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We must remember that the most important thing is sequencing. Then, we must remember that there is no sequence.

—Tom Smith

Anyone modestly concerned with transmitting information is intuitively aware of the importance of sequencing. For example, when writing a letter, an article, or a book, it will be easier for the reader to understand if the written information is organized in a logical and sequential manner. Lectures, presentations, and lessons abide by the same rule.

This omnipresence of “sequences” in our lives exists for a good reason. One could argue that because of the way we understand and perceive time, we are bound to a linear perception of what happens around us. This means that we will always experience life in a successive order of events, words, and thoughts.

Despite the fact that events are compelled to occur in a linear fashion (i.e., past, present, and future), we can plan the sequence before it occurs and therefore take some control over the way we exchange information with each other.

Perhaps the most universal and commonly used sequence is the classic “story line” sequence which includes a beginning, a middle, and an end. Sequences also exist in a linear model (i.e., from simple to complex and vice versa) and in a circular model (i.e., from general to specific then back to general). For whatever reason a specific sequence is adopted, the bottom line is that sequences are an intrinsic part of human learning and development. Educators certainly do not escape this reality. Since education often involves transmitting information or presenting experiences, whether we like it or not, sequencing plays an important role in our profession.

**Uniqueness or Universality**

Sequencing has been defined as the act of “paying attention to the order of activities so that the order is appropriate to the needs of the group” (Schoel, Prouty, and Radcliffe, 1988, p. 35). The literature also suggests that one of the most important programming components of an adventure-based learning experience is the selection of activities and the order in which these are presented (Anderson and Frison, 1992; Nadler and Luckner, 1992; Priest, in press; Roland and Havens, 1983; Rohnke, 1989; Rohnke and Butler, 1995; Schoel et al., 1988; Smith, 1991).

Consequently, specialists and practitioners in this field tend to agree that adventure activities should be sequenced in a logical manner in order to reach specific educational goals (Bisson, 1997). In addition, a variety of authors have addressed not only the importance of sequencing, but also the common belief regarding the uniqueness of each adventure sequence.

For instance, Schoel et al. (1988) argued that “a good sequence for one group may not work for another. There is no exact formula” (p. 77). Like Schoel et al. (1988), several other authors have expressed the importance of customizing a sequence specific to the nature and needs of
each group (Rohnke, 1989; Rohnke and Butler, 1995; Smith, Roland, Havens, and Hoyt, 1992). In essence, the popular argument is that there is no magical recipe for sequencing—each group requires a unique and customized set of activities.

However, despite this argument, when we look carefully at a few of the most commonly known prescribed sequences in our literature, apparent similarities can be found in their overall progression. What is even more astonishing is that these similarities exist even though the prescribed sequences were originally customized for different populations such as people with disabilities (Roland and Havens, 1983), patients in mental health institutions (Roland, Summers, Friedman, Barton, and McCarty, 1987; Roland, Keene, Dubois, and Lentini, 1987), children with behavioral disorders (Robb and Ewert, 1987), youth in counseling programs (Schoel et al., 1988), adult corporate training programs (Priest, Attarian, and Schubert, 1993), and general populations (Rohnke, 1989).

This last observation somehow contradicts the common assumption regarding the uniqueness of each sequence. Consequently, a dilemma arises between uniqueness and universality. On one hand, it is argued that program planning should remain flexible to allow for customization, yet on the other hand, it seems that a certain universality exists between sequences prescribed for distinct groups.

In my opinion, both conditions often coexist. However, before explaining this position on sequencing adventure activities, I believe it is important to look more carefully at the evolution of the prescribed sequence models that shared the observed similarities.

The Sequential Process

The sequential process model was developed at the Vinland National Center in Minnesota during the early 1980s. Roland and Havens’s (1983) “sequential process” model for people with disabilities included five levels: (a) awareness activities, (b) group cooperative games, (c) individual initiative tasks (i.e., the adapted low ropes course), (d) group initiative tasks, and (e) high adventure activities.

Overall, it seems like the sequential process proposed by Roland and Havens (1983) progressed by alternating individual- and group-oriented activities. It is also important to point out that this alternating process has not been strongly encouraged by others, and eventually, Roland himself modified his own sequence to create a more group-oriented progression.

The Experiential Challenge Program

Later on, Roland, Summers, et al. (1987) proposed another five-step model named the Experiential Challenge Program (ECP). This model included the following steps: (a) goal setting, (b) awareness, (c) trust, (d) group problem solving, and (e) individual problem solving. The ECP was originally designed for patients in mental health institutions, but soon was adapted to other settings (Smith et al., 1992). The steps were presented in a pyramidal structure (Figure 28.1) to express the progressive nature of the model. The pyramid also illustrates that each step establishes a foundation for the following level of activities. For instance, step one serves as the foundation for the rest of the sequence, and so on.

The Activity Process Model

Soon after the publication of the ECP sequence, the model was slightly modified and adapted to a different setting. This time, Roland, Keene, et al. (1987) traded the image of the pyramid for a circular model. The reason for this change was that now each step of the ECP included activities that contained components from all the other steps. For instance, they argued that an activity such as the Trust Circle (i.e., better known as the Willow in the Wind) includes not only trust, but also cooperation from the spotters and initiative from the “faller.” This new model (Figure 28.2) was called the Activity Process Model (Roland, 1993, p. 199; Roland, Keene, et al., 1987, p. 69).

In this new conceptualization of the ECP, the core of the circle bears the term challenge activities, and represented the fundamental nature of the program. The five stages or programmatic levels were placed in a circle around the core to indicate that each level shared common adventure components such as communication, cooperation, and trust. The next circle indicates that “debriefing”...
or "processing" was performed throughout the experience. The outer circle—the adventure experience—represented a sixth level in the form of a traditional outdoor pursuit activity (i.e., rock climbing and rappelling).

Roland, Keene, et al. (1987) explained that the realm of the adventure experience constituted a perimeter where all levels of the inner core can be integrated. For instance, rock climbing is presented to encourage goal setting, awareness, trust, group problem solving, and individual problem solving. Therefore, for the participants, the adventure experience represents a peak experience. After gaining the necessary skills and attributes during the first part of the program, they could, if ready, participate in a more global and concrete adventure experience. On this issue, Roland (1993) wrote:

The key concept was that the "inner core" had been initially developed while the "outer core"—the adventure experience—was developed later. This perimeter was thus dependent on the core, but the core was not dependent on the perimeter (p. 205)

The Challenge Education Sequence

Inspired by Roland, Keene, et al.'s (1987) and Roland, Summers, et al.'s (1987) work, Robb and Ewert (1987), and later Robb and Leslie (1987) proposed an adventure sequence of their own to work with children displaying behavioral disorders. Their sequence model was titled the Challenge Education Sequence (CES) which included seven steps: (a) goal setting, (b) awareness, (c) trust, (d) cooperative activities, (e) problem solving, (f) group challenge, and (g) adventure activities. The CES model was presented as a staircase to illustrate the progressive nature of the sequence (Figure 28.3). The first three steps of the CES are identical to the first steps of the ECP presented earlier in this chapter. The fourth step differs from Roland, Keene, et al.'s (1987) and Roland, Summers, et al.'s (1987) sequences by introducing a new category titled "cooperative activities."

In the CES, Robb and Ewert (1987) seemed to have returned to a sequential progression that inserted individual challenge activities within group-challenge tasks. This way, scheduling "problem-solving" activities after "cooperative activities" and before "group challenge" shifts the task orientation of the participants from focusing on the group, to focusing on the individual, to again focusing on the group. This insertion of individual-oriented tasks between group-centered tasks is at least intriguing since it appears that individual challenges are most often introduced at the end of a program because it is assumed that the group will then be ready to offer greater psychological support (Priest, 1996). In this vein, some authors (Priest, 1996; Schoel et al., 1988) also argue that personal problem-solving activities, such as the low-ropes-course events, can promote
group cooperation because they require group members to physically spot and encourage each other during the execution of the task.

While Robb and Ewert (1987) optimized the work of Roland and Havens (1983); Roland, Keene, et al. (1987); and Roland, Summers, et al. (1987) on the development of a prescribed adventure sequence, another group of practitioners developed a sequence of their own. This group of practitioners (i.e., Project Adventure, Inc.) had perhaps the greatest influence on the development of adventure programming in North America for the past 20 years. Their perception of a correct sequence is therefore critical.

**Project Adventure’s Trust Fall and Spotting Exercise Sequence**

All of Project Adventure’s publications emphasize the importance of sequencing in adventure programming (Rohnke, 1989; Rohnke and Butler, 1995; Schoel et al., 1988). They strongly adhere to the idea that there is no right or wrong sequence and that each group requires a customized progression (Rohnke, 1989; Rohnke and Butler, 1995; Schoel et al., 1988). However, they also advocate the use of a three-step fundamental introductory sequence. This short sequence is known as “the Trust Fall and spotting exercise sequence” (Rohnke, 1989; Schoel et al., 1988). The three steps include (a) icebreaker and acquaintance activities, (b) deinhibitizer activities, and (c) beginning trust and spotting activities (Rohnke, 1989; Schoel et al., 1988). Schoel et al. (1988) indicate that the Trust Fall sequence, as it is often referred to, is fundamental to the Project Adventure curriculum because it assures psychological and physical safety by developing trust and mutual caring among the members of a participating group.

The sequence is also seen as a preparatory stage before involving the group in more challenging activities. Schoel et al. (1988) recommend introducing the Trust Fall sequence before attempting the low- and high-ropes-course activities. On the preparatory aspect of the Trust Fall and spotting exercise sequence, Rohnke (1989) wrote: “This sequence takes the group from icebreakers, to deinhibitzers, to the trust activities so that the group is prepared for the [group] initiatives” (p. 10). Rohnke also explained that the sequence allows the instructor to accomplish two goals. First, it helps with the development of group cohesion in a gradual, non-threatening manner; and second, it helps to develop the spotting skills of each participant. Spotting is an integral and essential safety procedure used during group initiatives and low-ropes-course elements. Basically, it is a “human safety net provided by other people for the persons doing an activity” (Webster, 1989, p. 7).

As explained previously, the Trust Fall and spotting exercise sequence is only an introductory sequence for a much larger progression. However, it is important to note that Project Adventure does not suggest that these activity categories are a definitive sequence. Nevertheless, Schoel et al. (1988) enumerate these categories of activities in an order that, to many practitioners and scholars, appears to be a valuable sequence. Consequently, the following sequence: (a) icebreaker and acquaintance activities, (b) deinhibitizer activities, (c) trust and empathy activities, (d) communication, (e) decision making and problem solving, (f) social responsibility, and (g) personal responsibility (Schoel et al., 1988, p. 69) has often been adopted as a standard sequence for many adventure programs (James, 1991; Priest, 1996; Rohnke, 1989). For the sake of clarity, I will refer to this sequence as the Project Adventure sequence.

**Project Adventure Sequence**

The Project Adventure (PA) sequence starts with the three steps explained in the previous section (i.e., icebreaker and acquaintance activities; deinhibitizer activities; trust and empathy activities). Additional categories of activities then introduce more group-oriented and individual-oriented challenges. Explanations of these categories follow.

**Communication.** Developing effective and respectful communication skills is the main objective of this step in the PA sequence. Schoel et al. (1988) mentioned that it is important to prepare the group to work together before placing them in complex problem-solving activities. They wrote:

[Communication activities] provide an opportunity for group members to enhance their ability and skill to communicate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors more appropriately through activities which emphasize listening, verbal, and physical skills in the group decision-making process. (p. 69)

The reader will see later that this stage of the sequence can be considered a “team tool” (Priest et al., 1993) to be developed before attempting challenges that will require effective communication within the group.

**Decision making and problem solving.** The fifth step in the PA sequence introduces initiative activities (i.e., problem solving) which require the group to come up with effective ways of finding solutions to various problems. The problems are often physical and require cooperation, trust, and effective communication. Schoel et al. (1988) suggests that the members of the group have to learn to support each other while participating in a trial-and-error problem-solving process. The activities associated with this step are often presented in a sequence of their own, from the simple to the more complex.

**Social responsibility.** Although this step is identified using a somewhat generic title, the objective of this category of activities is quite specific. According to Schoel et al. (1988):
Activities in this category are often presented as individual tasks or skills to be performed for the benefit of others. Spotting, belaying, community service, and first-aid skills are a few examples of activities within this category. However, most adventure programs use only low-ropes-course activities to promote social responsibility. As explained earlier, spotting is an integral part of an individual low-ropes-course challenge and therefore becomes an ideal task underlining social responsibility through group support.

**Personal responsibility.** The seventh and final step of the PA sequence presents the group with more challenging individual tasks. High-ropes-course activities, rock climbing, and rappelling are classic examples of activities found at this stage of the program. The objective of these activities is to present challenges that will develop persistence, determination, and self-confidence in each participant (Schoel et al., 1988). Although these activities mainly focus on the individual, they can also require a degree of group support.

Also, as mentioned earlier, the PA sequence is perhaps the most known and accepted adventure sequence used today in adventure programming due to the popularity of books like *Islands of Healing* (Schoel et al., 1988) and *Cowsails and Cobras II* (Rohnke, 1989). Parts of the PA sequence can be found in programs for diverse populations such as in adventure therapy (Kimball, 1986), physical education (Anderson and Frison, 1992), and corporate adventure training (Priest et al., 1993).

**The Corporate Adventure Training Sequence**

The Corporate Adventure Training (CAT) sequence introduces categories of activities similar to the PA sequence. The CAT sequence includes five general categories: (a) classroom sessions, (b) socialization games, (c) group initiatives, (d) ropes courses, and (e) outdoor pursuits (Priest et al., 1993). The CAT sequence also includes two other general categories, "client visitations" and "other adventures," respectively placed at the beginning and end of the adventure program. For the purpose of this chapter, only four of the general categories will be discussed.

**Socialization games.** The socialization games category includes two specific types of activities: (a) familiarization and (b) deinhibitation (Priest et al., 1993). Like in the PA sequence, these two first steps are designed to help participants get to know each other while increasing their level of comfort within the group.

**Group initiatives.** The second category of activities includes team tools and team tasks (Priest et al., 1993). Team tools correspond to the trust and communication category of the PA sequence (Schoel et al., 1988). This set of activities focuses on the specific skills required to work efficiently as a group. Here trust and communication are the more common aspects. On the other hand, team tasks can be compared to the decision-making and problem-solving step of the PA sequence (Schoel et al., 1988). Activities in this subcategory present physical problems (i.e., initiatives) that require cooperation, planning, and group consensus.

**Ropes courses.** In this category, individuals participate in low- and high-ropes-course activities. The low-ropes-course activities are similar to the social responsibility phase of the PA sequence, while the high-ropes-course activities match the personal responsibility phase of the PA sequence (Schoel et al., 1988). Both subcategories contain activities that focus mainly on individual challenges that encourage group support. To that effect, group support on the low ropes course is often less psychological (e.g., through verbal encouragement) than physical (e.g., by spotting), as opposed to the high ropes course where group support is typically more psychological and less physical. Since most programs either do not allow students to belay each other on a high ropes course or use a static belay system (i.e., the participant is responsible for his or her own safety), the role of peer support is reduced to psychological encouragement. However, if a participant receives a belay from his or her peers, the support becomes both physical and psychological. For instance, in the activity called *Flying Squirrel* an individual is vertically hoisted up using a rope and pulley system activated by the group (Rohnke, 1989). The group here provides strong physical and psychological support.

**Outdoor pursuits.** The last category of activities in the CAT sequence includes traditional outdoor pursuit activities that are either activity based or wilderness based. In activity-based activities, the participants are introduced to outdoor pursuits that can be experienced in one day such as rock climbing, kayaking, or orienteering. Wilderness-based activities, on the other hand, last at least two days and are the equivalent of an expedition designed to integrate everything the group has learned up to that point. In other words, wilderness-based activities are the final test, or culminating experience, as suggested by Schoel et al. (1988). The outdoor pursuit category matches the "adventure experiences" of the activity process model (Roland, Keene, et al., 1987) or the "adventure activities" of the challenge education sequence (Robb and Ewert, 1987).
Common Phases Among Prescribed Sequences

After analysis, it becomes obvious that the CAT sequence has been strongly influenced by the prescribed sequences that preceded its appearance in the literature. This influence can be found across all of the prescribed adventure sequences presented in this review. As expressed at the beginning of this chapter, it is my contention that all of these prescribed sequences share similarities in their progression. To enhance these similarities, I have classified the various categories of adventure activity into four large, group-related, phases: (a) group formation, (b) group challenge, (c) group support, and (d) group achievement. Each of these phases represents a distinct activity focus. An analysis of these focus areas will help clarify the nomenclature used to identify the phases.

Group formation. Phase one of the classification refers to categories of activities such as goal setting, awareness, cooperative games, trust, communication, icebreaker, deinhibitor, and socialization games. The focus of this phase is quite apparent. All of the activities used at the beginning of the prescribed sequences are designed to help the members of a new group get acquainted with each other. Their progressive set of activities allows the participants to experience fun in a safe social environment. In addition, some of the initial activities are purposefully designed to develop trust and communication skills among participants.

Group challenge. The second phase includes activities that are designed to challenge the group. Various apellations, such as group initiative tasks, group problem solving, group challenges, decision making and problem solving, and team tasks, are used to identify activities that present the group with physical or mental challenges. To resolve these challenges, the group must make decisions while cooperatively recognizing the need for leadership and followership. All of the prescribed sequences presented have included this type of category of activities. Most of them were introduced before the personal challenge activities and after the initial group formation activities. Only two prescribed sequences, the sequential process (Roland and Havens, 1983) and the challenge education sequence (Robb and Ewert, 1987) introduce their set of group challenge activities after having led the group through a series of personal challenges. All other prescribed sequences introduce the personal challenge activities after the group challenge phase.

Group support. The personal challenge activities encountered in the low- and high-ropes-course events are often used at the end or near the end of an adventure program. It seems that the prescribed sequences have all included this category of activities in the last segment of their progression. Professionals in this field have called it individual initiative tasks, high-adventure activities, individual problem solving, social and individual responsibil-

ity, or simply, low- and high-ropes activities. Regardless of their appellation, these categories of activities are quite similar because they require not only self-confidence and determination from the participant, but also psychological support and compassion on the group’s part. Given that this study was mainly concerned with the development of group cohesion, the term group support was chosen to indicate this particular phase in the adventure sequence.

Group achievement. The final phase of the model is used to represent the category of activities that extends the adventure into the realm of traditional outdoor pursuit activities. This may include short-term canoeing, backpacking, and/or mountaineering expeditions, to name a few. The categories are titled adventure experiences, adventure activities, and activity-based or wilderness-based pursuits activities. Because these activities require more time and commitment from the participants, they are not present in all of the prescribed sequences. However, when present, they are invariably placed at the end of the experience.

The phases I have just described summarize the progressions suggested by the most commonly prescribed sequences. These phases are principally concerned with the various developmental stages that a group will experience as the adventure program unfolds. The phases could be regrouped into three large groupings: (a) the “group formation” and “group challenge” phases are group-oriented activities which are introduced at the beginning of the sequences, (b) the “group support” phase is a collection of individual-oriented activities which are introduced near the end of the sequences, (c) the final “group achievement” phase which involves traditional outdoor pursuit activities and/or expedition-type experiences are another group-oriented set of activities which are introduced at the end of the sequences.

Sequencing Group Development

Adventure programming has often been associated with small group development (Ewert, 1992; Kerr and Gass, 1995) and team building (Bronson, Gibson, Kichar, and Priest, 1992; Priest, 1996). Whether the goals of the adventure program focus on skill development or social growth, or have a therapeutical application, groups participating in these programs often experience various stages of group development (Kerr and Gass, 1995).

Group development was defined by Sarri and Galinsky (1974) as “changes through time in the internal structures, processes, and culture of the group” (p. 72). In addition, Sarri and Galinsky (1974) offered three dimensions to the changes in the life of a group: (a) social organization of the group (i.e., changes in the patterns of participants status among the group); (b) activities, tasks, and operative processes of the group (i.e., changes in the decision-making processes inside the group); and (c) culture of the group (i.e., norms, expectations, values, and purposes shared by
the group members). These dimensions are important not only because they change during the life of a group, but because the members undergo these changes with a certain regularity. In fact, these changes are considered so recurrent that they can be classified into phases or stages of development (Sarri and Galinsky, 1974).

Stages of group development have been proposed by several authors of small-group research. The models proposed over the years have varied from three to eight stages of development (Johnson and Johnson, 1987). Still, despite the lack of consensus between the models, there are some important similarities (Tuckman, 1965).

Tuckman reviewed 50 studies on group development which had been conducted with a variety of groups (e.g., therapy groups, sensitivity groups, natural and laboratory groups). After a thorough classification process which included variables such as (a) setting in which the studies were conducted, (b) the social realm in which the group behavior fell at any point during the life of the group, and (c) the position of the group in a hypothetical developmental sequence or stage of development, Tuckman eventually identified four stages of development common to all small group experiences. He called these stages forming, storming, norming, and performing.

**Forming.** During the forming stage, the participants usually experience a period of uncertainty in which they try to determine their status with the group and the group's norms (Tuckman, 1965). Some members search for leadership amidst confusion and anxiety. There is more of a willingness to please each other at this stage than during the storming stage.

**Storming.** During the storming stage, the participants engage themselves in interpersonal conflict as some of them might resist the influence of the group (Tuckman, 1965). During this stage, while reacting to situations with little independence or initiative, group members may show negative behaviors and test the limits of the leaders (Schoel et al., 1988).

**Norming.** During the norming stage, the participants establish a greater level of cohesiveness and commitment towards group cooperation and task accomplishment. The members of the group accept the establishment of new group norms and appropriate behaviors (Tuckman, 1965). Now the group begins to use its own strengths and to take pride in its accomplishments. Members become more independent and willing to work towards accomplishing goals (Schoel et al., 1989).

**Performing.** In the performing stage, the participants are able to perform tasks with proficiency and flexibility (Tuckman, 1965). The unified group members compliment each other by using the strengths of all members (Schoel et al., 1989).

Finally, Tuckman's developmental sequence is subject to some conditions that will influence the rate of progression through the stages. One of these conditions relates to the duration of the group's life. Groups that form for only a few hours a day or a week will progress slower in the developmental sequence than those that are formed and remain as such for several consecutive days. Another condition influencing the rate of progression is the specificity of the task performed. Conditions of intense experimental control might increase the rate of development while a group left on its own without specific tasks to accomplish might take longer. Even though Tuckman (1965) identified these conditions and their influence on the rate of progression, he did not specify the duration for each phase or the entire process.

**Research on Sequencing and Teamwork**

Priest's (in print) study on sequencing and teamwork clearly indicated the effect of sequencing on the development of teamwork among adults. Using a series of variations on the corporate adventure training (CAT) sequence, Priest designed a study that tested 8 different sequences. Table 28.1 (page 212) illustrates the variations performed on the CAT sequence.

Priest found that all subgroups improved their teamwork as a result of the 10-week CAT program. Improvement ranged from 50 percent to 70 percent on a 100 percent scale. Variation in the degree of teamwork improvement was attributed to the order of activities. Priest, then, indicated that teamwork in some subgroups began to improve immediately while in others it started with a slight decline before increasing. He concluded that:

The greatest gains in teamwork were achieved from the group-oriented activities like socialization, group initiative tools and tests, and low ropes course with spotting [group support]. Individually oriented activities, such as high ropes courses, orienteering and rappelling, were powerful adjuncts to the group-oriented activities, provided they followed in sequence and did not precede the later.

So in Priest's study, sequence B displayed the most uniformity and greatest increase in teamwork with activities such as socialization, group initiative tools, group initiative tests, and the low ropes course displaying significant differences at p < .05 in post hoc comparison. These findings are important because they are the first to support the assumption that the sequencing of adventure activities can have either a positive or a detrimental effect on the way adventure program participants develop teamwork skills and attitudes.
Table 28.1 Variations on the CAT Sequence

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<th>Group</th>
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APC = Action Planning and Closure  
GSI = Goal Setting and Introduction  
Class = Classroom Lectures  
High = High Ropes Course  
Low = Low Ropes Course  
O’ing = Orienteering Course  
Rapp = Rappelling  
Social = Socialization Game  
Tools = Group Initiative Tools  
Tests = Group Initiative Tests

Source: Adapted from Priest, Attarian, and Schubert, 1993, p. 12.

Research on Sequencing and Group Cohesion

In 1997 a panel of 25 professionals in adventure education was used to establish a “hypothetically correct sequence” (Bisson, 1997). Using a modified Delphi questionnaire, I invited scholars and practitioners on this panel to develop a “hypothetically correct sequence” that would promote the development of group cohesion among sixth grade students participating in a five-day residential outdoor adventure program.

After three rounds, the modified Delphi questionnaire indicated that the following sequence of categories of activities could be accepted as a hypothetically correct sequence. This sequence of categories of adventure activities was:

1. acquaintance activities,
2. deinhibitizer activities,
3. communication activities,
4. trust activities,
5. group problem-solving activities,
6. individual low-ropes-course events,
7. individual high-ropes-course events, and
8. outdoor pursuit experience.

My study was twofold. First, it established a hypothetically correct sequence, and second, it measured the effects of this sequence on the development of group cohesion among students participating in a traditional outdoor adventure program. Group cohesion results for the hypothetically correct sequence were also compared to the results from a group that received an “altered sequence” and a control group that participated in an environmental education residential program.

In the second phase the Group Development Assessment (GDA) questionnaire developed by Jones and Bearley (1994) was used to determine the level of group cohesion among subjects. The GDA included four phases identified as dependency, conflict, cohesion, and interdependence. Of those, only the mean scores of the cohesion phase were used for data analysis.

My finding suggested that the hypothetically correct sequence appears to be effective at developing group cohesion among participants. Second, although the altered sequence was effective at developing group cohesion, it
was significantly less effective than the hypothetically correct sequence. Finally, it appears that participating in a residential outdoor adventure program was more effective at developing group cohesion than participating in an environmental education program.

**The Multilayer Sequence Model**

This chapter reveals four important observations. First, it indicated that sequencing was perceived as one of the most important programming factors in adventure-based learning. Second, it pointed out the generalized belief that adventure sequencing could not be reduced to one ultimate or universal sequence. Third, it also demonstrated that most prescribed sequences, although different in length, nature, and context, share some common developmental phases. And fourth, it reported that appropriate sequencing has a direct effect on the development of teamwork (Priest, in print) and group cohesion (Bisson, 1997).

In light of this new information regarding sequencing, it appears that a balance between extreme flexibility and rigid universality in adventure sequencing is still the subject of a profound contention, these two perspectives create a false dichotomy that keeps the debate over adventure sequencing lingering and unresolved. Hence, we must entertain an alternative and more encompassing notion about sequencing.

Arguing for some flexibility has merit because, evidently, each adventure learning group is composed of people with different personalities and is submitted to a particular set of group dynamics. It is therefore reasonable to tend toward keeping the sequence of categories of adventure activities as flexible as possible so as to adjust the type and order of these categories of activities to the needs of each group.

On the other hand, some universality has not only been demonstrated by the obvious similarities found between the various prescribed sequences in our field, but most importantly, it has been supported by numerous research studies on small group dynamics. These studies suggest that most newly formed groups will experience a series of behavioral phases that are predictable and, somehow, common to the social maturation of any group.

From this rationalization, a new theory emerges which can be explained as follows. Adventure programming can be composed of three distinct types of sequences, each operating at a different level in a planning continuum. At one end of the continuum one would find a level of “flexible planning” that relates to the “microsequence.” The other end of the continuum would contain a level of “fixed planning” relating to the “macrosequence.” While the middle of the continuum would contain a level of “mixed planning” corresponding to the “mesosequence” (Figure 28.4).

In other words, the microsequence would refer to the adventure activity per se (e.g., Spider’s Web, Tension Traverse, Human Knot). This sequence would be flexible in nature and could be modified at any time by the adventure educator in response to the needs of a particular group.

The macrosequence would represent the phases the group experiences throughout its development. These phases were introduced earlier in this chapter as (a) group formation, (b) group challenge, (c) group support, and (d) group achievement. These phases, representing the macrosequence itself, would imply that some categories of adventure activities should be integrated and introduced in a specific order according to the social development of the group. In other words, the macrosequence would include a fixed plan of categories of adventure activities that would operate as catalysts for the social maturation of a group. This would also mean that because of its rigidity, no phase of the macrosequence could be bypassed.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented in its opening a popular remark from Tom Smith. Smith often said that sequencing is the most important thing but that there was no sequence. After reviewing Priest’s and Bisson’s studies on sequencing and group attributes, it seems that Smith is right when asserting that sequencing is an important programming component of any adventure-based curriculum. Moreover, if we accept the multilayer sequence model we can also accept Smith’s argument that “there is no sequence.” Since it is quite possible that Smith was referring to the microsequence when arguing that there is no “magical sequence,” it is then possible to subscribe to his remark on sequencing.

Although the model proposed in this chapter helps alleviate the dissonance between rigid planning and flexible planning, more studies on sequencing are needed to confirm or refute the proposed model. In addition, more inquiries are needed to see if sequencing has also an effect on other popular programming outcomes such as trust building, problem-solving skills, and leadership skills.

**References**


Bisson, C. (1997). *The effects of varying the sequence of categories of adventure activities on the development*


