

# Dynamic Assessment of Language

## Learning Process Assessment and Assessing Learning Potential

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### Quotes on Dynamic Assessment

“...Can help identify learning potential and eliminate bias for students with cultural and linguistic differences or socio-economic risk factors.”

“...assessment which seeks to identify the skills that an individual child possesses as well as their learning potential.”

“Dynamic assessment measures how a student responds to intervention and the difference between what the student can learn unaided, and what he or she can learn with assistance...”

“...is highly interactive and process-oriented.”

Virginia Department of Education, 2013

[www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/ issues/Dynamic-Assessment/](http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/Dynamic-Assessment/)

### Dynamic Assessment Methods Include:

1. Graduated Prompting
2. Testing Limits
3. Test-Teach-Retest

\*\* Use with any type of task to examine potential for learning / growth.

Gutiérrez-Clellen, V. F. & Peña, E. (2001). Dynamic Assessment of Diverse Children A Tutorial. *Lang Speech Hear Serv Sch*, 32(4), 212-224

Why This is Important: Spaulding, T., Plante, E., Farinella, K. (2006) ***Eligibility Criteria for Language Impairment -Is the Low End of Normal Always Appropriate?***, *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools* Vol.37 61-72

*“The practice of applying an arbitrary low cut-off score for diagnosing language impairments is frequently unsupported by the evidence that is available ...in test manuals.”*

<b>Expectations in the Literature for Diagnostic Accuracy</b>	
<b>Sensitivity ≥ 80%</b> Correct identification as impaired	<b>Specificity ≥80%</b> Correct identification as typical

*“Perhaps the most discouraging finding of this study was the lack of correlation between frequency of test use and test accuracy...assuming the ideal goal for diagnosis is 100% correct classification of children, accuracy levels should correlate with frequency of test use.”*

Betz, Eickhoff, & Sullivan, 2013

### Comprehensive Assessment Reference

- Information and references
- Specific data for 13 tests
- Information from publisher and research may conflict
- Designed to assist SLPs in discussing need for additional data sources
- [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov) search “SLP”

### Selecting Norm Referenced Assessment Tools

- Consider data including sensitivity and specificity
- Consider data from test producers and researchers
- Consider the norming sample
- Consider the impact of cultural and linguistic bias

**Federal Regulations 34 CFR §300.304**

- “Not use any single measure or assessment is used as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability”
- “Use technically sound instruments...”
- “Assessment and other evaluation tools...are selected and administered as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis”

**Overview of Dynamic Assessment**

**Consider Two Cases**

Is there a concern in reporting a single score without dynamic assessment data?


<b>Dynamic Assessment Measures</b>	
<b>Formal Systems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamic Assessment and Intervention Kit: Improving Children’s Narrative Abilities</li> <li>• PEARL (Predictive Early Assessment of Reading and Language)™</li> <li>• Narrative Language Measures™</li> <li>• Other purchased tools</li> </ul>	<b>Informal Systems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Age Language Measures (SLAM)</li> <li>• Story Champs™</li> <li>• Mindwing Concepts™</li> <li>• Destination Imagination</li> <li>• Test-teach-retest using standardized and norm referenced tests as the “test</li> </ul>

**Mediated Learning Components**

<b>Component</b>	
Intentionality	Teach, create awareness in the child
Meaning	Help child to understand why task is important
Transcendence	Help child think hypothetically.
Competence	Teach child to be self-regulated & active participant in own learning.

From [www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/components](http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/components)

**Mediated Learning Strategies**

- Assist student in meeting target and building competence
- Examples include:
  - Provide a model
  - Additional time
  - Paraphrasing or shortening of directions
  - Visual prompts or cues
  - Encourage elaboration with questions

<b>Consider Responsiveness</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Examiner Effort</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does the child respond?</li> <li>• Does the child maintain attention to task?</li> <li>• Does the child utilize the learning strategies provided?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well does child apply new skills?</li> <li>• Does child needs prompts to apply strategies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much support did you provide?</li> <li>• How intense in the support?</li> </ul>

**SLP’s Clinical Judgment**

- Practice improves performance
- Inter rater reliability is stronger at the ends of the spectrum
- This is NOT the only piece of data used in decision making

**Examine Modifiability: Consider the student’s stimulability / modifiability / responsiveness**

- Prompts
- Errors
- Confidence
- Rate
- Effort (child and adult)

**The Impact of Poverty on Language: Considerations for Assessment**

*Why Does The Gap Persist?*

*“Three-year-old children in professional families had a vocabulary as large as that of the **parents** in the study who were on welfare.”*

[www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov04/vol62/num03/Why-Does-the-Gap-Persist%2%A2.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov04/vol62/num03/Why-Does-the-Gap-Persist%2%A2.aspx)

*“The disproportionate use of vocabulary measures compared to morphosyntactic measures suggests that the content of the most frequently used standardized tests is not necessarily supported by the existing research literature.”*

Betz, Eickhoff, & Sullivan, 2013

**Semantic Knowledge**

Static Assessment

- Vocabulary tests measure exposure to words
- Highly effected by SES and mother’s education

Dynamic Assessment

- Measures ability to learn new words
- Differentiates WNL from SLI
- Fast Mapping (Dollaghan, 1987)

**The Impact of Poverty**

Likely deficits in:

- Personal efficacy behaviors
  - Perseverance
  - Self talk
- Information Capital
  - Knowledge based reasoning
  - Analytic thinking

Tier 2 Words

Words that are used in text and during classroom discussions.

Instruction in general education should address these needs

Search “Tier 2 Vocabulary”

<https://www.flocabulary.com/wordlists/>

- Tier 2 words (high FQ not domain specific – similar, fortunate)

<http://www.hpcsd.org/district.cfm?subpage=29208>

**Consider Home Culture**

Examine experiences with

- Locus of control for behavior
- Structure and use of routines
- Use of rigid time limits
- Temporal concepts (first, next, then)
- Language and story use

**Examples of Dynamic Assessment Methods**

What can you learn?

- Personal Efficacy Behaviors (Self talk, perseverance, etc.)
- Attention
- Imitation
- Problem Solving
- Memory
- Emotional state

Fast Mapping

- Measures the ability to learn novel words from exposure rather than vocabulary tests that differentiate socio-economic classes
- Significant differences between typically developing and children with SLI

Mapping in Normal and Language-Impaired Children  
Dollaghan, C. A. (1987). Fast Mapping in Normal and Language-Impaired Children. *J Speech Hear Disord*, 52(3), 218-222. doi: 10.1044/jshd.5203.218.

Fast Mapping

- Presentation of item and novel word
- Did incidental learning occur?
- Receptive language
- Expressive language
- Are prompts are required?
- What techniques assist the student in learning new words?

<p><b>Destination Imagination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick interactive tasks</li> <li>• “Instant Shaker” or Printables</li> <li>• Designed to stimulate creative processes</li> <li>• Use to examine:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organization</li> <li>○ Planning</li> <li>○ Language</li> <li>○ Problem Solving</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples from the PEARL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamic Assessment of Decoding and Language</li> <li>• Uses Test-Teach-Retest method</li> <li>• Interpretation and Recommendations are based on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student pre and post scores</li> <li>○ Responsiveness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## Narrative Assessment

*“The diagnostic accuracy of distinguishing a language difference from language impairment is substantially increased when LSA is used in conjunction with standardized testing.”*

Language Sample Analysis With Children Who Speak Non-Mainstream Dialects of English,  
[RaMonda Horton-Ikard](#), *SIG 1 Perspectives on Language Learning and Education*,  
March 2010, Vol. 17, 16-23.

Narrative Analysis	
Macrostructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Story Grammar</li><li>• Episodic Complexity</li></ul>	Microstructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literate Language</li><li>• Cohesion</li><li>• Clauses</li></ul>

Free Narrative Resources  
[www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov) and search  
“SLP”

- Free Resources
- School Age Language Measure Cards
  - Narrative Protocol for Picture Prompted Stories
  - Online modules with quiz and certificates

Story Champs ([www.languagedynamicsgroup.com](http://www.languagedynamicsgroup.com))

- Narrative tools for regular or special education staff (small or large group)
- Pre-k through High School
- Resources:
  - Scripted Stories
  - Icons for story parts
  - Written language activities
  - Story Champ Blitz extensions for older students

## Why Use Narratives?

- Relevant & contextualized task (content is taught as stories)
- Research shows up to 100% sensitivity and specificity as dynamic assessment tool
- Examine for multiple areas in one task
  - Morphology
  - Syntax
  - Semantics
  - Pragmatics

## Evaluation Reports and Dynamic Assessment

### Report Sections

1. Assessment Data
  1. Standardized/norm referenced
  2. Dynamic Assessment and Language Sample Analysis
2. Analysis/Interpretations
3. Recommendations

★ Reporting scores is NEVER enough

### Dynamic Assessment Data

- Dynamic assessment data is a valid source of data in IDEA
  - Evaluation and Eligibility
  - Regulations
- Written reports should contain data from these activities
- Document type of dynamic assessment, materials used, and mediated learning sessions
- Describe strategies and student performance and modifiability

### Documentation

- Consider including:
  - ✓ Summary of task and data
  - ✓ Comparison data (typical expectation or examples )
  - ✓ Summary of strengths and weakness

### Provide citations when appropriate to address:

- Diagnostic accuracy
- Research on usage
- Administration manual
- Regulations and state/professional guidance

## **A Review of Dynamic Assessment**

- Diagnostic accuracy is high and documented in the literature
- Reduces cultural and linguistic bias compared to norm referenced and standardized tests

### Dynamic Assessment

#### Methods Include:

1. Graduated Prompting
2. Testing Limits
3. Test-Teach-Retest

Use with any type of task to examine potential for learning / growth

### Dynamic Assessment

- Uses YOUR unique training and skills
- Differentiates between difference and disorder
- Reduces bias in assessment
- Informs instruction and leads to clear recommendations
- Informs treatment (if required)
- You can do this!