

Dynamic Assessment: An Effective Approach for Children with Speech and Language Learning Difficulties

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Introduction

Speech and language learning difficulties can have far-reaching consequences for a child's development and academic achievements. Effective communication skills are fundamental for social interaction, learning, and overall well-being. When children face challenges in speech sound production, language comprehension, expressive language, or social communication, their ability to effectively communicate and engage in various academic and social contexts may be compromised [1]. Early identification and appropriate intervention for speech and language learning difficulties are essential to provide children with the support they need to overcome these challenges. Addressing these difficulties early on can prevent further academic and social struggles, fostering a positive learning experience and enhancing the child's overall communication abilities. Dynamic assessment has emerged as a valuable and effective approach in the assessment and intervention process for children with speech and language learning difficulties. Unlike traditional static assessments that provide fixed conclusions about a child's abilities, dynamic assessment takes a more interactive and individualized approach. It acknowledges that a child's skills are not fixed, but rather malleable and open to change with appropriate support and guidance. In dynamic assessment, the child is actively engaged in the assessment process through interactive activities and guided learning experiences. The assessor observes how the child responds to mediation, support, and prompts, providing valuable insights into the child's learning potential and problem-solving abilities [2]. The individualized nature of dynamic assessment allows speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to tailor interventions specifically to each child's unique needs. By identifying a child's areas of strength and challenges during the assessment, SLPs can design targeted intervention strategies that address the specific aspects of speech and language learning difficulties. Dynamic assessment also offers the advantage of considering a child's cultural and linguistic background, making it a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach [3]. This ensures that the assessment and intervention process aligns with the child's cultural context and experiences, promoting a more meaningful and effective learning experience. Moreover, dynamic assessment provides valuable information for progress monitoring. By conducting post-assessments, SLPs can track the child's development over time and make informed decisions about the effectiveness of the intervention [4,5]. This ongoing evaluation allows for adjustments and modifications to the intervention plan, ensuring continuous improvement and maximizing the child's language development progress. Speech and language learning difficulties can have significant implications for a child's communication development and academic success. Dynamic assessment, with its interactive and individualized approach, has proven to be a valuable tool in addressing these challenges. By actively engaging the child in the assessment process, dynamic assessment offers insights into the child's learning potential, paving the way for personalized and targeted intervention strategies. As a flexible and culturally sensitive approach, dynamic assessment holds promise in supporting children with speech and language difficulties, promoting inclusive and effective intervention practices, and ultimately fostering

improved communication and academic achievements for these children.

Understanding dynamic assessment: Dynamic assessment is an interactive and collaborative method that goes beyond traditional static assessment approaches [6]. It involves actively engaging the child in the assessment process through guided, hands-on activities to observe their learning potential, problem-solving abilities, and responsiveness to intervention. Unlike static assessments that provide fixed conclusions about a child's abilities, dynamic assessment acknowledges the malleability of a child's skills and seeks to uncover their learning potential.

The dynamic assessment process is characterized by three main stages:

Pre-assessment: In this stage, the assessor establishes a baseline of the child's current skills through traditional assessment tools and gathers information about the child's background, learning experiences, and any potential barriers to learning.

Mediation: During this stage, the assessor actively intervenes and scaffolds the child's learning through explicit teaching, prompts, and feedback. The goal is to observe how the child responds to mediation and to identify their potential to learn and acquire new skills.

Post-assessment: The post-assessment stage evaluates the child's progress and the impact of mediation. This allows the assessor to determine whether the child's performance improved as a result of the intervention and to identify any remaining learning needs.

Application of dynamic assessment to speech and language learning difficulties: Dynamic assessment is particularly well-suited for children with speech and language learning difficulties because it can provide a deeper understanding of their learning processes and communication capabilities [7]. By actively engaging the child in the assessment process, dynamic assessment allows for the identification of their unique strengths, challenges, and potential areas of growth.

Individualized intervention: Dynamic assessment enables speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to design personalized intervention plans tailored to each child's specific needs. By identifying the child's potential

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Received: 26-Jun-2023, Manuscript No. jspt-23-108063; **Editor assigned:** 28-Jun-2023, PreQC No. jspt-23-108063(PQ); **Reviewed:** 12-Jul-2023, QC No. jspt-23-108063; **Revised:** 18-Jul-2023, Manuscript No. jspt-23-107856(R); **Published:** 25-Jul-2023, DOI: 10.4172/2472-5005.1000199

Citation: Sternberg E (2023) Dynamic Assessment: An Effective Approach for Children with Speech and Language Learning Difficulties. J Speech Pathol Ther 8: 199.

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to learn and adapt, dynamic assessment informs the development of targeted strategies to address speech sound production, language comprehension, expressive language skills, and social communication.

Assessment of learning potential: For children with speech and language difficulties, traditional assessments may not fully capture their true abilities [8]. Dynamic assessment uncovers a child's learning potential by focusing on their responses to mediation and support, helping to identify areas where they may thrive with appropriate guidance and intervention.

Culturally sensitive assessment: Dynamic assessment is sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity, allowing SLPs to consider a child's cultural background and experiences when assessing their language abilities [9,10]. This ensures that assessment and intervention strategies are respectful and inclusive of the child's cultural context.

Progress monitoring: The post-assessment stage of dynamic assessment helps measure the child's progress over time. This ongoing evaluation allows SLPs to adapt and modify intervention plans as needed, ensuring continuous improvement and maximizing the child's language development.

Conclusion

Dynamic assessment offers a valuable and interactive approach to assessing and supporting children with speech and language learning difficulties. By focusing on a child's learning potential and individualized needs, dynamic assessment empowers SLPs to create targeted intervention strategies that optimize the child's language skills and overall communication development. As a flexible and culturally sensitive approach, dynamic assessment holds promise in improving outcomes for children with speech and language difficulties and promoting inclusive and effective intervention practices in speech-language pathology. Continued research and implementation

of dynamic assessment can enhance its application and impact on supporting children's communication success and overall well-being.

Acknowledgement

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

Author declares no conflict of interest.

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