



Praxis and how it affects us:

Having just made my very first website, I am feeling very proud of myself. I'm not the most tech-savvy and was a little apprehensive before I started, knowing it wasn't going to be that easy and it was a new skill for me. It was going to be taxing my brain with very little background knowledge to help back me up. Knowing this helped me. I was able to do some deep breathing before started and plan ahead. This is praxis - planning

Since this was a novel task for me, it got me thinking about the novel tasks that children have to learn. Children are learning a lot of new academic skills but also as they grow, they have to learn a lot of new motor skills using their bodies. Whether it is activities of daily living (ADL skills) like brushing teeth or hair, getting un/dressed, putting on a backpack, learning a new sport learning to write or carrying multiple items into the classroom, there are a lot of steps that have to be sequenced. This is praxis -sequencing.

When making my website, there were errors on the way but each time I made a mistake, I learnt from it and navigated the platform easier the next time. This is what praxis is about – reviewing.

Praxis is the ability to plan, sequence and then review motor tasks.

Now imagine a child who struggles with praxis. There are quite a few steps where they might falter here. Before climbing new playground equipment, they may just run towards it and bump into someone on the way (not planning the route), always need reminding items to put in their school bag or loose items as remembering all the steps is difficult, stumbling on a hiking trail might be the norm for them and they have just got used to lots of bruises (as they are not reviewing why they fell).

This praxis ability affects schooling with disorganisation in getting ready for writing and thus miss important instructions or problems with writing legibly (as there are a lot of areas to remember when writing).

Do/did you have to teach dressing, using a spoon, how to put on a rucksack and keep repeating instructions to everyday activities? Then your child might have problems with 1 or more parts of the planning and execution of activities - praxis.

How you can help:

- Be patient (this is frustrating for your child also) and be aware of this issue
- Break tasks down into manageable components
- Help a child review for themselves, not do it for them 'Just think about what you have got and what might still be needed' instead of 'you forgot your water bottle again'.

- Using first/then
- Use visual clues, simple instructions that you do not change, but just repeat.
- Give physical support but try and reduce as they improve.

If you are worried about your child, as they struggle with a lot of motor skills including fine, gross and activities of daily living, give me a call or send me a message.

Kate Powell

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