



Podcast 26: Three Sequences for Designing and Delivering Meaningful Experiences

Episode notes: <https://prekteachandplay.com/podcast26>

Hi fellow Early Childhood Solutionaries. This is Kristie and today I'm going to talk to you about a part of the curriculum brainwork that even I sometimes kind of neglect or forget to talk about. And that's the sequence part of the Scope and Sequence.

So for those of you who don't know the curriculum framework, quickly it's four elements we called Assessment, Scope and Sequence, Activities Instruction, and Performance Monitoring. And these four elements, when they're put together are really what makes a quality approach to teaching young children with diverse abilities. And the second element Scope and Sequence--you know me, and you know I talk a ton about Scope. I talk about what comes before something that you think is really important. I talk about "what's your 'what'". I talk about all children being a triangle and that they have different needs at different times. As we talk about common outcomes and targeted outcomes and individualized outcomes. But in all this talk, where do we talk about sequence? So, in today's episode, we're going to dive deep into three types of sequence. What they are, what they mean, why you care and how thinking about these three different sequences can really help us meet the individual needs of young children with diverse abilities.

But before I get into too much about the sequences as part of a curriculum framework, I wanted to take an opportunity to invite those of you who are not yet Early Childhood Solutionary Members to become one. And so, if you haven't heard about it, our ECE Solutionary Membership, is kind of a unique opportunity. It's something that gives you 24/7 access to effective practices that are really practical tips that I've either created or curated just for you. It's also a program that allows me to clarify the practices that maybe we've talked about in a professional development event ... Maybe you've read one of my books ... Maybe you've read something in a blog or another podcast, but you're really not sure "How does this play out in my classroom? Or in my environment?". So, it's an opportunity for me to clarify things and what they mean for your situation. It also is my way to help you go step by step to implement effective practices.



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So, every month, you're getting tons and tons of tips that I send directly to your email and that list of tips and tools are things that are really hot issues, things that we know are really in our way or things that we want to enhance in our practices. And so it's an assortment of really carefully curated and created practical solutions that you get every month. And not only do you get more tips every month, but you have a members-only library where I give you full access to all of my tool kits, full access to all of my broadcasts and any special events that I host, you get sort of this, insider's look into it, as well as, of course, more practical ideas and solutions.

So, let's go back to thinking about sequences, but if you need to, pause the recording and go to prekteachandplay.com/learn-more to explore how you can become an ECE Solutionary member today.

So, sequences ... So, we have this thing called a curriculum framework. And my colleagues, Jennifer Grisham-Brown and Mary Louise Hemmeter and I often talk about this curriculum brainwork as an umbrella. It's something that is this overarching thing that covers your whole program and it's a way of thinking about all the pieces and parts. Sometimes we call it a map, sometimes we call it a quilt ... But it's all those pieces and parts of the things you do on a day-to-day basis as an educational team.

And so we have those four elements, Assessment, Scope and Sequence, Activities and Instruction and Performance Monitoring. And today, we're going to unpack the Scope and Sequence part but in particular, we're going to unpack the Sequences. And the freebie for today's episode is just a very straight-forward, very sweet little infographic that will highlight how these three sequences are different and how thinking about them helps you determine what to teach, when to teach and how to teach; particularly for children who are struggling or when development has stalled.

So, other podcasts, other blogs, other resources have really gone deep into what it is that we're teaching, what's our 'what'? How do we know who needs to learn what? What are common outcomes versus targeted outcomes versus individualized outcomes?

But today we're going to talk a little bit about three sequences and then after I talk about the three sequences, I'm going to illustrate how I use the assessment, evaluation and programming system, we call it the AEPS (Bricker et. al, 2002). It's a curriculum based or criterion referenced assessment that is really grounded in good research, is family-centered and authentic--but how can we use it to help us think about these sequences as we go to make decisions about instruction. And it doesn't mean that you'll all have to adopt the AEPS or administer the AEPS or even score the AEPS, it's just how do we use it as a resource to understand these three sequences? And so, while we know that development is highly variable and really



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highly inter-related, there are also some things we know about early development and learning in terms of three sequences that can help us think more about how we approach our instructional efforts.

And again, you'll want to download today's freebie at prekteachandplay.com/podcast26 and you can download the little infographic that puts these three sequences into visual representations. So, you can maybe even pause and go get that, so that while I'm talking you have something to couch your perspective.

So, the three sequences, we call them Developmental, Pedagogical and Logical. And we started this conversation many years ago in the first edition of our blended practices. In the second edition we continue the conversation to really think about Scope and Sequence being the bridge, the link if you will, between our assessment information--where we're deciding what we should teach, when we should teach, who we should teach what--and then the actual how do we teach. And we make that bridge by thinking about sequences. This is also important if you are a person or a part of a team that's writing individualized education plans and really individualized family outcomes as well. So we're thinking about how we are going to teach this desired outcome.

Whether it's an IEP-worthy goal, whether it's a common outcome or whether it's just something that we target temporarily to jumpstart development or when development has stalled. We really need to think about "How are we going to teach this? Does this trajectory come in a developmental sequence that is step by step? Or are things happening concurrently? And then lastly, do I have to think about some individual considerations that highly change everything and now we've got to be much more logical and personalized?".

So, let's start at the beginning. The first sequence and sometimes I call Sequential but most of the time I call Developmental is really channeling Piaget and early milestones. It's really that ... Step by step by step that most children, if development is unfolding in a way that it should, and they're receiving the support that they need, that they will run through this idea that step by step we're learning what we need to, in the way we need to, in the order we need to. And by need to, I just mean that it's really about keeping in mind what supports a child may need if they're struggling that if I think about "Oh, what is the typical sequence I won't begin to supersede human development, I won't try to rush development. I'll know this child is right where they're supposed to be at this moment".

So, when we're thinking about a developmental sequence, we're thinking really about first, second, third, fourth. And I usually like to use the example of learning to walk independently because you can actually see it if you've ever been around



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young children who are learning to walk. And so there's this step by step progression. It's harder to do something that is later in the sequence than it is earlier. So, a child is able to pull to a stand, that's the first step, if you will. Second is they learn to cruise, then they learn to walk with support, then they learn to walk unsupported. Now, we all know children who may go in a different sequence, which is just fine. But generally speaking, most children will go through a predictable sequence. So we call that a developmental sequence and that is where we think about that there are things happening step by step by step. So, that is our first type of sequence. And I see why I get confused if I call it a sequential type of goal or outcome because they're all sequences, right? So, developmental is better.

The second type of sequence is one that we call Pedagogical. And this is one that we know from research and repeated experience that these things will happen concurrently, that there may be isn't a first, second and third. But rather that there might be something that must come before the other. There is something that pedagogically a foundation or a prerequisite. It's something that is easier than something that's later or more complex so when I start to break down a concept into its components, I start to think about things that are happening either simultaneously or I start to find out which parts of the components are easier and that might need to be the things that I look at before I go to more complex things.

So, this pedagogical one might sound a little funny, it might sound like I'm talking out of both sides of my mouth. I feel like I'm talking both simultaneously or concurrently as well as that there's a sequence or hierarchy. But really, pedagogically doesn't mean that we know human development will unfold this way from a genetics perspective or how the body goes from inside to outside, from gross motor to fine motor, from externally regulated to internally regulated.

It's much more about when we think about instructions being delivered, where should we begin our instructions? Which things have to happen concurrently? How are we learning concepts around math and shapes and size and quantity? Are there other skills that are happening concurrently that allow us to do those? As well as are there easier constructs or easier representations of a particular skill? It's not a different skill that comes step by step, but there's an earlier representation of the skill that we need to be really thinking about, peeling back and thinking about the pedagogical trajectory of an outcome.

And so, sometimes when we think about skills like communication, there are ways that kids use words, phrases and sentences to express all kinds of things. It might be to inform, it might be to comment, it might be to label affect and emotion, it might be to express anticipation or make predictions. And so, these are all elements for pieces and parts of a larger construct of being able to use words, phrases and sentences and they're happening concurrently. And we need to be thinking about



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where in those pieces and parts, might a child be struggling. Or from a pedagogical perspective, are there certain pieces and parts of the whole that are easier to address than harder? Or are simpler than more complex, which would allow us to support a child who is struggling?

And then the third sequence is what we call Logical. And this just means that sometimes we find kids who just throw all of our ideas and our theories about development and learning, no matter how much research we have, kind of throw it out the window. So that can be ... There's just certain things that are happening right now for this child and their body's response to early childhood stressors or things that are happening in their life or just things about their interest and motivation at this point in time that really make that they start at a certain space. So it doesn't matter what Piaget may have said, it doesn't matter what the National Research Council might have said, it's sort of like, yeah, my data shows that logically, this is where this child is ready to go, this is where they are performing well and here's where they are struggling and here's how they are responding to my instruction.

So, this Logical is allowing you to say, regardless of what my research says, regardless of what my assessment says, and regardless of what research says, I might have other evidence that I need to go on a different path ... A different journey with this particular child. I need to pay more attention to certain things where they are right now, even though developmentally, I wouldn't expect them to be ready for it. Or maybe they have splinter skills or maybe there is a particular situation or event that they really struggle with and I've got to figure out why. So we call that a logical sequence. Based upon our data, we decide which order to teach it and we don't worry so much about what everybody else is doing. So hopefully those three made sense.

And again you can go to PrekTeachandPlay.com/podcast26 and download that freebie which is a simple infographic that tries to show or illustrate how we have these developmental sequences, which are very step by step, earlier to a later progression. These pedagogical sequences, which really stem from our research about early development and in particular early learning and we're figuring out what's happening concurrently, what's happening in terms of more simplistic versus more complex so that we take a big component of something and we break into pieces and parts and then figure out the sequence from there. Thirdly, we have this logical sequence. This is where we take a child's culture, a child's preference, a child's "where I am right now" view and we plan instruction that makes sense for them as an unique individual learner.



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So, rather quickly, how do I use the AEPS to get my handle on all of this diversity and all this variability and especially when I think about logical, that means anything is possible. Yep, that means anything is possible. The AEPS, the Assessment Evaluation and Programming System again is an authentic curriculum-based assessment or criterion referenced assessment that is for young children from birth to around 6 years of age. And it covers all areas of development; fine motor, gross motor, adaptive, cognitive, socio-communication, social. And it has lots of pieces and parts that are expanding into mathematics and literacy and science so that we can think not only of developmental areas but content areas.

But all of that aside, the AEPS items ... The way that it's constructed, the way that things are organized and laid out, there are generally those two main sequences; developmental and pedagogical. The logical is this interpretation that a team makes, that as you look at your patterns and the sequences and how children are performing, you might find that there is some sort of logical path for this child, that you would never have found based upon the AEPS was organized.

So, finding the logical sequence might require administering or at least scoring pieces and parts of the AEPS to look at expected and unexpected sequences and expected and unexpected patterns of performance. But the first two, you can use without administering, you just look for one key thing. They are in the scoring criteria for each goal, sometimes there is a note about scoring. And when there's a note about scoring, you're like "Hey, I didn't think I had to score!". Right, but you're just looking at the AEPS items with criteria and when there's a note about scoring you know that more than likely that goal and it's associated objectives are more that pedagogical type of sequence.

It's more of that things are happening concurrently, and we're really going to have to peel back and think about what is an easier component, a simpler component, what are the different components I have to teach simultaneously so there isn't a "first then", it's a "whole at once". So, is it possible to teach all of these things at once? Are certain pieces and parts already obtained but the child's struggling with some single component or some single part? That pedagogical is really saying "What's easier? What is something that I can peel back and look at in individual parts like a puzzle piece and then put the whole together to come up with the construct I'm looking for".

If you are looking at the AEPS, either the birth to three or the three to six, either level. Or if you're in the third edition and you're looking at the entire system, if the goal doesn't have a scoring note, we're really thinking about developmental sequences and the way the AEPS is organized that we call goals and objectives, the goal is the talk and the objectives are in reverse order. So that reverse order really teaches us about developmental sequences.



One of my favorite items is all about interacting with objects. That progression takes us from bottom to top, the bottom of the ladder or the staircase to the top where we go "Okay, first children use sensory exploration and that's how they interact with objects. Then they move to simple motor action on objects. Then they move to functional use of objects. Then they use representation play or where they have this idea of representing one object as another. And then we get into imaginary interaction and this imaginary play. So, the object isn't even really there". Can you see how that got from easier to harder? And there was a first and then a then, and we moved up the steps or up the ladder.

So, children will go through that developmental sequence and the AEPS just is comprised of lots and lots of different little ladders, where I can just go in and understand. This is the typical developmental sequence. And then I can think about a given child or group of children and say "Where are you in that developmental sequence?". Again, I don't have to score children, I don't have to administer it, I just say "When I'm trying to figure out what is going to be an IEP-worthy goal ... Where am I going to begin instruction ...". I can look at different goals and objectives within the AEPS and those that are more pedagogical, that are happening concurrently that are comprised of multiple pieces and parts, I can go "Hmm, okay, which of these is easier for this child? Which ones of them are harder? Do I teach all of them simultaneously or do I teach them in smaller clusters so as not to overwhelm?". And that's that pedagogical sequence.

And then I can also look for developmental sequences, like the interaction with objects, where I can really think about first, second, third and I can recommend or deliver instruction that is really concentrated just in that Goldilocks place, right? Just in that sweet spot, that zone of proximal development, where the child has just enough novelty where they are excited but they're not overburdened or over challenged. And then certainly if I administer the AEPS, I can have enough data to look at patterns and trends around the child's performance to see if there's a logical sequence that has emerged. So hopefully that helps you think a little bit more broadly about the bridge between linking assessment and instruction. And that we don't just focus on "what's our 'what'", who needs to learn what, and that are three types of outcomes, but that there are also three types of sequences.

You can download that very simple little infographic from prekteachandplay.com/podcast26 to sort out what is a developmental sequence, a pedagogical sequence and a logical sequence. And then as always, I'd love to come to your agency or your program and meet with other inspired early educators and we can talk more about how do we help address the needs of all learners in the same environment so that all children thrive not only in school but in life.



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