



Oregon Deafblind Project



Building Effective Programs

Lyn Ayer, Ph.D., Grant Project Director September 2016



Hello all!

Ah! Summer vacation has run out! Hope everyone is enjoying being back in school, meeting friends, new teachers (and old) - and generally getting back

into the swing of things. Some of you will be going to new schools too!

Our Parent Weekend 2016 went really well — with speakers on emergency preparedness for our families — and Robbie Blaha talking about a number of topics. If you want to know more — take a look at the blog on our homepage: www.oregondb.org - and here's an animoto slide show with some slides. Thank you to parents and other participants who provided the photographs. I was disastrous as a photographer — new camera — and forgot the battery-pack at home! Oh well! It all worked out. <https://animoto.com/play/h20cpftmftmZiA559ivG@>

We would really love more parents to join this group — for support, for information — and for fun too! We now have a parents-only PRIVATE facebook page—so, parents, if you want to join in the conversations on there — please send me an e-mail. Since this is a private page — it is restricted and no one can get in unless we allow them in..... Info for those of you who don't trust facebook and other social media. Of course, it is totally up to you. If you want to connect with the 2016 parent group — you can still do so — since I have a group list too.

Lyn



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“A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.” James Dent



OHOA Modules

Here's the OHOA brochure from NCDB for you to look over and download if you

want to:

https://moodle.nationaldb.org/pluginfile.php/32680/mod_page/content/13/Meet%20OHOA.pdf

OHOA MODULE 10

Concept Development and Active Learning

LEARNING OUTCOMES (From www.nationaldb.org)

- Recognize the impact of deaf-blindness on an individual's development of concepts and incidental learning.
- Compare and contrast skill development and concept development.
- Recognize that trusting relationships are essential for the development of concepts about the self (and concepts about the self are essential for learning).
- Recognize the role of touch and exploration in the development of concepts and active learning.
- Identify the role of language and communication in the development of concepts.
- Describe methods for incorporating experiential learning and functional tasks.
- Apply deaf-blind strategies in the development of routines which support active learning and concept development.



I loved the introductory video about building a snowman. It gives you a quick idea of what this abstract thing is — a "concept". AND it is cool to watch too. In the Inquiry challenge video, Jen shows us how inadequate some "models" are for children who are deafblind and — really — how they could develop wrong or inadequate concepts. The inquiry challenge form allows you to think more specifically about a banana and what we should be teaching to get to the total concept.

Activity one:

Concepts start with self — and spiral outwards to other people, actions, things and places. We develop concepts in a social context — and not in isolation. Experience and functional learning are at the heart of concept development. This is covered in the slide presentations—and the quiz.

Miles, B., & McLetchie, B. (2008). Developing concepts with children who are deafblind. National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness. Retrieved from

<http://documents.nationaldb.org/products/>

Activity two:

The sense of touch—and its appropriate use—is critical for children who are deafblind. So—if social interactions are a starting place, it follows that children who are deafblind need to learn more about the people in their lives. The slideshow in this section has videos that demonstrate how touch is used to communicate and learn about others, strategies to use and how to promote tactile learning in a way that is comfortable for the child. Strategies are shared from two significant sources of information on touch — Project SALUTE and Dr. Van Dijk. All of these strategies involve trusted connections with another human being.

Miles, B. (October, 2003, rev.) Talking the language of the hands to the hands. DBLINK. Retrieved from <http://documents.nationaldb.org/products/hands.pdf>

Activity three:

This section connects the philosophy, materials and techniques of Active Learning (Dr. Lilli Nielsen) as being essential to the development of concepts and summarized in the article noted in the box below.

<http://www.tsbvi.edu/resources/2151-five-phases-of-educational-treatment-used-in-active-learning-based-on-excerpts-from-are-you-blind-by-dr-lilli-nielsen>

Dr. Kathy Nelson talks about how the brain (and emotions) are involved in concept development.

Activity four:

The final activity section of this module helps to differentiate between skills and concepts. Knowing a skill or set of skills does not necessarily mean the child has learned the concepts too. For example, knowing the skills to make a snowman may not give a child the concept of a snowman (as our intro video showed us). Routines are created so that children learn the skills they need to know — in a sequential manner; but the teaching of concepts should also be a part of this. For example, if a child learns to brush his teeth, he should be learning that his teeth are now “clean”; or to brush her hair or put things away — “tidy”. And then concepts can be expanded to include other things and situations — e.g., a “clean” load of laundry, “clean” floors, “clean” dishes, etc. Concept development is linked to communication development (remember — the “social” context?). Sometimes it is assumed that if a child knows words and can speak, sign or write them, that he/she knows the concept. The module gives an example of a child not understanding how “big” or large a train is — until his father walked the length of the train with him!

There are 18 modules currently available, and two on Touch (and a couple of others) that will be available before the end of 2016. Read more about them at the following link so that you can decide if you want to learn more about a specific topic:

<https://moodle.nationaldb.org/mod/page/view.php?id=24821>

Paths to Literacy blog: Can Active Learning Be Used for General Education. Interesting approach, with examples of a Science lesson:
<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/blog/can-active-learning-be-used-general-education-instruction>



MANY organizations and individuals, including children and parents, were involved in creating the OHOA modules! Take a look at this long list: <https://nationaldb.org/ohoamoodle/contributors.html>



ATTENTION PARENTS!



Have you seen the “FAMILIES MATTER” section of the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) website? If not—take a look. You may.....

- Find a family you would like to connect with....
- Learn about the DB network’s FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE
- Join an ongoing FAMILY DISCUSSION — or start a new one
- Find information in SPANISH
- Connect to the NATIONAL FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR DEAF-BLIND



<https://nationaldb.org/families>

MEMORY

(continued from Summer 2016 publication)

“It is an important part of what makes us truly human, and yet it is one of the most elusive and misunderstood of human attributes.” <http://www.human-memory.net/>

Recap

The last time, we discussed what memory is (or might be!), and types of memory — sensory and short term. The next thing we need to look at is Long term memory:

Sensory memory → Short term memory → Long term memory

Here’s where we left off:

Long term memory No one yet knows enough details about long-term memory. It is possible that we never forget anything that gets stored there – but that the recall process may be affected and it may appear like we have forgotten. In the elderly, long-term memories often seem to come out of nowhere – and even seem more vivid than before. So they WERE somewhere – buried in the brain – resurrected by some association that seems random.

You need short-term memories to create long-term memories, but this can only happen when there is a process of CONSOLIDATION, stabilizing a memory “trace”:

- **“Rehearsal”** -- Repeat, repeat, repeat! Make it “routine”. Literally – a synapse increases in strength as an increasing number of signals are transmitted between neurons. “As such a neuronal pathway, or neural network, is traversed over and over again, an enduring pattern is engraved and neural messages are more likely to flow along such familiar paths of least resistance.” http://www.human-memory.net/processes_consolidation.html. If a new experience “adds” to an existing memory, the brain may “re-wire”. In order to sustain this rewiring, the body produces new proteins to actually rebuild the synapses in the new shape – the “new” memory! If that does not happen, the memory will weaken over time. It is important to continue to practice the “new” additions along with the old so they meld together. So, again – simply repeat, repeat, repeat. Be aware that sometimes, instead of adding something to an existing memory network, the new information causes interference and can be disruptive to the older memory—and end up being confusing for a child. Perhaps for our children who are deafblind/multi-disabled it may help to let some time pass before adding the “new”.
- And here’s something to keep in mind – **SLEEP** (slow-wave or deep sleep) is critical during the first few hours. Even daytime naps can help! “Studies have shown that information is transferred between the hippocampus and the cerebral cortex during deep sleep” and it is essential for the process of consolidation. This fact makes me wonder whether a child who cat-naps (e.g., a child with CVI) may be resting in order to consolidate something he saw or experienced. We DO know that after a cat-nap, a child with CVI is usually more alert and ready to learn once more.
- **Associations that are meaningful** – Make it functional. Doing this causes us to create a network of meaning – and therefore probably a stronger neural network.
- **Reading out loud** – or even whispering or mouthing – helps with memory. We know this. Most of us have actually done this. I know I still do this when I am preparing for a presentation or a discussion. The auditory connects to the visual and are better together. So if a child can read, or use another sense (e.g., vision-touch, sound-touch) - it will help consolidate a memory too.

The WHAT and HOW of long term memory:

Long term memory includes memories that reveal WHAT happened (episodic memory) – events, and facts. These are sometimes in the form of a series of events that form the whole story, reflecting on something that actually involved the individual-- “autobiographical events – times, places, associated emotions and other contextual knowledge”. http://www.human-memory.net/types_episodic.html. So – it is really important to relate back to a SERIES, step by step perhaps instead of just one little piece out of context. We could do this by creating little booklets that represent the whole story or

the whole routine – and go from page one to the next and onwards until the end. One can make a good case for a type of forward and backward chaining here too – with stress on a series.

Memory also includes other types of memories. For example, Semantic memory, which is an extension of episodic memory and contains some of the HOW as well. It is “a more structured record of facts, meanings, concepts, knowledge about the external world” – and this is knowledge separate from the personal type of knowledge or may have started out by being personal and now can be categorized as “simple knowledge” – hard facts. It is abstract – and connected to symbolic language.

For example, a child who is deafblind may recall early experiences in a hospital – brightness, loud sounds, voices of medical personnel, the smell of disinfectant in the room or on the bedclothes – and the procedures that happen to him/her. In the background, there may also have been music or the rhythm of a specific piece of medical equipment. All these are episodic – and may be played again and again in the child’s brain. All these pieces, as they occur, are distributed in the brain to various areas –vision, hearing, smell, etc) but the hippocampus puts them all together into one “episode”. Any ONE of these pieces could trigger the entire episode. That is possibly why a child may startle or fuss suddenly – because a “trigger” brought up the whole hospital experience. I remember traveling in a car en route to the Children’s Museum in Portland – with one of our children who is deafblind, his brother, and his mother. As we got close to Portland, he became very fussy and made loud complaining sounds. And suddenly as we rounded a curve on the freeway, this changed – to a big smile and happy sounds. I had no idea why – until his mother said, “We just went by the ramp to the hospital!” Aha! I guess, a combination of blurry vision and muscle memory told him this.

Sometimes personal “episodic” memories and general knowledge “semantic” memories combine into an “autobiographical” memory. The article has an interesting sidebar that says that autobiographical memory may be linked to handedness. It states that for someone who uses both hands (mixed handedness), autobiographical memory seems to be stronger. They think this may be a reflection of better communication between the brain’s two hemispheres, and a better functioning corpus callosum. So it is worth noticing if a child is right- or left-handed, or ambidextrous.

Also relating to long-term memory is what the article calls “temporal direction” http://www.human-memory.net/types_retrospective.html . We all look BACK to past episodes and occurrences (Retrospective Memory). But, connected to this is what we know we have to remember in the future (Prospective memory) – or “remembering to remember”. For instance, when we have to use cues to trigger a retrospective memory that will also help us recall what we will be doing or looking at. A child who is deafblind definitely needs cues (as we all do!!). Thoughts bounce between the two. If a child has a routine of dropping off the attendance sheets in the main office at school, he already has the routine in retrospective memory. However, he may still need those cues – to know when he is halfway to the office (humming sound or sound of water splashing from the water fountain), at the office door (cue pasted on the door jamb, or a change from floor to carpet). It is the reason why we make lists too. I know one youth who was deafblind who would make up his grocery list in the order of the various aisles in the store. He used his past knowledge of WHERE to project where he needed to be in the store.

<http://www.brainhq.com/brain-resources/memory/types-of-memory/long-term-memory> I enjoyed reading this article on long-term memory with some really simple points to remember. Long term memory:

- Can last for a few days or a few years
- May not be of equal strength — some are more memorable than others; some need prompting/reminding
- It is dynamic. We revise, add, and even blend one memory with another (therefore not always reliable!)
- You can consciously or unconsciously remember something — riding a bike is the latter
- Different “forms” of memory mix and mingle
- If the brain of a person does not or cannot record sensory information clearly, memory recall is affected
- Sharpening the process of what you take in through your senses will improve memory — Does this sound familiar — “Practice, practice, practice”?



And I like the “memory mythbusters” in this article: <https://elearningindustry.com/memory-types-facts-and-myths> . Read the short article!

Here are “thought ticklers” from it:

- There are no everlasting memories
- Memory is not infinite
- Encoding will not reinforce our memory
- Don’t study before you sleep
- Memory decays with age
- The people that learn faster are those that hardly forget
- There is no easy way to memorize

This site has 10 memory myths: http://www.memory-improvement-tips.com/memory-myths.html?utm_campaign=elearningindustry.com&utm_source=memory-types-facts-and-myths&utm_medium=link

This article on working memory – which it calls the “search engine” of the mind — is excellent too: http://www.cogmed.com/about-working-memory?utm_campaign=elearningindustry.com&utm_source=memory-types-facts-and-myths&utm_medium=link

Another article on working memory from which we can derive some information for our children who are deafblind: https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/executive-functioning-issues/5-ways-kids-use-working-memory-to-learn?utm_campaign=elearningindustry.com&utm_source=memory-types-facts-and-myths&utm_medium=link

This link lists 12 interesting facts about human memory – and the first one states that the human brain starts remembering – FROM THE WOMB: <http://www.theceugroup.com/12-surprising-human-memory-facts/> You can also learn some amazing “memory” facts about Alexander the Great, Mozart, Winston Churchill, and Bill Gates! Take a look.



PARENTS AND FAMILIES —
Watch the family pages on our website for information on emergency preparedness — not yet up, but soon: www.oregondb.org

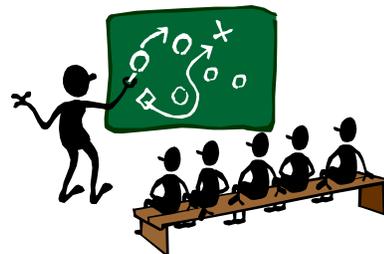
FACEBOOK SHARE



- August 2016 of Complex Child has an Advocacy theme. Here is one of the articles. Take a look at the others too! <http://complexchild.org/articles/2016-articles/august/10-tips-powerful-advocate/>
- Helen Keller loved dogs. Read more: <http://www.perkins.org/stories/blog/helen-keller-a-life-with-dogs>
- Back-to-school shopping tips from Paths to Literacy: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/blog/making-back-school-shopping-meaningful-accessible-and-fun>
- Do you like emojis? I do! Here are some disability-related ones: <https://parentingspecialneeds.org/article/18-new-disability-emoji-celebrate-use-share/>
- Microsoft’s wheelchair options for its facebook avatars: <http://www.theverge.com/2016/7/5/12095890/microsoft-wheelchair-xbox-avatars>
- Apple users — there is a new Duxbury Braille Translator available for you: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/new-dbt-now-available-mac>
- Modified Ladybug game from Paths to Literacy: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/strategies/family-game-time-modified-ladybug-game>
- Listen to Jim Allen from TSBVI on the subject of navigating the web: <http://library.tsbvi.edu/Player/13100>
- Literacy for students with intellectual or multiple disabilities (Part 1) from Paths to Literacy: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/blog/literacy-students-intellectual-or-multiple-disabilities-part-1-components>
- Adaptive mobile technology could help blind people “see” through their smart phone or tablet: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/06/150625081516.htm>
- 3-D sounds? <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/07/160718104338.htm#.V5jBvz2iEgc.twitter>

THE OREGON DEAFBLIND WORK GROUP

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WEB INFORMATION:

The Oregon Deafblind Project Website: www.oregondb.org

The home page has our newsletters, both current and archived.

Also get frequent information from our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Oregon-Deafblind-Project/132672043449117>

and our Pinterest page: www.pinterest.com/lynbayer

We also have our newsletters and other information on our web-page with our partner organization, the Oregon Department of Education:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=185>



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