



Episode 03: The Power of Praxis

Hosts: Tracy Stackhouse · Cory Dundon · Michelle Maunder



LISTENER NAME

DATE LISTENED

TOTAL LISTENING + REFLECTION TIME (MINS)

CPD HOURS CLAIMED



Episode Summary

Praxis is how we generate brand-new skilfulness: the first kick, the first climb, the first time the body works out something it has never done. This episode follows a vibrant six-year-old through the praxis process, ideation, planning, execution and monitoring, and lands on the hardest clinical question of all: when do you let joyful exploration run, and when do you step in to help it become skill? Michelle brings a composite of a delightful six-year-old boy, full of ideas, very social, and newly mobile after the postural work we talked about last episode. Now that his body can carry him into play, a different picture emerges. He is fast to have ideas but quick to abandon them, his sequencing and timing are out, his movements are ballistic rather than graded, and he changes the rules rather than monitoring and adjusting. We use Tracy's praxis roadmap to sort his presentation into those four parts. From there we get into what praxis actually is from an Ayres perspective, the sensory discrimination foundation underneath it, and why clumsiness is never just clumsiness. The heart of the episode is a story of him discovering a ball with his feet for the first time, pure joyful exploration with no mastery yet, and the question it raises: is this the emergent play that has to come first, or the moment to scaffold a little precision? We talk about following the child's lead, building sequence through imitation and his own do it again, and infusing discriminative precision without tipping the playfulness away from him.



Resources & Mentions

- Tracy's praxis roadmap, the visual map of ideation, planning, execution and monitoring referenced throughout this episode.
- Jean Ayres, Sensory Integration and the Child.
- Teresa May-Benson, on ideation assessment, including the string and other ideation tasks.
- Sasson Gubbay, who described the 'clumsy child syndrome'.
- The Sensory Integration and Praxis Tests (SIPT).
- Sensory Integration: Theory and Practice, on the somatosensory and bilateral systems that support praxis.
- Check out DFX's Learning Journeys to build your clinical reasoning skills: <https://dfxlearningjourneys.thinkific.com/>



Reflection Prompts

Take a few quiet minutes to consider each prompt and write freely. Add or remove a prompt block to suit the episode.

- 1 We define praxis as the capacity to generate novel skilfulness, resting on sensory discrimination and a process of ideation, planning, execution and monitoring. Which part of that process do you tend to focus on, and which do you overlook?

- 2 When something looks off but you cannot name it, the praxis roadmap helps locate whether it is the idea, the plan, the execution or the monitoring not coming together. Think of a child: where in that sequence does their difficulty actually sit?

- 3 We argue clumsiness always has a reason, an underlying sensory integrative cause worth chasing rather than accepting. For a child you'd call clumsy, what might be driving it underneath the behaviour?

- 4 The episode sits with the hardest question: when do you let joyful exploration run, and when do you step in to scaffold precision? For a child mid-discovery, how would you decide which moment you are in?

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We trace the same sequencing thread from finger-thumb touching through to getting dressed, all underpinned by somatosensory awareness and a clear body map. Where could building that foundation serve a child better than practising the end skill directly?
