centres do not give staff clear guidelines of

what is expected from them in terms of documentation, the pieces could be left undone, or the distribution of documentation work might be unjust. For example, one staff could document regularly while another does not completed any pieces, unless directed by senior staff. It is the centre director who should take the responsibility to allocate documentation requirements. Ultimately, documentation is required in emergent programs. Directors determine how often each staff must document and therefore, ensures that appropriate amount of documentation is undertaken and projects are equally distributed.

Because documentation is not always a written requirement in a person's job description, or at a centre, some problems might occur such as educators feeling it is unnecessary and might not complete it, not seeing the importance of documentation and leaving it on the backburner. Documentation might not be given as much value in centres where it is completed by choice, and pieces might be inconsistent if there is no specific amount of documentation required. This issue could be researched further; one might wish to compare the quality of documentation in centres which require documentation vs. centres where documentation is simply "part of the program." It might also be interesting to see how many pieces of documentation are being produced in centres where educators are required to document, or to look at why directors do not require documentation. Finally, further analysis could be of benefit on why educators document if it is not required but only completed by choice.

Eleven participants have shared documentation with their colleagues. Emily said sharing helps start a dialogue with colleagues and other professionals. David enjoys sharing his documentation with colleagues as it gives them programming ideas, Kate agreed and has found that sharing documentation with co-workers helps program

planning, and provides feedback on activities. She mentioned specifically that visual aspects of documentation help centre staff learn from one another.

Sharing with others clearly overlaps with program planning, which eleven participants identified as a reason for undertaking documentation. It helps create programs with more depth. David explained, “It’s helpful in program planning to see who is involved in it, and what they already know, so we can build on it.”

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to give an overview of the data pertaining to the participants’ experiences with using documentation in their emergent early childhood programs. The participants reported being involved in the documentation process from less than three months to up to twelve years. As participants became more experienced they became more comfortable creating documentation pieces and their work became more diverse. The majority of the participants said all staff in their centre were responsible for documentation. Program coordinators often aided educators in the process of documentation by helping them edit their work, assisting with the construction and development of documentation and, by spending time in the classroom allowing teachers time to document. Participants listed a number of types of documentation used in the classroom. The most popular were photographs, panels, written observations, portfolios or a combination of types.

There were also a number of reasons why participants may chose to document a specific event in the classroom. The most cited reasons to begin a documentation pieces were to record developmental milestones and to show others the interests of the children. Other popular reasons to use documentation in an emergent program included communication with parents, allowing children to re-visit work, to aid in program

planning and to validate programs and educators by showing that the children are not “just playing.” Data showed that participants were reluctant to use documentation solely for the purpose of professional growth and that only two educators had documentation listed as a job requirement. It is evident that documentation styles vary among early childhood educators and that there are a number of ways documentation can enhance the emergent program.

The following chapter focusses on participants’ use of reflective practice and development of projects while using the emergent teaching method. I will discuss the collaborative nature of the reflection process and reveal how educators in this study use reflection to help them plan programs and create documentation pieces. Finally, the children’s responses to documentation will be revealed.

Chapter 4

Reflecting and Building on Documentation

This chapter will provide a summary of the data collection related to reflective practice. It will reveal that reflection can be a highly collaborative process for the early childhood educators in this study. I will discuss how participants incorporate their own ideas about teaching into program planning and the ways in which reflection aids the planning and assessment components of teaching. This chapter also contains stories of how educators use documentation has lead to the growth of learning projects and how children use documentation to build on their work.

Reflection and Reflective Practice in Emergent Early Childhood Programs

As discussed in the literature review, an important part of emergent curriculum or Reggio-inspired programs is for the educators to reflect on their work, such as considering what they have seen the children do, as well as the program plans and documentation they have produced. Teachers need to reflect on the materials they provide, the programs they plan, ways to communicate effectively with families, and on other aspects of their programs. There are often additional reasons in emergent programs for reflection such as on what to document, and how to build on children's interests leading to learning and project growth. Educators might also reflect on their own practices and values.

In the initial study a number of the questions about reflective practice were included in the on-line questionnaire. After discussion with my thesis committee and completing my literature review, it was decided that there should be an entire section devoted to reflective practice and all participants should be a part of it. I contacted 11 of the 12 interview participants. I did not have current contact information for the one

omitted participant. Of the 11 participants contacted 10 responded to my request for additional information. I asked them:

- How do you think you incorporate your own ideas about teaching into the documentation process? (Explain)
- Do you think there should be more ways to incorporate your ideas into the teaching process? (Explain)
- Is there anything you would like to say about reflecting on children's work, being a reflective practitioner or how/if documentation helps you to become more reflective in the work you do?

For the purpose of data analysis, on-line survey respondents as well as those who answered follow up questions have been combined giving a total of fourteen responses for the follow up questions on reflective practice.

Additionally, the following questions revolving around reflection were included in the original interviews and questionnaires.

- How do you reflect on the work you do?
- Do you reflect alone or with others?

The Reflection Process

Reflection can be undertaken alone and collaboratively. The following shows the breakdown of participant's reflective styles.

Reflection: Alone or With Others

Participants' Reflection Style	Participants who use this style	# of Participants who use this reflection style
Reflecting Alone	Anne, Conrad	2
Reflecting with Others	Betty, David, Graham, Ingrid, Joanne, Kate	6
Reflecting both Alone and With Others	Emily, Freya, Hannah, Linda, Melissa, Nancy, Olive	8

All 16 participants spoke about their reflections styles in terms of reflecting on their own or collaboratively. Eight of the participants reflect both alone and collaboratively. Six deem reflection to be primarily a collaborative process, and 2 reflect alone. David said he likes to share what he has done with others, especially if it has gone well, in order they might also try the same activity. He said that at his centre there is always someone to help with program planning, documentation, and answering questions. David said he usually goes to his assistant director in times of need. Graham also said he reflects with others including his co-teachers, his director and the centre's executive director. Joanna and her co-teachers reflect on what is happening in the classroom once a week during the children's naptime. Ingrid said the staff at her centre are encouraged to reflect and plan together through the use of a programming sheet that contains observations of the children and information about daily activities.

Reflecting with others can be a positive experience that helps educators expand on program plans, share ideas, and solve problems in the classroom. Meetings can be a positive venue for collaboration on program planning and deciding what to document. Four participants said that meetings provide opportunities for collaborative reflection.

Betty said staff often look at daily log books together to discuss what work has been done and how further planning can occur. Freya and Graham said meetings might revolve around the topic of documentation. Olive said meetings at her centre allow the teachers to come together and share ideas.

Eight participants said they often reflect alone on their own time but, they also reflect with others. Hannah said she reflects during the evening, thinking about how her day went and what she could change. Hannah has shared her reflections with co-workers on the following day to extend her own reflection and for program planning purposes. Kate also spoke about reflecting with her co-worker “the next day.” She said that if it is a very busy day, she might leave notes in the communication binder. She believes the positive relationship she has with her co-worker makes it easy for her to share her ideas and reflections with him.

Linda does quite a bit of reflecting on her own, but always also reflects with other staff. Educators at her centre often connect “on the fly, and often discuss children’s behaviours, children’s interests, what is happening in the classroom and brainstorm ideas for planning and solving problems in the classroom as activities occur.” She added, “This might occur at meetings, but sometimes when it is busy or there is no time, reflecting in the moment is the way to go.” Olive and Peggy also spoke of reflecting on their own and later bringing reflections and ideas to other teachers for support, or to discuss various views and ideas. Only Anne and Conrad said they predominantly reflect on their own, but both welcome ideas from others or will go to co-workers for help when they are having trouble with their work. It might be important to note that Conrad was speaking specifically about reflecting on his own work when answering this question. Readers will be able to see that Conrad does not always work alone and is sometimes

collaborative in his documentation/planning styles when reading the curriculum story about “Reporters” described below. The responses revolving around methods of reflection show that doing so alone and with others is beneficial because this process aids in problem solving and program planning where group ideas are pooled together.

Documentation and Reflective Practice

Educators in emergent programs use the reflection process in a variety of ways to develop projects and learning activities, and to generate ideas for documentation pieces. One aspect of reflective practice occurs as educators incorporate their own ideas about teaching into programs and the documentation process. The educators who said they brought their own ideas into programs were comfortable with this process. The 13 who responded to my follow up questions reported that they could not suggest any better way to incorporate their ideas into the teaching practices

Olive, Peggy, Ingrid, Joanne, David and Graham discussed the importance of planning according to children’s interests. They believe this is an advantage of emergent programs – to pay attention through documentation to what the children are doing, and to create programs based on their ideas and those of the children. Ingrid stressed the importance of the “teacher’s voice” in emergent programs. She said that since the programs are based on observations of the children and the environment, teachers can create activities based on their own knowledge. She said that without the “teacher’s voice.” the children would be “missing a huge part of a learning activity.” Joanne enjoys the freedom, flexibility, and support in emergent programs. She thinks this approach is much more creative than theme based programs and she uses her reflections and ideas to create learning activities and documentation pieces. Linda said the Reggio-inspired approaches help teachers to be reflective researchers by encouraging “deep thinking and

analysis from all teachers.” She believes teachers should use their ideas to help the children become better researchers as well. In a similar vein, Nancy not only personally values the process of reflection, but also encourages the preschoolers in her class to regularly keep journals.

These findings about reflective practice demonstrate that the teachers in this study incorporate their own ideas and teaching styles when creating program plans. Eight of the respondents to the reflective questions thought that each teacher is different and therefore has different ideas of what activities, moments, or developmental milestones are valuable. What an educator chooses to document reflects their personal ideas and expresses their opinions on the teaching process to others.

Linda, Emily, Hannah, and Joanne also spoke about the importance of thinking about whom the documentation is aimed prior to undertaking the process. Joanne shows through her documentation pieces why she has chosen to supply the children with certain materials, and how materials were used in the classroom. She also includes her thoughts on why she chose to document certain moments and projects.

Melissa tries to ensure there are not too many personal opinions in her documentation pieces, but adds her ideas if they fit. She documents with the “audience, focal point of the information, and the forum of dissemination” in mind, as she wants to “remain objective” and ensure she is perceived as a credible source. In contrast, Peggy uses documentation as a means of expressing to others her views and ideas about teaching, to advocate for best practices in teaching, and to promote quality child care. Nancy is very open to incorporating her ideas in the documentation process and thinks she is not limited in terms of how much reflection she is able to include.

Documentation, Reflection, and Program Planning

Educators use reflection and their ideas to help build programs and decide what materials to use. Anne reviews documentation pieces to see what skills children in her care have developed and what she can do to help them develop further. Betty uses her ideas and observations of what the children are doing as a guide to choosing materials for further learning. Linda creates documentation with the children's learning in mind. She works on helping the children become better researchers and analyzers. Olive builds theories as she reflects on work and later uses these theories to get to the next step in programming.

Anne, David, Hannah, Nancy and Peggy thought that documentation was useful in helping the children further develop skills and assist in the planning process. Emily, Graham, Joanne and Olive said documenting and project work is a regular part of their program planning; they used completed documentation as a specific way to further develop activities happening in the classroom.

Four reported on ways documentation furthered the planning process, or ways it helped children develop their skills. Anne often documented to further plan activities in the block area and to build fine motor skills. David said he uses photographs in the classroom to help lead to other activities and further learning. Joanne thought that documentation helped build the children's self-esteem, made their strengths visible to others, and aided in building relationships between children in the classroom. She shared a story about posting a photograph of one of the younger children in an activity that demonstrated the process of developing pre-writing skills. She said the children showed their parents this picture and some developed a greater interest in writing. Olive includes the next steps of planning in her documentation pieces, and these sometimes led to

project growth. These examples from the participants show that documentation assists the planning process, and helps build programs for these educators.

Eight participants said they are able to obtain a better understanding of how children develop and grow through use of documentation. Participants use observations and photographs to note how children master skills, and to observe how the children's interests develop. Freya notices how children, after reflecting on their own work, take work to higher levels. Betty and Emily report that they are able to see children's capabilities when reviewing their documentation pieces. Emily noticed that the projects chosen to be documented in her centre are normally the ones that were developed by the children themselves. It is the work that is completely child-centered that is viewed as interesting and important. Emily said as the documentation pieces are reviewed she learns, "just how well organized children are, how incredibly competent they are" and that reflecting on the children's work helps teachers to know how they can support the learning and enhance the environment.

Melissa shared a curriculum story about a project that developed around the preschool children's interest in finding things. The educators discussed how they could foster this interest and decided to involve parents by inviting families to bring in items from around the house that could be shared with the class. A number of items were brought in and displayed, including some watches. The older children in another class took these apart to look inside. Melissa said that the activity had begun, as a small classroom project emerged as one involving the entire centre. Melissa's story shows how paying attention to the children's interest can lead to a new project.

Ingrid says she learns a great deal about the children when she studies her documentation pieces and reflects on how they demonstrate the children's learning. By

doing this, she gains insight on the children's feelings, how their relationships work, and what the children's level of understanding is regarding different people and their environment. Kate thinks that she gets to know and understand the children better through her documentation pieces, and because of this, she is better equipped to see how the children are feeling and she plans according to the children's interests and feelings. She thinks this has made her a better teacher. These participants showed that reviewing documentation can also be a valuable tool in learning how children develop.

Six participants stated that after learning about the children's interest through documentation, they encourage further learning and decide what will be the next step in their programming. Kate uses documentation in order to develop ideas to teach in new ways. Graham said, "I have learned that documentation will tell you what a child is interested in - every time." Conrad reflects on where things have started and where they should go; he uses documentation to decide what he can add to the children's work, to make it the best experience for them. Emily also reviews documentation and looks at what children have done to further support learning in the environment. Joanne reviews documentation to help her see the learning process of the children, and to identify what her class has accomplished. After she gets this information, she is able to discover where things are in program development, and what can be done next to support the children further.

Olive described the documentation process as a "helpful tool for thinking about children's work and play." She uses documentation to allow her to "think through the details, and consider what to offer next to support and extend children's work." Olive discussed how sharing documentation with co-workers helped the teachers discover a child's interests and develop a project related to nature. She said:

During team planning, one of the toddler teachers said, “I don’t know what Cameron’s interests are.” She carefully observed him over the next few days, camera in-hand. She discovered that Cameron really likes to be out in nature. She brought photos with her to planning and the team discussed and reflected together on how best to support his interest in the natural world.

It was through observation and photographic documentation that Olive and her co-workers were able to determine what Cameron wanted to focus on and plan activities that interested him.

These educators use documentation in a positive way to support their emergent programs; as a tool to discover children’s interests, to review the learning process, and to grow activities while building on children’s interests to expand their learning to a higher level.

Four participants reported that they learn about the process as they document. Linda and Nancy pointed out that documentation is a true “process” and both of these educators use documentation to show the finished product, and how the activities evolve. Hannah learned that there might be things you cannot document because there is “no time.” Freya also mentioned lack of time, and that she could “document for days”; however, finding time to document is a hard, long process and which needs to be limited.

Emily discussed how she has not yet witnessed this happening in the program she directs; however, it is a goal and an amazing part of the documentation process. She stated this can happen if documentation is kept on top of, and if centre staff has regular meetings. She listed Reggio Emilia as a big source of inspiration and gave examples of projects she observed taking place in Italy. She said:

I would say it has not led a lot to further planning in our centre, because often by the time we get to the documentation the project is gone. So we have to be a lot more on top of things in order to see that effect. That’s one of the benefits of documentation. It does lead to further program and growth of projects. In fact, that is one of the most important things is that the projects pick up deeper. I don’t

think any of our documentation has evolved in that way.

One thing is that we have not had enough staff meetings. I think one of the things you need to develop the documentation in emergent programs is lots of meetings. They don't have to be long but in Reggio they have lots of meetings and there is constant planning. There is major planning done in Reggio and they plan within the whole school. They do whole projects where the whole school collaborates on something like a book. I saw a beautiful book about Christmas time. Children and families were asked how they celebrate the holidays. They did not celebrate in the tradition sense. This book was a collaborative effort. There was family involvement and the whole school produced this book and gave a copy to each parent. It was lovely. They illustrated the book. Some of the pictures were created during the children's small group times. Sometimes the drawings were group drawings and group observations. The book also included children conversations result was a lovely book.

These responses showed that documentation helps educators learn more about the children they work with and how to plan activities based on the children's interests, leading to further learning. There was also some evidence that educators might learn more, as they practice. In this discussion of the participants' reflective practices I found there to be similarities and differences from what has been reported in the research.

Documentation, Reflection and Project Work

The use of documentation and reflective practice can lead to the development of "projects." Projects in emergent curriculum are those learning experiences that span over a period of time. They are based on the children's interests and involve hands-on learning. A small moment can develop into an in-depth investigation or a long-term project as children express their interests and educators build programming on these. On being asked to describe ways documentation has led to further planning seven of the participants described specific examples of projects and in-depth studies they have developed in their programs." The following details from some of how reflection and documentation led to long term planning and project work, illustrate the relationship

between reflection and documentation aided in building on the children's interests and skills. It is important to note that those whose stories are provided below have used the process for more than two years and are teaching in the school using the Play to Learn curriculum or a Reggio-inspired program. It might be that they had more to say about their project work because they have more training and experience with this process. On the other hand it could be because the types of program type they are using are more likely to generate project work.

Curriculum Stories

Becoming reporters.

Conrad and Kate engaged in a shared a project a couple of years ago. A child who had heard something on the radio about becoming a reporter began to ask questions about what it is that reporters do. Kate posted pictures from her group and other children in the class started to show interested in the topic. Neither of the participants commented on exactly when the documentations were posted. Conrad did note that his small group were only interested in the topic after they looked at Kate's photography and examined the documentation panels. Both teachers read each other's documentations and began planning activities for their groups together. Conrad stated it was through the documentation and reflection that they were able to pick up on little things that were missed and able to add new things to the project.

Kate asked the children what they would need to set up "a reporting station." They gathered pencils and paper and set up a "reporter's station" beside a window, overlooking the Public Gardens. The children then decided they needed a tape recorder. Kate said, "They needed something with 'sound waves' and if you can imagine, they used those words!" After this, they created a "computer with keys" and the children

started setting up offices all around the room.

This centre was located next to the headquarters of a local broadcasting station. The teachers contacted the station to see if they could bring the children in order to see “reporting in action.” The broadcasting station not only allowed them to visit but they later called back and asked the centre to do an interview with one of the newscasters on the morning show. The children all went into the station and were given their own microphones. The reporters at the stations took small groups of children into the studio and showed them how things worked. The whole project was then broadcasted on the show. Kate said: This was major. It went on for six month by the time it came out [the news report].It turned into another project. I spoke at a conference on the difference between theme and play based programs and how I was able to start from a little piece of paper and a pen with the kids and make it all the way to the radio. It scaffold up. That was one of my biggest ones [projects]. That was a turning point for me.

Kate and Conrad’s curriculum story is an example of a project started from a child’s question, led to a major discovery, and provided the children with many learning opportunities. Conrad discussed how Kate’s use of documentation within her small group inspired him to also talk about the topic with his small group and plan collaboratively with his co-worker.

The birds.

Freya and I worked together on the bird project. The project began with children observing birds in the backyard of our centre. The children began drawing and painting birds. We offered the children materials to make bird feeders, to further attract birds into the yard, giving the children an opportunity to bird watch. Bird toys were placed into the playroom and, the children created 3D birds using play dough and other materials including Styrofoam balls, Popsicle sticks, feathers, and googly eyes. They also went on museum trips, we observed birds and ducks in the Public Gardens, and went to the local library to collect various fiction and non-fiction books about birds. A large tree was created by all the children and hung in the studio; the children hung their birds on the

tree.

Freya and I created a large documentation piece which included a timeline on the development of the bird project, photos of the children working on various activities related to birds, the children's drawings, 3D creations, and write ups about what the children were doing and how plans came about.

Freya recalled that as we documented the project the children would talk about what was done during the day related to it, and then thought up other things that they would like to learn related to birds, as well as incorporated birds in the children's free play and art work. She noted that when the children noticed their work being documented, they began to see that their work was validated and important, which inspired the children to continue with the topic.

Documentation of this project was subsequently shared at an emergent curriculum group meeting with various educators from HRM who use emergent programming.

Kookaburra's tree.

Ingrid shared a story about a project which developed after the children sang about "Kookaburra"- sitting in the old gum tree. She described "The Kookaburra" project in this way:

The children were asking questions about a gum tree because of the song: "Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree." They were picturing bubble gum, pink bubble gum to be hanging off the tree. I brought pictures of gum trees and showed the preschoolers the pictures and it actually sparked them to wonder: Do we have gum trees in Nova Scotia? So we went to find that out and no, they are only in certain places. Then we discussed what kills a gum tree, because at that time spruce bud worm was very popular; so they heard all this stuff in the media about what was killing trees in our neighborhood so we went to find out what may kill a gum tree.

There was a lot to show: there is no bubble gum on this tree. It may not always be documentation of the children's work but it is also bringing in outside photographs that support that work, but of course from that there were lots of

different documentation that happened from putting pieces together of us going to look to see if there was any gum in our trees. They found spruce sap. We tried it and it wasn't good and we took pictures to show everyone's example of what it tastes like. We then put all those pieces together into documentation for families to see.

Ingrid's story demonstrates how singing a song and supporting the children's questions about aspects of it, led to a long-term project about trees. Ingrid's story also shows how important it is to document the children's work as well as aid the learning project by bringing in materials to support and guide the children's learning.

These educators have given reports of how documentation has led to growth and further planning within the classroom. The examples provide evidence for the benefit of using documentation as a guide for further planning, and for building on the interests of the children in the classroom. Through these recounted stories, readers can get a sense of how a small project, discussion, or activity, can lead into a large, long-term and in-depth study. They show how children often look at documentation pieces, or view pictures of themselves completing a project, and take their learning farther. These projects are positive examples of documentation. Documentation helps educators develop activities, create projects, and assists in children's learning; it is a useful and adequate tool in early childhood centres.

In the previous chapter I discussed the finding that participants have not undertaken documentation solely for the purpose of professional growth. However, their responses show that creating documentation pieces using emergent processes is an excellent tool for that purpose, and the process is a learning tool for educators. As educators document children's work, they are able to see how programs are carried out in the classroom, note the progress of all the children, and review their own teaching styles. All participants spoke of using the documentation process as learning experience they

thought they learned about observing, reflecting, programming, and children's development through documentation.

Children's Responses to Documentation

Participants discussed ways children in their programs have responded to documentation. All reactions were positive. Nine mentioned photographs, speaking about how the children reacted to seeing themselves and pictures of their work. They said the children "love it", "enjoy seeing pictures of themselves," and that they become excited or proud after looking at examples of their work.

Six participants said the children discuss the photographs as they look at them. Conrad has noticed children pointing to others who are no longer attending the centre, or who are on vacation, and explaining why they are not there. Freya said the children discuss the main focus of the photograph, but also often point out older work that is in the background. She thought that talking about the photographs reminds them about what they have been working on. Olive often sees children spontaneously taking their journals off the shelf. They share stories and discuss photographs from their journals and other documentation pieces with family members and classmates; they notice people as well as items that are no longer be in the environment. Betty, Freya, Graham, and Peggy said that the children sometimes become interested in past activities and re-visit their work or expand on activities they had already completed, after viewing photographs of themselves. Freya said that as documentation is posted the children continue to do more work. Peggy said that as children view documentation, they not only re-visit their own work, but they are "frequently inspired by other's experiences" as an outcome of viewing documentation. These participants' observations show that children notice and discuss photograph as well as other types of documentation in some detail.

These responses sparked memories of my own work with preschoolers. As I was writing the results, I thought of a day when two girls began work specifically because they wanted me to document it. I was writing down the conversations and taking photos of some boys who were creating a restaurant in the play room when two girls in the class asked me what I was doing. The girls wanted to know why I was “writing stuff” and why I was taking so many pictures. I explained that I was keeping notes and taking photos of what was happening so I could have some more “records” for the portfolio binders. These binders are easily accessible to the children in the centre, and they always know what teachers mean when they mention portfolios. This inspired the girls. They wanted to do “hard work too.” They went into the studio and began working on a large banner that showed the sun was “finally shining” - it had been raining for many days in a row that month. As the two girls worked, they showed me their work and explained each step so that I could take pictures and “write it down.” One of the girls later said, “Now you have a record of our hard work too.” They were very excited about this project. I displayed the banner, along with photos and explanations of how and why the banner came about on the studio wall. The girls continued to talk about their work and point out the banner to family members, classmates and classmate’s parents for a few weeks after the incident occurred.

Linda told a story of how examining a photograph helps children learn a new concept. She described part of a *Lego* project. The children had worked with light and shadows, with a particular focus on *Lego* shadows, placing their *Lego* creations face down on an overhead projector to project shadows onto the wall. Linda put up a photograph that contained a red transparent *Lego* that had created a red shadow. She recalled that when the children were building structures, and placing them on the

projector to observe the shadows they had not noticed the red one. However, when the children saw the photograph they noticed it, saying, “Look that one is red,” and also became interested in looking at other items that were transparent. Linda said this is “an example of how documentation definitely caused something to go in a different direction because before they were focussed on shadows and then they moved on to colour.”

Documentation can build on the learning process and allow children to delve deeper into the projects they are working on. This becomes very clear after reading responses and hearing examples from participants of how children at their centres have expanded on their work after seeing documentation, viewing pictures, and reading their portfolios. The results give evidence of the positive aspects of displaying children’s work and photographs to encourage children to discuss helping them expand vocabulary skills, build friendships, share work, and re-live moments that occurred in the classroom. Furthermore, these findings support the argument that documentation should be a part of all early childhood programs. The evidence that children pay attention to, discuss, and return to work that has been documented shows the educational outcome of documentation. It is not undertaken to make the walls look nice, or solely for the purpose to show the leaning that is occurring. It is actually an aid to children’s learning processes.

This chapter gave an overview of some of the ways the early childhood educators in this study use reflection to help them in the process of documentation and planning as well as how documentation has aided them in reflective practice. It was found that a number of educators benefit from reflecting with others and through collaboration the process of documentation may become a little easier. Furthermore, sharing ideas can aid in program planning. In the second part of this chapter the process of building on

documentation was discussed. Educators often use documentation pieces to help them further their program plans. Finally, I summarized how educators see children reacting to documentation pieces. It seems that children enjoy seeing photos of themselves and documentation pieces may serve as a learning tool for the children involved because as they see their work displayed they may continue working on in different ways. The following chapter will focus on the perceived limits, barriers and issues of documentation use in emergent programs.

Chapter 5

Issues and Limitations with Documenting

Undertaking emergent curriculum and documentation has a number of challenges. This chapter identifies some of the issues and limitations faced by study participants. One of the main barriers to carrying out documentation effectively is a lack of time. Another issue is not knowing what to document or “where to start” when beginning a documentation piece. Other limitations include the use of photographs, lack of space and materials, and a lack of training in methods of emergent programming.

The Lack of Time – When and How Can Documentation Pieces Be Produced?

As predicted from my own experience, time or lack (thereof), was a common issue mentioned by participants. Lack of time was identified as an obstacle for completing documentation even for those given scheduled programming time. Seven participants (Graham, Joanne, Linda, Nancy, Olive, Betty and Freya) thought they do not always have enough time to do their documentation work effectively. Graham says he always needs time, because even when he “keeps it simple,” he needs time to “spiff it up.” He feels there is a big issue with time management, especially when there are so many other duties to carry out. Joanne reported “this is a very time consuming and demanding approach, yet we have it within a system that is under-funded.” Linda also spoke of the need for time and the fact that program documentation time should be a part of day care regulations. She thinks it is very unfair for educators to be expected to do work on their own time. Olive often has to choose not to document something because of the lack of time to complete it.

Peggy thought that the quantity requirement at her centre did not fit the amount of time allocated to complete documentation. Teachers need the time to

observe, gather pictures, complete write-ups, reflect, and put documents together. I believe that if teachers are not given adequate time to complete this process, then documentation pieces are affected and the time educators must allocate outside of work hours increase. In these instances, documentation may be done quickly and without proper details, or the teacher may decide not to document at all. For documentation to be completed in detail, and to allow teachers to work within reasonable settings, there must be more importance placed on giving educators the time to take part in this important process.

Programming times ranged from a maximum of one to two hours per day, to a minimum of two hours every three weeks. Five participants said this was not adequate. Even when program documentation time is allotted, educators are still left scrambling for time to ensure they finish their documentation pieces. Eleven participants worked on documentation during lunch breaks, or at home, in the evening, or on weekends. This number includes six of the eight participants who were given program time for documenting at work.

Conrad is given one hour of program time per week to document. He said that his two required documentations often take him longer than an hour to complete; he uses his lunch hour and, if he is still not done, he takes work home.

Kate uses her documentation time to begin documentation and to plan what to document. She says it is a good time to get everything together; however, it is not enough time to complete everything. She feels as if she is undertaking documentation “all the time.” She often documents while sitting on the floor with the children, taking notes as the children play and as they complete activities, helping her to get to know the children and aiding the programming. When asked if she ever documented or

programmed on her own time, she said:

Yes, many times. I have done it on my lunch, or I have done it a bit at home. Sometimes it is just too hard to document [at work], I just don't have it in me to give my full attention to what I want to say.

Joanne also said programming time is a good opportunity for beginning documentation, but it does not allow enough time to finish a documentation project. She engages in the documenting process during her lunch breaks, by staying late, and while at home. She explained that her programming time occurred every three weeks as she works in a classroom with three others and the time is rotated between each member of staff. Joanne said that programming time allows her to begin planning what to document, but it was not enough to finish a documentation piece.

The educators at Peggy's centre are given one-hour each week for programming time, during which they can undertake documentation. However, she also finds it necessary to complete this work at home.

The majority of participants who received no extra program/documentation time during regular work hours. Fourteen participants said they work on documentation while on their lunch breaks, or outside of work hours. Linda completes everything at home "because there is no time," she added, "[it] is not sustainable at all." Hanna and Freya also work at home, and on lunch breaks, because they are offered no extra program time at their centre. Melissa often completes documentation during activities as the children are working. She also completes documentation on her breaks and at home.

Anne and David said they "take the time when they get the time" to undertake documentation. This can be during quiet times, children's nap hours, or when the number of children present requires less intensive educator attention. Anne documents whenever

she has the chance, reporting that when attendance is low the day is segmented to allow each staff an hour to document. David completes documentation throughout the day, keeping a camera ready to capture interesting work. Ingrid described finding time to document as “a dance.” She said it is often hard to find time to program/document, and if staff are struggling to finish pieces, she will try to substitute for them in the classroom so they “can do justice to this meaningful experience.”

Completing documentation can be a long process requiring much time and focus. Participants thought they did not have enough time to complete their documentation pieces, even when documenting throughout the day, or when given scheduled program time during their work week. Programming time is important to help keep up with an educator’s documentation, however, most of the participants who were given such time found it inadequate.

Anne, Betty, Emily, Freya, Hannah and Linda not receive planning time. , All except Anne and Emily, who try to document when there is extra staff at their centres or during quiet times spoke of working on their own time.

Two participants (Olive and Nancy) from the United States did not mention working outside of work hours.

When reviewing results one might conclude that the early childhood programs in the United States provide enough time to effectively carry out documentation in emergent programs. Past research such as Stacey (2005), Kroeger and Cardy (2006) and Tarr, Bjartveit, & McCowan, D. (2009) have reported that educators feel the emergent approach and the documentation process sometimes might result in a struggle to finding time to do everything efficiently and adequately.

Notably, the thirteen participants from centres located in Halifax and Tantallon,

Nova Scotia, thought that they struggled to find time to complete documentation requirements. When reading this, one must keep in mind that only nine centres are represented and only one or two staff from each centre participated in the study. The parameters of this study are limited to the number of people interviewed and surveyed. Outcomes from this research would suggest that other research questions could be posed to investigate whether other staff in the same centres feel pressed for time. Do other centres in Nova Scotia deal with the same issues and time struggles? Furthermore, a breakdown of the centres represented in this study show that participants who worked at small private centres had more issues with time, and less program time allocated to them, than those working at government funded, or not-for-profit centres. It could be deduced that this is because non-profit centres allow for programming time in their budgets, with a possibility that might more funding is available to do so, resulting from lower rent on buildings, more fundraising, larger child population, and in some cases government assistance.

Joanne spoke about the great amount of time that educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy are allocated for documentation. She spoke about the municipal funding Reggio schools receive and how there is always time set aside for programming and documentation in a Reggio educator's week. It is important to discuss how lack of time affects the educator's ability to carry out and create effective emergent curriculum programs.

It takes time to complete documentation pieces effectively; the lack of time during the work day requires educators to put in extra time outside work hours. This time issue is a real problem as it is often impossible to work on documentation during class time. For educators to put together in-depth documentation pieces while the program is

going takes away from doing other important things, such as setting up/guiding activities, facilitating play, keeping up with housekeeping duties, and ensuring the children are fully supervised. It is possible for educators to do simple documentation and observations with the children, or to teach the children how to put small pieces of documentation together. However, if educators are working on in-depth pieces, they might not have the time, or the materials at hand, to complete these projects directly with the children.

There are number of reasons why extra time for documentation and planning is not given to educators, money being the biggest issue. When educators are given programming time they must ensure the proper adult/child ratios stay in place. This means, if an educator leaves the classroom to document, a substitute or the centre administrator must cover their shift. If a substitute fills-in, they must be paid, and if administration staff fill-in, they are left to do their jobs later at night which could cost the centre more in overtime pay.

Time is always an issue; the childcare centre day is often very busy. Educators and administrators have many responsibilities, and there is often no time for documenting after the children leave. As documentation is a major part of emergent and Reggio-inspired programming, directors should be placing a higher priority on documenting. Directors should try to budget for programming time to ensure that documentation is completed in a fair manner, and to further ensure that working conditions for staff are appropriate. It also might be important for educators to learn ways to document which require less time, and to organize their daycare day appropriately. Furthermore, as emergent programs grow in popularity, educators could advocate showing the government the importance of documentation and how much time it requires, in order to have funding increased. Extra support from government for these

types of programs would enable centres to hire program assistants, documentation helpers, or extra substitute staff to cover documentation/programming time.

Difficulties with the Documentation Process

Time was not the only limitation related to the use of pedagogical documentation. Participants noted a number of other issues that limit its use. Some were specific to programming and documentation, while others dealt with practicalities, such as “time and space.” The following are the major limitations presented by the participants and by myself.

The use of photography.

The use of photography in documentations also causes some difficulties. Anne and Hannah spoke of restrictions on using photos in their classrooms. The teachers have to be careful to protect the privacy of children who are not allowed by their parents to have their pictures taken. Anne sometimes has to change her original documentation plan in order to ensure that certain children are not in a picture. During group activities, Anne finds it hard to decide if she should take a child who is not allowed to be photographed to another activity, or if she should skip photo documentations in order to allow activities to continue with all children involved. This shows the need for confidentiality and professional decision making when using media in documentation. Sometimes photograph documentation and the principles of emergent programs clash.

Lack of materials.

Materials are important in emergent programs. Teachers require materials to expand on children’s interests and to allow new ideas to emerge. Computers, paper, cameras and recorders, are all needed for documentation. Materials for documenting must also be available and accessible to educators so they can complete documentation in

a timely manner, capture important moments, and carry out the emergent programs successfully. When programs do not have these materials readily available the documentation process is limited and thus potentially the success of the program threatened. Five participants (Freya, Graham, Ingrid, Kate and Betty) become frustrated when such materials are not readily available. When Hannah and Ingrid have to search for materials to use for documentation they worry that they miss important moments. Kate and Graham find it is difficult to document when resources such as paper, tape recorders and computers and printers are not available.

It is important for directors of emergent programs centres to have documentation materials well stocked. If a director expects staff to run an emergent program successfully, they must be mindful of the materials needed for documentation and supply them appropriately.

Including all children.

Conrad, Freya, Emily and Ingrid think that it is hard to include all children in documentation pieces. When reviewing documentation at the end of the year these teachers noticed they had many pictures of the “busy, active, creative and focused” children, but they have very little documentation for children who are “shy, quiet,” or those who “spend the time only in one area of the classroom (such as in the reading corner, art studio or building corner). Emily said she feels that this is a very serious issue. There is a prevalent need for educators to be observant when creating documents. Educators must ask themselves “am I including everyone”?, “who am I missing”? and “what else can I add”? to ensure they are not filling up the walls with displays of only a small portion of the class.

Lack of space.

Space was identified as a documentation issue. Betty does not have enough space in her centre to display documentation. Nancy wonders what to do with all archived materials. David and Graham sometimes feel that too much documentation is displayed and the space may be overcrowded. An important part of documenting is knowing where it should ultimately be displayed or stored. It would be useful for directors to designate specific areas for documentation to ensure that the space does not get cluttered and that educator's feel they will know where to post documents or where to store pieces that no longer need to be displayed.

These limitations in regards to materials, time and space show the need for directors, and advocates for emergent programs, to ensure appropriate funding is available for securing the personal and material resources for documentation to be undertaken and developed. There is a need for program time, program materials, documentation tools and adequate space for displaying and storing documentations in childcare centres. If budgets do not allow for this support then a successful emergent program cannot be operated.

What and how to document.

A number of participants were unsure of what to document and how the documentation process works. It is important that documenters have a clear understanding of the process to ensure documentation pieces reach their fullest potential. There is a need for more training for educators carrying out emergent and Reggio-inspired and programs, specifically prior to beginning to work in an emergent environment. It is important that senior staff help educators understand the process by showing support, and answering questions, finding professional development

opportunities for staff, and providing resources pertaining to emergent programs such as books, web links and videos, on a regular basis.

The educators in this study use their perceptions of education, the children's work, and documentation to share ideas, provide opportunities for children, and create documentation pieces which reflect their personal teaching styles.

As there are many reasons to undertake documentation in early education programs sometimes it can sometimes be difficult to decide which events to record and which moments to let pass. The results from my research show that the open-ended nature of emergent programming makes deciding what to document difficult for those new to the process. With experience, educators are better able to determine what to document based on what they wish to achieve and goal of each piece.

Emily found that the questions of *what* and *when* to document were ones she asked when she joined an emergent curriculum group. She came to the understanding that documentation is an intuitive process:

I asked that question a lot when I joined an emergent program group; everyone had that question. I was told "you just take a whole lot of pictures and it becomes clear when you have started doing a few [documentation panels]; you just learn very quickly to recognize [opportunities to document]." We see activities that should be or could be documented and we seem to recognize them. It seems to come automatically. You do ask yourself on a regular basis: what type of thing is important and what are you looking for? We know that when the girls start making dresses for themselves out of paper that is exiting and that we should document it. When we see someone's painting with a really exiting story behind it we know that it is significant.

Emily's experience is similar to mine. When I began teaching in an emergent preschool age classroom three years ago, my co-worker in the classroom was also new to the process. We enjoyed documenting, but we often relied on each other and consulted the director to determine what content should be documented. We wondered what would

go in the portfolios and what would go on panels. The centre was using panels and portfolios as their only form of documentation at that time. As we began taking more pictures and notes, it became more obvious what to include in our pieces. This feeling of not knowing, or questioning what to do when new to documenting, shows that many educators are not receiving enough training prior to using emergent programming – whether that be within the educational programs, or in professional development sessions. There is a clear need for training to address questions like: how does one know what to document, what type of documentation should be used and when is the best time to document.

Level of comfort when documenting.

All participants, except Hannah, feel comfortable with the overall process of documentation. Hannah feels as she gets used to documenting, it will become a more regular part of the day, and she will become more efficient and comfortable with it. Hannah's idea of becoming more comfortable over time is consistent with a number of participant's responses on becoming comfortable with documenting.

Anne, Beth, Emily, Ingrid, Kate and Peggy are comfortable with documenting, but they admitted that it was a process that must be continued over time. Graham said he is comfortable with documenting because he has done it over his entire career; he feels well versed in it. David became comfortable with documenting when he practiced observing and documenting at his summer job, and while in school. Linda was very comfortable with the process because of her prior training in art and graphic design. She said this training helped her complete things quickly and efficiently, especially cutting and figuring out how to make documentation piece aesthetically pleasing. Ingrid credits her learning style – she is a visual learner and enjoys writing things down- in helping her

become comfortable with documenting.

Educators have varying levels of comfort with documentation and control levels are likely to change time and practice using the approach, training and learning and developing documentation skills. Despite being comfortable with the process, five participants still had some issues regarding documentation and finding the time it takes to document efficiently. Emily and Freya wondered how to bring documentation to a deeper level and to extend from documenting simple things to capturing long-term projects. David, Kate, Joanna, Linda and Olive all feel pressured when documenting, due to lack of time, which can impede on their comfort levels. David, who is required to do two documentations a week, said he sometimes feels pressured when completing documentation and finds it is hard to find two stand-out moments a week.

As educators become more comfortable over time and with training, it would be appropriate for them to complete training prior to entering a program that requires documentation. The directors of emergent programs should they hire staff with some level of training, or be willing to provide training and guidance to ensure staff are comfortable with documentation. Furthermore, as indicated early in this paper, directors must provide extra time for documenting, or have a documentation requirement that fits into the daily schedule to allow their staff, without stress and pressure, to be comfortable with the process.

Summary

This chapter reported the analysis of data pertaining to issues and limitations to using documentation in emergent programs. The data revealed that participants felt pressured for time when completing documentation projects and most educators were not

given adequate programming time which in turn meant they had to work on their own time (during lunch breaks and after work). Two participants spoke about the need for confidentiality when using photography. Five spoke of the frustration that occurs when resources and materials needed for documentation are not available and assessable. Finally, the data revealed that educators sometimes have trouble understanding how documentation works and they may not know where to begin when creating documentation pieces. The results also revealed a need for more training opportunities to be available for emergent practitioners.

The following chapter contains an overall summary of the study and research results. Future research topics will be identified. Finally, implications and recommendations for the field of early childhood education will be discussed.

Chapter 6

Discussion- Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

When I started my research, I would have called myself a “beginner” regarding the emergent approach to teaching. I was also new to documenting in this way. I learned as I took workshops to enhance my knowledge. It was important for me to know how to be successful using this approach. I often found the approach hard because of the time limitations, or in knowing what to document, which observations should be built upon, and I wanted to build on the children’s interests in a way that provided them with a wholesome learning experience. I wondered if other educators thought the same way. I also wondered if they felt there were any barriers in using this approach or if other teachers have had trouble with this style of programming. I believe that these were important questions for me to ask. I thought the information from other educators regarding issues with emergent curriculum might have a three-fold effect on the early childhood education sector. Firstly, this research would help tailor workshops to the field and towards the questions that are continually arising from emergent programming. Secondly, the research would help university and college instructors create teaching methods courses that would be useful and practical for individuals using this type of teaching. Lastly, this research will highlight the need for more time for programming and documentation in early childhood centres.

This chapter will provide readers with a clear understanding of the entire research study. The research is summarized and a discussion provides the qualitative data results. This chapter also includes implications of the findings and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

This study was designed to investigate early childhood educators' perceptions of pedagogical documentation and its use in emergent and Reggio Emilia - inspired programming. I hoped this research would give a voice to early childhood educators regarding the documentation process, how they feel about using it, what they have learned from documenting, and the obstacles and advantages they have discovered in implementing documentation into their programs.

I originally designed this study because of questions that arose for me during the documentation process. I began teaching in a program that attempts to follow the Reggio principles, but had not yet had any major training in the area. I became passionate about the approach as soon as I began using it, but I constantly had questions. I wondered whether activities were appropriate to present to the children, or if they would be considered theme based and teacher directed? What should I document? How should I document? Ultimately, I wondered if other teachers in the field had similar questions and what answers were they coming up with while practicing the documentation method? I designed this study to discover what emergent practitioners need, and to gather knowledge which could be used to advocate for more pre-service training, or professional development in emergent programs.

I also noticed there seemed to be many limitations to providing a fully emergent program in my own practice, and completely adhering to the Reggio approaches was difficult. I always seemed crunched for time, often documenting at home/after hours, and I was unsure how to plan programs that would lead to in-depth studies while incorporating the children's interests. I also wondered what incidents were important to document and how I could present the documentation in a more professional manner.

How do other teachers document; do they also have problems fitting everything in, or do they also have questions about documentation? This study addressed a number of these questions regarding the documentation process. The goal was to identify the main types of documentation practices teachers use, why they select certain documentation methods over others, what they routinely document, why they choose to document at all and what limitations and benefits they find as part of the documentation process.

The results revealed a number of issues with the current state of emergent programming in the areas of training, time management and perceptions of professional growth. Analysis of the data revealed a need for further research in the area, but also indicated a number of recommendations for the early childhood sector that would help educators achieve quality emergent programs. These recommendations may also allow for easier adaption of the Reggio- inspired programming outside of Italy, and may lessen time constraints felt by childcare workers who use pedagogical documentation.

Data was collected using in-depth interviews as well as on-line surveys. The interviews were conducted with early childhood educators living and working in the same area as myself (Halifax/Dartmouth), while on-line surveys were conducted with participants from outside the core Halifax area (Tantallon -Nova Scotia, Ontario, and the United States). All participants worked in licensed child-care facilities with children aged two to five years. All were identified by introductions through professional contacts and through emailing directors of emergent programs in various areas. Only participants who were known to myself, or whose names were provided to me by a thesis committee member, agreed to participate in the study.

Interviews were conducted in-person. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by me. On-line surveys were sent and received via email. A total of twelve

interviews were conducted, and four surveys were completed.

The research questions sought information about each participant's background in early childhood education, training received, and types of programs used. Participants were asked specific questions regarding the documentation process and reflective practice. Some questions provided participants with a list of answers to choose from, while others were open-ended.

Interview data was coded to protect anonymity and analyzed to determine major themes and to show the gaps in current practices where further research is needed.

Significant Findings and Discussion

This study was designed to investigate two significant issues: 1) whether educators using pedagogical documentation in their early childhood education programs feel adequately prepared to participate in the process; 2) what, if any, types of training and resources help bring quality emergent programs to North American child care centres. Through the analysis of data the following conclusions were found.

1. The number of years an educator has worked in early childhood education does not necessarily mean they are more experienced in documentation.

Participants' amount of time using emergent programming prior to this study varied greatly based on a number of factors, including the amount of time they worked in the field, their prior training, and their geographic locations. Many transitions from traditional approaches to using Reggio- inspired or emergent programming occurred after the 1990s around the time that literature on emergent programs and tours to Reggio became popular in North America. Results also showed that respondents from the US and Ontario had more training opportunities than those from Nova Scotia.

The following paragraphs describe the participants' current programs and transitions

to emergent programming in greater detail.

All participants use programs with child-centered emergent or Reggio- inspired approach to teaching. Of the thirteen centres, seven use a Reggio- inspired approach, five use an emergent approach, and two use the Play to Learn curriculum. Some participants have only used emergent programming during their careers. Approximately five years ago, Conrad and Kate have switched from theme based programming to emergent programming. David, Hannah, and Ingrid are employed in centres that are transitioning from theme based to emergent programs.

Despite the lack of training opportunities and the programming style requiring much dedication to the philosophy, there seems to be a number of shifts occurring from traditional early childhood programs to emergent programs. Interview and survey responses revealed that two participants had only began the shift to an emergent program over the past few months and four participants over the past few years.

One might ask, if the shift is so hard, “why is it happening”? One reason could be that as individuals hear of the style or see it in action they want to try it. For example, as soon as I walked into the centre where I have been working over the past few years, I loved it. The children were engaged, curious and creative. I observed the children in the preschool creating things in ways that I had never realized a four year old could do. The documentation pieces on the walls caught my eye. I wanted to try it and once I did, despite the questions and sometimes difficulties, I was dedicated to the approach and learn more about it.

2. Although participants were trained in child studies and a number of them held college diplomas/university degrees, the majority did not receive instruction in emergent curriculum practices during their formal education process.

Consistent with earlier studies (Gandini, 1998; Fraser and Gestwicki, 2002; Burrington and Sortino, 2004; Stacey, 2005; Nguyen, 2010) a number of the participants were not formally trained in emergent practices. The study results showed that there is a need for more formal training in emergent curriculum practices especially at the university level. It seems as a number of centres are transitioning from theme based programs to emergent or Reggio- inspired programs, educators are left to “learn as they go” while attending short workshops sporadically, trying to read up on emergent approaches on their own time or consulting with experts. The majority of participants had questions about the documentation process and felt that it was a continual learning experience. This would most likely be explained by the lack of formal training in the area and because the emergent and Reggio approaches bring about learning as teachers observe, respond and reflect. Educators may not find a transition or change in teaching styles so hard if they had adequate training in emergent practices as well as understood the values of Reggio schools.

Loris Malaguzzi (founder of the Reggio Emilia approach to learning) in an interview with Lella Gandini (1998) spoke about the teacher training in the Reggio schools. He reported that traditional schooling involves teacher instruction and evaluations. Malaguzzi said that even in Reggio, the teachers are not fully trained in the approach which involves learning through exploration, observation, relationships and up-holding values. According to Malaguzzi, all teachers require in-service training and learning while on the job. He said that the teachers learn to become experts in the approach through observation of the children and discussions with colleagues.

A number of studies on using emergent styles of teaching and the documentation approach have revealed that teachers do not have a great deal of training prior to using

the approach. Burrington and Sortino (2004) reported that when educators begin using documentation they are initially unsure of what to do and that most learning occurred as they reflected and spoke to other teachers about the approach. Furthermore, Stacey (2005) spoke about hiring teachers for the Child and Family Development Centre in Concord, New Hampshire. This centre used emergent curriculum as the main form of program development. Stacey reported that it was hard to find people who were trained in the approach although some had heard of it or tried it in the past. Furthermore, the results of Stacey's study on emergent curriculum revealed that as teachers had questions on the approach, they wondered what came next and they reported learning through workshops, co-workers and other facilitators. It was noted that the teachers often had trouble in understanding the emergent method because many of the participants were trained in traditional approaches. Nguyen (2010) completed a study designed to get a further understanding of the use of the Reggio- inspired practice in Ontario, Canada. The researcher reported that the teachers that participated in the study felt they had a lack of knowledge of the approach and felt incompetent in delivering emergent programs and producing documentation pieces. One might ask: "If the educators are not trained in the approach, how can they be expected to deliver fully emergent programs effectively"?

I graduated with a Child and Youth Study Degree in 2002. I can recall reading a page or two about emergent curriculum in my methods of teaching class as well as reading an article and watching a short video about Reggio Emilia schools in my cross cultural course. This is all that I remember learning about emergent/Reggio practices over the four year period of my undergraduate degree. I remember thinking these approaches sounded interesting and that they would be an effective way to teach. I remember wanting to learn more.

In 2008, I began my professional employment with a centre which creates programs based on the Reggio philosophies. I had so many questions for my director, and had to do quite a bit of reading during the evenings and on weekends. I attended many workshops over the past three years. From the moment I stepped into the “emergent preschool” I loved the style of teaching and wanted to stay with it, but wished that I had learned more about it in my university studies.

The following is a summarized list of questions from participants pertaining to emergent curriculum and the documentation process. I have added the names of those who asked each question in the brackets at the end of the questions; some were asked more than one participant.

- Is this the right thing to document? (Betty, Conrad, Ingrid, Linda and Emily)
- How long should I wait before observing a moment and creating a documentation piece? (Betty)
- How do you find time to document effectively if there is not time to observe, record, or space to display documentation? (Betty, Joanne, Linda, Kate)
- Is this a moment worth documenting, or was it just a “fluke”? Did the child reach a developmental milestone or was this a one-time occurrence? (Conrad)
- How do you make sure you have included all the children in documentation pieces and not children who are most creative or active? How do you document fairly and represent the entire class including the shy and quiet children? (Conrad, Freya, Linda)
- How do you take documentation further? For example going from recording an event, to being able to follow a process in depth? And in regard to emergent and Reggio programming how do you go from small learning projects to large long-term,

in-depth, whole class projects? (Linda and Emily)

- What other forms of documentation, besides panels are out there? (Hannah, David)
- How do you display documentation nicely? How do you present it without it looking like a scrapbook? (Freya)
- What do people in centres, other than my own, document and what forms of documentation do they use? (Hanna, Ingrid, Kate)
- How do you share documentation with others in the community? (Nancy)
- How can we effectively use documentation in the political arena? (Nancy)
- How can we effectively give documentation the justice it deserves? (Ingrid)

While Anne, Graham, Melissa and Olive were completely comfortable with the documentation process and had no questions, the others had at least one question on how to document efficiently. Furthermore, though Ingrid, Kate, Emily and Linda now feel comfortable with documentation and did not have any major questions they did speak about the many questions they had in the past and still wonder about how to deal with issues of time, and going in-depth with learning projects and documentation pieces.

Notably, it seems that those who are interested in Reggio practices, or working in Reggio- inspired programs (Emily, Linda, Melissa, Nancy and Ingrid) had questions that focused most on taking projects further, or having more in-depth documentation. It is likely because Reggio literature and the Reggio philosophy place a major focus on the use of documentation in early education programs.

This list of questions about documentation was being asked by emergent practitioners who have been in the field for varying lengths of time, from two months to twenty years. This gives evidence of a need for more training for educators in emergent

topics prior to entering the field. These questions can be used to help develop workshops and training for educators preparing to use emergent programming.

Why is there no focus on this style of teaching at the university levels? My hypothesis is that it depends on the instructors. As mentioned earlier those at Kinstec College in Nova Scotia had training and experience in Reggio practices and the interviewees who attended the child studies course there thought they had been adequately trained in emergent practices and spoke of using emergent programs throughout their entire career. Four interviewees had obtained Child and Youth Study degrees from Mount Saint Vincent University between 2002 and 2009 and reported receiving very little information on Reggio Emilia schools and emergent practices at the school.

One may wonder why the participants who took degrees in child study have not received training in emergent practices. I wondered that myself. I have come to realize that I may have a strong bias because of my love and passion for the approach. I also have noticed that I may feel that it is a more prevalent approach than it actually is in the Halifax area because I often stay in touch with other people using the approach and I tend to only attend professional development courses that focus on topics related to emergent curriculum and the schools in Reggio Emilia. I still did question why, “not more information in university courses” though. My thesis supervisor, Dr. D. Varga (through an email conversation) helped me gain some insight (2011). Varga explained that in those years that emergent curriculum was not a well known approach and the Reggio schools were very new to North America. She explained that the program at Mount Saint Vincent focused on developmental areas and developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, because emergent practices were so new it was unlikely that students would

have encountered these programs in their practicum experiences. Therefore, course emphasis was on preparing students for what they would likely need to undertake in their practicum experiences and upon immediate graduation.

3. Educators often incorporate methods of emergent programming without realizing they are doing so.

Some educators in this study used aspects of emergent programming for years such as the child-centered style and building programming based on children's interests. However, they did not know what they were doing is considered emergent programming. It seems that centres have been making formal shifts to this type of program in recent years.

Conrad said that his first teaching job used Reggio- inspired programming and when he moved to a theme based program he continued using aspects of the Reggio values. Emily explained that she had used aspects of emergent curriculum in her program for over 20 years; that the program was themed based, but always child- centered with plans developing from children's ideas and interests. When Emily discovered Reggio five years ago she immediately took "that turn and direction."

Ingrid was the coordinator of a program that shifted to emergent curriculum over two years; her centre is now leaning towards more reflective and child-centered practices.

Betty and Kate used emergent programming without realizing. Betty said "I did it...emergent...and it just felt right," but she did not know at the time that it was an emergent approach. Kate stated that over the past ten years others have told her that she was practicing emergent programming but she did not know what that had meant.

From the participants' responses it can be noted that although emergent programs have been used for several years by a number of them, it might not have been used as a formal program. In addition, a number of centres have already shifted to, or are in the process of moving from a theme based approach to a Reggio- inspired or emergent style of teaching.

4. Having international experience in Reggio, Italy, increases the passion educators feel towards using this method of teaching.

Results showed that as more individuals visit Reggio Emilia schools in Italy there is more of a desire to attempt to bring Reggio values to Canada and the US. As Emily, Graham and Linda discussed their trips to Reggio, they spoke with love, passion and dedication about the approach. These interviewees spoke about the wonderful work they were able to see and what they had learned on their study tour. They were inspired to learn more, stay with the approach and share it with others. This is consistent with experiences reported by students in an article by Goldhaber, Dall, Dimario, Lovell and Morrison (2004). The students reported positive experiences of attending a study tour in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Students revealed that spending time at the Reggio schools help them to value the techniques the Italians schools use and helped them to answer questions about the approach first hand. Furthermore, through study of observation and observing children the students became inspired to change their own teaching ideas and become more dedicated to the Reggio Emilia approach as they are able to learn things they did not read about.

David noted the transition from traditional teaching to an emergent style occurred in his centre only after his director went on a trip to Reggio Emilia. It seems that as teachers see the development and capabilities of children and the growth of in-depth

projects which occur with the use of emergent practices, they are inspired to continue to teach in this way and further develop programs. As educators are able to use this approach and see this approach first hand or have the opportunity to visit the “real” Reggio schools in Italy, they become dedicated to it and inspired to share information about it, leading to a shift from theme based programs to emergent curriculum styles of teaching not only in Halifax but in various parts of the world.

5. Documentation changes with experience.

Project Zero (2003) suggested that documentation changes over time. The researchers reported that as teachers spend time documenting on a regular basis they become more comfortable with the process and produce better quality documentation. Moran, Derochers and Cavicchi (2007) also reported that documentation changes over time. These researchers noted that as teachers had more experience with documenting their documentation pieces contained more variety, became more reflective in nature and were created using different techniques. Consistent with the previous suggestions, the participants in this study reported that as they spent more time documenting they became more comfortable with the approach and tended to include more variety in their work. As the participants in this study became more familiar with the documentation process they had fewer questions on the approach and moved past only documenting by using the “documentation panel.”

6. With so many things happening in the classroom, often choosing what to document, or when to document is the biggest obstacle in completing documentation.

Participants indicated that they often find it difficult to pick out events to write about, to photograph or to share with others but, as educators become more familiar with

the documentation process; it is easier for them to identify the main goal of each documentation piece. This could be related to the lack of training in emergent programs and the documentation process.

7. Documentation is a communication tool and displaying documentation can help build positive relationships between parent/teachers and children/parents.

While speaking on the use of documentation to aid in communication with parents, Malaguzzi (1998) said:

This flow of documentation, we believe introduces parents to a quality of knowing that tangibly changes their expectations. They reexamine their assumptions about parenting roles and their views about the experiences the children are living and take a new and more inquisitive approach toward the whole school experience. (p. 70)

Furthermore, Malaguzzi reported that an important benefit of documentation is when children share documentation with their parents which in turn helps parents speak to their children about the activities that occurred throughout the day. Edwards, Gandini and Forman (1998) argue that one of the key uses of documentation is that it is a communication tool for parents and as they read the documentation pieces it helps them to respond to their children's interests and build conversations with teachers. A number of researchers have noted these and other positive effects of displaying pedagogical documentation in the classroom can help build positive parent and teacher relationships as well as foster communication at home between parents and their children. Lella Gandini (1998), in an interview with Carla Rinaldi, reported that sharing documentation with parents shows them how their children learn and increases communication and dialogue between teachers and parents.

Thompson (2006) completed her Master's research at the Concordia Observation Nursery in Montreal, Quebec. The aim of her research was to develop an understanding

of how documentation panels created shared understanding between parents and teachers in the daycare. Five parents studied various documentation pieces and then participated in a focus group based on their observations. Thompson's results revealed that the use of documentation helped parents see how children learn through simple things such as studying shadows, cooking and using clay. In addition, documentation kept parents informed and aware of what was happening in the centre and the parents often spoke to the teachers about the panels after viewing them.

Wong (2006) studied early childhood educators' use of conversations with parents. The participants in this study spoke highly of the connection between documentation use and parent communication suggesting that displaying documentation helps parents to ask more questions about their children's educational experience and take a more active role in the child care centre.

Yuen (2009) described a project that occurred in a kindergarten classroom in Hong Kong. The child care centre had traditionally used a thematic approach but had switched to a more emergent style of teaching. The author documented a foot/shoe project. Yuen reported that through the use of documentation parents were more active in the learning project and the parent's reported that through seeing the children's work they were able to let go of doubts about their children's abilities and see how the children took ownership of the work they were doing.

The participants in the present study comments on communication with parents and families were similar to the results from past literature. Fifteen of the 16 participants reported using documentation in order to increase communication with parents. Participants reported that the use of documentation inspired parents to become more involved in program plans. Participants also reported that documentation made their

classrooms more welcoming for parents and showed parents exactly what was happening in the classroom each day. The results also revealed the participant's felt that the use of documentation helped the parents understand how their child was developing. Overall, participants reported that documentation had a positive effect on parent and teacher communication in their centres.

8. Documentation pieces validate what educators are doing.

Participants believe documentation shows parents that educators are teaching basic concepts and that it shows parents that learning occurs as children play; it makes learning become visible. Documentation can also help children see the steps they took when completing projects which may be used to build further programs based on children's prior learning experiences. As the research on parent communication revealed that displayed documentation helps parents see what the children are doing daily and aids in their understanding of the learning process, it can be concluded that this finding is consistent with past research.

9. There is a disconnect for many educators between the need to document and professional development.

Results of this study showed that participants do not see documentation as an important tool for professional growth. Some participants noted that if they were only completing documentation for the purpose of professional growth, they would not do it. Other participants did not at all identify documentation as a means for professional growth. These findings are contradictory to past research in this area. The Reggio schools use documentation as a main means of professional development. Malaguzzi (1998) reported that as teachers learn new things as they observe the children discuss observation and put together documentation pieces. Wong's (2006) research on this

subject, found that as educators discussed documentation pieces they were better able to understand the process, gained knowledge in teaching practices and grew professionally. New (2007) reported that as teachers in Reggio Emilia share their ideas, documentation pieces and knowledge, they are inspired to think about their own practices which in turn lead to growth. Finally, Stacey (2011) stated that as teachers share stories and speak about documentation, it can lead to professional growth and further develop their teaching practices. Though the participants in the current study did not speak positively about professional growth, I feel that the use of the documentation process almost always helps educators become better teachers. I think this way because of my own experiences. Over the past four years as I became more reflective in nature while studying children's actions and documenting them I have become more passionate about teaching, more aware of the needs and interests of children and have developed more of a desire to share my knowledge of early childhood education with others. This study left me with questions of why the educators who participated in this study were hesitant to speak about professional growth.

10. Documentation is not a required tool at many childhood education centres and thus does not fall within many educators' job descriptions.

Only two of the 16 participants in the study had documentation requirements listed in their job descriptions. However, in all the programs it was expected that they carry out documentation on a regular basis. This raises questions about the ability of those programs to provide emergent programs and support their educator's use of the documentation process.

11. Time, the lack thereof, is the most inhibiting factor for those who document or use an emergent approach to curriculum planning.

The biggest issue for participants was that there is not enough time to document. Many often work at home or on lunch breaks in order to complete documentation projects. It was also reported that even those who had scheduled planning or documentation time during their working hours did not have enough time to complete documentation effectively. The participants reported working on lunch, after hours and at home and not being paid for the extra work.

This finding is consistent with a number of studies conducted with emergent practitioners in the early childhood education sector of North America. Burrington and Sortino (2004) reported that adopting emergent values and completing the documentation process requires an investment of time. The researchers noted that educators feel they do not have enough time to complete the documentation process effectively due to the number of duties assigned in the classroom (including taking care of children, observing and writing notes, meetings, housekeeping responsibilities, and supervising students). Educators in the Project Zero study (2003) also reported that completing documentation took time and that there is a need for support including allowing teachers time to meet and complete the work. Stacey (2005) found that educators do not have enough time outside of the classroom to complete planning and documentation projects and that time was the biggest obstacle in using the approach. Wong (2010) stated that educators often feel that they do not have time to complete everything involved in the curriculum because of behavioral issues in the classroom. It was reported that teachers may be given an hour a week for program time outside the classroom but is not enough time to complete documentation pieces and after finishes all the duties involved in caring for children the teachers may want to take extra time to complete documentation pieces (Wong). The following discussion of the results related to time in the current study and

my own personal reflection highlights the similarities with past research.

My experience with emergent programming includes occasional work in the evening, or on weekends. My personal experience would make me believe that so many educators put in the extra time because they are dedicated to their centre and to the emergent style. Educators want to feel like they are being productive and successful, and they are committed to the emergent and Reggio frameworks; providing quality child care programs. It is possible that some educators work extra hours because it is expected of them; for instance, they know their directors and the parents at the centre expect a certain amount of documentation, and even if it is not written in their job description, they know it must be done and to avoid conflict, they do it.

Over the past year, I was very busy during the off - work hours writing this thesis and fulfilling other “life” demands. Because of this, I was less likely to work at home or stay late after work to document. I often felt unproductive, or as though I was not contributing to my program as I should. No one at my workplace said this to me out loud, my director rarely asked me to work after hours and often I was told that I was a hard worker, but because a certain number of documentation pieces were not produced I thought that I was not doing our program any justice.

It is my hypothesis that most educators feel pressured regarding documentation. They recognize it is an important aspect of the program and they are dedicated to the approach. Educators care about the children they work with and their career, so they often work hard to fulfill the requirements that may not be written within a contract, but are most certainly prevalent at early childhood centres., This pressure is problematic and can only change if educators are given time to document during work hours. If they are unable to do this, there should be a program in place for staff to get paid, or receive

time in lieu, for hours educators work on their own time.

There is a large amount of time required in emergent programs to observe, review notes, create documentation, collaborate with staff, collect materials, create and display documentation, and plan programs based on children's interests. Creating quality, aesthetically pleasing documentation pieces, requires time; one must determine which type of documentation style to use, type and cut and paste, gather background information, and display the final products. If educators are not given adequate time to program, observe, and document, they may never reach one of the goals of emergent programs --- creating long term projects. Documentation pieces in the centre may lack depth, or crucial information to truly make learning visible.

This is an ethical dilemma. For the retention of valuable employees, it must be ensured that directors are not taking advantage of hard working and dedicated staff. As well, it is necessary to ensure that that centres are not purposely not including program and documentation time in their budgets because they know staff will work on their own time. If educators continue to work extra hours, they will inevitably become burned out, or give up working at home which will further affect documentation to a point where there will be none at all. Educators work together to advocate for the time they need for documenting or to be advocated for "off time" labour. Furthermore, directors and administrators must acknowledge the problems that exist with not having time to document. They must understand that it is unacceptable to take advantage of staff who are putting in a number of unpaid hours on a regular basis. It is recommended that directors should only expect a reasonable amount of documentation which can be completed during work hours, ensuring employees are recognized for their hard work.

These results seem more consistent with the ideas of North American scholars as

it seems that Reggio Emilia schools do place a value on time and also allow for extra time in the educator's day for planning and documentation. Edwards, Gandini and Forman (1998) reported that the teachers in Reggio schools work about 36 hours per week. Furthermore, they reported that within this 36 hours they are allotted 4.5 hours for planning and professional development and 1.5 hours of documentation time. Thornton and Brunton (2010) stated that the administrators of the Reggio schools in Italy place great value on time and this is why time may not be a barrier to documentation and programming. One may ask: why there is such a difference in regards to the value of time in Italy compared to North America?

12. Documentation is a responsibility of all staff. Collaboration aids in the documentation process.

Consistent with past research (Project Zero, 2003; Stacey, 2005; Wong, 2006; Moran, Derochers and Cavicchi, 2007; and McNaughton and Krenz, 2007) the results of the study revealed that the process of documentation becomes easier with collaboration and reflection with other teachers. The authors of the past studies reported that collaboration was important to help educators develop outlines, understand observations of the children and allow the documentation to flow more smoothly. In 14 of the 16 centres, all educators are responsible for some aspect of documenting. In some cases, the educators are responsible for their own work, while in others they document collaboratively, which seemed to help the documentation process flow more smoothly. In centres where program coordinators or directors were involved in the documentation process they served as a liaison, or as a helper, to encourage and to complete documentation.

Seven participants normally complete documentation on their own, and seven

complete it with others. Two complete documentation by themselves at times, but they also collaborate when needed. Conrad, David, and Melissa normally complete their documentation alone, but they might go seek help from co-workers or the director for proofreading, or to ensure accuracy of the documentation. Hannah believes collaboration allows everyone a chance to make decisions and to share the workload. Ingrid thinks that making documentation a team effort ensures that everyone has a part in the work, and that collaboration shows the different perspectives of each teacher. Kate has completed her documentation pieces alone but, thinks that collaboration could be more productive saying that, “some people are better at documentation than others, so collaboration can be a good learning tool.” She also thought it would be beneficial for educators to mention important moments to each other.

Graham completes documentation alone, or by working with others, depending on the interests of the children and educators. He said that it is “a collaborate effort” when two teachers would like to work on the same project. Linda completes documentation alone, but the collection of information is collaborative at her centre. Emily completes documentation alone, and would love to have a more collaborative approach at the centre she directs. She believes that the best ideas come from working with other people and that it would be beneficial to ensure the not only “one person [was] filling up all the walls with no room for anyone else.”

Documentation can be completed alone, but, the majority of the participants supported collaboration. Some participants, although most of their documentation work is completed on their own, used others as a source of support -- for collecting information, asking others point of view, and editing. Collaborative documentation has many benefits, such as lessening the work load, adding other’s perspectives and views

and, providing time for reflection.

13. Children learn through exposure to documentation.

A number of scholars have reported that documentation makes learning visible and aids the learning process for the children who are able to review documentation pieces (Katz, 1998; Gandini and Goldhaber; 2001; and Kinney and Wharton, 2007). Maple (2005) and Tarr, Bjartviet and Kostiuk (2009) wrote about projects that occurred in early childhood classrooms. The authors reported that as children were exposed to documentation throughout the duration of the projects they became more confident, explored materials in a deeper way, became better at problem solving and had more in-depth conversation with peers. Gandini and Goldhaber (2001) also reported that as children's work is displayed it helps the children to know that their work is valued and helps them form memories of the learning process. The results of the current study validated these findings. Participants reported that as children see their pictures they sometimes re-do or expand projects. Displayed documentation gives children something to talk about, helps them re-live important moments and gives them something of which to be proud.

14. Resources are often tight in childhood education centres causing restraints on the types of documentation educators can complete.

Some participants felt that their centres lacked enough materials to document properly. For example, common complaints included not having a tape recorder, enough paper, or no printers in the centre.

In some instances, participants felt there was not enough space to display or store documentation. The issue of space was also reported by emergent practitioners in studies completed by Project Zero (2003) and Susan Stacey (2005).

Questions for Future Research

Respondents identified a number of areas that needed further research.

The list below outlines questions that remain and how and in some instances why one may wish to investigate these further.

Question1. Why is there no, or little, focus on this style of teaching at the university level?

Research Questions:

- Have university programs changed as emergent programming has become more popular?

The participants in the study who have university degrees all attended the same university is a limitation. This leads to the following additional research questions:

- Has the university program changed over the years since emergent programs have become more popular?
- Why is there a lack of focus on emergent programs? Are other teaching methods (such as theme, Montessori, High Scope) highly recommended or endorsed to students or do programs teach general teaching methods allowing students to make choices on what type of program they will use?
- Do other colleges/universities across Canada and the US have more information on emergent programs/ Reggio Emilia schools available to students? It may be useful for students to have a general understanding of a number of program models. This would help them adapt to teaching in required ways during employment and would help them make choices about what type of program they

would like to be involved in.

Question 2. How much documentation is being completed in centres where staff is not given a documentation quota?

Research Questions:

- Why do directors not require staff to document?
- Why do educators document if it is only “by choice”?

Question 3. Do other educators at other early childhood centres in Halifax feel pressured for time when documenting?

Rationale: Results showed the educators in this study felt they did not have enough time to document properly. It’s difficult to determine whether these results can be generalized given that this research only covered nine centres.

Question 4. Does documentation aid in professional growth? If so, how?

Rationale: Participants in this study rarely purposefully used the documentation process for the purpose of professional growth. Future research could be developed to focus on this topic, on how documentation is a professional development tool or why teachers may not use documentation for this reason.

Conducting research that answer these questions would help fill the gaps that were left by the limitations of this study and would help develop more solid representations for the results.

Implications and Recommendations for Emergent Curriculum Practices in the Early Childhood Education Field

Upon completion of this study I was left with more reminders of how much work must be done to support and maintain quality emergent programs and to ensure that the

documentation aspects of these programs are carried out effectively. The results also lead to implications for the field including recommendations to early childhood educators, centre directors, training programs, and the childhood field as a whole. The following are some beginning steps that might help change the state of emergent and Reggio- inspired schools in Canada and the United States. These steps would allow educators to become better trained and ready for the emergent experience. It's key for educators to feel more comfortable with the documentation process.

1. Courses at the university and college levels should include a section that focuses entirely on this type of programming. There is a need for educators to become more familiar with the principals of emergent curriculum and the documentation process during their formal education.

There are a number of processes and values that go along with emergent programs such as: planning programs based on children's interests, providing exceptional learning environments, teaching through projects, providing "loose parts" and other open ended materials to enhance learning, reflective practices and using documentation to make learning visible. In terms of Reggio Emilia and the schools in this Italian municipality, professors could share information on the history/progression of these schools, their values to uphold (in regards to image of the child, the environment, relationships and documentation) and project work.

There is also a need for early childhood education courses to have more of a focus on the process of observation and pedagogical documentation, and to discuss why it may be important and how to carry it out effectively. Early childhood educators cannot be expected to include all these factors in their emergent programs if they do not know what they are. A stronger focus on these aspects of programming would help students

who are becoming early childhood educators see the value of emergent teaching, and help prepare teachers, like myself, to provide high quality/developmentally appropriate emergent programs.

In instances when this may not be possible, it would be beneficial for directors of emergent programs to provide on-site training to educators who are new to the process. Continued professional development that focuses on documentation issues is important for centres to keep up-to-date on resources and to provide staff with direction and encouragement regarding the process.

2. Make documentation a priority by adding it to the job specifications.

Directors demonstrate the importance of the documentation process when it is included as part of the job requirement.

3. Make documentation time a priority in early childhood centres. Specifically, directors must make it clear that documentation should be completed during work hours and if directors can not give paid program time for documentation; time in lieu should be provided as an option for educators required to complete documentation outside of their regular work hours.
4. Directors must ensure the daycare budgets include funding to carry out planning and documentation effectively. Documentation and emergent curriculum require materials different from theme-based programs developed out of documentation. It may include needing extra materials for the children to enhance the learning that occurs in long term projects. Having various materials on hand is necessary to ensure centres provide children with the best learning environment, to engage learning in different ways.
5. There is a need for government funding to make program time affordable to

- all centres. As emergent programs grow in popularity, emergent practitioners must come together to gain funding and materials.
6. Centres should employ program coordinators, or have an experienced educator in the field consult with staff on a regular basis. Results showed that in centres where program coordinators and or consultants were available they served as a liaison to help with documentation, gaining materials and carrying out emergent programs.
 7. Directors should ensure they allow time for staff to collaborate and reflect on their work on a regular basis. This may be done by holding regular meetings or having communication logs available for the staff to write down their comments or questions.
 8. Recognize staff for their documentation accomplishments. It takes much time, effort and dedication to carry out an emergent program effectively, when staff go above and beyond what is required of them in order to create a wonderful documentation pieces, find resources to enhance the children's interests and to make the centre a better place, they should be recognized by their directors for their hard work.

Limitations.

1. A number of participants were known to the researcher. The researcher knew first hand of centre philosophies, projects that had occurred and the methods of teaching the participants used. Although every effort was made to remain objective and open-ended when analysing the data, some personal bias may be present.

2. The use of audio files/tapes may have caused some of the interviewees discomfort causing them to be less open in their responses. The researcher tried to ensure interviewees were comfortable by conducting interviews in familiar locations and attempting to remain warm and friendly throughout the interview process. In addition, it might have been hard to get accurate responses during the transcription process due to the sound quality of the audio files. To ensure accuracy, notes were taken during the interviews, interview participants reviewed their written transcripts prior to data analysis and follow up questions were asked when necessary.
3. Low Response Rate/Small Sample Size - It should be noted that only a small number of child care centres were represented in the survey. The only individuals who responded were those known to the researcher and those recommended to the study by a thesis committee member. This may make it difficult to generalize results as there may not be enough variety in the individuals represented in the study.

This study brought about a great deal of information and ideas regarding teachers' perceptions of using the documentation process in emergent programs and Reggio-inspired programs. The results have led to a number of practical recommendations. This project was not only a requirement for my Master's degree but has helped me professionally. The last two years has helped me become more confident in implementing emergent programming. Studying and reading about emergent and Reggio practices has helped me realize just how deep my passion and love is for these types of early childhood programs. Above all, it has made me want to spread my love for and knowledge of these programs to other educators and to parents of young children. I have

become aware of how much dedication this type of program requires and became more reflective in my own practice. I sincerely hope that my work will help others to become effective emergent practitioners and that in the future the many questions that educators have regarding documentation will not be left unanswered.

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Appendix A – Interview for “Emergent Programming and Documentation” Study

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview.

1. Could you please describe for me your training in early childhood education
2. For how many years have you been working as an early childhood professional?
3. Could you tell me about the different types of early childhood programming that you have used?
4. Please describe the type of emergent program within which you work (number of children; age group, specific program type).
5. How long have you been using an emergent approach to teaching?
6. Have you had any formal training in emergent programming? Are there other sources of information you have used to help you with emergent programming?
7. How long have you used documentation in your centre?
8. What types of documentation do you use?
9. How do you decide what/when to document?
10. Why do you complete the documentation (for example: to communicate with parents, to allow children to re-visit work, for the purpose of professional growth, to share with colleagues, for program planning) - Explain.
11. When do you complete the majority of your documentation?
12. Who is responsible for completing documentation?

13. Do you complete it alone or is it a collaborative effort?
14. Would you be able to describe how examples of how documentation has led to further planning or growth of projects within the program?
15. Has displayed documentation within your centre provoked conversation among families or helped parent/teacher communication within your centre?
16. How do have the children responded to displayed documentation?
17. How do you reflect on the work you do; for example alone? With others? Please describe.
18. Do you think that “learning is made visible” with the documentation process?
19. Can you discuss your level of comfort with the documentation process?
20. What have you learned by using the documentation process?
21. Do you have any questions on the process of documentation?
22. Do you have questions on what/when/where or how to document? Please Explain.
23. What might you think are limitations or restrictions in using this approach to teaching? If so, what are they? / Do you have any issues pertaining to using documentation?
24. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your time and contributions.

Appendix B – Sample On-line Questionnaire

“Emergent Curriculum and Documentation”- Survey Questions

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. Please answer questions as you feel comfortable. You may refer to the Letter of Consent for more information on the study and its purpose. If you have any further questions please contact me via phone at [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED]

Consent: By completing this survey you are indicating that you understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Please answer the questions directly on this attachment, save the information and email it back ASAP.

1. What training have you had in early childhood education?
2. How many years have you been working as an early childhood professional?
3. Could you tell me about the different types of early childhood programming that you have used?
4. Please describe the type of emergent program within which you work (number of children, age group, and specific program type).
5. How long have you been using an emergent approach to teaching?
6. Please identify any formal training or workshops related to emergent programming that you have received.
7. What sources of information have you used to help you with emergent programming?
8. How long have you used documentation in your centre?
9. What types of documentation do you use?
10. How do you decide what/when to document?
11. Please explain why you complete documentation (for example: to communicate with parents, to allow children to re-visit work, for the purpose of professional growth, to share with others, for program planning or other reasons).
12. When do you complete the majority of your documentation?

13. Who is responsible for completing documentation in your centre?
14. Do you complete documentation on your own, or is it a collaborative effort?
15. Please describe how documentation has led to further planning or growth of projects within the program.
16. Has displayed documentation within your centre provoked conversation among families or helped parent/teacher communication within your centre?
17. How have the children responded to displayed documentation?
18. How do you reflect on the work you do; for example alone? With others?
19. Do you think that “learning is made visible” with the documentation process?
20. Can you discuss your level of comfort with the documentation process?
21. What have you learned by using the documentation process?
22. Do you have any questions on the process of documentation?
23. Do you have questions on what/when/where or how to document? Please explain.
24. What might you think are the limitations or restrictions in using this approach to teaching? If so, what are they? Do you have any issues pertaining to using documentation?
25. How do you think you incorporate your own ideas about teaching into the documentation process?
26. Do you think there should be more ways to incorporate your ideas about teaching into the process?
27. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Please indicate your willingness to be contacted by telephone or follow-up questions.

I am willing to be contacted by telephone: _____ (please provide number)

I am NOT willing to be contacted by telephone: _____

Do you wish to receive a summary copy of the report? YES or NO
If you indicated YES please provide an address (home or email) to forward the report summary.

Thank you for your time and contributions.

