A Summary of Stages Research

The Stages framework and activities were developed over many years, and much research shaped its evolution. This document summarizes the Stages research to date.

Introductory Sections

The introductory sections of Stages: A Systematic Framework to Design Learning and Select Educational Materials for Individuals with Cognitive or Language Delay describe and summarize contemporary issues in designing meaningful learning. Although there is a range of topics discussed, these references reflect the most compelling trends.

References for Assessment and Evaluation Trends
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Project
http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/

More about the Common Core aligned learning maps can be found here:
http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/content/what-learning-map

Example test questions can be found here:
http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/content/releasedtestlets_im

National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC)
http://ncscpartners.org/

Organizing comprehensive resources using a wiki, an impressive collection includes documents, presentations and videos in support of teaching and evaluation for learners with intensive special needs.
https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page

Start with the Help page to become familiar with how to navigate and use the wealth of tips and tools.
https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Help:Contents

References for Professional Development Trends

Center on Technology and Disability
http://ctdinstitute.org/

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Project
http://dlmpd.com/

National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC)
http://ncscpartners.org/

Please also refer to the General Resources at the end of this document that reflect the resources gathered at the end of the book and do not necessarily fit into any specific Stage but instead offer generic support.

Stage One

In Stage One, the learner begins to use an appropriate input device to control the learning environment and establishes a reliable access behavior. She realizes that pressing a switch or pressing on the touch interface for the device can make something happen on the screen. This reliable access behavior is the first step in the learning process.

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Journal of Special Education Leadership (issue referenced: Volume 12, Number 2, Fall 1999) Council of Administrators of Special Education, CASE, Inc., 101 Katelyn Circle, Suite E, Warner Robins, GA 31088

Korsten, Jane E., Terry V. Foss, and Lisa M. Berry. *Every Move Counts Clicks and Chats: Sensory-based Approach: Communication and Assistive Technology. Kansas City: EMC, Inc., 2007.*

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TAM Connector (issue referenced: Volume 12, Number 1, Fall 1999) Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191

The Center for AAC & Autism, http://www.aacandautism.com

Stage Two

In Stage Two, the learner is exposed to deliberately richer language experiences. She learns that objects have names and that actions have words to describe them. The learner is not asked to identify objects, but simply to be a sponge and absorb information about them. This Stage develops receptive language and pre-linguistic skills.

Stage Two activities present language to learners without requiring a response, thus developing their receptive vocabulary. Early literacy research has shown the importance of exposing learners to the sound of words, the symbols for them, and their labels (Cunningham, 2000; King-Debaun and Musslewhite, 1997).

Research in the area of emerging literacy also tells us that the rhythm and rhyme inherent in nursery rhymes are important vehicles for the beginning development of phonemic awareness (Cunningham, 2000). Once learners can hear rhymes, they begin to isolate word patterns. Exposing learners to all forms of emerging literacy that are meaningful promotes language acquisition (King-DeBaun and Musslewhite, 1997).

References for Stage Two

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Stage Three

In Stage Three, the learner demonstrates an understanding of language through object identification and categorization. For example, she can show that she knows what a dog is (identification) and that an apple is a type of food (categorization). This is the first Stage in which the learner is asked to make a selection or respond to a question based on a prompt. Choice-making skills develop now, as well as the ability to wait as choices are presented.

Stage Three is the first stage at which the learner is making choices, and so presents a significant opportunity for assessment. Until this stage, there have been few ways for the learner to show what concepts he or she has learned. We can now begin to evaluate the learner's expressive language development and cognitive skills. In addition, choices offered using multiple levels of representation (i.e., photographs, drawings, symbols) give learners an opportunity to show their understanding of concepts presented at different levels of abstraction.

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TAM Connector (issue referenced: Volume 12, Number 1, Fall 1999). Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191

Stage Four

Stage Four marks another significant turning point in the learner's progress—the learner moves from language foundation to academic readiness. Until now, the content has focused on building a solid language foundation. The Stages framework stresses that before a learner can be expected to enter an established academic program, he must have a stable foundation in language. In Stage Four the focus shifts toward more traditional development in both academic and social skills.

Math curriculum activities follow the guidelines of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). The foundation of the literacy curriculum standards is the National Reading Panel Report of 2000.

References for Stage Four

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Stage Five

The majority of the learner's academic growth occurs at Stage Five. She expands her skills from learning simple mathematical concepts to solving more complex problems. She grows from basic spelling skills to full and fluent literacy. This type of academic journey takes time. The development of full academic functioning begins now and continues through the rest of the learner's life. A Stage Five learner should be working on Stage Seven writing skills at the same time that she is working on complementary reading skills. She will be reading and writing simple sentences at first. As skills progress, she will be expected to incorporate vocabulary words and other content-related words, as various subjects of study become part of her curriculum.

Many states align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) developed in 2009. CCSS is an effort to organize consistent, real-world learning goals that prepare all students for college or career, regardless of where they live. Extremely detailed standards have been published, revised, and described for any state to leverage.

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Stage Six

A Stage Six learner applies academic concepts to real world situations. In this Stage, the learner is aware of and wants to be involved in the world around her. She begins to apply his knowledge to allow her to become more independent. The focus changes from academics to applied knowledge and functional learning skills, commonly referred to as activities of daily living (ADL). This is indeed a thrilling Stage for the learner. Academics and social skills come together in a pragmatic way for the learner at this time. The learner's needs and goals will continue to dictate the focus and content of education. For example, some learners may not achieve the skills needed for reading for enjoyment. However, they may acquire the ability to read for safety, which is an important skill for community independence. In this way, Stage Six is an academic detour from Stage Five, still offering an educational content but in a more applied way.

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Vicker, Beverly 2009. Meeting the challenge of social pragmatics with students on the autism spectrum. The Reporter, 14(2), 11-17.

The following websites were selected because they were active and helpful resources as of the publication date of this book:

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)
www.aamr.org

The ARC of the United States
www.thearc.org

Best Buddies International, Inc.
www.bestbuddies.org

Crotched Mountain Foundation
www.cmf.org

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) at the University of Washington
www.washington.edu/doit/

Job Accommodation Network
http://askjan.org/

University of Arizona's Project FOCUS:
http://www.projectfocus.arizona.edu/

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WIFACETS)
http://www.wifacets.org/links/national-institute-life-planning-persons-disabilities

Stage Seven

The ability to clearly and independently express one's thoughts on paper is the most sophisticated skill in the Stages framework. Independent writing is a high-level skill that incorporates other literacy skills such as reading, spelling and organization. Because there is a separate teaching methodology associated with writing and the related materials selection is unique, it is set aside as a separate Stage.

A learner's ability to write independently is essential to continuing her education, seeking employment, living independently, and communicating with others. When a learner writes a sentence, tremendous potential for academic independence begins. The skills involved in written expression include both language use and mechanical conventions such as spelling and grammar.

References for Stage Seven

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http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/

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The Center for Literacy & Disability Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill. Writing with Alternative Pencils CDs

Willis, Judy. A Writing Activity to Help Students with Attention Disorders. 2006. National Writing Project. Retrieved 2015 http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2363

Observable Skills Checklist

The purpose of academic assessment is to evaluate the accomplishment of learners in relation to knowledge and skills identified within a chosen framework. It is important that the instrument or procedures implemented be both reliable and valid. Research reflects these issues as they are reflected in the design of the Observable Skills Checklist.

References for Observable Skills Checklist

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Exploring Reliability in Academic Assessment. Retrieved online from <https://www.uni.edu/chfasoa/reliabilityandvalidity.htm>
The Center for the Enhancement of Teaching. How to improve test reliability and validity: Implications for grading. [Available online: http://oct.sfsu.edu/assessment/evaluating/htmls/improve_rel_val.html].

Resources

Be sure to check each Stage for resources specifically connected and referenced in context.

AAC Intervention
916 West Castillo Drive
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340
http://aacintervention.com/

http://spedapps2.wikispaces.com/

Abilities Expo - Abilities Expo local events
2601 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite 200
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Phone (310) 450-8831
www.abilities.com

Alliance for Technology Access – network of local resource centers
1119 Old Humboldt Road
Jackson, TN 38305
1 (800) 914-3017
www.ataccess.org

Apple Computer, Inc. Worldwide Disability Solutions
1 Infinite Loop
Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 996-1010
http://www.apple.com/accessibility/
http://www.apple.com/contact/

Assistive Technologies Industries Association – publications, conference, webinars, resources, research
330 N. Wabash Avenue, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60611-4267 USA
(877) OUR-ATIA (687-2842)
www.atia.org

Assistive Technology Internet Modules – create a free account to find information and professional development
Education Service Center of Central Ohio
2080 Citygate Drive
Columbus, OH 43219
(614) 445-3750
http://www.atinternetmodules.org/

Bridge Assessment – early literacy and language assessment framework
Center for Literacy and Disability Studies
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB #7335, Suite 1100 Bondurant Hall
321 South Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7335
(919) 966-8566
http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/early-childhood-resources-1/the-bridge-assessment

Center on Technology and Disability – create a free account to find information resources, personal and professional development activities, technical assistance
1825 Connecticut Avenue N.W.,
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 884-8588
http://ctdinstitute.org/

Closing The Gap – newspaper, resource directory, conference, webinars
P. O. Box 68
Henderson, MN 56044
(507) 248-3294
www.closingthegap.com

Deaf-Blind Model Classroom Resources
Center for Literacy and Disability Studies
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB #7335, Suite 1100 Bondurant Hall

321 South Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7335
(919) 966-8566
http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/deaf-blind-model-classroom-resources

Disability.Gov - U.S. federal government website for information on disability programs and services nationwide
https://www.disability.gov

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC) - Educational Resources Information Center
http://eric.ed.gov/

Exceptional Parent Magazine - magazine with annual technology issue
6 Pickwick Lane
Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07677
(800) 372-7368
www.eparent.com

Microsoft Corporation
1 Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052
(800) 426-9400 or (425) 882-8080
www.microsoft.com/enable

Madalaine Pugliese Online Resources

Pinterest
https://www.pinterest.com/madspugliese/

Wiki for iPad Recommendations
http://apps4stages.wikispaces.com

Luis Perez You Tube Channel on Accessibility
https://www.youtube.com/user/lfperez72/videos

PrAACtical AAC
http://praacticalaac.org/