"A PROFESSIONAL DECISION YOU HAVE TO MAKE": A SOCIOCULTURAL EXPLORATION OF PRACTICE AND IMPACT WITHIN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' USE OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

Evidence suggests that despite convincing arguments as to why Educational Psychologists (EPs) should use Dynamic Assessment, use of the approach amongst professionals may be low. There is also little evidence to show the impact of Dynamic Assessment other than a handful of case studies. This research aimed to better understand EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment in two Local Authorities by exploring specific practices and influences on practitioners using semi-structured interviews based on Engeström's Activity Theory Framework. This framework was complemented by a Personal Construct Psychology technique known as the Repertory Grid Method to ensure due weight was given to the beliefs experiences and choices of EPs interviewed. A case study was also carried out to look at the impact of Dynamic Assessment on a Special Needs Coordinator working with an EP in one of the Local Authorities. The research found that Dynamic Assessment provides information about a child's strengths, difficulties and approach to learning, along with insight into what helps the child to learn more effectively. When used within a consultative approach where the adult working with the child is an integral part of the assessment process, this increased understanding can result in changes to the way the member of staff thinks about and works with the child, and potentially how they work with other children too. Despite these benefits the research showed that there are many constraints to EPs using the approach that require personal commitment and effort to overcome, sometimes in spite of the prevailing culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Aims of my research

Dynamic Assessment is an approach used by Educational Psychologists (EPs) to assess children's cognitive skills and their approach to learning. Unlike traditional psychometric assessment, Dynamic Assessment is typically subjective, qualitative and interactive. It focuses on what the child can achieve with support rather than their unassisted performance.

This thesis explores the difference that Dynamic Assessment can make in EPs' work and how this can be explained. Specifically the research focuses on,

- What are the sociocultural and personal influences on EPs who use Dynamic Assessment?
- What are the specific practices EPs carry out when they use Dynamic Assessment?
- What is the impact of Dynamic Assessment on adults working with children in schools?

Why research Dynamic Assessment?

Dynamic Assessment offers many EPs a psychologically and ethically sound way of working with children and young people who have experienced educational failure. The approach is based on a social constructivist understanding of learning and

development (Vygotsky, 1978) and aligns with beliefs about an essentially social and optimistic purpose of education.

My professional practice has repeatedly demonstrated the benefits of the Dynamic Assessment for children parents and staff. Perceptions of ability have been challenged and strategies which help the child have become clearer. However in some cases I have had less success, prompting reflection on what is needed in order for Dynamic Assessment to be an effective use of time. My management responsibilities have further increased my interest. I have often felt the desire to demonstrate the potential benefits of the approach to colleagues who appear to use other forms of assessment in a mechanistic and uncritical manner, with little change for the child as a result.

The current political context makes the question of 'what works' in EP practice even more pressing. The austerity agenda (Her Majesty's Treasury, 2014), coupled with ongoing academisation of schools in the UK (Department for Education, 2016), has led to increased trading with schools within a competitive arena. This has made it essential that EPs are able to demonstrate their value and distinctiveness and show how their work improves outcomes for children and young people. The need to carry out robust research to better understand the potential value of Dynamic Assessment within EP practice is clear.

What is already known about Dynamic Assessment?

Dynamic Assessment was first introduced to EPs in the UK in the early 1990s (Lidz, 1991; Elliott, 1993). However despite considerable interest in the research and theoretical literature there is a perception that it remains underused. Barriers identified to EPs using the approach include logistical difficulties (e.g. Stringer et al, 1997), the perceived need for statistical rigour (e.g. Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001), the level of professional expertise and commitment required (e.g. Elliott, 1993) and cultural beliefs and practices which discourage EPs (e.g. Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000). Concerns about the difficulty of linking assessment to intervention in the classroom have also been identified (e.g. Yeomans, 2008). Research into the extent of EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment has shown that take up is low (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Woods and Farrell, 2006), however studies have typically been methodologically flawed, and have lacked in depth analysis of the practices, choices and influences on those who do use the approach.

Most often case studies have been used to demonstrate the impact of Dynamic Assessment (for example Birnbaum and Deutsch, 1996), although a number of experiments have been conducted by David Tzuriel (1987, 1995, 2000b) to show changes in the child within the assessment itself as a means of validating Dynamic Assessment instruments. Tzuriel and others have concluded that the assessment itself can lead to structural changes in the child's cognitive functioning, although it is recognised that these are likely to be short term. Some researchers such as Lauchlan et al (2007) have also concluded that the assessment can give the child a

more positive sense of themselves as a learner and result in longer-term changes to their attitude to learning.

The literature and research suggests that Dynamic Assessment can provide a rich picture of the child's learning, including information about their learning potential, the specific cognitive processes that they may need to develop, mediational strategies that are useful in supporting the child's learning and affective factors which may be impacting on learning, (see for example Feuerstein 1979, 2002; Elliott et al, 1996). Of the research reviewed for this thesis, a small number of studies (for example Lawrence and Cahill, 2014) looked at the subsequent impact of the Dynamic Assessment on the teacher, concluding that the approach has potential to support longer-term change in the child by impacting on beliefs about the child and subsequent intervention provided. The lack of rigour in these particular studies makes it hard to generalise about the potential of Dynamic Assessment more broadly however.

What is the original contribution of this thesis?

This thesis provides an original contribution to the literature by investigating a number of a-priori propositions about the possible benefits of Dynamic Assessment using a mixed methods case study design with a range of pre and post assessment measures. In contrast with previous research, the study will explore Dynamic Assessment as a complex social phenomenon consisting of not only the assessment itself, but also preparation and follow up with schools. The thesis also contributes new knowledge regarding the specific Dynamic Assessment practices of EPs and

how their personal experiences and beliefs, alongside sociocultural factors affect these choices.

The theoretical propositions investigated in the thesis are as follows:

- Dynamic Assessment practice is influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors
- Dynamic Assessment provides information about the cognitive and affective factors impacting on a child's learning
- Dynamic Assessment provides information about how the child can be helped to learn more effectively
- Dynamic Assessment can impact on the practice and beliefs of adults supporting the child in school
- The impact of Dynamic Assessment is influenced by the individual practices of the EP as well as wider sociocultural factors

Structure of the research

My research uses sociocultural psychology to explore the Dynamic Assessment practice of EPs working in two Local Authority (LA) Educational Psychology Services. Activity Theory (Engeström, 1999) is used as a framework to understand and model professional practice. This framework is supported by an approach from Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) to ensure that the importance of individuals within the activity is not overlooked.

The research is carried out in two phases. Firstly an exploration of practice in the two services provides an indication of the diversity of Dynamic Assessment practice that exists within and between the LAs. This first phase uses semi-structured interviews to examine what EPs do when they use the approach, what they think about Dynamic Assessment (including the influences on their practice), and what difference they think it makes. The second phase uses a single case study to test out these findings in real time. The case study particularly focuses on looking for evidence of impact of the approach using a range of pre and post assessment quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. It is hoped that by adopting this pragmatic approach to the research, there is ample opportunity for triangulation of findings, and in so doing, addressing any concerns about internal validity.

My thesis is underpinned by the interpretative epistemological position. I have made the assumption that I am able to understand Dynamic Assessment practice and impact best by studying the perspectives of those involved. I recognise that by adopting this stance and relying heavily on qualitative data and a single case study design I leave myself open to criticisms about external validity. However my aim is not to generalise from my study to the wider population of EPs, but instead, (following Yin, 2003), to develop theory which will in turn be subject to critique and testing through future research, and at a less formal level by individual EPs trying out the evidence based recommendations.

My approach to qualitative data analysis is based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) method of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. Following

Yin (2003), I also use a 'pattern matching approach' to conclude whether my findings support my specific research propositions.

Structure of my thesis

The thesis follows a traditional natural sciences experimental report structure.

In Chapter 2 I describe and critically review what is already known about Dynamic Assessment and its impact. This literature review focuses specifically on the Dynamic Assessment practice of EPs in the UK, although where appropriate reference is made to international practice and thinking. In addition to presenting what is known about the topic, the discussion highlights where there are gaps in our understanding and where previous research has been methodologically unsound, before offering a clear rationale for the present study.

Chapter 3 describes my methodology and research design. I give an overview of Activity Theory, focussing particularly on the use of the approach as a framework for conducting research. I also outline the criticisms of this theory and describe how my own research uses Personal Construct Psychology and additional interview questions to give due emphasis to the influence of individuals within activity. I then justify my choice of research design, and finally describe in detail the method adopted in the first phase of interviews with EPs and the case study in the second phase and how I analyse the resulting data.

Chapter 4 presents the main findings of my research, highlighting the similarities and differences between EPs in the two authorities and tensions and changes in their practice over time. The results are structured around the components of Engeström's Activity System. I then describe the findings of my case study, exploring the practices of one EP in detail, and highlight the evidence of impact of the approach using the pre and post assessment data.

In the penultimate chapter I discuss how my findings relate to my research propositions and overall aims. I highlight where the findings support previous research findings and where they offer a new understanding of specific issues. I also reflect on where my choice of method and design at times limited the faith that should be placed on my results, for example as a result of inconsistent methodology looking at who is involved in Dynamic Assessment,

In my concluding chapter I reiterate my strongest findings and offer these as a 'best current practice' theory and consider the implications for EPs and their everyday working practices.

Finally my appendices contain a sample of my raw data plus full result tables. I also include copies of data collection tools and a glossary of Dynamic Assessment tests.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter I provide a critical review of the Dynamic Assessment literature, focusing particularly on what is currently known about EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment in the UK and the impact of the approach. After describing the current professional context in which EPs are working and highlighting the on-going debate about the importance of casework with individual children, I focus on definitions of Dynamic Assessment, the advantages of the approach, the extent of use by EPs and the barriers to greater uptake. Finally I look at ways in which Dynamic Assessment can be used to inform intervention in the classroom. Throughout the chapter I highlight the gaps in our current understanding and offer a critique of the research, before concluding with a rationale for the present study in relation to the literature.

An important distinction is made at this point between the focus of my research, 'Dynamic Assessment', and the tools used to investigate it, 'Activity Theory' and 'Personal Construct Psychology'. A discussion of these approaches is presented not in this literature review therefore but in Chapter 3, which describes my methodology.

The literature review focuses specifically on the Dynamic Assessment practice of EPs in the UK, although where appropriate reference is made to international practice and thinking. Use of Dynamic Assessment in the UK typically adheres to the 'clinical' approach introduced by Reuven Feuerstein in the late 1970s. This approach differs from the more standardised 'interventionist' approach used predominately in

mainland Europe and for research purposes. Much of the international literature is of limited relevance therefore to EPs practising in the UK. However where international perspectives offer insight into the practical application of Dynamic Assessment or explores the underlying principles of the approach, (for instance in the work of Carol Lidz), or focuses on the assessment tools familiar to many EPs (as in David Tzuriel's research) this has been included.

The literature review was conducted by searching for relevant literature in a variety of ways. The first involved following up references provided in taught content during the early stages of my professional doctorate at Birmingham University, input on Dynamic Assessment during my professional training at the University of Southampton and in a four day course from David Tzuriel in 2004. Additionally the online Dynamic Assessment reference list maintained by Carol Lidz (now managed by the Vanderbilt University and available online at http://discoverarchive.vanderbilt.edu/handle/1803/3913) was a useful source of information. Finally I conducted a number of searches via the University of Birmingham online library databases including but not exclusive to ERIC, MedLine, PsychARTICLES (Ovid) and the British Education Index (EBSCO).

The role of EPs

A paper published in Educational Psychology in Practice argued that after years of discussion about the role, what EPs actually do is now reasonably well articulated.

> 'EPs are fundamentally scientist-practitioners who utilise, for the benefit of children and young people (CYP), psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through the functions of consultation, assessment, intervention,

research and training, at organisational, group or individual level across educational, community and care settings, with a variety of role partners,' (Fallon et al, 2010, p.10).

However, the authors went on to suggest that despite clarity at this level, *how* EPs go about delivering this role in day to day practice is still very much up for debate.

Discussion about the work of EPs in the last decade has focused on a number of key areas:

- Describing the tasks carried out by EPs (e.g. DfEE, 2000; Farrell et al, 2006)

- Describing the frameworks underpinning EP practice (e.g. Kelly et al, 2008)

- Defining what is unique and distinctive about the role of the EP (e.g. Ashton and Roberts, 2006; Cameron, 2006), and

- Debating the relative importance of various aspects of EP work

The latter debate has focused in part on the importance of direct assessment of individual children within EP practice. The argument about whether this casework is desirable has an enduring theme in professional discourse since the publication of Gillham's book 'Reconstructing Educational Psychology' in 1978.

As advocates of individual casework, Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) argue that EPs are in 'danger of becoming obsolete' (p.71), if they do not embrace this aspect of the role, citing evidence showing the value attributed to individual EP casework by schools, (Mackay and Boyle 1994; Farrell et al 2006). The authors further support their argument by noting the link between individual casework and systemic

approaches, the unique skills possessed by EPs to carry out the work and the ongoing need to understand children with highly complex and individualised needs.

Where EPs have argued against a place for individualised casework they have often done so by stressing the relative importance of other aspects of EP work, for instance Boyle and Mackay (2007). Other authors have reported evidence that EPs are dissatisfied with the amount of individual casework they are required to carry out (Shannon and Posada, 2007) and that they do not see it as the most valuable aspect of their work (Ashton and Roberts 2006).

A number of factors make it difficult to judge the relative merits of these two viewpoints however. Firstly, terminology is not used consistently either in professional practice or in the literature. The terms casework, individual assessment and statutory work are used interchangeably but may have very different meanings to EPs. Some professionals would describe work based on a consultative approach (Wagner, 2000) as individual casework whereas others would not as it may not involve working directly with the child.

The need to complete statutory assessment work has also influenced debate about the relative importance and attractiveness of individual casework. Leadbetter (2000) suggested that the impact of statutory work at a time when the profession was considering the merits of a more systemic preventative approach may have contributed to the idea of casework being less preferable. The perceived link with the

use of psychometric testing has also been highlighted as contributing to the low status of individual casework (Boyle and Lauchlan, 2009).

Whatever the stance that is taken on the relative merit of individual casework, it is widely acknowledged that it remains an integral (and valued) feature of EP work, (DfEE, 2000; Farrell et al, 2006). Within this wider debate, the place of Dynamic Assessment and its potential to support intervention in the classroom has been an area of considerable discussion.

Dynamic Assessment

It is almost 40 years since Reuven Feuerstein and colleagues wrote the seminal text, 'The Dynamic Assessment of Retarded Performers: The Learning Potential Assessment Device Theory, Instruments and Techniques,' (1979). The book described an approach to assessment that focused on what could be learned given support and actively explored the social, emotional and cognitive factors impacting on performance.

The last two and a half decades have seen EPs in the UK take a significant interest in the approach. A number of key writers have written repeatedly about the benefits of the approach for EPs. Further discussion has been made about why, given the advantages of Dynamic Assessment, uptake has been slow. In more recent times thoughts have begun to turn to how the profession might use the approach most effectively to impact on better outcomes for children and young people.

This review focuses on the literature written about Dynamic Assessment either for or by EPs in the UK. Additional mention is also made of key international writers who have proved particularly influential on EP practice in the UK. The review seeks answers to the following questions:

- What is meant by the term Dynamic Assessment?

- What are the advantages of using Dynamic Assessment for EPs?

- To what extent are EPs using the approach?

- What are the barriers to EPs using Dynamic Assessment?

- How can Dynamic Assessment be used to inform intervention in the classroom?

What is Dynamic Assessment?

Dynamic Assessment is an assessment approach used by some EPs in the course of their individual casework with children and young people (e.g. Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000). Feuerstein et al (2002) describe Dynamic Assessment as being based on a number of key principles. These include the role of the assessor in actively creating a Mediated Learning Experience in order to bring about structural change in the child's cognition, observation as the means of assessing change and the use of domain free tasks. Feuerstein's model is also underpinned by a 'state' rather than 'trait' view of intelligence, (p. 99).

Table 1 shows definitions of Dynamic Assessment that have been suggested over time. Key features of Dynamic Assessment apparent in these definitions are discussed below.

A variety of techniques

A number of the definitions in the literature make reference to the idea that Dynamic Assessment is an umbrella term for a variety of procedures and techniques. Lidz (2014) suggests that differences in approach under this broad concept are to be found in the nature of the interventions provided during the assessment, the content domains and the information outcomes. Interventions during the assessment may be either flexible and responsive exemplified by Feuerstein's clinical approach, or standardised and quantitative, for example the graduated prompt approach promoted by Campione and Brown, 1987. Assessment may involve non-familiar (domain general) materials (Feuerstein et al, 1979) or curriculum (domain specific) materials (Lidz, 1991). The purpose of Dynamic Assessment can be to inform placement or to predict performance (more typical of mainland Europe) or to support classroom intervention (more typical in the UK, Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001).

Lidz (2014) also suggests the information outcomes of describing the enhanced level of performance of the learner, exploration of the obstructions to optimal levels of performance, determination of specific learner needs and provision of a baseline against which future progress can be gained from the approach.

Reference	Definition
Lidz (1991)	An approach that follows a test-intervene-retest format, and that focuses on learner modifiability and on producing suggestions for interventions that appear successful in facilitating improved learner performance. Dynamic assessment also provides information regarding functional and dysfunctional metacognitive processes, as well as regarding intensity of intervention involved in producing change,' (p.6).
Waters and Stringer (1997)	'In offering an individual an assessment task, the assessor is concerned to set the best possible conditions for the individual, to observe the cognitive strengths and weaknesses of the individual as they attempt the task, and to use those observations as feedback to determine the nature and amount of mediation ('the connecting and enriching link') required to enable the individual to succeed on that task,' (p. 97).
Deutsch and Reynolds (2000)	'Assessments based on adult mediation represent intensive, time-limited interactions where the assessor is not looking for the average performance of a child, but is searching for samples of maximal performance as an indication of his/her ZPD [Zone of Proximal Development] and is also seeking means to help him/her to move through it,' (p.312).
Elliott (2000)	'A measure that directly assesses the process of learning, by means of adult-child scaffolded interaction, and examines the child's potential to learn (given appropriate intervention),' (p.61).
Tzuriel (2000b)	'The term Dynamic Assessment refers to an assessment of thinking, perception, learning and problem solving by an active teaching process aimed at modifying cognitive functioning. Dynamic Assessment differs from conventional static tests in regard to its goals, processes, instruments, test situation and interpretation of results,' (p. 180).
Lauchlan and Elliott (2001)	'Dynamic Assessment aims to help the child gain a better grasp of the nature of the task, draw upon important cognitive and metacognitive processes and, by addressing the affective realm, build feelings of competence. As a result, such assessment should provide important diagnostic information about the child's ability to learn,

	maintain and transfer new skills,' (p. 648).
Elliott (2003)	'An umbrella term used to describe a heterogeneous range of approaches that are linked by a common element, that is, instruction and feedback are built into the testing process and are differentiated on the basis of an individual's performance,' (p.16).
Yeomans (2008)	'Dynamic Assessment examines the processes, rather than the products of learning. It identifies strengths and weaknesses in the process skills or cognitive functions of the learner. The unique feature of Dynamic Assessment that differentiates it from other major assessment paradigm…is that intervention is an integral part of the assessment process,' (p. 105).
Lidz (2014)	'A procedure that provides adjustments in response to the response of the learner to the embedded interventions sufficient to generate useful and meaningful recommendations for intervention which promote learner competence. The nature of these adjustments provides the content we need for individualised educational programs and for monitoring student progress over time,' (p.296).

Table 1. Definitions of Dynamic Assessment from the literature

In recent years some authors have embraced the concept of Dynamic Assessment as an 'umbrella' term and have started to explore the ways in which even standardised psychometric assessments are dynamic in part (e.g. Muskett et al, 2012). However others have been keen to rule out that which is not dynamic under this umbrella term and to reaffirm essential inclusionary criteria. As an example Bavali et al (2011) guard against the use of 'false Dynamic Assessments' in second language teaching, suggesting that only those approaches which are underpinned by the work of Vygotsky and Feuerstein and are highly interactionist (see below) represent 'true' Dynamic Assessment.

An interactive collaborative assessment

The collaborative interaction between the assessor and the child in a Dynamic Assessment has been identified as the one constant feature appearing in all definitions (Elliott, 2003; Haywood and Lidz, 2007). In UK educational psychology practice this interaction is typically but not always described in terms of Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (1979), an example of an 'interactionist' as opposed to 'interventionist' procedure (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000). Lantolf and Poehner (2004) describe the difference as follows:

> 'In [interactionist Dynamic Assessment] assistance emerges from the interaction between the examiner and the learner, and is therefore highly sensitive to the learner's ZPD. In [interventionist Dynamic Assessment] forms of assistance are standardised, therefore emphasising the psychometric properties of the assessment procedure,' (p.54).

They go on to explain that interventionist approaches are interested in the speedy and efficient acquisition of new and specific learning content, whereas interactionist approaches are characterised by the lack of both a 'predetermined endpoint' (p.54) and concern for the amount of effort required to bring about change, stressing the development of the child as of paramount importance.

The purpose of the assessment

Haywood and Lidz (2007) identify a focus on the child's modifiability or ability to learn with help, as a constant feature of definitions of Dynamic Assessment. A focus on assessing the child's ability to transfer their new learning to related problems (transcendence) is also a common feature. Other elements of the definitions relating

to purpose include information about the child's cognitive strengths and difficulties and the identification of strategies needed to bring about change in the child's performance.

Kozulin (2011) suggests there is confusion about the concepts of learning potential and cognitive modifiability within Dynamic Assessment practice. He describes the former as

'The evaluation of children's ability to benefit from models, cues and examples during the performance of the learning tasks', (p.175).

The latter on the other hand is described as

'The modifiability of a wide range of cognitive functions of students and/ or their readiness for the transition from one cognitive-developmental stage to the next one', (p.175).

Kozulin is keen to stress that as an approach based in the social constructivist paradigm, the purpose of Dynamic Assessment should be to identify the child's cognitive modifiability.

Very few of the definitions specifically mention assessment of affective factors impacting on performance. Affective factors are the child's emotional responses and attitudes that can have a positive or negative effect on their learning. An international

review of the literature by da Silva Ferrão and Fiorim Enumo (2008) also found little explicit inclusion of affective factors in approaches to Dynamic Assessment. More recently, a review by Tiekstra et al (2014) of 31 studies scrutinising the consequential validity of Dynamic Assessment found that only two of the procedures researched made explicit reference to affective motivational strategies within the interaction or intervention stage.

This omission is surprising given the emphasis that Feuerstein placed on affective factors in his work where he described the relationship between cognition and emotion as 'two sides of a transparent coin,' (Feuerstein, 2003, p.33).

> 'Affectivity representing the energetic factor, both generates and is generated by cognitive processes. Thus, motivation and attitudes cannot be considered in isolation from such cognitive factors as knowledge, operations, anticipation of outcomes, and adoption of strategies for achieving particular goals. The choice of one's goals and aims is strongly contingent, upon cognitive functions and mental acts by which one singles them out of a number of possible alternatives, using comparison in order to ascribe priorities to one as opposed to another,' (p.32).

A focus on affective factors is apparent in case studies reported by EPs in the literature however, (for instance Lauchlan et al, 2007) and in tools developed to 'capture' the child's performance during Dynamic Assessment (for instance Lidz 1991, 2003; Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010; Lauchlan and Carrigan, 2013). The lack of reference to affective factors in the literature may be due to the greater emphasis on research oriented approaches which tend to focus on speed of mastery and amount of instruction required rather than the wider aims of clinically oriented approaches, (Khaghaninejad, 2015).

Finally, in comparison to her earlier definition, increased attention is paid to the 'what for?' of the Dynamic Assessment process in Lidz's 2014 definition which clearly makes the link to the child's education and the desire to bring about positive change. As discussed later in this chapter, this shift reflects a growing emphasis on the meaningfulness of the approach and the need to improve the link between dynamic assessment and intervention (e.g. Yeomans, 2008).

Towards a definition of Dynamic Assessment

A definition of Dynamic Assessment which is of relevance to EPs needs to include information about the interactive nature of the assessment, the information sought during the process, the fundamental reason for EPs to choose Dynamic Assessment and an indication of the breadth of procedures subsumed within the term.

In response, my definition of Dynamic Assessment is as follows:

> 'Dynamic assessment describes approaches to assessment which focus on illuminating the cognitive processes and affective factors impacting on a child's performance through the child and assessor working together on a task. Integral to the assessment is the active role of the assessor in trying to create the optimum conditions for the child to learn both content needed for the task and more general processes that can be applied to both the task and beyond. Working in this way allows the assessor to gauge the child's responsiveness to support and to use these observations to subsequently inform tailored intervention in the classroom which will help the child learn more effectively.'

The degree to which EPs interviewed for this research agree with this definition is discussed in my findings and discussion chapters.

The use of Dynamic Assessment in the UK

Of the approaches discussed, Feuerstein's clinical approach is the best known to EPs in the UK. In a survey of EPs with a stated interest in Dynamic Assessment, Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) found that of the 60% of EPs who identified a theoretical basis for their assessment practice, 41% acknowledged the influence of Feuerstein's ideas. Elliott et al (1996) compare this situation with the approach in the rest of Europe and the United States where practice has been heavily influenced by the perceived need for some level of procedural or scoring standardisation.

Deutsch and Reynolds suggest that the situation in the UK has come about as a result of the training and materials that have been accessible to EPs. There is nothing in the literature or in my professional experience to suggest that this situation has changed since 2000. Regular training offered to EPs by Ruth Deutsch (heavily based on Feuerstein's approach) and more recently the launch of the CAP (Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010) have possibly narrowed the sphere of influence even further.

A possible counter influence to this situation may however arise from the highly accessible practical text 'Dynamic Assessment in Practice' written by H. Carl Haywood and Carol Lidz (2007), which albeit acknowledging Feuerstein's influence adds a different emphasis to the approach through a focus on curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment.

The vast majority of the practice papers and research reviewed for the purpose of this review are overtly based on Feuerstein's model of Dynamic Assessment,

although a few do introduce alternative approaches, if then to argue for the superiority of the clinical approach (Elliott, 1993). One noticeable foray from this tradition however is the research carried out by Lauchlan and Elliott (2001). In this paper, obviously appealing to the interests of the wider international Dynamic Assessment community, the authors explore the validity of the concept of learning potential as measured through Dynamic Assessment procedures in predicting the subsequent performance of children with learning difficulties. What is interesting in this paper is the departure from the interpretative epistemological position assumed in the vast majority of authors writing about Dynamic Assessment in the UK.

In this research Lauchlan and Elliott adopt a positivist approach to Dynamic Assessment. They use numerical measures of modifiability to categorise children as 'low' or 'high' potential in an experimental design to investigate the effect of children receiving cognitive intervention on standardised measures of reading, maths and reasoning. The assumption made is that accurate measurement of learning potential during Dynamic Assessment is both possible and valuable as it can be used to predict the likely success of future intervention. This contrasts significantly with Feuerstein's view.

> 'Except in instances of great success (where they certainly constitute evidence of the individual's capacity to acquire and apply learning), the absolute numbers are not informative of the changes that can, under other circumstances, be produced in the individual. In situations of lesser success, no success, or negative performance, absolute numbers can be misleading at best, or can obscure the potential for change at worst,' (p.509).

Why should EPs use Dynamic Assessment?

Attempts by authors to argue why EPs should be using Dynamic Assessment have focus on a number of themes. Authors have variously argued that Dynamic Assessment:

- Fulfils the requirement of professional practice guidelines

- Can overcome some of the problems of traditional psychometric approaches

- Is useful in specific situations and to answer particular questions

- Can support EPs to inform intervention in the classroom

- Has been demonstrated to bring about positive change for children and teachers

Each of these themes is discussed in detail below.

Fulfils the requirement of professional practice guidelines

Recently Hill (2015) has offered a broad perspective to the discussion about why EPs should use Dynamic Assessment, focusing on professional practice guidelines. She considers the use of the Dynamic Assessment through the lens of the four lines of enquiry posed in the 2002 Professional Practice Guidelines published by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology of the British Psychological Society. In so doing, Hill argues that the approach can provide insights into 'what is happening', 'who is concerned', 'why is there a problem' and 'what can be done about it'.

The paper is helpful in that it approaches Dynamic Assessment and the reasons EPs might choose to use it from a fresh perspective, however the arguments put forward regarding 'who is concerned' are confused, drifting into 'who is involved' as the paper reaches its conclusion, which undermines the other evidence and arguments presented in the paper to some degree.

A superior alternative to psychometrics?

Some authors, commencing with Feuerstein et al in 1979, have drawn heavily on the well-rehearsed critique of psychometric intelligence testing in order to advocate for Dynamic Assessment. Elliott in particular has on a number of occasions (2000, 2003) explicitly argued that Dynamic Assessment represents a superior approach to psychometrics and can overcome some of the limitations of the latter.

The arguments offered by authors writing from this perspective (including Feuerstein et al, 2002; Elliott, 2000) have focused on a number of key concerns regarding psychometric approaches including their potential to underestimate a child's ability, cultural and socio-economic biases, the neglect of social and emotional factors impacting on learning, poor theoretical underpinnings and difficulties linking the assessment to intervention.

Most recently, authors have sought to stress the 'value added' of Dynamic Assessment in comparison to standardised approaches. Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) argue that Dynamic Assessment empowers children in a way that standardised approaches cannot. Lauchlan and Carrigan also cite research by Meijer (1993) reflecting on the child's experience of assessment approaches, arguing that

children have been shown to be more comfortable if the assessor is involved in a collaborative process with them as learners. Poehner (2011) highlights the aims of ensuring fairness and equity for learners when using Dynamic Assessment,

> 'Assessment represents a crucial first step toward establishing educational fairness by mediating learners toward success and taking stock of this process as it unfolds in order to determine, with learners where to go next,' (p.103).

It is not my intention to consider these arguments in detail in this review. I believe that while it is crucial that the critique of psychometrics receives due discussion in the profession of educational psychology, it alone does not create an imperative to use Dynamic Assessment. Indeed given the ongoing exploration of why EPs may not be using Dynamic Assessment as much as might be expected given its 'intuitive appeal' (Elliott, 1993), the justification for increasing understanding of the approach as a phenomenon in its own right appears obvious. The distraction provided by ongoing debate about the limitations of psychometrics has simply highlighted the lack of significant evaluation of Dynamic Assessment. The time for a change of emphasis is overdue.

A useful tool in the assessment repertoire

Some authors are keen to stress that Dynamic Assessment should be used in response to certain questions and in particular circumstances, as part of a repertoire of assessment tools available to EPs.

Both Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) and Haywood and Lidz (2007) argue that Dynamic Assessment should be seen as a useful tool in the assessment repertoire,

as the approach is able to provide information about the child which is not readily available from other sources. Haywood and Lidz suggest that the use of Dynamic Assessment is particularly useful where there are affective factors impacting on performance which would otherwise give an underestimate of a child's ability. Mediation from an assessor during a Dynamic Assessment allows these factors to be overcome to a certain extent and may offer a more realistic picture of what the child can achieve given optimum conditions for learning.

They also argue that the approach is most appropriately used in response to particular questions: when assessors are well trained, when thorough task analysis has been carried out and when the instruments chosen can be linked to the questions being investigated. This argument is weakened however by a lack of empirical evidence to back up these claims.

Haywood and Lidz's stance on Dynamic Assessment is a more critical reflection on the pros and cons of the approach than is taken in much of the literature reviewed. Rather than defending the assessment practice by offering it as a superior alternative to psychometrics or by countering criticisms of the approach with the argument that Dynamic Assessment should not be subject to psychometric evaluation, the authors fully acknowledge the limitations. Accordingly they argue that rather than being the panacea of assessment approaches, the use of Dynamic Assessment is limited. They suggest that it shouldn't be used a part of a battery (as it is question based) or for classification purposes (on the basis that it is an idiographic rather than

nomothetic approach) and is difficult to use with children with language difficulties as a result of the essentially verbal nature of assessor mediation.

Birnbaum (2004) agrees that the approach should be used for particular cases and should be seen as one possible assessment tool of many. In a number of the case studies presented in her paper on the use of Dynamic Assessment in tribunals she uses the approach to augment the findings of previous standardised assessments. In others she uses the approach to try to assess the child's reaction to working under pressure, one presumes to recreate the conditions of certain types of provision. Dynamic Assessment is also used with a child with a hearing impairment (due to the limits of standardisation of the main cognitive assessments) and in order to 'consider the educational environment necessary to facilitate [a] child's learning needs,' (p.8).

Informing intervention in the classroom

Some authors argue that the current context has emphasised the role of the EP in informing intervention in the classroom. Indeed, over half of EPs (with an existing interest in Dynamic Assessment) surveyed by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) felt that the provision of practical advice to teachers was an advantage of using the approach.

Elliott (2000) suggests that the increased emphasis on inclusion in the UK and subsequent delegation of financial resources to schools in many local authorities has reduced the pressure on EPs to carry out psychometric testing to inform placement decisions and increased the emphasis on intervention. He goes onto argue that by using Dynamic Assessment, EPs are able to fulfil a distinctive role, complementing

teachers' existing expertise in curriculum based assessment. In a similar vein, Birnbaum and Deutsch (1996) argue that teachers are used to working within an interactive framework of assessment, which emphasises the importance of observation of children's performance, presumably making them more open to dynamic approaches. If these observations are accurate, they are a convincing argument for the use of Dynamic Assessment in schools. However, my professional experience working in three Local Authorities and conversation with EPs across many more has suggested that despite delegation and the rhetoric of inclusion, special schooling, the statutory assessment framework and diagnostic practices within the National Health Service continue to exert considerable pressure on EPs to categorise children according to the severity of their difficulties.

Elliott (2003) argues that the role of the EP should be on defeating the limiting predictions made about a child's predicted developmental course. He suggests that the use of Dynamic Assessment can inform either tailor made interventions for the classroom or provide a 'profile' of the child which can be linked to specific interventions.

Evidence of positive impact

What evidence is there of EPs having successfully informed intervention in the classroom following Dynamic Assessment? Hill (2015) argues that because the aim of transferring learning is central to mediation during Dynamic Assessment, generalisation to the classroom should in theory be straightforward. However is there evidence supporting this claim?

The research investigating the impact of Dynamic Assessment studied for this review typically but not exclusively used case studies to highlight the possible advantages of using the approach.

The use of the case study to describe and promote the practice of Dynamic Assessment and particularly to highlight the possible impact of the approach is historically linked with Feuerstein. Both his original 1979 book and the 2002 edition present a number of case studies giving information about both the assessment process and the short and long term outcomes attributed to the approach. The generalisability of the outcomes of the case studies to EP practice is somewhat limited however, not least because in many of the cases eight to ten hours of assessment were undertaken compared to EPs who in my professional experience typically work with children for one to two hours. Despite this limitation, a number of themes can be identified. These include the potential of Dynamic Assessment to change children's beliefs and those of adults working with them, in addition to providing information about their learning and the support required to bring about improvements.

Elliott et al (1996) argue that the case study design continues to be appropriate for this research as Dynamic Assessment is both difficult to investigate empirically and has traditionally been researched in this manner. Yin (2003) suggests that multiple case study designs, such as those reported by Feuerstein et al (1979) and Birnbaum (2004), are appropriate where the researcher is seeking replication of the findings of

the initial study, either to support a particular proposition or to refute an alternative proposition.

Other researchers have used a single case study design based on what Yin (2003) terms a 'representative' or 'typical' case, which he suggests aim to 'capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation,' (p.41).

The use of representative case studies can be criticised on a number of grounds. Firstly, the case is presented in order to provide evidence of the correctness of the author's hypothesis, rather than to test out the hypothesis *and alternative propositions.* In some instances, it is also fair to assume that cases which contradict or call into question the author's hypothesis may be 'deselected' before publication. The notion of whether it is possible to identify a 'typical' case in EP Dynamic Assessment practice is also questionable. The lack of standardisation, range of tools used and methods of feeding back the assessment to those involved, are but a few of the variables which suggest varied and complex practice within the profession.

Thus although this type of research does provide us with the opportunity to theorise 'after the fact' about the nature of Dynamic Assessment, the lack of contrary findings reported and challenging of the theory base does suggest that case study research in which hypotheses can be tested out rather than simply confirmed is needed.

In spite of their limitations, the case studies reviewed do provide some insight into the type of information that can be collated during Dynamic Assessment, changes in

children that can result from the approach and the potential influence on intervention in the classroom. Of the case studies reviewed, three focused on the role of the EP in informing practice in the classroom. An overview of the studies, the measures used and impact described is given in Table 2.

A traditional critique of the case study design argues that the potential to generalise from this research is limited. Yin (2003) argues however that the case study *can* be used to generalise to theoretical propositions (as opposed to populations as is the case in an experiment conducted with a large sample of participants). In the case studies reviewed therefore we might generalise to the proposition that 'Dynamic Assessment can result in positive outcomes for children'. However methodological difficulties with the specific case studies presented make it difficult to generalise in this way with a great degree of confidence. As Yin notes of the traditional critique of case studies,

> 'Despite the fact that these common concerns can be allayed…one major lesson is that good case studies are still difficult to do,' (p.11).

In both the Birnbaum and Deutsch (1996) and Elliott et al (1996) studies, information has been presented reiterating the potential of the approach to provide specific kinds of information. In the former study, no evidence is given of any direct impact of the assessment on subsequent intervention in the classroom. Elliott et al do mention changes occurring as a result of the assessment, but choose their words carefully, suggesting that the teacher was

> '*Given* a different and more optimistic view, together with insights into which she might alter her teaching approach to meet his needs' (p.159),

Authors	Details about the child	Procedures used	Information gained from assessment	Impact on child and teacher
Lauchlan et al (2007)	8 year old boy, reading, number and language difficulties.	Analogies subtest from Cognitive Modifiability Battery. Creation of learning profile with the child from a video of the assessment after one week informing subsequent intervention		Positive changes in child's confidence, independence and effort. Progress in language work. Boy happier to attend school and motivated to repeat Dynamic Assessment.
Birnbaum and Deutsch (1996)	11 year old boy: under achieving, average IQ, attainment above chronological age, below average memory, slow processing speed.	Complex figure drawing task, 16-word memory test.	Information about unassisted performance, progress gained as a result of repetition alone, amount of mediation required overall and in different tasks, type of mediation that helped him progress, deficient cognitive functions, affective factors impacting on learning, learning potential.	
Elliott et al (1996)	9 year old boy, slow progress in reading and number.	One subtest of Cognitive Modifiability Battery using pretest-teach-retest format.	Information about affective factors affecting performance.	Change in teacher's view of the pupil's learning difficulties. Increased understanding of how to adapt teaching to meet pupil's needs, through presentation of the task, a focus on problem solving and creating a supportive learning environment through encouragement and praise.

Table 2. Details of research carried out looking at the impact of Dynamic Assessment

(N.B. A glossary of Dynamic Assessment tests is provided in Appendix 1.)

but do not provide any evidence of the teacher having acknowledged this understanding and insight, with subsequent changes to her actual practice. To present this as evidence of the effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment is somewhat naïve. Popular approaches such as consultation (Wagner, 2000) are based in part on the understanding that relaying your own knowledge and understanding of a child to a teacher and providing them with advice about what to do, does not mean they then automatically understand the child better nor that they are subsequently sufficiently motivated or skilled to act on this understanding or have time to do so.

Lauchlan et al (2007) try to evaluate the impact of carrying out the assessment on the child and teacher by means of follow up discussions, and indicate how they have tried to link their findings to the classroom context. Their emphasis on working with the boy to understand himself better and empowering him to make choices about the focus of subsequent intervention also adds a new dimension to our understanding. What is missing from this study is an indication of the validity of the observations made about the impact of the assessment on the boy and the role of the adults in the boy's life in supporting the intervention. The authors do however recognise the tentative nature of their conclusions and identify the need for further research to test out their hypotheses further.

In 2014 Lawrence and Cahill investigated the impact of Dynamic Assessment from the perspective of the child, the parent and the teacher. In this study, EPs carried out 1.5 hour Dynamic Assessments with 9 children and followed these up with individual reports, which were then discussed in consultation meeting with parents and teachers. The pupils were ethnically and linguistically diverse and spanned the primary and secondary sectors. Semi-structured interviews were then held with children, parents and teachers, in addition to focus groups with participating teachers. Inductive thematic analysis carried out on the interview responses identified the following themes:

- Dynamic Assessment is an empowering positive experience for the child which may also improve their confidence in their ability to learn following the assessment
- The responses of adults suggested that Dynamic Assessment had an impact on the child's social, emotional and learning behaviours as well as their self-perceptions.
- Dynamic Assessment impacted on the understanding of the child's difficulties, with a movement away from narrow 'within' child hypotheses.
- Dynamic Assessment increased a sense of optimism about what the child could achieve
- Parents viewed the approach as having a positive impact on their approaches to caring for and supporting their child

This study extends our understanding of the potential impact of Dynamic Assessment in a number of ways. The inclusion of the child, parent and teacher view allows triangulation across the responses, allowing for the identification of key themes. The techniques and tools used to collect the children's views children were also more robust than in previous research, adding authenticity to the reporting of the child's voice. In addition, the research used a multiple participant design, making it easier to draw conclusions which could start to be generalised to the wider population.

There are however a number of criticisms of the design, some of which are acknowledged by the authors. The lack of information about the frequency of responses within each theme makes it difficult to test the conclusions that the authors draw from the research. Likewise the reporting of comments which ran contrary to their conclusions would have aided critical scrutiny. Lawrence and Cahill also failed to explore the significance and relative impact of the consultation meeting following the Dynamic Assessment and subsequent report. Authors such as Yeomans (2008) would argue that this aspect of the EPs' work may have contributed to the positive impact reported by parents and teachers. The same cannot be said for the children however, who did not participate in these meetings.

Finally, the authors acknowledge that perceptions of impact are not the same as actual impact and concluded that,

> 'Further research could focus on whether these impacts actually occur or are merely perceived by the parents, teachers and other professionals involved in the process, due to changes in the way that the issue or concern is conceptualised,' (p. 204).

In a further study looking at impact, Bosma and Resing (2012) found that there was no significant change in the teaching approach (as rated by the Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale) of four teachers following a Dynamic Assessment. They hypothesised that this was due to the short time period between providing information about the children and observing the teachers in the classroom, meaning there was a lack of time for changes to be implemented.

Surprisingly they also found that there was an overall reduction in teachers' perceptions of learning potential of students following the assessment. Bosma and Resing suggest that this may have been because the information provided about the children following the assessments was difficult for teachers to understand. This is acknowledged as purely speculative however and the authors recognise a discussion with teachers regarding the reasons for their judgements would have been helpful.

The Bosma and Resing findings are interesting but raise more questions than answers. It is unclear to what degree the results from the standardised approach used could be generalised to the clinical approach used in the UK. In addition it is not clear how the findings were fed back to the teachers, as the method is vague with regards to the content of both the verbal and written feedback, again limiting the conclusions that can be drawn about the potential impact of the approach.

It is my hope that my research will address some of the methodological limitations of these studies.

How is Dynamic Assessment perceived?

A number of studies have surveyed EPs about the perceived usefulness of Dynamic Assessment. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) found that not only did EPs feel that the approach could provide practical advice for teachers, nearly half of those surveyed also felt that the experience was positive for the child and the psychologist. In a survey of the use of different assessment procedures by EPs, Woods and Farrell (2006) also concluded that EPs felt Dynamic Assessment was a useful approach but was used infrequently.   Unfortunately, little weight can be given to this supporting evidence as a result of poor questionnaire construction (lack of definitions, inadequate coverage of items surveyed and inconsistent use of rating scales) and over interpretation of tentative results.

Other researchers have looked at Special Needs Coordinators' (SENCOs') and teachers' perceptions of Dynamic Assessment. Lauchlan (2001) cites a number of unpublished studies which he concludes suggest that teachers find reports of Dynamic Assessment procedures very valuable. Freeman and Miller (2001) suggest that although the type of information provided by Dynamic Assessment is relatively unfamiliar to SENCos, they view it as potentially useful in understanding children and planning to meet their needs. The authors also found that despite SENCos lack of familiarity with the approach, they viewed it as potentially more useful than the information provided from normative assessments. Recently Bosma and Resing (2012) found that special school teachers interviewed reported a preference for practical and concrete recommendations characteristic of Dynamic Assessment reports. These teachers also 'appreciated the provided dynamic testing information

because of the elaboration beyond intelligence scores and deficits of the children,' (p.15).

Although these studies provide some insight into how information from Dynamic Assessment may be viewed by those working in schools, again the focus is on the theoretical rather than practical applications of the approach. The question of whether these same SENCos and teachers could and would make use of the information through effective intervention remains to be answered.

How much do EPs use Dynamic Assessment?

There is agreement between a number of authors that EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment is low. Elliott (1993) argues this point by referring to the literature base. The majority of research emanates from the USA, with little interest shown in British journals until relatively recent years. More recently Lebeer et al (2011) showed that use of Dynamic Assessment to assess cognition amongst a range of child development professionals (including educational and school psychologists) in Europe is very low, with 95% of those interviewed using standardised psychometric tests such as the Weschler Intelligence Scales.

Two sets of researchers have investigated the level of usage of Dynamic Assessment by surveying practising EPs in the UK specifically. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) carried out a postal survey of over 100 EPs identified as having an interest in Dynamic Assessment through their attendance on training courses or membership of Dynamic Assessment interest groups. The responses of the 88 EPs

who returned the questionnaire summarised in Table 3 below, led the authors to conclude that use of Dynamic Assessment 'by most EPs in the UK is very limited,' (p.325).

Amount of Dynamic Assessment used	Percentage of respondents
Not using the approach	47%
Less than 2 hours per week	37%
2-5 hours per week	16%

Table 3. Results of survey indicating how much EPs use Dynamic Assessment (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000)

Deutsch and Reynold's conclusions must be treated with caution however. Regardless of the obvious bias in the sample, the sole focus on the use of Dynamic Assessment by EPs as opposed to the approach *in comparison to other approaches* leave us unable to determine whether use of Dynamic Assessment is truly low in relative terms. Likewise, the authors fail to determine the overall level of individual casework carried out by EPs during their working week, which would have provided a clearer understanding of the meaning of the reported time spent on Dynamic Assessment, particularly given the movement in the profession towards more consultative ways of working (Kennedy et al, 2009) and the breadth of activities carried out by EPs (Farrell et al, 2006).

Woods and Farrell address some of these limitations in their 2006 research. 142 EPs attending major conferences were surveyed about their use of a number of

assessment approaches. Some of the results of the survey are summarised in Table 4.

Type of assessment	Percentage of EPs using this assessment 'commonly'	Rank (out of 16 types of assessment)
Cognitive testing (using full or partial test, or both)	71%	Rank not available for combined percentage score
Curriculum based Dynamic Assessment	18%	12th
Test of Dynamic Assessment	11%	14th
Standardised attainment tests	67%	7th
Criterion referenced assessment	37%	9th

Table 4. Results of survey showing use of different kinds of assessments by EPs (Woods and Farrell, 2006)

Although Woods and Farrell's research appears on first sight to be easier to interpret (and indeed is based on a more representative sample of the profession), a number of methodological issues are apparent. Some assessment methods such as classroom observation (in my professional experience used regularly by almost all EPs) are noticeably absent from the survey, perhaps indicative of the lack of a pilot phase for the study. The rating scales used are also difficult to interpret. The rating of 'commonly used' is given to indicate those assessments which are used by EPs more than 25% of the time, resulting in a very broad category and no opportunity to try to understand the assessment practices of EPs in detail.

What this suggests then is as yet we are unclear about the exact level and pattern of use of Dynamic Assessment by EPs, but there is tentative evidence both from research and the literature (and indeed from my own observations of working as an EP) that Dynamic Assessment practice is limited in the profession. Why then might this be the case?

Possible barriers to using Dynamic Assessment

A significant proportion of the literature on Dynamic Assessment written by or for EPs has considered why the profession may not be using Dynamic Assessment as much as it might, considering the appeal of the approach. Of those writing on this subject, Deutsch and Reynolds alone have based their conclusions on asking EPs directly, however the content of arguments put forward by other authors appear valid when reflecting on my own experiences working as a local authority EP and are certainly open to further investigation. Also worthy of note is Elliott's (1993) article, which uses a sociocultural perspective to explore the apparent reluctance of EPs in the UK to use Dynamic Assessment.

The barriers identified in the literature can be categorised into a number of key themes and are summarised in Table 5. A number of these are explored in more detail below.

Type of barrier	Description	Examples
Logistics	Practical barriers which may prevent an EP from using Dynamic Assessment as part of their everyday working practice.	Time (e.g. Elliott, 1993; Stringer et al, 1997; Lidz, 1991; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Lantolf and Poehner, 2004) Access to materials (e.g. Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000) Difficulties recording whilst carrying out the assessment (e.g. Lauchlan and Carrigan, 2013)
Statistical rigour	Concerns about the perceived validity and reliability of the approach.	Reliability (e.g. Haywood and Lidz, 2007) Validity (e.g. Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001; Haywood and Lidz, 2007 including impact of mediational skill of assessor) Insufficient evaluation of the approach (e.g. Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000) Conceptual lack of clarity (e.g. Khaghaninejad, 2015) Lack of reporting of technical characteristics of tools (e.g. Khaghaninejad, 2015)
Professional expertise and commitment	Factors which either prevent an EP from acquiring or maintaining the necessary expertise to carry out Dynamic Assessment or which impact on the EP's motivation to carry out Dynamic Assessment despite other barriers.	Difficulty of acquiring skills needed (e.g. Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001; Elliott, 1993; Stringer et al, 1997) Training available (e.g. Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Stringer et al, 1997; Lidz, 2009) Knowledge about how and when to use the approach (e.g. Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001) Lack of dissertations written about Dynamic Assessment being submitted for

		publication (Lidz, 2009) Need for commitment to the theories and methods of Dynamic Assessment at the expense of other approaches (e.g. Elliott, 1993)
Linking assessment to intervention	Difficulties in using dynamic assessment to inform and influence intervention in the classroom	Communicating findings to teachers and parents (e.g. Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000) Link between assessment and classroom practice (e.g. Yeomans, 2008; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Lidz 2009) Poor link between Dynamic Assessment and cognitive education (e.g. Haywood and Lidz, 2007) Reflexive approach to delivery of Dynamic Assessment (Lidz and Haywood, 2014)
Culture	Cultural beliefs and practices which may deter the EP from choosing to use Dynamic Assessment as part of their professional practice	Demands of local authorities (e.g. Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001; Elliott, 1993; Stringer et al, 1997; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000) Mismatch with western epistemology (e.g. Elliott, 1993; Stringer et al, 1997) Emphasis in education in UK on product rather than process (e.g. Elliott, 1993; Stringer et al, 1997) Prevailing view of intelligence as fixed (e.g. Stringer et al, 1997) Society's understanding of meaning of Special Educational Needs as deviation from the norm (e.g. Stringer et al, 1997) Threat of legislative action and pressure from lobby groups resulting in defensive practice (e.g. Stringer et al, 1997; Lidz, 2009)

Table 5. Barriers to EPs using Dynamic Assessment identified in the literature

Logistics

Deutsch and Reynold's survey of EPs in 2000 found that around one fifth of respondents cited time as a reason for feeling dissatisfied with their use of Dynamic Assessment. Subsumed within this category were feelings of not having enough time allocated to schools generally to work with children on an individual basis and the amount of time taken for Dynamic Assessment compared with other approaches. Further, around one third of respondents perceived the time needed for the assessment to be carried out, fed-back and written up to be a major disadvantage of the approach, (the most common disadvantage suggested by EPs).

Elliott (1993) and Stringer et al (1997) both make the point that time may be a barrier in the presence of competing demands such as pressure to complete psychometric assessments and to carry out statutory work. Within this context the need for efficient use of a limited amount of EP time becomes paramount and shorter assessments providing information which may satisfy particular demands will be given priority. This does raise the question however as acknowledged by Stringer et al of whether efficiency in this sense does actually result in *useful* information which in the long term actually contributes to better outcomes for children and young people. Lantolf and Poehner (2004) suggest that an interventionist approach to Dynamic Assessment may be more time efficient and able to be delivered to greater numbers of students. However they acknowledge that in gaining this efficiency the rich picture about individual's cognitive strengths and difficulties may be lost. It is also the case

that EPs in the UK rarely are asked to work with whole cohorts or classes or students and much more of the work is on a individual case basis as part of a graduated response to special educational needs (Farrell et al, 2006).

The argument that time is a barrier to EPs carrying out Dynamic Assessment is dependent on the notion that the approach does actually take longer to carry out than other methods of assessment. Certainly if as Lidz (1991) recommends EPs are using one to two hours of their time to work with children in this way this argument would appear to have merit. However if EPs are choosing shorter procedures such as 'The Bunny Bag' (a play based Dynamic Assessment used with pre-schoolers lasting around 45 minutes) described by Waters and Stringer (1997), this conclusion might reasonably be called into question.

Statistical rigour

Much of the discussion regarding the statistical rigour of Dynamic Assessment relates to concerns about validity. David Tzuriel's attempts at establishing validity for a number of Dynamic Assessment instruments and the counter claims by writers in the UK are a useful example of the arguments involved.

The concept of validity exists in many forms. A simple definition of the umbrella term suggested by Cohen et al (2007) is

> 'A demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it purports to measure,' (p. 133).

Herein lies the problem. The aims of Dynamic Assessment vary widely according to the particular procedures employed and method assumed (Lidz, 2014). Therefore the focus for measurement and subsequent quest to establish validity will differ.

Current discussion about the differences between interventionist and interactionist approaches and their respective foci on learning potential and structural cognitive modifiability is an example of this issue. A second issue might be whether a wider definition of validity such as Cronbach, (1971, cited in Beckmann, 2014) should be used, focusing on the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the inferences drawn from the test scores. In this instance, validity might reasonably be established from looking firstly at the changes in classroom practice following Dynamic Assessment and secondly what difference these changes make to students.

Tzuriel's view of Dynamic Assessment is heavily biased towards the quantitative assessment of learning potential. As a result his research aiming to establish the validity of Dynamic Assessment instruments such as the Children's Analogical Thinking Modifiability Test (CATM) focuses on evidence of quantitative change in cognitive processes during the assessment process and on the predictive power of Dynamic Assessment test scores in comparison to static psychometric results.

Tzuriel's (2000b) attempt to establish the Seria-think as a valid and accurate Dynamic Assessment tool is a case in point. The research compared children's performance before and after either mediation (in the experimental group) or free

play (in the control group). The post-mediation results of the experimental group showed significant improvement. No change was found in the control group. Furthermore only post-teaching scores were found to be predictive of performance on a content-related maths test. In a review of the application of the approach for young children, Tzuriel (2000a) offers further evidence of the validity of Dynamic Assessment instruments by citing research showing significant gains in children's scores following mediation on the CATM, (Tzuriel and Klein 1987), CSTM (Tzuriel, 1995), and the preschool learning assessment device, (Lidz and Thomas 1987). What is interesting is that this evidence could be said to be validating the concept of mediated learning experience rather than Dynamic Assessment per se.

The second feature of Tzuriel's method of validating the approach is to establish the superiority of Dynamic Assessment measures over psychometric scores in predicting subsequent learning and attainment. Tzuriel (2000b) describes his research looking at the power of post-teaching scores on the Children's Seriational Thinking Modifiability test (CSTM) to predict subsequent maths attainment in Year 1 children, (Tzuriel et al, 1999). By comparison, pre-teaching scores (argued to be comparable to static test scores) were not shown to be predictive of later attainment. Tzuriel (2000a) describes the results of a study in which the scores of children on the Learning Potential Test for Minorities (LEM) were found to be better predictors of their academic achievements than static scores gained on the Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (Resing and Van Wijk, 1996).

Tzuriel's attempts at validating Dynamic Assessment are an admirable start to a difficult venture. However, as he acknowledges himself in his review,

> 'Validation of Dynamic Assessment is much more complex than validation of a static test, for several reasons…Dynamic Assessment claims to have a broader scope of goals such as assessing initial performance, deficient cognitive functions, type and amount of mediation, affective factors, and different parameters of modifiability,' (p.426, 2000a).

Even when agreement is reached about the purpose, establishing validity remains difficult due to the multitude of environmental factors impacting on the child both within and following the assessment. One factor that has received attention from Haywood and Lidz (2007) is the impact of mediational skill of the assessor. Likewise, following the assessment the authors highlight the importance of appropriate intervention to establish validity commenting,

> 'There is an almost irresistible tendency to expect the improved performance without providing the specified conditions that would make it possible to achieve,' (p.329).

This idea has been supported empirically (albeit somewhat tentatively) by Lauchlan and Elliott's (2001) finding that measures of learning potential achieved through Dynamic Assessment were only useful as predictors of subsequent performance where cognitive intervention was provided.

The challenge in future, and perhaps that which would make the most difference to EPs, will be to validate the usefulness of Dynamic Assessment in real-life educational contexts, in order to inform next steps for children's education and ultimately improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

On a related theme, Tzuriel (2003) provides information regarding the reliability of a number of Dynamic Assessment measures for young children. The information given relates to inter-item correlations using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Although the reliability levels for the instruments are generally in the acceptably high to very high range (with one or two exceptions), Tzuriel does not address the more contentious issue of inter-rater reliability.

Interestingly, in recent years some authors have started to restate Feuerstein's argument that Dynamic Assessment is fundamentally different to other forms of intelligence testing and therefore should not be viewed through a scientific paradigm. Murphy (2011) does not directly answer the question as to whether she believes Dynamic Assessment should part company with the psychometric field and forge its own psychological framework, but does argue that the issues facing Dynamic Assessment are more about the philosophical and methodological issues facing psychology as a discipline as a whole rather than unique to the approach, and also warns of the threat of the continued critique of the 'best of both worlds' situation approach to the continued growth of the area.

Regardless of those who argue otherwise, the establishment of a sense of rigour may still be important to EPs, particularly given the increased emphasis on evidence-based practice within the profession, influenced by a shift towards the use of standardised clinical guidelines within the Health Service, (see for example Wolpert et al, 2002). Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) showed that 13% of EPs felt that the perceived lack of evaluation of Dynamic Assessment was a disadvantage of the approach, suggesting that there was not enough research looking at the long-term

outcomes of the approach or indeed how it compared with other types of assessment in terms of usefulness. Likewise in the United States, Lidz's (1992) survey of school psychology trainers indicated that responders did not use Dynamic Assessment because of insufficient supportive evidence amongst other factors (cited in Lidz, 2009).

Professional expertise and commitment

Elliott (1993) suggests that the skills and expertise required to carry out Dynamic Assessment are not easily acquired. He argues that the magnitude of the breadth of approaches subsumed below the Dynamic Assessment umbrella is potentially off-putting to practitioners; see also Hill (2015). In a more recent article he adds that in addition to the breadth of knowledge to acquire, the complexity of the approach can also deter EPs from using the approach (Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001). Poehner (2011) supports the notion that Dynamic Assessment (of the kind typically practised by EPs in the UK) is challenging,

> 'Interactionist Dynamic Assessment places considerable demand on mediators, who do not follow a script but instead must remain attuned to learner needs and contributions throughout the activity,' (p. 104).

In the past, a lack of accessible quality training and support was seen as a barrier to developing expertise even where EPs are motivated to use the approach. In 1997 Stringer et al questioned whether tutors on professional training courses were sufficiently skilled and experienced to equip the next generation of EPs with the expertise needed to practise in a culture where support might not be readily available from peers in Local Authority services.

Deutsch and Reynolds' survey supports the idea that lack of quality training may have been a barrier to EPs, showing that 47% of EPs felt that the training they had received was inadequate in some way. Where practitioners received more lengthy training they were more likely to feel confident to practise Dynamic Assessment. By way of a leading question, Deutsch and Reynolds' survey also showed that virtually all of the EPs felt that follow up to their training was needed in order to maintain and develop their skills further. More recently Lidz (2009) has suggested that there may be a 'greying out' (p.16) of those who have been delivering Dynamic Assessment training, and suggests that organisations such as the International Association of Cognitive Education and Psychology should provide training for trainers to address the shortage that this phenomenon will create. Lidz also suggests that there is a need for an increase in dissertations written on the subject to find their way into published journals.

Finally Elliott (1993) suggested that the need for theoretical and practical commitment to the approach might deter some EPs. Following Meyers (1987), Elliott argues that Dynamic Assessment requires 'the divestment of existing theories and approaches,' (p.55). This argument makes strong assumptions however that relate to Elliott's perspective on Dynamic Assessment generally: EPs who use Dynamic Assessment do so instead of using psychometrics. What is missing here is consideration of the alterative view of Dynamic Assessment as one of many tools that a psychologist might use based on the questions asked.

Lidz (2014) takes a broader perspective. In a paper written on the brink of retirement considering the degree of consensus around and future of Dynamic Assessment she concludes,

> 'Despite all the claims of support for evidence based practice, in my experience, trainers and practitioners are not making an effort to become informed about the growing evidence base for Dynamic Assessment. I am aware of too may practitioners who continue to practise what they were taught in graduate school decades ago,' (p.302).

Kaghaninejad (2015) gives the following psychological explanation for why this may be the case,

> 'There is a certain inertia inherent in our satisfaction with being able to do what we already know how to do, and to do it exceptionally well.'

Culture

Lauchlan and Elliott (2001) and Elliott (1993) suggest that the pressure on EPs from local authorities to carry out particular kinds of assessments (particularly psychometrics) has been a barrier to the development of Dynamic Assessment. Expanding on this argument further Stringer et al (1997) explain that there is an inherent incompatibility between the use of the approach and the role of the EP as gatekeeper to resources integral to both the Statutory Assessment framework and the provision of special schooling. Within these systems the role of the EP is to support the classification of children into levels of need to support the equitable allocation of resources. This aim does not seem comfortably with either the ideology or practical application of Dynamic Assessment however. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) found evidence to support this from EPs' responses to their questionnaire. Around one fifth of EPs felt that the demands of the local authority were both a

disadvantage of using Dynamic Assessment and were a reason for their feelings of dissatisfaction with their use of the approach.

On a wider level, Elliott (1993) argues that the emphasis within the UK education system as a whole is on product and knowledge. A process-focused assessment is therefore incompatible with the culture within our education system. Elliott goes on to suggest that the impact of this cultural emphasis is that teacher training courses lack an in-depth exploration of child development and the impact of interventions on developmental pathways. In short, when confronted by a child who is experiencing learning difficulties, teachers may have little understanding to draw upon. The impact on teachers' ability to make use of findings from Dynamic Assessment is clear,

> 'One might argue that if teachers are unable, for whatever reason, to draw upon information regarding the child's cognitions, sophisticated Dynamic Assessment procedures will prove to be of little value and represent no more than a "four lane highway leading to a cow pasture",' (Elliott, 1993, p.56).

Within EP services themselves, the popularity of the consultation model (Nolan and Moreland, 2014), may have affected EPs' beliefs about the place of individual casework within service delivery. Kennedy et al (2009) describe a situation in which some authors writing about consultation have 'mistakenly assumed that consultation implies *no* direct contact between the child/ young person and the EP'. Patsy Wagner writing in 2000 is clear to stress that EP consultation is an approach which combines 'joint exploration, assessment, intervention and review,' (p.11). She also states clearly that she 'sees individual children'. However her persuasive and enduring argument (articulated in the same article) that consultation can free EPs from the 'treadmill' of individual assessment and report writing appears to have led to

professional confusion about the relationship between the two approaches. Inevitably this has led to some EPs and services anecdotally choosing to adopt a wholly indirect approach to service delivery, effectively undermining the status of individual assessment in some areas.

Linking assessment to intervention

In order for Dynamic Assessment to be a worthwhile pursuit for EPs it needs to result in one way or another to better outcomes for the child. In reality this will often mean that the findings of the assessment are somehow assimilated by those adults working with the child into more effective interventions leading to progress in their areas of need. However establishing this link between the assessment and the subsequent intervention is far from straightforward, and some authors such as Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) argue that what discussion has taken place has been lacking in meaningful applicable advice about how to achieve this aim.

Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) found that around one quarter of EPs in their survey felt that difficulties establishing links between Dynamic Assessment and classroom practice were a disadvantage of the approach. In the same vein, 15% of EPs suggested that the language associated with the approach was also a disadvantage. EPs' responses to the survey also highlighted the need for training and ongoing support with writing reports, linking Dynamic Assessment to the National Curriculum and explaining the approach to schools, reinforcing the idea that these may be some of the more difficult aspects of the approach.

Both Haywood and Lidz (2007) and Yeomans (2008) have suggested that the link between the findings of Dynamic Assessment and cognitive education is problematic. Haywood and Lidz suggest that even where cognitive education is taking place in schools, intervention provided to children following Dynamic Assessment is not targeted at their specific needs and there is thus a need for a more individualised approach to be adopted. Yeomans on the other hand argues that in UK schools at least, the 'ideal' situation of a targeted cognitive education programme (such as Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment) is rarely available. Neither she argues is the Mediated Learning Environment required for long lasting structural change in a child's cognitive processes readily available in schools, because, as she notes, not all teaching is mediational.

Most recently Lidz and Haywood (2014) have suggested that practitioners using Dynamic Assessment need to become better at adopting a more efficient approach which specifically targets the skills and content required in the area of concern in the classroom, guarding against the 'reflexive' use of Dynamic Assessment. If EPs are currently using Dynamic Assessment in a mechanistic way, this could be explained by both time for preparation being limited and professional expertise being low. Recording tools such as the CAP (Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010) also encourage a broad screening approach to Dynamic Assessment rather than a targeted assessment by virtue of the wide range of information collated.

The assumption from each of these perspectives is that teachers working with children do actually have difficulties using the information from Dynamic Assessment

and translating it into meaningful intervention in the classroom, and yet there is little empirical evidence that this is the case. Indeed the findings of Freeman and Miller (2001) discussed previously provide counter evidence. Only research which follows the Dynamic Assessment process through from the interaction between the child and assessor through to intervention by the teacher would be able to show whether this might also be the case in reality.

Looking at the issue of making the link between assessment and intervention from another perspective, Feuerstein et al (2002) make the observation that often the results of a Dynamic Assessment create dilemmas for those adults working with the child, leading to a resistance to change. In an interesting commentary on contemporary society, they indicate that when faced with evidence of possible change, adults working with a child find themselves caught between the acceptance of the child as they are (typical of the modern approach to disability) and the suggestion of their future potential. Feuerstein and colleagues also suggest that dilemmas can arise when the recommendations arising from Dynamic Assessment are in conflict with the hidden goals of adults working with children.

Working with schools: making the link

Ways of overcoming the difficulties in making the link between assessment and intervention in schools have been the focus of some of the most recent UK literature on Dynamic Assessment. These ideas have focused on:

- Actions needed before during and after a Dynamic Assessment to maximise the link between the assessment and intervention

- Helping teachers understand and make use of information about deficient cognitive functions identified during a Dynamic Assessment and

- Identifying existing curriculum links or introducing new classroom practices to support teachers' understanding of the process of assessment and intervention.

Actions needed before during and after assessment

Yeomans (2008) suggests that in order to maximise the chance that teachers will be able to use the results of a Dynamic Assessment to inform intervention they should be centrally involved in the process before during and after the assessment.

She argues that pre-assessment discussion to ensure that teachers and EPs 'share common assessment and intervention goals,' (p.111) can be beneficial as staff are more likely to retain ownership of the problem. She also makes the point that pre-assessment discussion can be used to increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of the procedures used and the approach as a whole. Yeomans suggests that having teachers present during the assessment can also be beneficial, although unfortunately this aspect of her paper is under-explored making little use of either theoretical or empirical support. Following the assessment, Yeomans proposes that there is a need for direct discussion with staff to 'mediate' the findings of the assessment leading to increased understanding of the child and agreement of an intervention plan.

Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) provide practice guidance and materials for EPs using Dynamic Assessment. This guidance expands on their 2007 paper describing the use of the approach in the case study described previously. Although there are critiques to be made of the robustness of this case study and of the conclusions that can be drawn about the efficacy of the approaches recommended, it is clear that both authors have much experience of working with Dynamic Assessment within their professional practice and are likely to be drawing on many years and examples of what has worked and what hasn't worked in their own professional practice.

The resource provides a range of tools for recording during the assessment, and guidance about actions needed after the assessment. The authors advise EPs to focus on a small number of learning principles rather than confusing recipients with too much information, using a consultation approach and involving the child in the follow up. They also advocate reviewing progress and the effectiveness of strategies agreed after an agreed period.

Lidz supports the idea of using consultation alongside Dynamic Assessment, providing reasons for why she thinks this is important in her 2014 consensus paper,

> 'To assure that the teachers, parents, and other mediators understand and accept the recommendations and feel (and become) competent to deliver the appropriate interventions,' (p.301).

She goes further in a second paper from 2014 written with Carl Haywood,

'Interventions should make sense and be doable by the professionals who are to carry them out following the assessment. If not easily implementable, then the appropriate consultation and training needs to be provided,' (p.84).

I would go further again and suggest that the intervention plan agreed in the consultation should also include suggestions and strategies identified by those who will be responsible for the child's ongoing education, in addition to those which are based on advice from the EP, maximising the motivation and empowerment of those involved and increasing the likelihood that the plan is then implemented, (see Nolan and Moreland, 2014 for further discussion).

Making cognitive functions accessible

In EP practice, a number of lists of cognitive processes exist, all loosely based on either Feuerstein's original deficient cognitive functions or the amended list suggested by Lidz (1991). Many of the lists attempt to translate the original language used by Feuerstein into more accessible terminology for teachers and parents.

As an example Lauchlan et al (2007) describe a list of 'learning principles' based on Feuerstein's cognitive functions and the affective factors impacting on performance identified by Tzuriel et al (1988). The list is worded positively (identifying what the child can do) rather than focusing on existing deficits and barriers to performance and is written in language which is accessible to both adults and children. Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) went on to publish this information, as part of their practical classroom resource, 'Improving Learning through Dynamic Assessment', with a checklist for adults in addition to a child friendly version.

What is encouraging about this development is that, (like Yeoman's article), it invites critical discussion about Dynamic Assessment practice in the UK. Although the original paper falls short in a number of ways, the resource does provide one of the first steps towards 'home grown procedures' needed for the development of practice within the UK, (Waters and Stringer 1997). Deutsch and Mohammed's (2010) Cognitive Assessment Profile (CAP) has also provided a framework for working with cognitive functions, which its website suggests provides a 'shared language for the use of all those involved with a child', (www.dynamicassessment.co.uk, accessed 2015). The inclusion of copious examples in the profile of the link between each function and classroom behaviour and practice is a significant step forward in supporting EPs, likewise Mentis et al (2007) provide a range of classroom based strategies in their invaluable book 'Mediated learning: Teaching, tasks and tools to unlock cognitive potential.

Yeomans (2008) takes a different approach to supporting teacher's understanding of cognitive processes by drawing parallels between Feuerstein's taxonomy of cognitive functions and National Curriculum initiatives such as 'Learning Across the Curriculum,' (DfES 2005). Despite the lack of information in the article about the precise content of the overlap between these initiatives and Feuerstein's list, Yeomans does provide a means of starting to talk about cognitive processes in a language which teachers are familiar with and will hopefully view as already part of their 'day jobs'. An alternative option again would be to include opportunities in initial teacher training for classroom practitioners to learn about Dynamic Assessment and learning potential as suggested by Bosma and Resing (2012). In the mean time

however EPs need to find supportive strategies which do not require a fundamental shift in education policy in the country (see DfE, 2014) and will not take years to embed.

Linking to classroom practices

Lidz and Haywood (2014) suggest that certain approaches under the Dynamic Assessment umbrella have demonstrated greater potential for linking to classroom practice. They suggest that these approaches have in common firstly a match between the assessment and problem area domains, secondly are evidence or at least 'experience-based' and lastly are prescriptive rather than simply descriptive. Amongst the approaches which Lidz and Haywood recommend are those which focus specifically on literacy and numeracy, Dynamic Assessment procedures used in English as an Additional Language teaching and those used by Speech and Language Therapists. Although Lidz and Haywood have offered a theoretical rationale for why these and the other approaches listed are likely to better link to intervention in the classroom, the paper would have been greatly improved by the inclusion of empirical evidence demonstrating whether research supports this hypothesis.

As well using curriculum initiatives such as 'Learning Across the Curriculum' to help teachers understand cognitive processes, Yeomans suggests that 'Assessment for Learning' (2008) can be used to bridge the gap between Dynamic Assessment and subsequent intervention in schools. She suggests that the approach can be used as

a way of introducing the concept of mediation and emphasising the similarities and differences with more instructional forms of teaching.

Gavine et al (2006) argue that links exist between Dynamic Assessment and Assessment for Learning as an approach derived from formative assessment. More specifically they liken Dynamic Assessment to 'divergent' formative assessment where the traditional power imbalance between learner and teacher is readdressed through a joint exploration with the child of their understanding. My own experience of working in schools over a number of years would suggest that although this link might exist in theory, using this in practice with teachers would be of questionable value, due to limited familiarity with the approach in schools. Perhaps the message is one of starting from what each individual teacher knows and as Yeomans (2008) suggests using post-assessment discussion as an opportunity to mediate new understandings of what might support the child in the future.

Norwich's (2014) 'Lesson Study for Assessment' is described as a classroom based Dynamic Assessment approach. The introduction and guidelines published by the University of Exeter outline the procedure which consists of a cycle of 3 or more lessons and collaborative planning/ review meetings, focusing on one to two children. The lessons are used to observe how the child learns and understand more about their response to intervention. The iterative cycle of reflection and intervention (sometimes involving an EP) aims to identify what works as well as the barriers to learning, and to support planning of future intervention with the child. The Lesson for Study Assessment approach is a useful start for thinking about how the gap between

assessment and classroom practice could be reduced by giving the tool to those who work with the child everyday. I have a number of criticisms however, which would need to be addressed for the potential of this approach as an authentic and effective Dynamic Assessment procedure to be realised. My main criticism is that I would question whether the procedure as it stands meets the criteria for being described as Dynamic Assessment, and would suggest in fact that it is a form of targeted formative assessment. The guidelines focus little on the 'learning approaches' used by children and the intervention or changes to teaching which are integral to the cycle are not expected to be meditational. It is unlikely then that any changes which would occur would bring about any lasting structural cognitive change, although the child's response to more effectively targeted teaching may well improve, (their learning potential). I would also suggest that as a result of major changes in education policy and curriculum in the UK since the early nineteen-nineties, the majority of teachers' knowledge about cognitive skills and cognitive development is very limited as demonstrated by the lack of focus on this area in the Teacher Standards (DfE, 2011). Again, this limits the progress that could be made with the approach unless an EP were involved.

Conclusion

The term Dynamic Assessment describes a wide range of interactive assessment approaches designed to gauge a child's potential to learn. Specific approaches differ in the degree to which they retain psychometric characteristics, but are similar in their focus on cognitive processes (including those which are in the process of developing), rather than on previously acquired knowledge and skills.

Interest in Dynamic Assessment grew initially out of a desire to offer an alternative to what were felt to be biased unjust psychometric approaches to measuring ability. Nearly forty years on, the concerns about psychometrics remain, yet EPs appear to be continuing to regularly use these assessments. What is more, if the limited research is to be believed, Dynamic Assessment has failed to materialise as a significant assessment tool for EPs in the way its supporters had hoped.

Authors have used a variety of arguments to try to convince EPs of the merits of the approach. Some continue to promote Dynamic Assessment as an ethical alternative to psychometrics, whilst others focus on the specific occasions when the approach might be an appropriate choice of tool. The production of rich meaningful information about the child's learning is a ubiquitous theme in the literature, although the emphasis placed on the various kinds of information which can be gained varies from writer to writer. The utility of the approach in informing intervention for children has also been a recurring theme, although in practice this has appeared more complex than one might expect. Others have gone a step further and attempted to demonstrate the positive outcomes of the approach typically using representative single case studies as part of a post-facto research design.

The research and literature has suggested possible reasons why uptake of Dynamic Assessment may be low. Factors identified relate to the logistical demands of carrying out a lengthy assessment using inaccessible materials, the perceived need for statistical rigour, the level of professional expertise and commitment required to

use the approach skilfully and cultural beliefs and practices which discourage EPs from using the approach. Recently thought has also been given to how to overcome the inherent difficulty of using Dynamic Assessment to inform intervention in the classroom. Authors have argued for the need for EPs to link Dynamic Assessment with curriculum initiatives and concepts which are familiar to teachers, in language which is accessible but meaningful, and to embed the assessment in a range of activities which might support those involved to make best use of the information gained.

For the profession of Educational Psychology the goal should now be to explore fully the effectiveness of the approach and in so doing, determine whether the effort needed to rethink familiar ways of working is justified. Arguing that Dynamic Assessment is a morally superior alternative to psychometrics has been ineffective in changing the practice of the majority of EPs, whether or not they may agree with the critique of static approaches. For those already using the approach, evidence of impact is needed and given the complex social contexts in which EPs work, a better understanding of how to improve practice resulting in better outcomes for children and young people.

In order to achieve these goals, a number of authors writing in the field agree that research is needed which sheds light on the 'the complexities of the assessment-intervention interface,' (Elliott, 2000 p.63). Integral to this exploration there is also agreement regarding the need to determine whether and how Dynamic Assessment

can be used by teachers to inform intervention in the classroom and ultimately what difference this makes to the children themselves.

> 'Future studies need to examine the extent to which Dynamic Assessments can: (a) result in recommendations for intervention that are (b) meaningful to, and will be employed by, practitioners (parents, teachers, therapists) and which (c) subsequently demonstrate meaningful gains that are unlikely to have been achieved in their absence,' (Khaghaninejad, 2015).

There is also agreement between the majority authors that a case study design, whilst limited, remains appropriate for carrying out this research.

The remainder of this thesis describes my research looking at the specific Dynamic Assessment practices of EPs and the impact on those involved. Over the course of the next three chapters I will offer a rationale for the methodology I used to research my key questions, present the findings of my interviews with EPs and case study, and discuss these in light of the existing literature and the limitations of my method. Finally I will discuss the implications of my findings for EP practice and consider how further research could further our understanding of this complex and fascinating area of our work.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

In this chapter I outline the overarching aim of my research and the specific questions I investigated during my work. I also list the research propositions which I chose to test, drawn from my clinical experience and literature review. I provide an introduction to Activity Theory which I used as the conceptual framework to explore the practice of EPs using Dynamic Assessment and give a rationale for why it is appropriate for this investigation.

During the chapter I also focus on my choice of research design and describe the epistemological position taken in my work. I justify my choices making reference to the limitations of previous studies and indicate how my approach will use a range of tools and techniques to further our understanding of Dynamic Assessment in a robust manner. Where limitations exist with my approach, I acknowledge these and demonstrate how I attempted to minimise any undermining effects on my findings. Finally I describe my method in detail and discuss the ethical concerns which I had to consider in my research.

Research questions and propositions

The overarching aim of my research is:

- To look at the difference that Dynamic Assessment can make and how this can be explained

Specifically the questions I address through the research are:

- What are the sociocultural and personal influences on EPs who use Dynamic Assessment?

- What are the specific practices EPs carry out when they use Dynamic Assessment?

- What is the impact of Dynamic Assessment on adults working with children in schools?

The theoretical propositions investigated in the research linked to my literature review are that:

- Dynamic Assessment practice is influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors

- Dynamic Assessment provides information about the cognitive and affective factors impacting on a child's learning

- Dynamic Assessment provides information about how the child can be helped to learn more effectively

- Dynamic Assessment can impact on the practice and beliefs of adults supporting the child in school

- The impact of Dynamic Assessment is influenced by the individual practices of the EP as well as wider sociocultural factors

Conceptual Framework

Activity theory

Throughout my research I use Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a framework to understand and model professional practice. CHAT, (also sometimes known as Sociocultural Activity Theory), can be thought of as the range of approaches which attempt to link the activity of individuals and groups with the wider cultural contexts in which this activity occurs.

Wertsch et al (1995) described these approaches in the following way:

> 'The goal of a sociocultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human mental functioning, on the one hand and the cultural, institutional and historical situations in which this functioning occurs on the other,' (p.3).

CHAT approaches are based on the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and the connections he made between the psychological and social worlds. Kozulin (2005) explains that Vygostky saw human behaviour as 'purposive and culturally meaningful actions,' (p.104) rather than simply a biological response to a stimulus. He also believed that activity was mediated by interpersonal communication and 'psychological tools' such as sign and language systems.

The concept of 'psychological tools' is described in the following passage:

> 'The most essential feature distinguishing the psychological tool from the technical tool, is that it directs the mind and behaviour whereas the technical tool, which is also inserted as an intermediate link between human activity and the external object, is directed toward producing one or other set of changes in the object itself,' (Vygotsky, 1981 p.140 quoted in Daniels, 2005, p.8).

This understanding of activity is depicted diagrammatically below:

Tools

Subject ——— Object ⟶ Outcome(s)
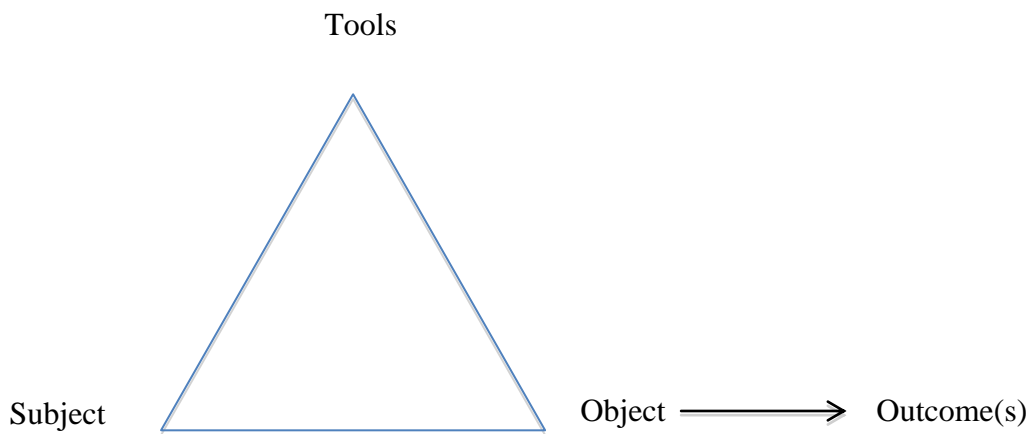
Figure 1. First generation Activity Theory model, Daniels (2001, p.86)

Leontev's contribution

In Vygostsky's work, activity is seen as 'object oriented action mediated by cultural tools and signs', Engeström and Miettinen (1999). This idea focuses on action at the individual level. Leontev (1978, 1981) evolved this thesis by suggesting that behaviour could be understood at three levels. At the most basic level: 'automatic operations…driven by the conditions and tools of action at hand', above this 'individual (or group) action…driven by a goal' and the 'uppermost level of collective activity…driven by an object related motive,' Engeström and Miettinen (1999). Leontev also argued that within the same activity, different people may carry out different actions, giving the example of the role of a 'beater' in the wider activity of a hunt, a concept termed 'division of labour'.

The work of Engeström

Contemporary activity theorists such as Yrjö Engeström have developed these ideas at the theoretical and practical level and in so doing have attempted to explain the link between the individual, their activity and the wider social context.

Engeström (1999) proposed that a unit of analysis within Activity Theory should be the 'object-oriented, collective and culturally mediated human activity, or Activity System,' (p.9). This is depicted diagrammatically in Figure 2.

Engeström uses the Activity System to frame activity within its cultural, institutional, and historical context. The upper half of the system is recognisable as Vygotsky's concept of socially mediated action (Cole and Engeström, 1993). The lower half of the system extends our understanding of activity by incorporating 'rules' (for example conventions, social rules, statutes, legislation), 'community' (others involved in the activity) and following Leontev (1978), the 'division of labour' (how work is shared between the subject and others).

Within this representation of an Activity System, Engeström uses double headed arrows linking each component to draw attention to the interactional nature of the system. He also sees Activity Systems as being in a constant state of flux.

> 'The internal tensions and contradictions of such a system…are accentuated by continuous transitions and transformations between these components of an Activity System, and between the embedded hierarchical levels of collective motive-driven activity, individual goal-driven action, and automatic operations driven by tools and conditions of action,' (1999, p.9).

Tools

Subject ← → Object → Outcomes

Rules ← → Community ← → Division of labour
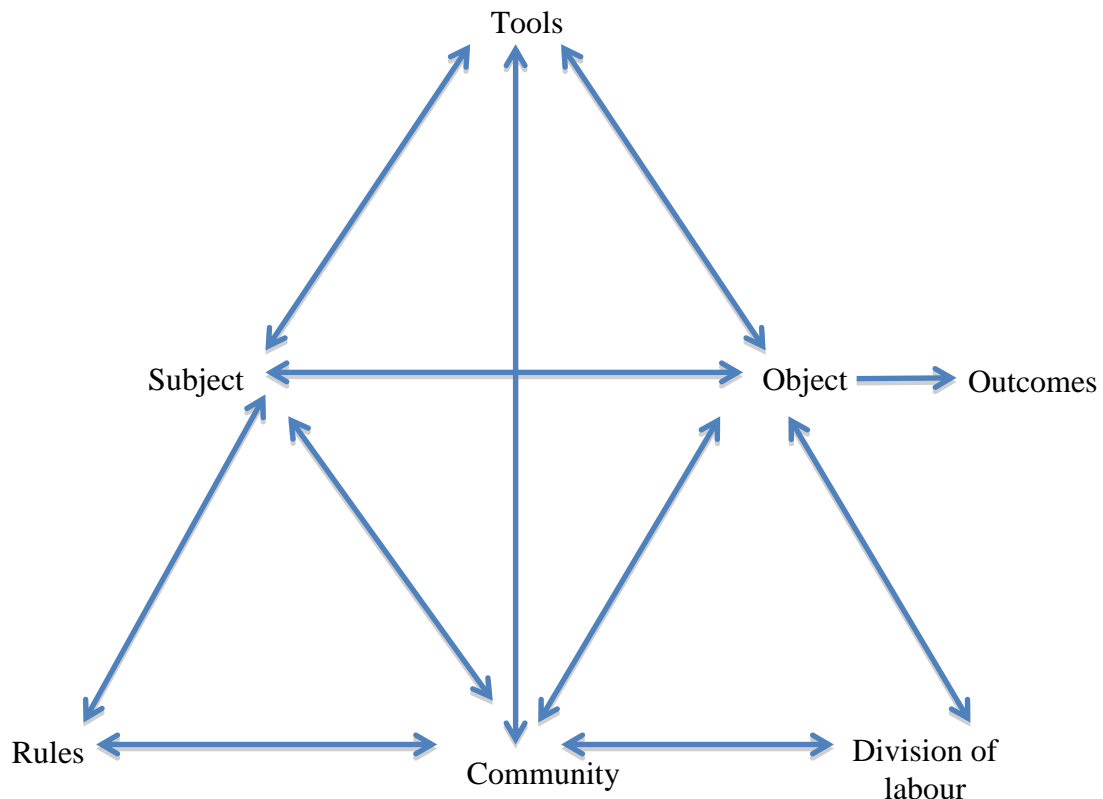
Figure 2. Diagrammatic representation of an Activity System, Engeström (1987)

Finally Engeström also believes that Activity Systems transform over time (known as the principle of historicity) as a result of 'expansive cycles', (Engeström, 1987).

> 'An activity is by definition a multi-voiced formation. An expansive cycle is a re-orchestration of those voices, of the different view points and approaches of the various participants.' (Engeström, 1999, p.35).

My research uses the concept of the Activity System to model EP Dynamic Assessment practice. My reflections on using this framework in previous research and arguments from the literature provide the rationale for this decision.

Using Activity Theory as a framework for research

It has been argued that Activity Theory can act as a framework for use within exploratory research. As Engeström and Miettinen (1999) suggest,

> 'Activity theory should not be regarded as a narrowly psychological theory but rather as a broad approach that takes a new perspective on and develops novel conceptual tools for tackling many of the theoretical and methodological questions that cut across the social sciences today,' (p.8).

Nussbaumer's (2012) review of articles describing the use of Activity Theory as a research tool in school settings describes how there has been a 'dramatic increase' in the use of the approach in educational research over the last two decades.

Educational Psychologists have likewise become increasingly familiar and comfortable with using the approach. Activity Theory was included in Kelly et al's (2008) seminal text 'Frameworks for Practice in Educational Psychology: A textbook for trainees and practitioners'. Research using Activity Theory as a framework for exploration and evaluation of aspects of professional practice also appears in the journal 'Educational Psychology in Practice' with increasingly regularity, (see for example Greenhouse 2013; Cane and Oland 2015; Green and Atkinson 2016).

The appeal of this flexible approach is well articulated.

Leadbetter (2005, 2008, Leadbetter et al 2007) has been a strong advocate for Activity Theory and has been instrumental in bringing about increased understanding in the profession. She argues that sociocultural activity theory approaches are

grounded in strong psychological underpinnings and provide a useful framework for describing complex systems, whilst not losing sight of the individual.

Similarly Nussbaumer (2012) argues that

> 'The theory's importance lies in organising, sifting, sorting and clarifying complex phenomena,' (p.45).

Leadbetter (2008) also suggests that the information gained from research using Activity Theory can be easily shared with those involved in the activity, providing an opportunity for checking the validity of conclusions drawn by the researcher.

My own research looking at the psychological contribution made by EPs (Stacey, 2006) highlighted the value of Activity Theory. My experience of using the approach supported the above claims, but also led to considerable critical reflection by the EPs on their individual and team practices both during interviews with EPs and in the subsequent feedback sessions.

Criticisms of Activity Theory

Although Activity Theory has many strengths as a research framework, the theory is not above criticism, indeed as Nussbaumer (2012) states,

> 'Generally Cultural Historical Activity Theory is acknowledged to be in need of refinement,' (p.46).

Bakhurst (2009) warns researchers using the approach not to ignore these limitations and to be mindful of the contradictions not only within the activity system being

investigated, but also between the model itself and the object of the activity. He suggests that the approach is better suited to certain situations, for example where the object of the activity is clear and where there is agreement about what constitutes an instrument or tool used in the activity. Worryingly, recent Activity Theory research published in Educational Psychology in Practice has failed to fully appreciate the limitations of the approach. Neither Greenhouse (2013) nor Cane and Oland (2015) critique the methodology, and Green and Atkinson (2016) acknowledge the limitations but do not reflect on how these were either addressed in their methodology or could have impacted on their findings.

A key criticism of Activity Theory is the lack of emphasis on the 'subject' position, focusing instead on the activity itself as the primary unit of analysis, known as 'conflation' (Archer, 1996 cited in Hartley, 2009). Daniels (2001) argues that in underplaying the subject position, the role of personal agency in choosing whether to engage with the activity is overlooked.

Similarly, Peim (2009) criticises the approach in this regard,

> 'In what sense does [Activity Theory] provide an account of subjectivity, of subjective experience, subjective motivations or subjective differences? Here a lacuna of considerable significance opens,' (p.176).

Ignoring the significance of subjective factors may lead to incomplete or inaccurate understanding of the activity being investigated. As Toomela (2000) argues, the same activity may be underpinned by any number of 'structurally qualitatively different mental operations' (p.357). If this argument if accepted, it is feasible that for

example a conclusion reached about the significance of a lack of tools in a certain activity, may actually be due to a lack of motivation of subjects to search for different tools to achieve their aims.

Warmington (2011) also suggest that Engeström underplays the significance of the vertical division of labour in the work place, in other words the political dynamic between workers and managers. Engeström instead focuses on the horizontal plane, in other words the interactions and division of labour between workers and the transformations that occur over time as a result. My own research in 2006 would suggest that the impact of this vertical plane is highly significant if approaches such Developmental Work Research are to be effective. The manager present in feedback meetings spent much of her time justifying the contradictions identified by EPs in their practice, rather than considering possible ways forward. This observation echoes the concerns of Avis (2009), that the nature of transformation in Activity Systems needs to be understood better in light of political structures if the potential of the framework to transform activity is to be achieved.

Engeström himself acknowledges some of these limitations. In 2008 he stated that

> 'Activity Theory is an evolving framework which needs to be developed further as it is applied in empirical studies,' (p.382).

He suggests that a number of 'mid-level constructs' are starting to be developed which will aid our understanding of transformation and influence in Activity Systems. In the mean time, it is important that all researchers using the framework are critical of its limitations, acknowledge the benefits of the approach, and attempt where

possible to develop a clearer understanding of the potential of the approach through developing new theory and testing this out in empirical situations.

The use of Activity Theory in my research

I have chosen to use Activity theory in my research in spite of its limitations. The framework is able to deal with the complexity of and variety within Dynamic Assessment practice and can help to describe the many influences on the work carried out by EPs. Furthermore, the framework is able to illuminate the fluidity of this practice, constantly in a state of flux as the context in which it is carried out changes over time.

My previous research indicates that the description of Dynamic Assessment practice produced as a result of the research can be used to stimulate reflection on and development of individual and service practice.

In my research I attempt to address the lack of significance afforded to the subject position by asking additional questions about the beliefs and experiences of the EP during the interviews and also by using a Personal Construct Psychology technique to explore EPs' constructs about Dynamic Assessment. A rationale for and description of this approach is given later in this chapter. The importance of overcoming the under-emphasis on the subject position is discussed previously, but additionally Dawson (1992) argues for the importance of 'people' in organisations. She suggests that individuals vary in terms of their attitudes, motivation and performance and supports the view that in some cases these individuals impact on

their organisational context. If I am to achieve the research aim of 'What are the sociocultural and personal influences on EPs who use Dynamic Assessment', I need to fully understand the influence that the individuals involved make.

In using Activity Theory as a research tool there is a need to be explicit about my own positioning and influence within the Activity System. During the first phase of my research in which I interview EPs about their Dynamic Assessment practice, I become, albeit temporarily, part of the community involved in their work and as with others involved, play different roles due to the division of labour in the activity. This active positioning and influence is even more apparent in the case study in the second phase of my research. This acknowledgement of self as an active subject in the activity is a feature of the interpretative paradigm discussed below. The roles I play and their possible influences on my findings are also given due consideration.

Epistemology

A critique of the research design and methodology of previous research

Two main epistemological positions can be identified in the literature reviewed for this thesis. David Tzuriel, Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) and Woods and Farrell (2006) adopt a positivist research paradigm in their research, whereas the case studies presented by Lauchlan et al (2007), Birnbaum (2004) and Elliott et al (1996) are based on an interpretative approach.

Epistemology is concerned with the way in which we view knowledge, for instance knowledge as proven fact or individual perspective. It is also interested in how these claims to the status of knowledge come to be made. Griffiths (1998) describes epistemology as focused on a series of questions and issues about knowledge,

> 'What it is, how we get it, how we recognise it, how it relates to truth, how it is entangled with power,' (p.35).

Tzuriel's work researching the application of Dynamic Assessment instruments is embedded within the positivist paradigm. Interestingly, this epistemological stance contrasts significantly with Tzuriel's approach to the delivery of Dynamic Assessment, which assumes many of the characteristics of the clinical approach advocated by Feuerstein. This is noted in his definition of Dynamic Assessment, which emphasises how it is different to standardised approaches,

'Dynamic Assessment differs from conventional static tests in regard to its goals, processes, instruments, test situation and interpretation of results,' (2000b, p. 180).

Despite this perspective in his work with children, Tzuriel uses experimental design and inferential statistical analysis in his research, adopting the standard view of science,

> 'The purpose of science is to develop universal causal laws. The search for scientific laws involves finding empirical regularities where two or more things appear together or in some kind of sequence,' (Robson 2002, p. 20).

In Tzuriel's (2000a) review of research aimed at establishing Dynamic Assessment measures as 'useful and accurate instruments' (p.395), he cites a series of experimental studies conducted to establish the utility of the approach with different groups of children. The review cites only research using quantitative data collated

through experimental and quasi-experimental designs. In so doing, he concurs with the superiority given to these research methods in the advice provided to health professionals in 'Drawing on the Evidence', (Wolpert et al 2002). He concludes his review by stating that,

> 'The research evidence presented in this paper validates Dynamic Assessment as a more accurate and useful approach for measuring individual's cognitive abilities and relating them to various educational, and intervention variables, than the static test approach,' (p.424).

His conclusions are unequivocal. He has generalised from the results of the experiments reviewed to state a truth to be accepted about reality. Again this is characteristic of the positivist epistemology and the emphasis on prediction through the production of knowledge,

> 'In the form of generalisations from which predictions can be made and events and phenomena controlled,' (Usher, 1996, p.13).

In adopting this approach however, Tzuriel is open to the many criticisms which can be levelled at positivist research. Indeed, in other contexts Tzuriel himself appears to have acknowledged these concerns. Commenting on the Sternberg and Grigorenko's (2001) suggestion that to some degree all testing is dynamic, Tzuriel (2001) counters,

> 'The attempt to combine the static and dynamic approaches reminds me of the acrobatic manoeuvres some psychologists do to appease scientific demands for objectivity and reliability. Scientific efforts should be focused on improving the problems of the Dynamic Assessment approach…rather than diluting it with artificial transplantations of conceptual paradigms, and sacrificing a promising Dynamic Assessment approach on the altar of hard science with 'experimentalistic,' strict, and standardised demands,' (p.246).

The view that Tzuriel therefore holds of the practice of Dynamic Assessment itself does not appear to extend to research into its efficacy. Tzuriel's research explores the effectiveness of Dynamic Assessment by investigating the measurement of learning potential using pre- and post-intervention scores on his instruments. This approach contrasts significantly with the clinical procedure assumed by many practitioners and with qualitative observations which are made about the child's learning. Tzuriel's research therefore effectively narrows the conclusions that can be drawn about the potential applications, in an attempt to standardise and quantify Dynamic Assessment.

Likewise, Tzuriel's declaration that most of his studies have been conducted at the Bar-Ilan laboratory, (2000a, p.395) invites further criticism. EPs use the approach in a classroom environment which is influenced by the teacher and support staff, the school as a whole, and the local and national educational context. The embedded context for Dynamic Assessment is typical of highly complex social activity. Some authors would argue that this degree of complexity makes the search for universal laws outlining causal links between Dynamic Assessment and outcomes unlikely to yield fruitful conclusions. Furthermore, this complexity is likely to be case-specific in many ways, making statistical generalisation of findings to a wider population again a problematic pursuit. As Usher (1996) states,

> 'It is questionable whether generalisable and predictive knowledge is possible in the social domain,' (p.14).

The utility of ignoring the real-life context by exploring Dynamic Assessment in a laboratory setting is therefore a highly questionable practice.

The use of the positivist paradigm in Dynamic Assessment research can also be criticised for failing to recognise the limitations of the researcher perspective. Throughout much of Tzuriel's work there is a lack of overt personal reflexivity and acknowledgement of the value-laden quality of the data collected. Even simple numerical measures used by Tzuriel (2000b) to measure the frequency of specific behaviours observed during a Seria-Think assessment cannot be seen to be value-free. Within this research, frequency measures are taken to be an indicator of the child acquiring a particular cognitive function, which in turn is taken to indicate the usefulness of this particular Dynamic Assessment instrument. Other interpretations exist but are not given due consideration. Tzuriel assumes that the empirical data uncover the truth about the phenomenon.

By way of contrast, the case studies presented by Lauchlan et al (2007), Birnbaum (2004) and Elliott et al (1996) assume the interpretative position.

Usher (1996) describes the aims of the interpretative position.

> 'In social research, knowledge is concerned not with generalisation, prediction and control, but with interpretation, meaning and illumination,' (p.18).

This position would suggest that Dynamic Assessment can only be understood by exploring the meaning made of the assessment experience by those involved. Likewise the impact of the assessment can be understood by illuminating multiple subjective perspectives of change, rather than by attempting to capture objective

reality through standardised instruments and simplification of the phenomena to numerical indicators.

This does not mean to say however, that there is not a larger purpose to interpretative research beyond the description of individual meaning, indeed as Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue,

> 'The purpose…is to reveal the meaning of particular forms of social life by systematically articulating the subjective-meaning structures governing the ways in which typical individuals act in typical situations,' (p.90).

However, much of the interpretative research reviewed for this chapter can be criticised for failing to fulfil this promise, as *systematic articulation* has simply not been robust enough. A number of studies and their shortcomings in this respect are described below.

Lauchlan et al (2007) describe a single case study where they carried out classroom observations and obtained the views of the parent, teacher and child to draw tentative conclusions about the impact of using specific Dynamic Assessment tools to inform subsequent intervention. Little information is given about the intervention itself, how the views were obtained and the nature of analysis undertaken in order to draw conclusions about the impact of the assessment.

In Elliott et al's (1996) case study presentation, the strengths of the approach are based on the assessor's observations of change in the child's behaviours during the assessment. The data are made more real on one level by the inclusion of a partial

transcript of the assessment in which the child is struggling to give an account of the way he has reached a solution. The child's meaning made of the assessment situation and their perception of change within the meeting would have strengthened the observations. However, a real criticism of this particular study must be levelled at the description of change in the teacher following the assessment. No evidence is given of how it is known that this change has occurred, we must simply accept the author's conclusions that she was better equipped to meet the child's needs following the assessment.

Birnbaum (2004) presents a number of case studies in which she has used Dynamic Assessment evidence for Special Educational Needs and Disability tribunals. In these case studies she draws on observations of the impact of her evidence on subsequent decisions made by the local authority and the tribunal panel. Birnbaum's paper is interpretative in that she shows a degree of reflexivity in highlighting the professional context in which she is writing and is clear to avoid over generalisation on the basis of the qualitative data she has presented. The inclusion of multiple perspectives and greater transparency in how she drew her conclusions about the impact of the approach would have added some degree of rigour to what admittedly is intended as a discussion paper.

Epistemological position assumed during this research

The aim of my research is to develop an understanding which offers some explanation of the practice of Dynamic Assessment as a social phenomenon rather than just in the specific cases I investigate. My underlying assumption in so doing

(removing the research from a wholly relativistic perspective) is that there is an underlying reality to be investigated. That we can only know this reality incompletely is the inevitable limitation of the research process and of human understanding more generally.

Integral to this interpretative stance is the need to recognise how I am positioned relative to the object of my research and to recognise the limitation of this perspective. Dynamic Assessment has been an integral part of my professional practice since my initial training as an EP and has remained a focus of considerable interest for me over time. In making these choices I have made assumptions about the inherent usefulness of the approach. My use of Dynamic Assessment has also been underpinned by beliefs about ethical practice and a commitment to using assessments which are both fair and provide children and young people with the opportunity to show what they are capable of.

I also recognise the influence of my different roles on the behaviour of the EPs participating in the research and therefore potentially on my findings. Although my primary role was one of researcher during the interviews and case study, my familiarity with the EPs as a manager, colleague and in some cases friend is likely to have impacted on their responses and behaviours. For some, previous conversations about Dynamic Assessment or observations of my practice may have influenced answers to questions or resulted in an emphasis on particular features of their work. In the case study it was clear that my presence both caused anxiety and increased motivation to perform well.

Similarly the influence of my interest in highlighting the potential benefits of the approach in a service in which the approach is little used must be acknowledged. There was also a need to be clear with myself and the participants about how my role as a manager and professional bound by the Health and Care Professions Council (2016) Code of Conduct would influence my actions should they report inappropriate or weak practice. The ethical impact of this positioning and steps taken to overcome the resulting challenges is discussed at the end of this chapter.

Although the interpretative paradigm is often associated with qualitative research designs, (see for example Robson, 2002), my study will make use of both qualitative and quantitative data. The adoption of a mixed method design is an example of a pragmatic approach to research as described by Robson (2002).

> 'Whatever philosophical or methodological approach works best for a particular research problem at issue,' (p.43).

Similarly, Cohen et al (2007) note that case studies often contain many types of data based on the principle of 'fitness for purpose,' (p. 181), rather than being limited to a particular epistemological paradigm. Yin (2003) also supports a mixed method approach, suggesting that this kind of research allows exploration of more complex questions and ideas and produces more robust data than single method approaches.

Following Robson (2002), the main purposes of combining qualitative and quantitative data within my own research are to ensure I can firstly triangulate information from different sources and secondly integrate my personal perspective of the situation with those of the participants (acknowledging the subjectivity of such an

approach). Finally this approach facilitates the identification and interpretation of links between specific practices and outcomes due to the rich picture provided from qualitative data combined with the relative ease of comparison afforded by quantitative data.

To some purists, my approach may appear to push the boundaries of the interpretative position. However as Miles and Huberman (1994) comment,

> 'The paradigms for conducting social research seem to be shifting beneath our feet, and an increasing number of researchers now see the world with more pragmatic, ecumenical eyes,' (p.5).

It is my aim to shed light on the practice and potential of Dynamic Assessment, rather than to obtain philosophical purity and I intend to exploit the breadth of tools I have at my disposal as a researcher in order to do so most effectively.

In the next section I describe and give a rationale for the design of each of the phases of my research, along with a detailed description of the method used. I also outline the data collected and my approach to analysis.

Phase 1 research design and method

Research design

Interviews

The first phase of my research looking at the Dynamic Assessment practices of, and sociocultural influences on EPs used semi-structured interviews based on the Activity

Theory framework, supported by a Personal Construct Psychology approach known as the Repertory Grid method.

Mears (2012) describes in-depth interviews as,

> 'Purposeful interactions in which an investigator attempts to learn what another person knows about a topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks and feels about it, and what significance or meaning it might have,' (p.170).

Cohen et al (2007) add to this definition a focus on the different ways in which information may be collected during interviews and stress the flexibility and control this approach affords. They suggest that interviews are useful where there is a need to gather information and when the aim is to test or develop hypotheses. Cohen et al suggest that the choice of whether to use structured, unstructured or semi-structured interviews depends on the purpose of the interview, the greater the need to compare and quantify, the more structure and standardisation is required.

My research explores in depth the views and experiences of individual EPs using Dynamic Assessment, but also looks for patterns within and across Local Authorities. The semi-structured interview is able to fulfil both of these aims and is epistemologically aligned with the mixed methods pragmatic approach I take throughout my research. Moreover the choice to use interviews rather than questionnaires or other methods reflects my professional experience and skills. Mears (2012) asks us to reflect on whether as researchers we are comfortable with complex social interactions before choosing this approach. My training and background make interviews the ideal tool for me to explore EPs' views.

Interviews have a number of disadvantages however. Cohen at al (2007) warn that interviews can be time consuming both for participants and the researcher. Data analysis following transcription can be particularly labour intensive, and inevitably the time required will limit the number of participants that can be interviewed. Likewise the loss of data following transcription (for instance non verbal cues conveying meaning) must be acknowledged. The question of interviewer bias is also a concern.

Personal construct psychology

To explore the subject position within the interviews, participants are asked a series of questions about their motivation, experiences and beliefs in relation to their use of Dynamic Assessment. Additionally an approach from Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) known as the Repertory Grid method (Kelly 1955) is used to fully explore what Leontev (1978) termed the 'sense' and 'meaning' made of the object of Dynamic Assessment. A detailed description of the approach is given in the 'Procedure' section later in this chapter.

Repertory Grid method is suitable for this purpose as it is a practical and flexible tool which is frequently used in PCP (Neimeyer, 2002) to study and understand personal interpretations of experience (Bannister, 1985).

Burr et al (2012) recently reviewed the effectiveness of PCP techniques in qualitative research. They suggest that,

'PCP theory and methods are epistemologically compatible with approaches that take seriously subjective experience,' (p.342).

The approach therefore can be argued to be suitable for the interpretative epistemological paradigm adopted in my research. The authors go on to suggest that PCP is appropriate when time needs to be given to explore the deeper meaning of concepts, and particularly when concepts, ideas or experiences may be difficult to articulate. My Activity Theory research in 2006 looking at the psychological contribution made by EPs found that practitioners had most difficulty answering questions about the object of their activity. It is for this reason that I chose to use an additional tool to support participants' thinking in this area.

Burr et al (2012) argue that PCP techniques are superior to other approaches which are also designed to 'get below the surface,' (p.343). They argue that PCP differs in that it requires less verbal fluency than other approaches, may create less anxiety about giving the 'right' answer due to the supportive role of the researcher, and is time efficient in comparison to other techniques. The authors also highlight that PCP can be enjoyable and illuminating for participants, provides rich information about the subject matter and helps to avoid well rehearsed responses to lines of enquiry.

In my research I have chosen to use the Repertory Grid method from PCP to elicit EPs' constructs about what is meant by Dynamic Assessment. There are threats to the validity of this approach however. Johnson and Nadas (2012) reading of Kelly suggest these threats include weak interviewer skills, the impact of group dynamics on construct elicitation, language limitations of participants and failing to use 'triadic

elicitation' to explore constructs. These concerns are overcome in my research. My training and experience in using PCP approaches is considerable, I use the technique with individuals rather than the group, I use the approach with highly articulate participants and have remained true to the original method proposed by Kelly (1955).

Finally, Kelly (1955) himself cautions that constructs are permeable by design and that words ascribed to constructs may not truly reflect the participant's meaning. Overall however, the approach does provide a useful tool to develop EPs' views of the meaning of the object Dynamic Assessment and in so doing more fully develops the subject position within the Activity Theory framework.

Method

Data collection

During the first phase of my research, the views of EPs are collected through individual semi-structured interviews designed to elicit information about each aspect of their Dynamic Assessment activity.

The interview questions are based on the work of Leadbetter and the use of Activity Theory in the Learning in and for Inter-Agency Work project (Leadbetter, 2006; Leadbetter et al, 2007). This research used specific questions during interviews to elicit information from professionals about each component of the activity system. The use of these same questions during interviews in my unpublished research looking at the psychological contribution made by EPs provided rich qualitative data

from which to understand EP practice (Stacey, 2006). The questions generally proved easy to understand but provoked considerable thought and reflection from EPs, suggesting they were constructed in such a way as to significantly illuminate an embedded aspect of our professional activity. However my research also highlighted the difficulty with which EPs answered the question about their personal understanding and meaning of 'making a psychological contribution', (the 'object' of the activity). To support this aspect of the research, I therefore use triadic elicitation and repertory grid analysis from Personal Construct Psychology to elicit EPs' core constructs about Dynamic Assessment. The opportunity for EPs to comment further on their personal meaning of Dynamic Assessment is also given through an additional open question following this exercise where I ask whether there is any other way they would describe Dynamic Assessment.

To address the lack of due emphasis given to the 'subject' position in Activity Theory I also complement Leadbetter's interview schedule with questions relating to the personal background of the EP, their reasons for choosing to use Dynamic Assessment and the extent to which they use the approach.

To support my understanding of the community involved in Dynamic Assessment, I used a tick sheet with EPs in Oxshire after the interviews. This tick sheet required EPs to indicate who was involved in Dynamic Assessment, what types of schools, what age group and what type of difficulties. Unfortunately as a result of the time delay between the two sets of interviews, this adaptation to the interview schedule was mistakenly overlooked in the Southdale interviews, where only the interview

question and verbal prompts were used to investigate the community involved in Dynamic Assessment. The impact of this limitation is addressed in chapter 5.

Interviews in Oxshire took place between May and December 2008. Interviews in Southdale took place between October 2010 and February 2011.

All data collection tools used in phase 1 of my research are provided in Appendix 2.

Data analysis

I interrogate EPs' qualitative responses to interview questions using an approach to data analysis devised by Miles and Huberman (1994). This approach consists of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. In some cases, (such as with EPs' self-reports of the tools used during Dynamic Assessment), this amounts to little more than content analysis, reporting on frequencies of particular tests used. However, in other questions such as 'What supports your use of Dynamic Assessment?' greater analysis is required. In the first data reduction phase of Miles and Huberman's approach I use iterative thematic analysis to identify themes within the EPs' responses from transcriptions of the recorded interviews.

Responses in the two Local Authorities are compared to highlight differences and similarities in practice between the areas. Additionally I identify responses that indicate tensions and change in practice over time to highlight those areas of contradiction and historicity within the Activity Systems. Each of these steps supports

exploration of the proposition that 'the impact of Dynamic Assessment is influenced by the individual practices of the EP as well as wider sociocultural factors'.

Participants

The two Local Authorities studied for my research were those in which I had worked as an EP. I took this approach for ease of communication with participants and establishing consent with managers in the services. The two authorities differed in a number of ways.

Oxshire was a county council covering a large geographical area, consisting mainly of rural areas with a small number of large towns. The authority was in the least deprived quintile for socioeconomic deprivation based on national comparisons. The EP service was split across three bases with a senior EP in each, and a principal EP located centrally. The service had adopted a consultation approach to service delivery in the early 2000s.

Southdale was a small unitary authority with good transport links. The authority was in the second least deprived quintile for socioeconomic deprivation based on national comparisons, however had the third highest economic inequality in the country. Coastal deprivation was significant. The EP service was based centrally with a principal EP and two seniors. At the time of the interviews, the service had only recently adopted a consultation approach to service delivery.

In phase 1, EPs self selected for the interviews in answer to an email asking for volunteers to be interviewed about their practice. The criterion for inclusion in the

research was that participants used Dynamic Assessment in their work. 7 EPs were interviewed in Oxshire and 6 EPs were interviewed in Southdale.

Procedure

Interviews with EPs were held in a quiet room in the service office. A do not disturb sign was placed on the door. The EP was welcomed to the interview and thanked for their participation. Appendix 2 provides the script for the interviews and Repertory Grid exercise. EPs were also asked follow up questions in between as appropriate from their responses. All interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone. Additional notes were taken in the event of recording failure.

In the Repertory Grid exercise EPs were asked to write down 6 to 8 different types of individual assessment approaches (also described as 'ways of working with children individually'). They were asked to include Dynamic Assessment in this list. EPs were then asked to identify any three of the ways of working, where two are the same and the other is different. They were then instructed to write the way in which the two were the same on one side of a sheet of paper, and the way the third was different on the opposite side of the paper and to draw a straight line between the two. The EPs were then told to mark the line as a 9-point scale between the two 'constructs' and to indicate on the line where Dynamic Assessment would be placed. This procedure was repeated until the EP had generated around 6 to 8 constructs about individual assessment approaches and had marked where Dynamic Assessment would be on each scale. Unlike in the full Repertory Grid method I did not then go on to ask EPs to rate the other types of assessment against the constructs. This is

because my research questions did not focus on the meaning made of Dynamic Assessment in comparison to other approaches and this therefore would be an extraneous and potentially confusing step for EPs.

Following the interviews in Oxshire I emailed all participants and asked them to complete a tick sheet indicating who was involved in the Dynamic Assessment. This was not sent out to Southdale EPs.

Phase 2 research design and method

Research design

The second phase of my research uses a flexible case study design to explore specific Dynamic Assessment practices used by one EP within a school context. The case study also looks at the impact of the approach on staff working with children.

There is some argument about whether the term 'case study' refers to the object under investigation, the outcomes of the research or the particular approach taken during the study, (e.g. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013). In my work I have conceptualised the case study as a research design as per Yin (2003) and Hamilton and Corbett- Whittier (2013) who suggest that a case study should be seen as,

> 'An approach to research that aims to capture the complexity of the relationships beliefs and attitudes within a bounded unit, using different forms of data collection and is likely to explore more than one perspective,' (p.10).

Yin (2003) suggests that case studies are useful when the researcher is aiming to explain why things are happening and when events are not under the researcher's

control (either for ethical or practical reasons). He also highlights the effectiveness of case studies for studying contemporary as opposed to historical events. Woodside (2010) also argues that the case studies can provide

> 'A deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviours occurring for a specific process through time,' (p.6).

This deep understanding, he argues, is achieved through the adherence to twelve principles of case study design which include the use of unobtrusive as well as obtrusive methods of data collections and the need for system rather than linear thinking when describing the case.

De Vaus (2001) suggests that case studies are an appropriate choice of design in situations where there are a large number of variables compared with a small number of cases. These two conditions are highly relevant when studying Dynamic Assessment. The opportunities to study the approach in local authority EP services will be limited by the small number of EPs using Dynamic Assessment regularly as an assessment tool. In addition, the practical difficulties of gaining informed consent from stakeholders and gathering data within limited time scales, often at short notice are likely to limit the number of cases available for study.

From my experience and the research reviewed, a large number of variables appear to impact on the outcomes of Dynamic Assessment. These include the:

- Nature of the mediated learning experience created by the EP during the assessment (Haywood and Lidz, 2007; Tzuriel, 2000a)

- Specific questions under investigation during assessment (Birnbaum 2004; Lidz 1991; Haywood and Lidz 2007)

- Preparation carried out with the school before the assessment (Yeomans, 2008)

- Degree of training and supervision experienced by the assessor (Haywood and Lidz, 2007)

- Tools used to carry out the assessment (Haywood and Lidz, 2007)

- Nature of the pupil's difficulty (Haywood and Lidz, 2007)

- Familiarity of teachers and support staff with approaches to teaching which focus on process rather than product (Yeomans, 2008)

- Means of communication chosen by the EP to feedback findings from the assessment (Yeomans, 2008)

- Presence of a member of staff during the assessment (Yeomans, 2008)

- Age of the pupil

- Views of supporting adults about and their understanding of cognition and ability

- Motivation of the pupil and supporting adults to change behaviours

- Degree of collaboration between home and school

As a result, the case study is well suited to address my research questions. The design is capable of addressing both the exploratory component of the research looking at the impact of Dynamic Assessment on the pupil, parents and teaching staff as well as the explanatory dimension linking the practice to outcomes identified. The design is also able to account for the contextual influences and can be used to build

theory which may be applicable to the practice of Dynamic Assessment as a whole by EPs.

Yin (2003) suggests that the effective use of the case study design is dependent on clarity about the 'unit of analysis' under investigation. De Vaus (2001, p. 18) defines the unit of analysis as the 'thing about which we collect information and from which we draw conclusions'. Yin (2003) terms research in which there are multiple units of analysis 'embedded case studies' as compared to 'holistic' case studies where a single unit of analysis is being studied.

In my research the specific units of analysis which are studied to better understand Dynamic Assessment practice and the impact of the approach are

- The preparation for the assessment carried out in school by the EP
- The Dynamic Assessment
- Feedback of the assessment
- Beliefs and practices of the teacher or teaching assistant

The influence of the context for the case study will be explored by investigating the

- Sociocultural factors influencing EP practice
- Sociocultural factors influencing the impact of the assessment on the teacher or teaching assistant

Figure 3 depicts the embedded case study design for this phase of my research.

By using an embedded design, Yin (2003) suggests that potential difficulties associated with holistic designs can be avoided. Firstly, investigation of distinct units of analysis is more likely to result in focused data collection and clarity about the variables being investigated and how they can be 'captured'. An example of this within my own research might be the need to operationalise the individual assessment experience in some way, using an established tool such as the Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale (Lidz, 1991).

According to Yin, the focus provided by separate units of analysis in an embedded case study design can also prevent 'slippage' or change of focus during the research which can be a problem with holistic case study designs. However, despite the relative merits of the embedded case study design, Yin does criticise this approach where the research fails to return from the focus on the units of analysis to the case as a whole, leading to a situation in which

> 'The original phenomenon of interest…has become the context and not the target of study,' (p. 45).

A further differentiation which can be made within the overall case study approach is between single and multiple case study designs. Yin puts forward a convincing argument that multiple case studies provide a stronger evidence base from which theoretical understanding may be built and are often seen as being more 'robust' than single case studies.

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│   │   │    Preparation for  │       │     │
│       │     assessment      │             │
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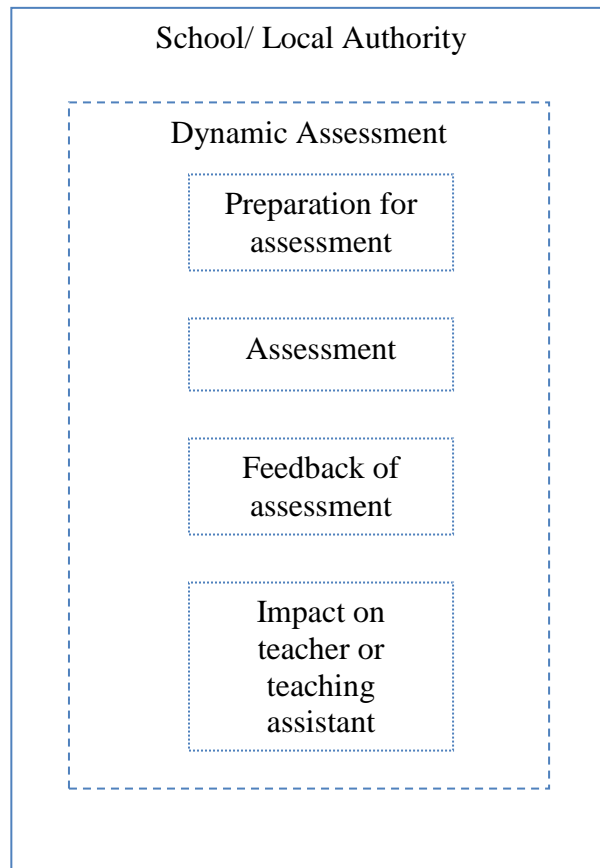
Figure 3. Diagrammatic representation of a single case in my research based on Yin (2003)

As de Vaus (2001) notes,

> 'The more the cases behave in a way that is consistent with the way we would expect on the basis of our theory, the more confident we are about our theory,' (p.238.)

However multiple case study designs have their limitations. Most significantly, the time required to carry out in-depth case study work will be doubled at least, a luxury not available in my own research.

Yin (2003) suggests five different rationales for using a single case study design, two of which are relevant to my work. Firstly I am testing a number of propositions drawn

from my literature review about the positive impact of Dynamic Assessment. Yin calls these case studies in which the aim is to test well-formulated theory, 'critical cases'. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) offer a description of a 'cumulative case study' that extends Yin's concept and fits well with my desire to militate against the methodological limitations of previous research. These case studies are described as those

> 'Which replicate and or develop existing case studies to build a cumulative body of evidence to draw upon with regard to a particular phenomenon or development,' (p.19).

Yin (2003) also argues that the single case study design can be used where there is a representative or typical case to study in order,

> 'To capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation,' (p.41).

It is likely though not absolutely certain that the case studied in my work was fairly representative of EP Dynamic Assessment practice. I was familiar with much of the approach taken from both my own professional assessment practice and the EP interview responses in the first phase. Additionally, as will be explored in Chapter 4, the tools training and community available in Dynamic Assessment show high levels of congruence across EPs.

The main criticisms of the case study design relate to validity. External validity is the degree to which findings can be generalised beyond the individual case. This criticism is particularly targeted at the single case study design where there is not the opportunity to replicate results within the research.

In response to this criticism Woodside (2010) argues that the same can be said of any single experiment due to the potential for the selection of unrepresentative participants for example. Woodside also agrees with Yin that the objective of case studies is not to generalise but to develop theory which can then be tested against future cases.

In my research I intend to establish external validity by building and testing theory within the case study design in order to understand more about the potential outcomes of Dynamic Assessment practice generally and how this might be achieved. This theory will then be open to testing in future research. The question of internal validity is also important to my choice of design. De Vaus (2001) defines this as,

> 'The extent to which the structure of a research design enables us to draw unambiguous conclusions from our results,' (p. 28).

Woodside (2010) suggests that concerns about internal validity can be overcome in case studies by triangulation of multiple sources of data over time. In EP practice, triangulation of information about a situation from a variety of sources is essential to effective assessment practice. De Vaus (2001) also argues that as case studies investigate units of analysis within specific contexts, these variables and their influence on possible causal relationships are given due consideration adding to internal validity, unlike in experimental designs. As an example, Elliott (2000) raises the question of whether teacher understanding of the theories underpinning process based approaches to education and assessment has an impact on their ability to use the findings of Dynamic Assessment. The use of a rigorous case study design is

capable of exploring such contextual variables and considering their role in possible causal relationships.

Method

Data collection

Table 6 below shows the data I collected during the case study and how this related to my research questions. All data collection tools used in the case study are provided in Appendix 3. The observation schedule for the SENCo working with the child and the questionnaire looking at the impact of the approach were piloted prior to the case study. This took place during routine casework I carried out on behalf of Oxshire as an EP in their employment.

Additional information was also gathered regarding the outcomes of the assessment and the sociocultural factors influencing practice as described in Table 7.

Unit of analysis	Research question	Data collected	Methods used
Pre-assessment (preparation)	What are the specific practices EPs carry out when they use Dynamic Assessment?	Descriptive information about preparatory work undertaken with the school	• Semi-structured interview with EP • Semi-structured interview with SENCo
Dynamic Assessment	What are the specific practices EPs carry out when they use Dynamic Assessment?	Descriptive information about Dynamic Assessment practices carried out with the child	• Semi-structured interview with EP • Semi-structured interview with SENCo • Structured observation including Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale (Lidz 1991)
Feedback from EP	What are the specific practices EPs carry out when they use Dynamic Assessment?	Descriptive information about feedback practices to the SENCo following the assessment	• Semi-structured interview with EP • Semi-structured interview with member of staff • Structured observation of discussion between EP and SENCo after assessment • Scrutiny of written information produced by EP
Impact on SENCo	What impact does Dynamic Assessment have on the SENCo?	SENCo's self-report of impact of Dynamic Assessment on their beliefs and support given to the child	• Semi-structured interview with SENCo • Observation of SENCo working with the child before and after the assessment • Questionnaire completed by SENCo before and after assessment • Scrutiny of Individual Education Plan before and after assessment

Table 6. Data collected during the case study

Research question	Data collected	Methods used
What are the sociocultural and personal influences on EPs who use Dynamic Assessment?	EP self report about sociocultural factors influencing their practice during the case study	Semi-structured interview with EP
To look at the Difference that Dynamic Assessment can make and how this can be explained	SENCo self-report about sociocultural factors influencing the impact of the Dynamic Assessment	Semi-structured interview with SENCo

Table 7. Data collected during the case study relating to outcomes of the assessment and sociocultural factors influencing practice

The timetable for data collection was as follows.

Activity	Date
Scrutiny of pre-assessment IEP	11.6.09
Scrutiny of pre-assessment questionnaire completed by SENCo	11.06.09
Pre-assessment observation of SENCo working with child	11.06.09
Observation of Dynamic Assessment (also observed by SENCo)	18.06.09
Observation of feedback and joint problem solving meeting following Dynamic Assessment (attended by SENCo and EP)	18.06.09
Scrutiny of written EP feedback provided to school	25.06.09
Scrutiny of post-assessment IEP	30.06.09
Scrutiny of post-assessment questionnaire completed by SENCo	30.06.09
Post-assessment observation of SENCo working with child	30.06.09
Interview with SENCo	30.06.09
Interview with EP	13.07.09

Table 8. Timetable for data collection during the case study

Data analysis

Yin (2003) suggests that the identification of a general analytic strategy prior to specific data analysis is helpful in case study research. This strategy provides a clear focus for later analysis which relates directly to the aims of the research and specific research questions.

Yin's preferred strategy for case study designs relates to the theoretical propositions underpinning the research. In the case of my research, the theoretical propositions based on the conclusions of the literature review are that:

- EP Dynamic Assessment practice is influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors
- Dynamic assessment provides information about the cognitive and affective factors impacting on a child's learning
- Dynamic assessment provides information about how the child can be helped to learn more effectively
- Dynamic assessment can impact on the practice and beliefs of adults supporting the child in school
- The impact of Dynamic Assessment is influenced by the individual practices of the EP as well as wider sociocultural factors

Following Yin (2003), 'pattern-matching logic' is used to match the data collated within the case study to the data predicted on the basis of these propositions. As an example I look at whether data collected from observations, questionnaires and interviews with the teacher or teaching assistant working with the child demonstrates a change in practice and beliefs following the assessment. This pattern matching is based on Miles and Huberman's approach (1994) to qualitative data analysis, and statistical analysis of quantitative data where appropriate. I then use the results of this analysis to build theory regarding effective practices in Dynamic Assessment.

Participants

Participants for the case study were selected by asking for an EP in Oxshire to volunteer to participate in this phase of the research. Once this EP had been identified (based on the first response received), they were asked to identify a suitable 'case' to research. The criteria for selecting a case was that they needed to be planning to use Dynamic Assessment with the child and to gain written consent from the member of school staff and parents, and verbal consent from the child (via the parents or school). Oxshire was chosen as the Local Authority for the case study as it was the first area in which I undertook my interviews and time was available to complete the data collection involved.

Procedure

The data collection activities proceeded in the order described in Table 8. The procedure for each activity was as follows.

- The SENCo was asked to provide a copy of the IEP before and after the assessment.

- The SENCo was emailed a copy of the questionnaire to complete before the assessment. This was then collected on the day of the first observation of her working with the child. The post-assessment questionnaire was then given to the SENCo on the day of the assessment and collected during a later visit.

- I observed the SENCo working the child during a timetabled individual support session of her choosing. This took place in the SENCo's room. During the observation I wrote notes on the observation schedule and the MLERS form. Once this visit was completed I used the MLERS scoring schedule to rate the mediation provided by the SENCo. At the beginning of the observation, the SENCo explained to the child who I was and why I was there and I thanked her for agreeing to my presence.

- The Dynamic Assessment and feedback took place in the SENCo's room. The SENCo was present and reintroduced me to the child, who I again thanked for allowing me to observe. I took written notes throughout using the observation schedules.

- I requested a copy of the written feedback from the EP, who sent this by email.

- The interviews took place in quiet rooms in school and the service office. These were recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed prior to analysis.

Ethics

Throughout my research I was mindful of the potential ethical challenges created by my work and the need to address these issues to prevent any unintended harm to

those involved. I was careful to identify all potential risks to participants, for example being identified as the owner of a particular comment about a local authority, and took action to ensure these negative consequences could not occur.

It was important to gain informed consent from participants, especially from the child involved in the case study. I believed that it would be essential to ensure participants understood the aims of the research, the commitment required from them and the potential costs and benefits. I recognised the need to ensure that participants did not feel coerced into taking part by giving them time and space to make decisions and ensuring they understood their right to withdraw at any time. I also understood the need to ensure that information about the research was tailored to the individual needs of the participants.

Confidentiality for participants was also a key concern. I ensured that where possible the source of data collected during the research could not be identified other than by the respondent. However I also needed to ensure that participants understood the limits of the confidentiality that could be guaranteed. As an example, in the case study participants were clearly able to identify who had said what. The names of the participants and Local Authorities were changed. Additionally, only one example of an interview transcript has been provided in Appendix 4 to reduce the likelihood of the EP being able to be identified from their comments. Finally, all original data collected was kept securely to reduce the likelihood of information being seen by others that could be used to identify participants.

As a practitioner-researcher I also needed to balance the demands and impact of my role as researcher with my management duties (British Educational Research Association, 2004) and professional responsibilities as a practitioner psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC, 2016). I achieved this by being clear that my researcher role took precedence during the data collection, analysis and subsequent write up. With the exception of any safeguarding concerns that may have arisen which would have superseded this understanding, my role was to observe, enquire and understand EPs' practice, not to judge or evaluate it against my own standards or exemplars from the literature. I believe that the clarity regarding this positioning shared with the EPs contributed to their willingness to consent to participate, the openness of their responses during the interviews and the sharing of every aspect of practice during the case study.

Outside of the clearly defined boundaries of the research, it was clear that some of my findings should be addressed through continuing professional development opportunities for EPs. My interpretation of the findings and the key implications for the professional development of EPs is discussed in my concluding chapter. Within the two services researched my findings directly impacted on the training I was able to arrange or provide for EPs in Dynamic Assessment. I was also able to address issues of a lack of understanding or inconsistencies in practice both at a service level through policies or development opportunities and an individual level through supervision when the appropriate occasion arose. It is important to note however that the findings of the research were not the only triggers to this work and it was not necessary to make reference to the findings at the level of individual EPs at any

point. As a manager I was well acquainted with many of the strengths and areas for development in the EPs' work and the research findings were a useful addition to this but not the most significant source of information.

Finally, I needed to be sensitive to the impact of the evaluative aspects of the research, in other words, 'Does Dynamic Assessment make a difference?' Evaluation research can be demanding for participants delivering the intervention due to their emotional investment in the results. To some degree this challenge was reduced in my research as the purpose was not to ascertain whether or not Dynamic Assessment should be adopted (or ceased), but rather to understand what is involved and how it can result in positive outcomes, with the ultimate aim of improving practice.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Interviews with EPs

In this chapter I will be focussing on the main findings of my research, starting with the interviews with Educational Psychologists (EPs). The interviews explored the research question:

'What are the sociocultural and personal influences on EPs who use dynamic assessment?'

I will present the findings firstly in regard to each separate component of EP practice (analysed as an Activity System) and then consider the findings relating to the activity system as a whole. I will also discuss any differences between the two Local Authorities (LAs). For each of the components of the Activity System I will present the findings for each of the questions posed in the interviews.

To help focus on the most significant findings, this chapter describes those views expressed by more than half of the EPs in either one or both of the LAs and those that seem to offer something new to our understanding. The percentage of respondents relate to the six EPs interviewed in Southdale and seven EPs interviewed in Oxshire.

An example of an interview transcript is provided in Appendix 4. Appendix 5 provides the full findings from the interviews, including those expressed by very small numbers

of EPs. Where the omission of results pertaining to very small numbers of EPs in the main body tables affects the clarity of the 'overall' percentage of EPs giving a response under a particular theme, this is noted. This is true of tables 10 and 17.

Subject

How much time do EPs spend using Dynamic Assessment?

The EPs were asked firstly what proportion of their work in schools included individual assessment with children and secondly what proportion of this individual work involved Dynamic Assessment. Individual assessment was clarified to mean time spent directly working with a child to understand more about the area of concern. Table 9 summarises the EPs' responses.

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	Amount of time	Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Proportion of time spent on assessment	More than 1/2	43	100	69
	Less than1/3	57	0	31
Proportion of that time spent on Dynamic Assessment	Less than half	71	83	77
	High proportion of work	29	17	23

Table 9: Amount of time spent on Dynamic Assessment by EPs

EPs formed two distinct groups. The first group reported that less than 30% of their casework involved individual assessment, with one EP explaining her answer by reflecting on her typical way of working,

'I do tend to do loads of observation and consultation as my model.'

The larger group reported a much higher proportion of individual assessment activity (50% or above).

'The majority. Vast majority. I should think certainly 95% of work. Probably more.'

Interestingly all of the Southdale EPs fell into this group.

The response of one EP from Southdale highlighted a possible explanation for this difference,

'Recently I would say I had done less individual work with children but whether that's because of using the new paperwork or focusing on consultation, but I'd still say it's quite a big part.'

The majority of EPs included Dynamic Assessment in less than half of their individual assessment work, and there was little difference between the two LAs.

All of the EPs who used dynamic assessment in a high proportion of their work, also worked with children individually in more than half of their work.

One EP in each Local Authority talked about Dynamic Assessment principles pervading the majority of their work, although then went on to report that only a low proportion of their work included a Dynamic Assessment.

'I tend to use I suppose snippets of it really rather than anything else, just as part of what I'm doing anyway. I guess I'd like to think it permeates my work.'

Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) received with regards to Dynamic Assessment

EPs were asked what training and continuing professional development activities they had undertaken with regards to Dynamic Assessment.

The table below (and subsequent tables) show the percentage of EPs in each authority who made comments corresponding to each of the themes and responses described, as identified during thematic coding. Further details of responses given by very small numbers of EPs resulting in the overall percentages for 'Individual development activities' and 'Peer support' are provided in Appendix 5b.

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Training or development undertaken**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Training received as an EP	Training provided in service meetings	43	100	69
	Tzuriel/ Deutsch training course	86	33	62
	Overall	**86**	**100**	**92**
TEP training and experiences	Training during TEP course	57	83	69
	Other experiences as EP in training	43	33	38
	Overall	**57**	**100**	**77**
Individual development activities	Reading Dynamic Assessment texts	29	50	38
	Overall	**71**	**67**	**69**
Peer support	Peer support/ supervision	43	67	54
	Overall	**57**	**67**	**62**

Table 10: Training and development undertaken by EPs

Training received as an EP

The majority of EPs had received training in Dynamic Assessment through service meetings or training days. All but one of the Southdale EPs noted having received training as a service on using the CAP (Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010).

Less whole service training was evident in Oxshire. Two EPs had received training whilst working for different Local Authorities and one talked about a range of training received in Oxshire,

'You tend to get little odds and ends at [team meetings], things like that.'

Training and development activities during initial EP training

Those who had received training in Dynamic Assessment as a trainee had qualified more recently than those who had not. In addition to formal training, some of the EPs experienced a wider variety of learning opportunities as trainees.

'We went out and did some things in schools… And then came back together, it was a few days, over a period of one or two or three days. So we went out, we had one day where we sort of talked about it, then we had one day where we went out to schools and gathered information, and then we had some time, I think it might have been two days, then we came back together and then what have we learned how can we write a report now and that sort of thing.'

The learning opportunities offered on field placements during initial training were also highlighted by these EPs. Commenting on her supervisor's use of Dynamic Assessment one EP told me:

'I was his EPiT when I was on placement. He was one of the EPs who said, and I really admire this, this is the bit where I'm really envious…'Don't ever take a psychometric assessment into any of my schools, that's the only rule being my student'. So I had opportunities to observe him and shadow him and then try bits that he was doing.'

Individual development activities

Reading key Dynamic Assessment texts such as those written by Feuerstein was instrumental for some EPs,

'I mean it has sections about...it has a whole section about the children of the Mellah, the children from the Jewish enclaves in Morocco and how what a low educational level they had and then when they went to Israel trying to work with some of those children. So of course, trying to find, again, working from their strengths, finding what they could do and then showing them themselves that they could learn and then building from that.'

Peer support

The importance of peer support was highlighted by EPs, sometimes in the form of spontaneous discussion and at other times as more purposeful and deliberate activity:

'That can be informal stuff like…saying 'have you used this assessment form', 'have you ever come across this happen to you'. Or saying 'let's get to grips with doing the dots', or it might be just the wording in a report.'

Choosing to use Dynamic Assessment

EPs were asked why they chose to use Dynamic Assessment. Their responses are summarised in Table 11.

Information gained from the assessment

The majority of EPs told me they chose to use Dynamic Assessment because of the type of information about the child that they could gain from using the approach, providing a rich picture of the child's learning, often with limited time.

Many of the EPs felt that the information gained was of practical relevance.

> 'I think because the information it gives us is practical, it is actually usable, you can use it with a teacher to bring about change because it gives some insight into how a child is learning, or blocks they have to their learning so I think it is helpful in that sense…it can inform your work with teachers.'

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Reason for using DA**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Information provided	Provides information about the child	57	67	62
	Provides information that is of practical relevance	29	67	46
	Focuses on strengths/ possibility for change	29	33	31
	Overall	**86**	**100**	**92**
Experience of the assessment	EP experience of and beliefs about assessment	86	67	77
	Child's experience	86	50	69
	Overall	**86**	**67**	**77**
Relation to other assessments	Alternative to psychometrics	57	67	62
	Complements psychometric information	14	0	8
	Overall	**57**	**67**	**62**

Table 11: EPs' reasons for choosing to use Dynamic Assessment

Experience of the assessment

Many EPs stated that they used Dynamic Assessment because of their experience of and beliefs about assessment.

> 'Generally I choose to use it because … it fits with my philosophy about how to work as an EP. I think it is about, we want to understand how children learn, we don't want to test what they already know. I think if we are testing what they already know we may as well ask a teacher to do it. I think its about working with children in ways that are empowering we want to do things that are positive, we want to work in ways that show what children can do in certain situations not what they can't do. We don't want to work from a deficit model, we want to show what a child can do when the conditions are right, rather than thinking about what they can't do and comparing them with their peers.'

Some EPs commented simply that it was an interesting and enjoyable way of working.

> 'I like the Vygotskian element, the doing it together. It is a social activity and socially important, the teasing out of things. It so easy to lose the idea that learning things is a social activity which is part of how we live. It's the idea of being social beings that inspires me and being motivated by learning generally.'

Others suggested that they felt 'more comfortable' using the approach, perhaps suggesting some degree of personal resolution of the ethical dilemmas encountered when assessing children. These EPs chose to use Dynamic Assessment as they believed the assessment experience was positive for children.

> 'It's far more ethical rather than watching someone struggle.'

In some cases, this choice appeared to be prompted by deep concerns about the impact of using other kinds of assessments with children, sometimes based on personal experiences,

'I still vividly remember being assessed as a child, when I was in juniors, so God forbid I ever inflict any assessment like that on a child.'

For some, these concerns were based on more recent experiences,

'I saw a child last week and what they wanted me to do was some attainment stuff, and I said to the child, we're going to do some spelling and he was like, I had a spelling test yesterday and I got zero out of twenty and that was the first utterance I had out of him and I thought oh my god what am I doing this for this is just ridiculous. I didn't have enough time so….I thought I'll get the attainment stuff out of the way and if I have enough time later I'll do the other stuff and then that was the first thing that came out of his mouth and I thought I've done this wrong, I should have done it the other way round regardless of how much time I had because I needed to make him feel comfortable and he clearly didn't.'

Relation to other assessments

More than half of the EPs used Dynamic Assessment as an alternative to psychometric testing. In one case this was because of the perceived usefulness of the information gained in comparison to static tests. In another it was about the likelihood of a child being able to access a standardised assessment. For the others, the experience of the two types of assessment from the child and EP's perspective was seen as crucial,

'Personally I get very, very frustrated administering tests where I can't help them, where I can't support their thinking, where I can't cue them, where I can't scaffold and if I can do those things in the context of the dynamic assessment I think I get a better performance out of a child …I wonder how a child goes away from this [static assessment] after they really know they've got so many wrong.'

Outcomes

EPs were asked to describe the outcomes of Dynamic Assessment. Their responses are summarised in Table 12.

Theme	Outcome of Dynamic Assessment	Percentage of respondents		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Provides information about the child's performance/learning	Strengths	100	33	69
	Approach taken	43	83	62
	Difficulties	71	33	54
	Change in performance with mediation (learning potential)	43	67	54
	Affective factors	29	50	38
	Overall	**100**	**100**	**100**
Provides information about intervention needed	Provides information about intervention	86	83	85
	Overall	**86**	**83**	**85**
Results in changes in teacher, child or situation	Changes for teachers	43	33	38
	Outcomes for children	43	33	38
	Change in situation	0	17	8
	Overall	**71**	**50**	**62**

Table 12: Outcomes of Dynamic Assessment

Provides information about the child's performance and or learning

All of the EPs interviewed stated that Dynamic Assessment provided information about the child and their needs, including the intervention needed to bring about change.

> 'What I'm hoping to achieve is trying to find out what makes a difference with the child. What can the teachers do or what can the parents do; that's going to help that child to start operating where they're not.'

The approach was also felt to provide information about the child's strengths.

> 'I think you always pull out strengths from Dynamic Assessment even if they're really marginal ones. It's not all about failure, negatives and they can't do this that and the other.'

The EPs reported that Dynamic Assessment could provide information about the approach taken by the child during tasks and their learning potential.

> 'How they approach a given task maybe through a learning task or a learning opportunity, what holds them back…'

> 'I think you achieve quite a lot from that and you learn about a child's potential through mediation so what is that child able to do independently and what are they able to do with mediation, so how is that child able to develop their learning or understanding through mediation by an adult.'

Surprisingly few of the EPs mentioned that Dynamic Assessment could provide information about the affective factors impacting on learning.

> 'What you can also gather from a DA as well is information on a child's confidence levels and their emotional, how their emotional, how that area impacts on their access to a task. Sort of confidence, self-esteem, familiarity with the person. It gives the opportunity to see how a child's self esteem confidence impacts on the child's access to the learning task.'

Changes for the teacher and the child or changes in the situation.

As described above, EPs were keen to stress that Dynamic Assessment produced information about the child. However, in some ways this could be seen as an output rather than an outcome of the approach. Fewer comments were made with regard to tangible changes for the teacher, child or situation. However, combining these themes, 62% of EPs overall felt that these changes did occur (71% Oxshire, 50% Southdale).

> 'The children…realise that they are capable of something that they thought they can't [sic] do.'

> 'The adult client in the situation feels they are being taken seriously that something in inverted commas is happening.'

Tools

Table 13 shows the tools used by EPs when they carried out Dynamic Assessment.

Tools fell into two categories, materials used with the children and young people, and tools used to record and assist thinking or follow up to the assessment.

Materials used with the children and young people

All but one of the EPs interviewed used specifically designed tools to carry out Dynamic Assessment, taken either from Feuerstein's Learning Propensity Assessment Device or from David's Tzuriel's range of published tests. Table 14 specifies the tests used.

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Tool used**	**Oxshire**	**South-dale**	**Overall**
Materials used with the children and young people				
Tests	LPAD	86	83	85
	Tzuriel tests	71	50	62
	Overall	**86**	**100**	**92**
Toys	Other toys	57	33	46
	Let's Play	14	33	23
	Overall	**71**	**67**	**69**
Other tools used				
Checklists and frameworks	Deficient cognitive functions	43	67	54
	CAP	0	83	38
	Affective factors checklist	0	17	8
	Overall	**43**	**83**	**62**

Table 13: Tools used by EPs during Dynamic Assessment

These tasks were seen by some as having particular merits in some cases.

'I would use the complex figure a lot, with secondary. I like that one, especially …working with a lot of young boys, I think they like that one, because it gives them a real nice visual progression of progress doesn't it?'

'I do the organisation of dots, which I like and I think kids like, they get fed up after one page but that's fine you don't usually get further than one page, but it's like a puzzle isn't it, its like a puzzle they wouldn't normally do in school.'

	Test	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
LPAD	Complex figure drawing task (CFDT)	86	83	85
	Raven's Matrices	29	0	15
	Organisation of Dots	57	0	31
	16 word memory task	29	17	23
Tzuriel Test	Children's Analogical Thinking Modifiability Test (CATM)	71	50	62
	Children's Seriational Thinking Modifiability Test (CSTM)	0	17	8

Table 14: Names of tests used during Dynamic Assessment

A number of the EPs used other materials such as toys or games.

> 'I do use stuff that's more familiar to them like building blocks. I use the sorting bears as well…. I suppose with the pre-schoolers I tend to use stuff that's around in their environment, you know in the pre-school.'

> 'Stuff that I've got in the back of my car. Coloured dinosaurs for sorting and just looking at and talking, but mostly sorting. We've got a thing like a 'Where's Wally' book, to see how the child goes about finding Wally…. I've got things like, not word search but, spot the difference things. Anything really, but those are often the ones that I draw on. Oh I know, things like playing Kim's game, I've got a whole load of toys just to do that.'

It appears that these EPs appeared to be using a range of tools to assess children, using the underlying principles and process of Dynamic Assessment as a map to guide their interactions. Indeed for two of the EPs, this approach was very conscious and meant that the range of tools available to them was almost limitless,

'In a sense I was almost mapping the CATM onto what I had in front of me and I think that's not difficult to do with all sorts of things really…You can do it with coloured paper clips if you can sort them. Do you know what I mean? Or bricks you can do it with. Just so you're using those questions and getting them to form patterns.'

Other tools used

EPs mentioned using various versions of a list of the child's cognitive skills,

'I've used the list. The list where they are [divided] into the three different areas; and there is another one which is longer which has prompts on it but again it focuses on the different cognitive areas you would be looking at. It's the same thing but written in a more user friendly way than the input output one.'

The vast majority of EPs in Southdale used the CAP, having been trained in the approach a year before the interviews took place.

'The CAP provides several frameworks which already existed separately for instance the triangle of interactions between the task, the mediator and the learner.'

Object

The responses to 'what is meant by Dynamic Assessment' were collated through both the interview process and the repertory grid exercise. All of the EPs answered the interview question, however repertory grid responses were not available for one EP as there was insufficient time available during the interview to complete this task. Chapter 3 describes the triadic elicitation and repertory grid method used in detail.

Table 15 indicates the percentage of EPs who either made a comment relating to each theme in response to the interview question, or described Dynamic Assessment in this way during the repertory grid exercise.

Focus of Dynamic Assessment

All of the EPs either made a comment about the focus of dynamic assessment or identified this as a construct during the Repertory Grid Exercise.

Theme	Description of Dynamic Assessment	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Focus of assessment	Cognitive process	100	60	83
	Learning potential	57	100	75
	Emotional factors	29	0	17
	Overall	**100**	**100**	**100**
Nature of task	Interactive and unstructured	71	60	67
	Focuses on different modalities	29	60	42
	Overall	**86**	**100**	**92**
Nature of information obtained	Qualitative	29	60	42
	Subjective	43	40	42
	Overall	**71**	**80**	**75**
Nature of relationship between assessor and child	Mediational	57	40	50
	Overall	**57**	**40**	**50**

Table 15: EPs' descriptions of Dynamic Assessment as the 'object' of activity

The majority agreed that the focus of Dynamic Assessment was on cognitive processes rather than end product.

> 'It's a way of viewing a child and in terms of thinking about their individual cognitive functions and so on and what skills and strategies they're using.'

The repertory grid exercise elicited constructs demonstrating the same idea. For example one EP described Dynamic Assessment as a '2' where '1' represented 'problem solving' and '9' represented 'completion of a given task'. This is shown pictorially below,

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Problem solving

Completion of a given task
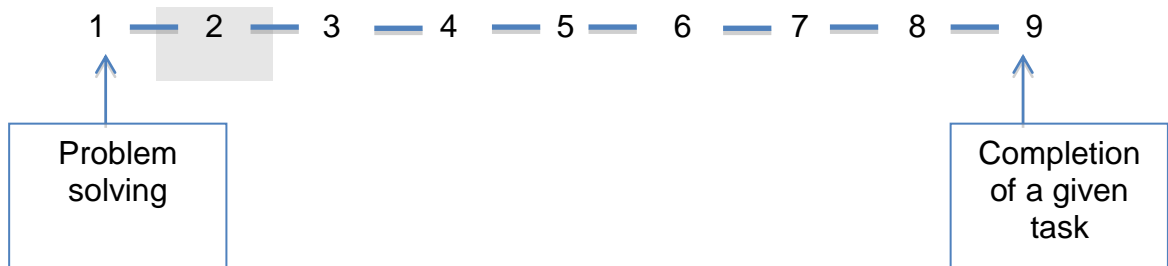
EPs described Dynamic Assessment as focusing on the child's learning potential.

> 'Dynamic assessment is a way of finding what children can learn with mediation as opposed to what they currently know right now.'

Again, triadic elicitation produced similar constructs, an example of which is given below.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Purpose of assessment is baseline activity

Purpose of assessment is potential ability
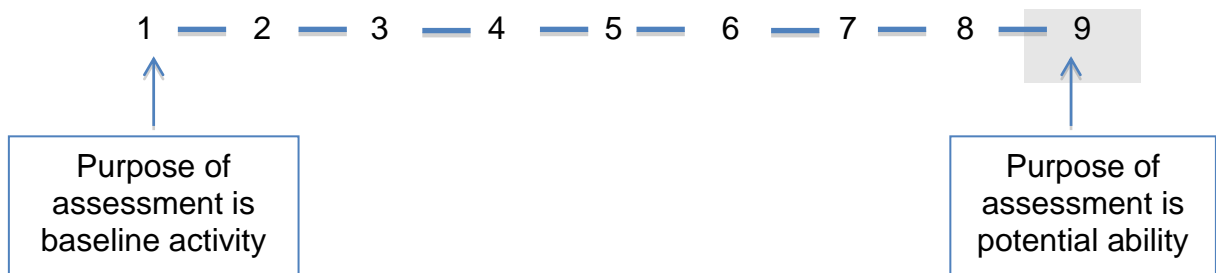
Nature of the task

The nature of the task and interaction with the child during the assessment was significant to EPs.

> 'I think that I would be describing an interactive discussion or activity that is more naturally occurring and developing in response to the child.'

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Active involvement by me, responsive to the child

Structure gives perimeters
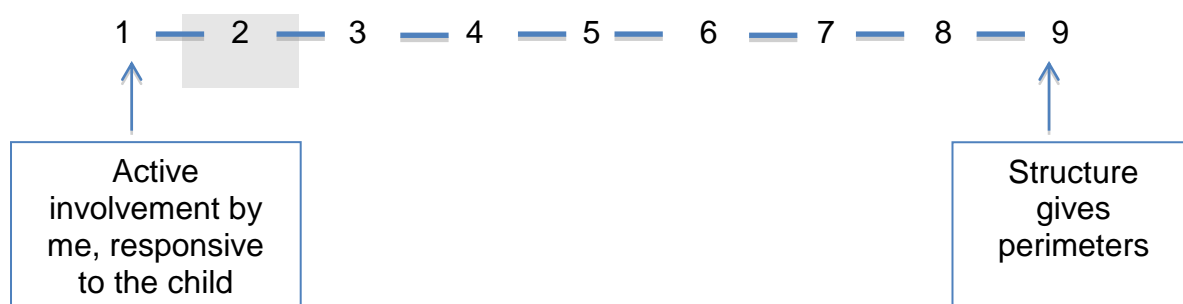
EPs also noted that Dynamic Assessment assessed the child using different modalities.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Use of visual medium to explore child's views

Use of verbal medium to explore child's views
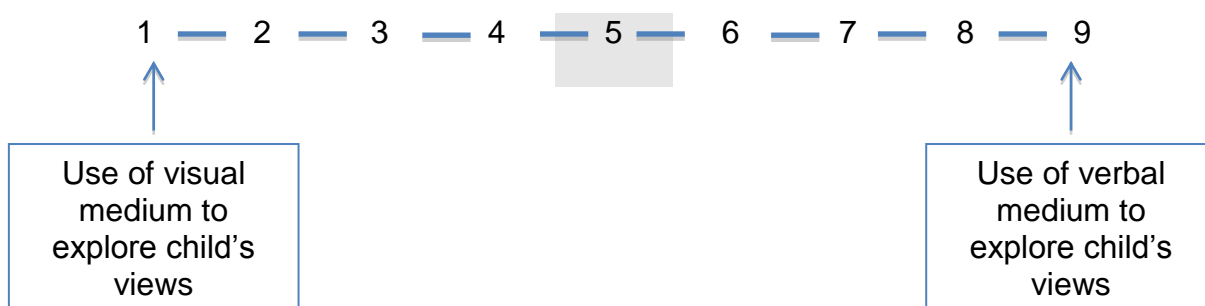
Nature of information obtained

The information obtained from a Dynamic Assessment was also key, with many EPs stressing the qualitative idiographic nature of the data collected.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

↑ (pointing to 1)

| Qualitative and/or descriptive |

↑ (pointing to 9)

| Quantitative normative comparative |

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

↑ (pointing to 1)

| Scored |

↑ (pointing to 9)

| Observed |
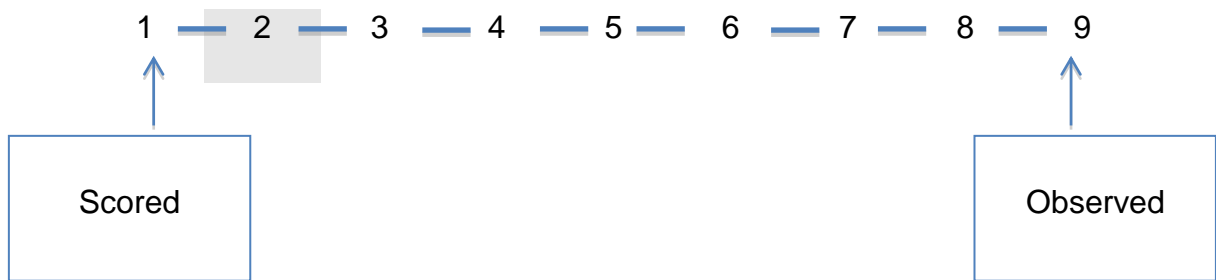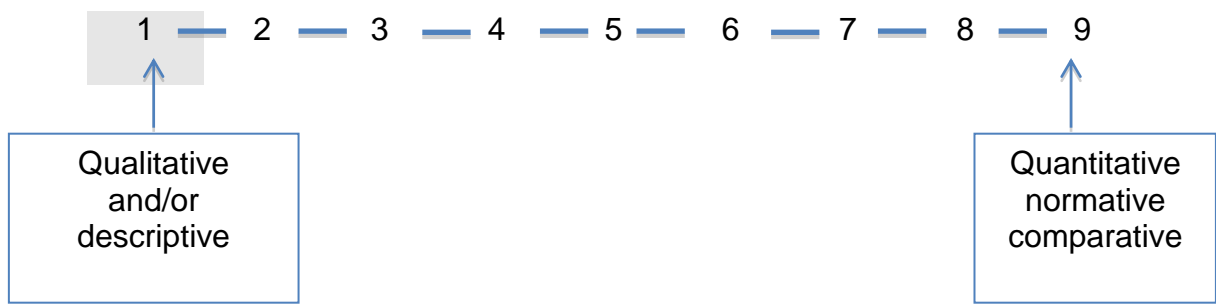
Nature of relationship between assessor and child

The relationship between the EP and the child was mediational for more than half of those interviewed.

> 'Looking at how children can access information given the right scaffolding and right mediation.'

Some gave examples of how they would mediate,

> 'It's got to be something which makes sense to the child as well, that I'm not just doing it for the sake of doing it, so something about the intentionality I suppose.'

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

↑ (pointing to 1)

| No mediation or scaffolding |

↑ (pointing to 9)

| Use of mediation and scaffolding |
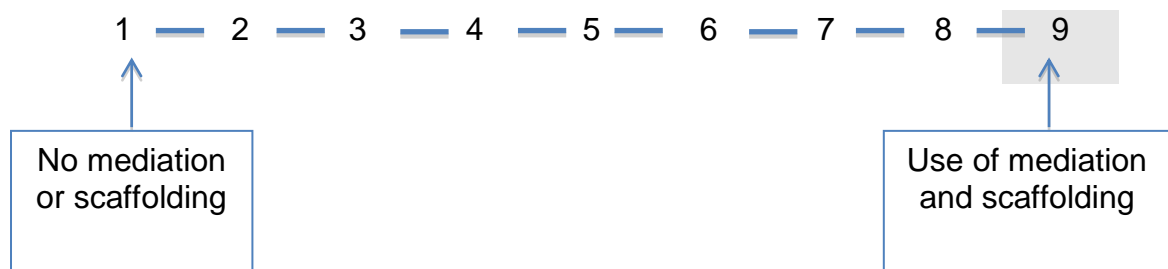
Rules

EPs were to identify the constraints and supports to their Dynamic Assessment practice. The constraints identified are summarised in Table 16.

Constraints

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Constraint**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Logistics	Time	100	67	85
	Materials	57	50	54
	Overall	**100**	**83**	**92**
Culture	School	57	67	62
	LA	86	17	54
	EPS	14	17	15
	Overall	**100**	**67**	**85**
Professional expertise and commitment	Skills/ knowledge and confidence	57	67	62
	Demanding	14	50	31
	Overall	**83**	**100**	**85**
Statistical rigour	Statistical rigour	57	17	38
	Overall	**57**	**17**	**38**
Linking assessment to intervention	Linking assessment to intervention	14	17	15
	Overall	**14**	**17**	**15**

Table 16: Constraints on EPs using Dynamic Assessment

Time

Time was the biggest barrier to Dynamic Assessment practice. The reasons for needing time were varied.

Some of the EPs reported that they needed time to see the child on more than one occasion.

> 'The whole of the kind of Ruth Deutsch kind of approach is very rigorous…I'd like to get into using them but they're not actually appropriate to the kind of role as an LA educational psychologist. I just don't think we've got the time. If we worked in a developmental role they'd be wonderful. If we were actually seeing a child time and time and time again and we were looking for ways of measuring things, feeding things back to the child, as an experimental sort of way of working they would be very valuable.'

Others noted the need for time to work with schools to manage their expectations and challenge their presumptions about what EPs should be doing.

> 'I think when schools don't have that many visits and they feel pressurised in what they want you to get through in the visits, there isn't enough time to challenge it in a way that isn't just going to make them feel, I don't know, a sense of panic I guess.'

This was sometimes coupled with a sense of compromise,

> 'In some situations if you haven't got the time to fight… then you may give in, but I suppose that's a professional decision you have to make.'

Time was also needed for EPs to prepare for the assessment, finding time to think about and plan for an assessment of a particular child or explaining their approach to schools before or after the assessment.

'The time it takes to communicate the way that we conceptualise somethings.'

EPs also mentioned the need for time to develop their skills and practice.

'I guess time is the biggest one and that's my own fault in terms of what are my priorities but time to go over stuff time to observe other people if there are opportunities for that and time to pick up new information about other assessments I could use.'

Materials

Some tests or materials were seen as being unfit for either the particular child being assessed or for the approach generally. The latter point was clearly articulated by one EP adapting standardised assessment materials in order to work dynamically.

'The difficulty when you're using set materials is of course you can only move within the parameters of the test you've got which wasn't designed for Dynamic Assessment...if you want to start doing fine subdivisions within a particular problem, you've got no material.'

This was also true for some EPs using tools specifically designed for use within a Dynamic Assessment.

'I'm not a big fan of the organisation of dots because once they've started its very difficult to bring them back it can be quite negative if they go ahead and they're impulsive its quite difficult to restrain that impulsivity because they've got a whole sheet ahead of them.'

For one EP it was simply a case of availability of certain tools,

'We had no CATMs here, [one of the EPs] bought one herself, but I had to push to get one for the team and that was the only style of assessment we had actually.'

Culture

Cultural beliefs and practices also constrained EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment, particularly within schools and the LA.

Constraints in schools related to the expectations of the EP role, or in some cases to the beliefs and understanding of staff generally, further constrained by a lack of time to doing anything about these situations.

> 'I think there is a really key difficulty in people believing that everybody could make progress or would be able to change with the right kind of support…The other bit is that cognition is so difficult to get a handle on…For teachers to feel they have fully grasped and for someone else to feel that they have really understood how a child is learning is a really huge task and I think it sometimes feels completely overwhelming. I think it should sit more comfortably with teachers but it doesn't, some of the language used needs some explaining to teachers.'

The Local Authority culture was also significant, particularly in Oxshire.

> 'What constrains use of Dynamic Assessment is when you get…other agencies involved in a situation, who don't understand your role and suggest to parents or school, that you are going to do a cognitive assessment. That's a huge one.'

Likewise the SEND decision-making panel was seen to constrain practice.

> 'So I wouldn't do a dynamic assessment…if the school just says we want to know whether this child will get statutory assessment, that wouldn't necessarily inform that because I would tend to just look up some BAS scores and things, especially if I think there's no chance or there is every chance…And that's probably because it's easier to prove that or demonstrate that in a way that will be acknowledged by others, through doing their kind of standardised assessment.'

> 'I guess there are constraints within the local authority, I don't know, expectations or what I perceive are the expectations of the numbers. A school said to me last week, "well we'll wait for your scores…". I was like don't hold your breath [laughs] you'll be waiting for some time…'

Professional expertise and commitment

Many comments suggested that a lack of expertise or commitment to the approach constrained EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment, particularly their skills, knowledge and confidence.

Skills, knowledge and confidence

> 'It would be true to say that my aspiration to use it is greater than my content knowledge.'

> 'I'm always thinking God, if somebody else did this assessment, they would probably do it in such a different way and maybe, and that makes me feel a little bit insecure at times. Well insecure a lot of the time is probably more accurate. …. I feel it's harder to know whether you're doing the right or wrong thing.'

For some of the EPs, a lack of knowledge about and experience of using different tools for Dynamic Assessment was the issue.

> 'My thing that I don't do well is that I wish I used a greater variety and matched them more appropriately to what I'm trying to look at.'

In one case these feelings were in contrast to how confident the EP felt when using more traditional approaches.

> 'When I use psychometrics I feel happier with my being able to describe and explain results even if they are inaccurate and as I use them more often I feel I could argue my way out of it.'

The demands of Dynamic Assessment were also a constraint.

> 'I am thinking that dynamic assessment is much more challenging for the person working to do the assessment than other forms of assessment because there is so much onus on people being able to notice interpret and develop. There is no comparison in terms of the demands that it makes. It puts the person doing it under the spotlight.'

'It's quite hard to note down things while you are doing it. That's one of the constraints actually I would say. It takes a lot of practice to do that.'

Statistical rigour

Perceived statistical rigour was important to the Oxshire EPs. Comments focused on the perceived merits of positivist and interpretative epistemological standpoints.

'It's shaky. It's not an assessment I use alone. I'd only use it alongside percentiles.'

'The other concern that I have quite a lot is because you are also placing emphasis on the task and situation, knowing about the scope for what you say or think is true in a slightly shifting situation is also really tricky to judge.'

The interaction between the skill of the EP as a mediator and the conclusions that could be drawn from the assessment were also a concern.

'There's always this feeling of what would have happened if I'd done it like this or if I'd have said this differently or it's all about what I would have done to support or inhibit.'

Supports

EPs also identified a range of supports to their Dynamic Assessment practice as summarised in Table 17.

The involvement of others was the most significant support for EPs. Comments were made which related to the interest generated by peers, and the reassurance and support they provide.

'Peer support, so talking with colleagues about how they use it and what they are doing.'

Further details of responses given by very small numbers of EPs resulting in the overall percentages for 'Involvement of others' are provided in Appendix 5i.

Theme	Supports for using Dynamic Assessment	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Involvement of others	Peers	57	50	54
	Overall	**86**	**83**	**85**
Professional expertise and commitment	Training/CPD	57	50	54
	Overall	**57**	**50**	**54**
Culture	Culture	43	50	46
	Overall	**43**	**50**	**46**

Table 17: Supports for EPs using Dynamic Assessment

EPs also noted the benefits of more structured opportunities to work with peers.

> 'I think the current service structure where there is ongoing discussion, where the profile of it is raised where there's opportunities to work with peers, I think it is working with peers and seeing other peoples practice that really helps.'

EPs also noted the support provided by managers

> 'I guess just knowing that you're the senior who will be at panels and that you believe in it makes a difference to the sort of acceptance of it.'

and the profession as a whole.

> 'As much as it's criticised, it is also in vogue.'

As well as being a barrier, professional expertise and commitment was also a support for some EPs. There were comments about the quality and impact of training,

'I enjoyed doing it and I enjoyed seeing all the various tests and I learnt a lot from doing it, from seeing the way it was all delivered.'

'Ongoing CPD opportunities like the CAP, so I think if you continually refresh your knowledge you are more likely to keep doing it.'

Similarly, cultural beliefs were a support as well as a constraint to practice at a number of levels.

'I think in the local authority the fact that statutory assessments don't require percentiles and I think also the working practices of the local authority in terms of there being a lot more recognition that individuals work individually.'

'The culture within our service, so you're very pro-dynamic assessment, so supportive line management, I'm not sure if you weren't supported with line management that you would necessarily, I think you need that back up.'

'I think schools have been quite responsive to the fact that this is the way that I work and I said to them if there is a problem with what I do or if they don't like what I do then I am happy to talk about that but so far no one has said why haven't I had a score.'

Community

Responses to the question 'who is involved when you carry out a Dynamic Assessment' are summarised in Table 18. As noted in Chapter 3, the method used across the two authorities to generate these results was different, however it is clear that there are some areas where there are high levels of agreement between EPs, for instance the involvement of teachers in the assessment process.

Theme	Community involved	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Role	Teacher	100	83	92
	Child	100	50	77
	Parent	57	83	69
	EP	86	33	62
	TA	71	50	62
	SENCo	71	50	62
	Unspecified or other school staff	29	67	46
Age of child or young person	Primary	100	100	100
	Pre-school	100	83	92
	Secondary	86	83	85
	All ages	57	67	62
Type of school	Mainstream	100	50	77
	Special	71	33	54
Nature of difficulties	BESD	86	100	92
	Language difficulties	100	67	85
	Learning difficulties	71	100	85
	EAL	71	33	54
	ABI	57	0	31

Table 18: Community involved in Dynamic Assessment by theme

Division of labour

The EPs' responses to questions about who does what in Dynamic Assessment highlighted actions at three stages, during the assessment, the follow up to the assessment and further tasks after the follow up to the assessment.

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Task carried out**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Tasks during the dynamic assessment	Assessing the child during the Dynamic Assessment	86	100	92
	Readiness to learn from and respond to mediation (reciprocity)	71	100	85
	Mediation	57	67	62
	Peer learning and support	0	50	23
	Overall	**86**	**100**	**92**
Tasks during the follow up from the assessment	Participation in consultation	86	100	92
	Feedback	57	50	54
	Readiness for change	0	83	38
	Overall	**100**	**100**	**100**
Tasks after the follow up from the assessment	**Overall**	**29**	**50**	**38**

Table 19: Division of labour by task

No one specific task after the follow up to the assessment was mentioned by 50% or more of EPs in either authority, however half of EPs in Southdale made a comment related to this theme. Responses are summarised in Tables 19 (by task) and 20 (by person).

	Percentage of respondents indicating that the task was carried out by a specific person			
Task carried out	EP	School	Parent	Child
Tasks during the dynamic assessment				
Assessing the child during the Dynamic Assessment	69	38	23	0
Readiness to learn from and respond to mediation (reciprocity)	0	0	0	85
Mediation	54	8	0	0
Tasks during the follow up from the assessment				
Participation in consultation	54	35	31	0
Feedback	54	0	0	0
Readiness for change	0	23	8	15

Table 20. Division of labour by person involved in the Dynamic Assessment

N.B. In this table, the figures indicate the percentage of EPs across the two authorities who reported that tasks in the Dynamic Assessment were undertaken by a specific member of the community

In order to analyse the respective roles of those involved in Dynamic Assessment, I identified both the range of actions undertaken and who undertook them.

Division of labour during the assessment

EPs were seen as leading the assessment.

> 'My role is obviously to deliver the assessment for want of a better word but to do that and analyse what is happening for that child during the assessment.'

Others attending the assessment were generally seen as observers.

> 'I usually say, "If you want to sit in you can, because you'll be able to see what they can do and what they can't do and the tests will mean more to you and you'll probably have more ideas yourself about what you can do to help"'.

The creation of a Mediated Learning Experience was seen as integral to the role of the EP.

> 'To give them information about the task, to help with their concepts about certain things, to help with strategies which may be helpful or not helpful, to help regulate their behaviour if it is appropriate to provide clarity about the task, to point out patterns and things that they might need, similarities and differences, to give them prompts, to ask them open questions, to help them focus on their own thinking about things, to challenge some of their thinking and thoughts, to be someone who they feel they can learn with.'

One EP also described a situation, in which the mediator role had been shared in part with a worker supporting the child she was assessing,

> 'She was keeping him focused really. Between us we were keeping him focused.'

Children were expected to respond to the support provided.

> 'I suppose it's to use their skills to address a task that has been given to them. To respond to mediation and stuff like that.'

'One of the purposes is for children to be able to demonstrate capabilities and skills and ways of doing things and ways of reflecting on what they are doing.'

Division of labour during the follow up to the assessment

EPs described a situation in which the assessment was followed by consultation, (also known as joint problem solving), where observations were shared, validated and challenged and the implications of the findings for future provision are identified by all involved,

'Mostly in a joint problem solving meeting. I talk through the information I gained from the assessment and then we…we all think about what could help.'

The EP, the school staff and the parent were most likely to be involved in the consultation.

'In terms of checking out whether some of the information I have is correct, I would then involve the parents, the teacher and the SENCo. So if for example the information I had got was that he struggled with more than one piece of information I would check whether that was affecting him in the classroom.'

'Their role is to take on board what is being said and to work with you to understand what the implications are for them and the child in the class. So its not just to sit there and receive the information its kind of to be a joint problem solver really about what are we going to do with this information now we've got it.'

The feedback of information from the assessment was the EP's role.

'Sometimes…personal feedback…face to face, but then otherwise it would be report and telephone conversations…I usually write some aspect of it up.'

Interestingly EPs also commented on the importance of the attitude of those involved, echoing the EPs' responses to questions about the supports and constraints to their practice.

'To be open and motivated to change things for the better for the child.'

Reflections of the activity system as a whole

Historicity

The EPs made a number of comments during the interviews which suggested that their Dynamic Assessment practice had changed over time. The pattern of responses are summarised below in Table 21.

Theme	Focus of change over time	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Subject	Training	100	100	100
	CPD	86	83	85
	Choosing to use the approach	57	33	46
	Proportion of DA/ individual assessment	14	50	31
	Overall	**100**	**100**	**100**
Rules	Culture in the work place	29	67	46
	Overall	**29**	**67**	**46**
Tools	Change in tools	43	50	46
	Overall	**43**	**50**	**46**
Community	Community	29	50	38
	Overall	**29**	**50**	**38**

Table 21: Percentage of EPs making comments about the historicity of their Dynamic Assessment Practice

Some comments related to a change with no particular trigger, whereas others identified events at specific points in time which presumably resulted in changes to

practice. These comments all demonstrate the importance of recognising the historicity of EPs' Dynamic Assessment activity.

Comments indicating change over time were made about every aspect of Dynamic Assessment practice. Furthermore every EP made such a comment.

Subject

All of the EPs talked about having received training at a specific point in the past. It is safe to assume that in some way this would have affected their level of understanding or practice.

A number also highlighted a change or time specific influence on their motivation to use Dynamic Assessment. Comments included personal experiences of being tested using standardised cognitive assessments, specific cases demonstrating the potential of the approach (or the problems with other forms of assessment), in one case being inspired by hearing Feuerstein himself talk about the approach.

> 'I did actually go to hear him talk…That was as a teacher.'
>
> Interviewer: 'And what influence, what impact did that have?'
>
> 'Oh huge, absolutely huge, how could I forget it. Absolutely huge impact. Just such a positive way to work with kids and made absolute sense to build on what they can do rather than what they can't do.'

The amount of general assessment and Dynamic Assessment undertaken by EPs had also changed over time. In Southdale, the EPs reported a reduction in the

amount of assessment work undertaken due to an increased focus on consultation and taking on other responsibilities.

Cultural changes had also influenced EP practice over time, (29% Oxshire, 46% overall). For some these changes were about the changing expectations of others about the EP role,

> 'I think there's a lot of historic stuff as well about what people expect EPs to do, what EPs have done in the past,'

or their changing response to these expectations,

> 'There was a push after the first year or so for a lot of cognitive assessment and at that time I only had been doing it for a short amount of time, this job, so I felt I should be doing them whereas now I wouldn't do them…. when it came to more statutory stuff and expectations from people about what information should be provided I wasn't strong enough or secure enough at that time.'

For others, working in a different Local Authority prompted a change in their practice. One EP who talked about schools' expectations as a constraint to her dynamic assessment practice reflected on how things were different in her previous authority,

> 'Nobody had that expectation where I was before, it was a non-psychometric authority. Absolutely, totally, totally... Nobody used the WISC or the BAS. We didn't have them in the service. They just didn't exist. It was too much the other way, I don't know, but everyone worked with it and the heads had no other expectations, it was, 'this how it is here'.'

Another EP found moving to a new Local Authority supportive,

> 'I think having worked in a service or worked with schools where they have wanted scores and recognised scores aren't useful but still wanted them that was harder for me and I found I had to compromise some of my practice but still engineer situations where I could demonstrate why it wasn't as beneficial

to do but it's the fact that schools and the service allows me to work, allows me to be quite independent in the way that I work.'

Tools

The tools that EPs used in their Dynamic Assessment practice has also changed over time. Some EPs reflected on using a tool in a specific case with particular success or lack of success, leading to a change in practice.

'He was just gob smacked when he turned it over and it was a different colour, it took him about 5 minutes to recover from how exciting it was, so I like that particularly with younger children.'

Community

The type of schools where EPs carried out Dynamic Assessment changed as 'patches' changed, or when EPs moved authorities or took on other responsibilities

EPs also talked about cases where they had first included a member of staff in the Dynamic Assessment. In each case this appeared to be at the request of the member of staff, however the EPs mostly found this a positive experience.

'A SENCo observed me doing it primarily because she wanted to see what I was doing because I wasn't doing a standardised test…Afterwards when I was talking to mum about this girl's difficulties…the SENCo was able to say, 'when this girl had this level of support and she had this level of instruction and when the information was presented, she was really really successful, far more successful than we thought she could be'. It wasn't coming from me having done the assessment, it was coming from someone who had observed the changes going on and I think supported mum in realising that things weren't dire.'

'It was really good because she could focus on keeping him focused and I could focus on throwing out the activities in as quick succession as possible to

keep his interest. And when he lost it and there was no way he was going to do anymore it was a joint decision.'

Contradictions identified within the Activity System

Many of the EPs made comments during the interviews identifying tensions or contradictions within Dynamic Assessment practice.

These contradictions were identifiable throughout the responses given by EPs rather than prompted by a specific question. They arose naturally as EPs reflected aloud on the problems, concerns and issues they had with their practice. The focus of these concerns either related to a single component of practice (primary inner contradictions) or focused on difficulties caused by the interaction between components of practice (secondary contradictions).

A number of the rules identified by the EPs in answer to the question 'What constrains your Dynamic Assessment practice' can also be seen as contradictions. As an example, time to prepare for, carry out and follow up from Dynamic Assessment was a constraint for the majority of EPs. Likewise, cultural expectations of schools, local authorities and EP services influenced individuals' practice. These are both forms of structural tensions within the activity system which may lead to new forms of practice over time.

Table 22 shows the contradictions identified in the EPs' comments. The percentage of EPs who identified each possible primary inner contradiction can be identified by

	Subject	**Tools**	**Object**	**Outcomes**	**Rules**	**Community**	**Division of labour**
Subject	29% Oxshire 50% Southdale 38% overall		0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall	0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall	29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall		0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall
Tools		29% Oxshire 17% Southdale 23% overall				14% Oxshire 17% Southdale 15% overall	14% Oxshire 50% Southdale 31% overall
Object			29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall				
Outcomes				14% Oxshire 17% Southdale 15% overall	29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall	14% Oxshire 0% Southdale 8% overall	0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall
Rules						0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall	
Community						29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall	29% Oxshire 17% Southdale 23% overall
Division of labour							43% Oxshire 50% Southdale 46% overall

Table 22: Percentage of EPs who identified primary inner and secondary contradictions in their Dynamic Assessment practice

reading from the cell directly below and along from the aspect of practice. For example by reading from the cell directly below and along from 'tools' we can see that overall 23% of EPs identified a primary contradiction in this aspect of their practice. The percentage of EPs who identified each secondary contradiction can be identified by reading down from one component of practice and along from the other, for example 15% of EPs overall identified a contradiction between the rules influencing their practice and the outcomes achieved.

Contradictions identified by at least 50% of the EPs in one authority

Primary inner contradictions

There were tensions between the roles that people played in the assessment. EPs found the need to multi-task challenging.

> 'So its kind of like you've got to deliver the test or whatever you are doing and you've got to write down your observations from that but those observations you've got to take the implications from that for what that actually means. And that's the tricky bit. Because its like you, what are the implications for what you are saying in a way that is helpful for the people you are working with but without losing some of the impact of it.'

Other EPs highlighted the lack of involvement of parents and a lone EP identified a lack of teacher commitment and motivation,

> 'It would generally be very specific cases where a teacher actually really wants to find out about how a child learns and that doesn't happen very often.'

EPs were also dissatisfied with their training and professional development opportunities.

> 'I tried to go on the three or four day Tzuriel training which comes round occasionally, I tried to go on that, but I haven't had any.'

Secondary contradictions

EPs commented on contradictions between different aspects of their Dynamic Assessment activity, typically related to the tensions between the tools used and the roles played by those involved in the assessment.

The content of these comments varied, however three of the four centred on the difficulty with recording during a Dynamic Assessment.

> 'I think what you would have to do is take detailed notes or take your notes on the cognitive functions list that I've got, then map it onto it, I don't think you could do it at the same time but you can do it if you are observing someone.'

Contradictions identified at least one EP in each authority

Primary inner contradictions

EPs identified challenges with the tools available; again commenting on using the CAP,

> 'Well I started trying to go through in sequential order and then I stopped. I didn't get through the form it was more me trying to negotiate the form, I started at the beginning.'

One EP also questioned the validity of the perception that children's experience of

Dynamic Assessment is more positive that standardised assessment,

> 'Be interesting to see if the children perceived any difference between the
> approach that was more dynamic.'

Secondary contradictions

Some tools were also seen as inappropriate for some children.

> 'I don't tend to use the CATM or I haven't. I guess there's something about the
> blocks that for your average secondary child isn't right.'

Finally, EPs identified tensions between those involved and the roles they played,

> 'I need to think really hard about parents being involved again in the
> assessment because it would really be nice for them to do it as well…ideally I
> would like the adult to be doing, to be trying it out with the child as well, but in
> practice that's not what happens.'

Differences in Dynamic Assessment practice between the two Local Authorities

The pattern of responses made in the two authorities clearly differed for some

questions, suggesting that sociocultural context can have an impact on EP Dynamic

Assessment practice. Table 23 shows where the difference between the number of

EPs responding in a similar way in each authority was 50% or more.

The specifics of and reasons for these differences are described in the earlier

sections of this chapter. I also explore possible explanations further in Chapter 5 in

which I discuss my findings in relation to my research propositions, methodology and

findings of my literature review.

Aspect of activity	Theme	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Difference
Division of labour: Tasks during the follow up from the assessment	Readiness for change	0	83	83
Tools: Checklists and frameworks	CAP	0	83	83
Rules: Cultural constraints	Local Authority	86	17	69
Outcomes: Provides information about the child's performance / learning	Strengths	100	33	67
Community	Mainstream school	100	33	67
Object: Nature of information obtained	Other	0	60	60
Subject: Time spent on assessment	More than 1/2	43	100	57
	Less than1/3	57	0	57
Subject: Training and CPD	Training provided in service meetings	43	100	57
Tools: Materials used with the children and young people	Organisation of dots	57	0	57
Community	ABI	57	0	57
	EAL	71	17	54
Subject: Training and CPD	Tzuriel/ Deutsch training course	86	33	53
Community	EP	86	33	53
	Child	100	50	50
	Language difficulties	100	50	50
Division of labour: Tasks during the assessment	Peer learning and support	0	50	50

Table 23: Themes where there was 50% or greater difference in the responses of Southdale and Oxshire EPs

Overview of findings from the interviews with EPs

The interviews with EPs provided a rich picture of the individual practices of EPs and the cultural and logistical influences on their professional decision-making. EPs were able to reflect on how their practice had changed over time and on the tensions in their current practice.

EPs defined Dynamic Assessment as focusing on cognitive processes and learning potential. They described it as interactive unstructured and mediational, and as focusing on different modalities. They chose to use Dynamic Assessment as an alternative to psychometrics, because of the information provided and because of their beliefs and experience of the assessment, as well as the experience for the child.

Dynamic Assessment was used by EPs with a broad range of children in different settings, typically involving parents and school staff as well as the EP and the child. The role of the EP was well defined, providing feedback and consultation with adults and assessment and mediation with the child, whose task was to respond to this support. The role of other adults involved was less well defined. EPs used formal assessment tools but also toys and checklists for assessment and recording.

EPs felt constrained and supported by various influences. The involvement of peers, receiving training and cultural factors could be supportive, whereas time, materials and cultural factors could constrain practice as well as a lack of skills knowledge and confidence and a perceived lack of statistical rigour.

Finally EPs felt that Dynamic Assessment resulted in rich information about children's learning and what could support their progress. The wider potential impact of the approach on adults working with children didn't emerge as a dominant theme but features significantly in my case study findings which are described next.

Case Study

The case study provided the opportunity to look in greater depth at some of the aspects of Dynamic Assessment practice identified in the interviews. It also provided information about the outcomes of the approach through a range of before and after measures and verbal reflections from those involved, regarding what had changed. A selection of the data collected is included in Appendix 6.

Background

The case study looked at a Dynamic Assessment carried out with a 6 year old girl called Bethany by an EP called Rebecca. The SENCo in the school was Nat, and she acted as the point of contact with Rebecca through out the process.

Rebecca was an EP working for Oxshire Educational Psychology Service. At the time of the assessment, she had been working as a psychologist for approximately 6 years. Rebecca was the named EP for Bethany's mainstream Infant School.

Bethany was referred to Rebecca due to concerns about her slow progress with learning. Rebecca had previously had involvement with Bethany's sibling and had met her father through this earlier work.

Bethany was described by those who knew her as sociable, affectionate, playful and engaging, with well developed fine motor skills. Her Individual Education Plan (IEP) focused on basic literacy and numeracy skills. Bethany's expressive and receptive language skills were noted as key difficulties.

Scope of the Case Study

The case study focused on activities carried out before, during and after the Dynamic Assessment. The data collection activities did not include two informal discussions between Rebecca and Nat, the first agreeing that a Dynamic Assessment was appropriate given Bethany's difficulties, and a second phone call following the post-assessment joint problem solving discussion. The content of these conversations was shared with me however and it was therefore possible to understand how these events contributed to the overall activity.

During the Dynamic Assessment Rebecca worked with Bethany using a variety of published tests and toys. They worked together in the SENCo's room where Bethany

was used to working, with Nat observing. Following the assessment Nat and Rebecca discussed what had been learnt and made a plan for Bethany. This was later written up by Rebecca as a joint problem solving record and sent to the school.

The Dynamic Assessment as an Activity System

Subject

The degree to which Rebecca exerted control choice and personal agency over each aspect of the dynamic assessment was evident.

Her informed choice to use Dynamic Assessment with Bethany was clear from a comment during her interview,

> 'This little girl was making some progress but there was concern about what sort of long term progress she would be able to make and how we could help her make it and I thought it if I do a cognitive assessment it wouldn't show anything other than that she struggles and really I needed to find out how we could help her more.'

Rebecca made informed choices about the tools she used and how she used them. She also considered how to involve Nat in the assessment process. These choices are explored further in the relevant sections below, but should be seen as clear evidence of Rebecca demonstrating personal agency and deliberate professional decision making as the subject within the Dynamic Assessment activity system.

Rules

Constraints

Rebecca and Nat identified a number of constraints during the Dynamic Assessment.

Nat described how less time had been available for the post-assessment feedback than normal because of the EP's prior commitments. She also described the constraints on her own time. Lack of time was seen as a barrier to her follow up plans for meeting with parents and teachers and writing Bethany's new IEP. However, this challenge was clearly overcome to some extent by Nat's personal motivation to affect change.

> 'There's time in as much that sorting out new IEPs and reading all the other things when you've got hundreds of things ongoing, there's always the time constraint, but then that hasn't stopped me because I've wanted to do it.'

Rebecca was anxious about her choice of tools, however this was offset by her need to understand Bethany's learning.

> 'I think maybe I'd chosen possibly too…that they were too similar some of the things that I used, I could have used more variety, I used a lot of shapes and colours but part of that was not knowing her that well and making sure that I had some things to judge her level'

Supports

Many more factors which supported the assessment were identified than constraints or barriers, of which five were common to both women.

They agreed that having Nat observe the assessment was fundamental to the success of the work. Rebecca's view of why this may have been helpful was twofold. Firstly it helped Bethany feel relaxed and able to learn and secondly Nat may have learnt from the experience,

'Her seeing me she might have got stuff from that.'

However Nat's description of her experience of the assessment offered greater insight into the importance of observing Rebecca work with Bethany.

'Well, it was a brilliant opportunity for me…it was almost like a demonstration as well, in a way, when she did that picture of showing, again, of how to get her to add to it the next time, of noticing different things, counting another time and putting it away and then doing another building on it, basically.'

The working relationship between Nat and Rebecca also had a positive impact. For Rebecca this was about the school trusting her to make the right assessment decisions,

'I think they just trusted me to do what they needed really.'

Whereas for Nat the impact of the esteem with which she viewed Rebecca could clearly be felt.

'I've only done all this because the work that…Rebecca [has] put in.'

Nat's personal qualities were also seen as having an impact on the outcomes and processes. For Rebecca these traits were best described in her description of why she chose to involve Nat in the assessment as an observer,

'Because she would be a willing participant in that, and I knew she would be really interested in it and hopefully would learn stuff from it and I knew she would follow through on anything she learnt.'

Interestingly many of the very same characteristics were apparent in Nat's description of why she had not experienced many constraints during the assessment.

> 'I was interested obviously to do this for Bethany to take her learning forward…I was just happy to learn the ability to change things…there's always the time constraint, but then that hasn't stopped me.'

Alongside a clear sense of personal agency,

> 'I mean I just do my own thing!'

The characteristics of the staff in the school and the culture therein were also a factor identified as contributing to the impact of the assessment. For Rebecca this was about her sense of the school as a whole engaging with her work and for Nat it was about the support offered to her personally by the head teacher and the positive attitude of the staff to change.

> 'I mean it's not always easy getting people to take on change but pretty much I can then go to people..and say "try this…" and usually people will be on board and will use it.'

Finally both women identified that the information about Bethany collated during the assessment generated useful discussion following the assessment and could be used to inform future strategies to help her learn.

> 'I think it was effective in that it was really good information on the basis of which to do problem solving.' (Rebecca)

> 'If we'd done a cognitive assessment, yes we know that she would probably be in the bottom percentiles. I think we know that and so then what does that show you – where this has brought a whole load of strategies.' (Nat).

Further factors seen as supporting the dynamic assessment identified by Nat or Rebecca but not both are listed below:

Factors identified by Rebecca	Factors identified by Nat
• Culture in the local authority (no longer needing 'scores' when providing evidence for statutory assessment) • Clear aims agreed before the assessment as to the outcomes required by school • Nature of assessment meant that EP did not have to 'repair' Bethany's self-esteem • Flexibility of EP during the assessment with the child • Using joint problem solving after the assessment	• Receiving written feedback quickly which includes information about the child's strengths • Information provided from the assessment seen to be relevant to other children • Recommendations from the assessment 'fit' with plans for staff development • Novelty value of Dynamic Assessment as a new approach used by the EP in school

Table 24: Factors seen as supporting the Dynamic Assessment by either Nat or Rebecca but not both

Tools

A number of different tools were used throughout the assessment process, predominantly by Rebecca within the assessment itself and in later verbal and written feedback to Nat.

The tools used during the Dynamic Assessment were specifically chosen to achieve the desired outcomes from the assessment and to play to Bethany's strengths and explore her difficulties.

'So I could gauge…what the ZPD was likely to be.'

'They were practical and hands on and she had needed that in her learning previously and because she has language difficulties and they weren't

massively dependent on language skills to be able to problem   solve   with them.'

The tools were also chosen as they were familiar to Rebecca,

'They are ones that I knew.'

Despite preparing the assessment before hand using specific tools, Rebecca identified and responded to the need to be flexible and use other materials available during her interaction with Bethany,

'You have to be flexible to get the best, you know she needed breaks she wanted to go and play with the letters, partly using the letters wasn't what I planned to and it became quite curriculum specific.'

During the assessment itself there was clear evidence of Rebecca creating a mediated learning experience which encouraged Bethany to both demonstrate her existing knowledge and acquire new skills and knowledge. MLE can be thought of in this sense as a conceptual tool which transforms the child's performance and understanding during the task.

Almost all of the aspects of MLE were apparent in Rebecca's assessment of Bethany, although some were more evident than others. In the assessment, factors relating to the relationship established between the two and the skill with which Rebecca was able to mediate meaning to Bethany were highly developed.

Specifically, the aspects of mediated learning experience which were most evident were:

- Meaning

- Sharing (joint regard)

- Praise and encouragement

- Challenge

- Psychological differentiation

- Contingent responsivity and

- Affective involvement

Interestingly the two aspects of mediated learning experience which were least well developed were transcendence and sharing of experiences. However, Rebecca herself offered some explanation for why this might have been so in the case of the mediation of transcendence.

> 'I didn't really feedback to Bethany about what strategies had helped her explicitly, like 'it really helped when you', and we didn't talk about when else she may have found it helpful, although I would have done with older children.'

When I asked Rebecca if she would typically attempt to help children of Bethany's age think about these things she told me she didn't often do a lot of assessment with younger children. This perhaps reflected newly developing rather than well established tried and tested ways of working using Dynamic Assessment.

Rebecca also used tools to support Nat's thinking during the verbal and written feedback.

During the consultation meeting Rebecca used language tools to clarify, summarise and check understanding. She also used language to give weight to particular observations and questioning to check the validity of her observations. She visually referred to the assessment materials to support the point she was making and showed Nat Bethany's drawings to demonstrate her progress during the assessment.

The Joint Problem Solving process and record were key tools in the assessment process, although Rebecca had not originally intended on approaching the feedback in this manner,

> 'Nat started to say…''It was interesting that', or 'The next thing I 'm going to do is', so it automatically went into problem solving…I hadn't really thought I was going to do a record of problem solving/consultation but I could have done, and that's what I did afterwards though wasn't it? But I think that was just because Nat wanted to engage in the discussion about it and .I could have just   left and said ok I'll write this up as a report but actually I think it was much more effective to talk about it then'.

Rebecca used additional tools in her written feedback where she provided a detailed explanation of the approach and the process.

> 'In contrast to standardised psychological assessments that provide scores to reflect the current performance of a child, Dynamic Assessment helps the educational psychologist to analyse the strategies and cognitive functions (thinking skills) used by a child to solve tasks. As it involves the educational psychologist actively intervening to question, prompt and teach the child, it also provides evidence of the child's response to mediation and allows consideration of what sort of mediation might benefit the child in future learning'

> 'Bethany was required to copy a complex figure as accurately as possible and to then draw it again from memory. Mediation was then provided in relation to the original and Bethany's own drawings and the figure was again copied and then recalled from memory'

Community

Nat and Rebecca worked closely together throughout the preparation for the assessment, the assessment itself and the follow up, with Bethany involved only during the delivery of the assessment.

Rebecca actively involved Nat in the assessment as a result of her willingness to engage and learn.

Nat also planned to involve others following the assessment. These plans are discussed in the Outcomes section.

Division of labour

Before the assessment

Before the assessment, Rebecca assumed the role of decision maker, communicating with the school how she would address the questions they had about Bethany's learning.

> 'I talked with them about well she's making progress but really what we need to find out what severity of difficulty she has with making progress and there's a number of ways I can find that out.'

During the assessment

During the assessment Rebecca presented a series of tasks chosen to provide information about Bethany's zone of actual development and proximal development following mediation.

> 'I was trying to gauge what she already knew and could do before I did a more precise, right I'm going to try to move you from there to there…So I could gauge more what the ZPD was likely to be.'

Rebecca's role was in keeping with the definitions of Dynamic Assessment provided by the EPs in the first phase of my research and with the literature.

By inviting Nat to observe, Rebecca was able to demonstrate mediational strategies to someone who would be working with Bethany in the future. As Nat noted,

> 'It was almost like a demonstration as well…of how to get her to add to it the next time, of noticing different things, counting another time and putting it away and then doing another building on it, basically.'

In response, Nat demonstrated a willingness to learn and change.

> 'I was interested obviously to do this for Bethany to take her learning forward, but I knew it would fit some other children as well. So no, I was just happy to learn the ability to change things,'

Bethany responded to the mediation offered by Rebecca and engaged with the tasks. This 'reciprocity' was apparent throughout the assessment, particularly in the earlier stages when she was most attentive, but also in the latter stages of the assessment with encouragement from Rebecca.

Nat observed Rebecca's way of working with Bethany, and also provided reassurance and comfort to Bethany in a novel situation. Interestingly, this dual role

was hidden from Bethany who was led to believe that Nat was there to 'get on with some work on the computer', in an effort to prevent her from her becoming overwhelmed by having too many adults in the room.

Nat was also able to contribute to the mediated learning experience on a number of occasions, prompted either by Bethany looking for reassurance (mediation of contingent responsivity and affective involvement) or by Rebecca encouraging her to comment on Bethany's achievements (mediation of change and competence).

Follow up to the assessment

The next part of the process involved a discussion between Nat and Rebecca about their observations and the implications for Bethany's learning. At this point in the assessment, the division of labour shifted to a shared dynamic with each woman taking an equal share of responsibility for the problem solving. Interestingly, Rebecca's view was that this came about as a result of Nat's reaction to the assessment rather a particular plan she had in mind for following up after the assessment.

Rebecca's role in the discussion initially focused on feeding back information from the assessment such as Bethany's approach to the task, her strengths and difficulties, and the strategies which had helped her improve. She also highlighted key points by asking Nat to confirm whether she had observed certain aspects of Bethany's performance

Once the initial phase of the discussion was complete, Rebecca's role moved to clarifying with Nat how the information from the assessment could be used to support Bethany's future learning. This included asking questions about Bethany's current IEP and level of support, but also sharing suggestions for future areas to work on and strategies which might support her learning. Finally in this part of the assessment Rebecca clarified her next steps.

Nat played a very active role in this discussion in keeping with the idea of joint problem solving. Various comments were made which demonstrated Nat's confidence and Rebecca's willingness to share the 'power' in the conversation, with examples of Nat listening, seeking clarification of Rebecca's points to offering her own suggestions and contradicting Rebecca's interpretations. In addition, throughout the discussion Nat kept her own informal notes, written as an aide memoire when she came to write Bethany's next IEP.

Throughout the discussion Nat sought clarification of Rebecca's comments and whether her own suggestions were appropriate. On one occasion she checked her understanding of particular language used by Rebecca (asking for an explanation of the term 'visual scanning skills'). On other occasions Nat appeared to be seeking reassurance as to whether her own suggestions and thoughts were valid, for instance checking whether she should continue using 'Communication in Print' with Bethany and whether precision teaching approaches might be useful.

At other times Nat appeared confident to make comments and suggestions without clarification from Rebecca about whether they were valid. At its simple level this involved Nat sharing an observation of Bethany during the assessment,

> 'She couldn't cope with big and small.'

She also commented on her experiences of working with Bethany in school,

> 'She'd rather look around the room or at you than work.'

Based on the assessment and subsequent discussion, Nat shared a number of ideas about strategies which might help Bethany in the classroom.

> 'All of the vocabulary taught needs to relate to her topic like reduce reuse recycle.'

She also shared her hypotheses about Bethany's learning for example noting the avoidant behaviours that had been evident when she was struggling to understand.

Nat used her experience of working with Bethany on a regular basis to question the conclusions or suggestions made by Rebecca, for instance sharing her anxiety that using a sand timer might be distracting for Bethany and proposing that if Bethany had done the work completed during the session over a week she would have been more likely to retain the knowledge about shapes taught.

Finally Nat used the discussion as an opportunity to share her thinking about what her next steps might be (for example discussing Bethany's speech with the Speech

and Language Therapist) and to share her surprise at Bethany's performance on a particular aspect of the task.

Subsequent to the follow up discussion

Following this discussion, Rebecca wrote a report using the Record of Joint Problem Solving format. However, further communication in the form of a brief telephone discussion took place before this occurred. The purpose of this discussion was to discuss any outstanding issues and to clarify next steps.

In preparation for writing the report, Rebecca took time to review her notes and think about Bethany's cognitive performance in relation to Feuerstein's list of deficient cognitive functions.

In the report Rebecca:

- Provided an explanation of the approach

- Provided an explanation of the task

- Recorded Bethany's cognitive and affective strengths and difficulties

- Listed strategies found to be helpful to Bethany in the assessment

- Drew conclusions about Bethany's learning

- Listed strategies to be used in school to support Bethany's learning as agreed with Nat

- Provided a written record of further actions agreed during the discussion

The final stage of the Dynamic Assessment within the scope of the case study was for Nat to write Bethany's IEP and to provide a copy of the plan to Rebecca.

Nat told me that she planned to share the IEP with teachers working with Bethany. She also planned to share it with Bethany's parents in a simplified form.

> 'I don't think that [the report] would be very good arriving on the doorstep. So literally, I would just pull out the major parts and then give them the IEP so they have a simplified format.'

Rebecca clarified further future actions in the Joint Problem Solving record.

Strategies/actions/targets	To be carried out by
In general provide a very high level of adult modelling, imitation, repetition and practice during learning activities	School staff
Discuss key objectives for Speech and Language development with SALT and incorporate targets onto IEP so that everybody can support development of focus areas	SENCo
During interventions and when supported in the classroom gradually expose resources /info, with only relevant resources available	SENCo/CT/TA

Table 25: Extract from Joint Problem Solving record

From discussion with Nat it was clear that the process of transforming the assessment and feedback into an IEP involved active consideration of how the strategies and information gained could be used in school. This process appeared to have started during the verbal feedback session,

As Nat described,

> 'We just went through a few of the things with me scribbling down a few things that could be used as targets.'

What was also clear was Nat's recognition of her role in this process,

> 'I suppose Rebecca says things but then it is putting how you think it can work in school and with the speech side as well, it's knowing more than Rebecca at the time, where she is with her speech.'

Outcomes

Evidence of the outcomes of the Dynamic Assessment came from a number of sources. These sources included observations, views expressed as well as written evidence. Table 26 summarises the outcomes of the assessment process from the evidence gathered.

	Sources of comparative data (collected before and after assessment)			Sources of non-comparative data (collected once only, during or after the assessment)				Number of pieces of evidence listing this outcome
	IEP	Observation of SENCo	Questionnaire	Feedback observation	EP interview	SENCo interviews	Written report	
Changes to IEP	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Provides information about Bethany's learning				✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Planned involvement of other adults	✓			✓	✓	✓		4
SENCo's beliefs about child			✓			✓		2
Changes for other children						✓		1
Way of working with Bethany		✓						1
Impact on Bethany						✓		1
Impact on SENCo						✓		1

Table 26: Outcomes of the Dynamic Assessment process

Changes to the IEP

Comparison of the Bethany's IEP before and after the assessment highlighted a number of significant differences which can be attributed directly to the assessment having taken place.

Table 27 describes the main changes in the content of the IEP.

	Before Dynamic Assessment	**After Dynamic Assessment**
Focus of individual work	Basic literacy (sound/word recognition, writing first name) Basic numeracy (1:1 correspondence to 5) Expressive language (use of 'I')	Cognitive process (comparative behaviour) Expressive language (use of topic vocabulary, articulation of 's' and 'sh') Receptive language (following instructions)
Material tools used to support learning	Symbols **(**Communicate in Print) Kinaesthetic (sorting trays for counting, number cards to sort, magnetic letters, Rol 'n' write letters, alphabet play dough mats and play dough, 'Find your Fish' game for initial sounds) Published language resources (Reception Narrative Pack language resource)	Kinaesthetic (High level of concrete resources, kinaesthetic approaches, sorting activities) Visual (Spot the difference, visual approaches)
Psychological tools: Responses to affective factors		Very clear rules 'to reduce ability to go off at a tangent'

Psychological tools: Teaching Strategies Used/ suggested	Circle time in class with repetitive use of 'I'	Modelling, repetition, practise and imitation Repetition of labels/vocabulary Encouragement to use/imitate language to describe information Relate new vocabulary to her experiences Pre-teach vocabulary using concrete tools Opportunities to notice similarities and differences Interactive game format to restrain impulsivity Speed games [building fluency]
Adult support	Involvement of EP Literacy and language groups with SENCo Literacy with TA	Literacy and language groups with SENCo Literacy with TA Involvement of SALT

Table 27: Focus of the IEP before and after the Dynamic Assessment

Following the assessment, Bethany's IEP included a focus on cognitive processes and listed many more strategies to support Bethany's learning and emotional responses.

Rebecca noted this change in her interview,

> 'You can see how the IEP has changed from being more about what resources they use to what strategies they'll apply.'

Nat also described how the focus of the targets had shifted from literacy to pre-literacy skills (comparative behaviour). She also felt that the IEP had moved away from listing equipment, to include a lot of information about the strategies that adults needed to use to mediate Bethany's learning.

The strategies suggested to support Bethany's learning were clearly influenced by the plan agreed in the Joint Problem Solving meeting and by Rebecca's written record of the meeting provided to the school.

Involvement in the assessment process had clearly influenced Nat's understanding and the subsequent IEP.

> 'It just highlighted to me like I was saying to you earlier, that actually, she has so many pre-literacy basic skills that she needs to be learning. It comes over that we look at her again and think we are going too far, we need to take a step back and look at her skills really.'

Information about Bethany's learning

Rich information about Bethany's learning was gained from the assessment process. The types of information gained and their source are given in Table 28.

Rebecca reflected that the information gained through the assessment was particularly helpful during the follow up,

> 'I think it was effective in that it was really good information on the basis of which to do problem solving.'

	Feedback observation	EP interview	SENCo interview	Written Report	Quote from EP report
Information about Bethany's strengths					
Cognitive	✓			✓	
Affective	✓			✓	'Pupil strengths: motivation and enthusiasm to participate.'
Language	✓				
Other			✓	✓	
Information about Bethany's difficulties					
Cognitive	✓			✓	'When copying Bethany did not refer back and forth frequently between her drawing and the original in order to check and compare similarities and differences.'
Affective	✓			✓	
Language	✓			✓	
Other	✓		✓	✓	
Information about Bethany's response to mediation					
Information about mediated emotional performance				✓	
Information about mediated cognitive performance				✓	'She was not able to significantly adapt her original plan and her drawing was relatively similar to her first copy, although she did display greater accuracy on items that had been counted.'
Difficulties resistant to change				✓	

Information about Bethany's attainment					
Baseline attainment (before mediation)				✓	'She demonstrated that she could visually match a named image to the corresponding letter on a puzzle.'
Information about what helped Bethany's learning					
Strategies that were helpful	✓			✓	'Participation was achieved through a high level of social interaction (in order to provide positive feedback, reassurance, prompts to focus and mediation), allowing her to become focused on self chosen activity for short periods, changes of activity and short breaks.'
Influence of environment on learning		✓	✓		

Table 28: Information gained from the Dynamic Assessment

Nat felt that the information gained was both interesting and helpful to her in school,

> 'There was loads and loads of information, which was interesting, and also the bit at the back was fantastic with the strategies, because they are really, really important, both for Bethany and with saying about the transition – all those things mean I can now talk to the new class teacher and there are things that we may need to implement on a daily basis.'

Planned involvement of other adults

It was clear from a number of sources that the involvement of other adults working with or related to Bethany would follow the assessment.

Bethany's language difficulties were evident throughout the assessment and led to the agreement in the Joint Problem Solving meeting that the Speech and Language Therapist should be consulted for advice regarding speech sounds.The Joint Problem Solving record also agreed that Nat would discuss and share a copy of the document with Bethany's parents, subsequently adapted by Nat to make the information more user friendly.

Nat also planned to involve other members of staff in the school following the assessment feedback.

At the simplest level this entailed passing on the learning from the assessment to the Bethany's current and next teacher by sharing the report and IEP, however Nat also planned to take the learning wider by reflecting with other staff about the potential impact of the approaches with other children.

'I do quite a lot of staff meetings and with the TAs I do a lot of training, so it's through that kind of way…and I have a speech and language staff meeting in September, so that's the kind of thing that would fit in nicely anyway.'

SENCo's beliefs about the child

Nat's questionnaire responses changed following the assessment, regarding both the underlying cause of Bethany's difficulties and the extent to which she could change and learn.

	Before Dynamic Assessment	**After Dynamic Assessment**
Beliefs about origin of child's difficulties	'Attention skills Receptive language Classroom environment Language skills Visual memory'	'Difficulties with gathering information, impulsive, distracted by concrete materials, language: conceptual vocabulary. Cognitive skills need learning before can be applied to curriculum.'
Beliefs about extent to which child could learn and change	'Quite a lot' 'Specific needs, therefore different techniques could help her learn more effectively'	'Great deal'

Table 29: Nat's responses to questions about her beliefs about Bethany gathered through the questionnaire before and after the Dynamic Assessment

Her responses to the question about her beliefs about the origin of Bethany's difficulties indicated that following the assessment she had a greater understanding of her underlying cognitive difficulties and affective responses impacting on her learning. Nat also indicated that she understood the impact of these cognitive difficulties on the likelihood of effective learning elsewhere with her comment that 'cognitive skills need learning before can be applied to curriculum' [sic].

Finally, following the assessment Nat shared her belief in both the questionnaire and the interview that Bethany had greater potential for change and learning than she had previously assumed.

'I think there's a lot she can do, but I think she just needs an awful lot of modelling, imitation. It's made me very aware about her learning and the fact that it will be dependent on how she's picking up…unless we're modelling, she's picking things up wrongly and then doesn't get past that. I also just think that she will be OK because she is one of those characters and she loves being 1:1 and she's learning and making progress. It's changing how we work to help her make progress now.'

Changes for other children

Nat's plan to involve other members of staff following the assessment meant that the strategies applied for Bethany were likely to have a positive impact for other children,

'I think for the whole staff as well, it is just a reminder with … the visual aspect of the learning. I think it is pretty good across the school, but it's made me think I need to check out reminders to make sure because it's not just Bethany, there are lots of children that need visual reminders and visuals cues a lot of the time.'

Nat expanded on her plan to look at all children's IEPs on the basis of what had been learnt,

'I know we're talking about Bethany now, but it actually will extend to other children because I know now when I do someone else's IEP I will know exactly the same applies.'

Way of working with Bethany

Nat's comments and my observations of her and Bethany working together demonstrated that there had been tangible changes in her approach. Table 30 describes these changes.

	Before Dynamic Assessment		After Dynamic Assessment	
Focus of individual work	Basic literacy tasks (phonics, reading with symbols, writing) Basic numeracy tasks (counting) Language (vocab and articulation, conversation) Reasoning skills (2 linked objects)		Literacy (phonic discrimination) Numeracy (counting with 1:1 correspondence) Cognitive processes (similarities and differences, visual scanning, visual memory) Language (articulation, naming vocabulary)	
Material tools used to support learning	Symbol supported text (Widget) Visual cues (phonics resources) Recording equipment (pen and whiteboard) Toys (jigsaw) Visual stimulus – picture for expressive language		Recording equipment Kinaesthetic cues (fur, magnetic letters) Visual cues (Pictures, objects to look at/remember)	
Psychological tools: Responses to affective factors	Reassurance :Verbal and physical in response to anxiety Changed focus: Moved on without pressing point Break: Allowed short distraction Refocused on task Allowed avoidance behaviour briefly		Ignoring (distraction) Delayed reward (distraction) Reassurance (anxiety) Disapproval (inappropriate behaviour) Redirection (distraction) Highlighting consequences (distraction)	
Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale	Intentionality	2	Intentionality	2
	Meaning	3	Meaning	2
	Transcendence	1	Transcendence	2
	Sharing (joint regard)	3	Sharing (joint regard)	3
	Sharing (of experiences)	1	Sharing (of experiences)	1
	Task regulation	3	Task regulation	3
	Praise	2	Praise	3
	Challenge	2	Challenge	2
	Psychological differentiation	3	Psychological differentiation	3
	Contingent responsivity	3	Contingent responsivity	3
	Affective involvement	3	Affective involvement	3
	Change	1	Change	0
	Reciprocity (Not included in total)	2	Reciprocity (not included in total)	2
	Total	27		27

Table 30: Summary of changes observed in Nat's approach to teaching Bethany before and after the Dynamic Assessment

Nat had internalised the importance of modelling to help Bethany understand the 'right' way to solve a problem,

> 'Because you sometimes feel that with a lot of children when you are modelling, that actually you are giving the answers, so I think I was happier that I can be giving all the prompts – you know you are wanting her to get it right, it's like what you said or Rebecca said, it is like the area of learning because otherwise she gets it in her head and it's wrong.'

The understanding of the importance of and application of task regulation was also evident,

> 'I did notice with the Kim's game as well, it was using the same things that we had already used for the vocabulary… the same pictures and all sorts of things, but actually it was memory there she didn't…until we got into it and repeated the same things, she didn't know, because she wanted to do it with her eyes closed, so while I was saying "look at them", she was doing it like this, so she needed quite a few goes at that didn't she so she could get into it and realise that actually what she needed to do was to focus on that and look. And that has come out today that that needs a lot of looking at I think.'

From the observations it was clear that many of the strategies that had been modelled by Rebecca during the assessment and highlighted during the Joint Problem Solving were evident in Nat's practice after the Dynamic Assessment.

There were other aspects of Nat's way of working with Bethany which showed little change following the assessment however. The focus of the work was on basic literacy and numeracy development on both occasions and also included tasks designed to develop language and cognitive skills. She used a multi-sensory approach and responded to Bethany's emotional response to learning using a range of strategies.

There was also no change in the overall Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale score following the assessment. However, close inspection of some of Nat's behaviours during the two teaching sessions showed some evidence of the development of her approach with regards to the mediation of task regulation and transcendence. Both of these areas showed Nat using a greater range and frequency of meditational strategies as described in Table 31, and used many of the strategies agreed in the Joint Problem Solving following the assessment (Table 32).

Impact on Bethany

The opportunity to capture the impact of the assessment on Bethany was limited due to the limited scope of this case study. It was possible however to observe Bethany during the assessment itself and to focus on whether there was any difference in her level of reciprocity before and after Rebecca's involvement.

During the assessment Bethany was engaged and attentive. No change was noticed in Bethany's level of engagement with Nat before and after the assessment, as evidenced by no change in her reciprocity score and the observations from the MLERS,

	Mediational strategies observed	
Aspect of MLE	**Pre-assessment**	**Post-assessment**
Transcendence	Referring to the jigsaw of the bucket and spade…'When you go to the seaside…'	Gave cues to aid recall of vocabulary from her experience e.g. 'you like to eat it, you would find it on a beach, you have planted them in the garden'.

Before playing Kim's game said 'We're going to use your memory, remember when you played the fish game?'

Encouraged Bethany to demonstrate to the teacher how to say snake when she got back to class. |
| Task regulation | Jigsaw task: asked Bethany why the two pieces went together.

Provided Bethany with one piece of the jigsaw then asked her to find the other piece, provided a hint as to the type of relationship 'Can you find something that would go in the cage?'

When asking Bethany to count the cards said 'Let's start at the top and go all the way down.'

Frequent modelling of language, including direct requests for Bethany to repeat key words. | Prompted Bethany to 'think again' when she made an error

Encouraged Bethany to use Jolly Phonics action when saying a sound.

Supported conceptual labelling (big/small) by physically comparing objects.

Instructed Bethany to make all her marks on one page during the spot the difference task.

During counting task said 'Let's go down like this' gesturing counting one line then the other.

Articulated what process needed for Kim's game, 'We're going to use your memory'.

Indicated when strategy not being used, 'no you've got to look Bethany otherwise it won't work.' |

Table 31: Notes from the MLERS focusing on Nat's mediation of transcendence and task regulation before and after the assessment

Specific recommendations/strategies arising from assessment:	Used?	Evidence of use
Provide high level of modelling, imitation, repetition and practice	✓	Used when teaching articulation of sounds and vocabulary
Use concrete resources plus visual and kinaesthetic approaches	✓	See 'concrete tools used'
Repetition of specific and accurate labels and vocabulary to describe concepts	✓	New labels provided including conceptual vocabulary such as big and small, same and different.
Encourage Bethany to imitate and use language to describe. Use verbal prompting to help her recall target vocabulary.	✓	Multiple examples of asking Bethany to name objects/feelings etc., prompts using phonetic and semantic cues, modelling of new vocabulary, requests to imitate. Prompted her for 'shell' with 'you find it on the beach'
Relate new vocabulary to her experiences	✓	Semantic prompts given relating to her experience e.g. you really like eating these (sweets), you've been planting these in the garden
Pre-teach curriculum specific vocabulary using pictures/objects	x	No evidence
Notice similarities and differences	✓	Spot the difference. Attention drawn to difference between big shoe and small seed to emphasise language.
Identify and work on small focus area at a time	✓	'S' and 'sh' only targeted in phonic work. 6 items chosen for Kim's game.
Model what is expected from the start	✓	Asked Bethany to clarify whether the correct pronunciation was 'tickers' or 'stickers', advised her to 'think again' when she when she made a mistake. Gave rule for what to do in activity, modelled how to make sound by asking Bethany to look at her mouth, corrected her for 'strawberries'

Provide clear structure and rules for the task	✓	Clear instructions given for each task. Structure and format for each task very clear.
Include interactive game format (including turn taking)	✓	Included Kim's game with Bethany taking a turn at hiding objects.
Gradually expose resources/ information with only relevant resources available	✓	Commented before Bethany arrived that she had 'hidden' everything so that she wouldn't start 'poking'. Did spot the difference in two stages – not revealing comparison picture and purpose of exercise until after full discussion of 1st.
Allow opportunities to participate in favoured activities for short periods	✓	Allowed Bethany to play with a toy snake intermittently throughout assessment as a reward
High level of repetition until recall/use of concept is rapid and consistent (precision approach)	✓	Encouraged speed of response within sorting activity (emphasised verbally)
Use of gesture to draw attention to information available	✓	Pointing to resources. Gestured order in which Bethany had completed the task.
Encourage and model systematic info gathering and exploration of the problem (e.g. what else can you see/ do you notice…?)	✓	Used verbal prompts to encourage Bethany to look for something specific in picture, e.g.. I can see something growing in this picture. Gave rule that she had to look otherwise it wouldn't work.
Link new knowledge and concepts to personal experiences to make it meaningful	x	No evidence (beyond prompts for vocabulary)

Table 32: Strategies agreed used by Nat following the Dynamic Assessment

Impact on SENCo

The Dynamic Assessment appeared to have both an emotional and developmental impact on Nat, in addition to the impact on her beliefs and approach to working with Bethany discussed previously.

During the Assessment, Nat found herself challenging her assumptions about what would work with Bethany and having time and space to reflect on the nature of learning and development generally,

> 'Actually, I was quite surprised when they were doing it because I thought there would be a lot more input from Rebecca, but obviously she was giving minimal input to get as much out of Bethany to see what just came naturally. So initially I thought 'Mm, I'm not quite sure what she was doing', but then I could see that something worked with Bethany, Rebecca hardly said anything. She would say 'These go in order' and if Bethany knew what she was doing, she would just do it straight away, which was quite interesting because I think it is the same with a lot of children – developmentally they are at the right stage you do something and they just take over, don't they? Whereas, and you could see where it was difficult, she would just play with the bricks and swap them around. So it was quite interesting to see actually.'

The assessment reminded Nat of Bethany's strengths,

> 'I think, in some ways, her strengths, although I kind of knew them, to see them written down like that does help. She's obviously using an awful lot of strategies all the time because her expressive language is so poor. I think it kind of just reminded me that actually she has got a lot of strategies in place to try and help her expression to be understood.   I'm also, another thing highlighted, was her short-term visual spatial memory – that kind of thing where she was doing that picture, the one for memorising – that was quite a strength'

It also helped Nat to feel more comfortable with her approach to working with Bethany.

> 'So I think I was happier that I can be giving all the prompts…it was kind of less stressful trying to push her.'

Contradictions identified during the Dynamic Assessment

Nat and Rebecca identified three main tensions during the Dynamic Assessment. These focused the report written after the Joint Problem Solving meeting, the meeting itself, and Rebecca's choice to use individual assessment in this case.

The Joint Problem Solving record was problematic for Nat in a number of ways. Although she saw the report as very useful and informative, she also identified that the amount of detail could be overwhelming for her and the parents. Nat also questioned whether the level of detail Rebecca provided was sufficient, as the report would be provided to the SEND decision-making panel.

Both women commented on the impromptu Joint Problem Solving meeting. For Nat this represented a deviation from the normal practice of inviting the teacher and parents to participate, which created some confusion.

Rebecca similarly acknowledged the difference but went on to consider whether with more practice at Dynamic Assessment, it could become the norm,

> 'If I was better practised at it and more confident in it I would feel more confident to do a shorter assessment and a consultation as a routine practice.'

Finally, Rebecca reflected on whether she should be using assessment more often in order to achieve positive outcomes within her work,

> 'Sometimes it really makes me think gosh if I did more assessment I could be more effective being really specific about what would help, because the consultation, the observation and consultation and gathering teacher information I'd do that first and I'd already done that with Bethany, but the actual sort of individual really looking intently gives you really clear things that you know you definitely want to aim for.'

Historicity

I didn't find any evidence of changes in Dynamic Assessment practice over time in the case study, as this appeared to be the first time that Rebecca had used the approach in the school.

> 'That was a very different way of Rebecca working with Bethany that I hadn't seen her do regarding an assessment before.'

Summary

The findings from my case study offer support for much of what was found in the interviews, but also extend our understanding of some aspects of Dynamic Assessment Practice.

Although similarly constrained by time and materials, many more supports were identified by those involved in the case study than by the EPs interviewed. Of particular interest was the significance attributed to the SENCo's qualities and the relationship between her and the EP. Having the SENCo observe the assessment also contributed to the positive outcomes from the work.

Unlike the interviews, the case study clarified the role of the SENCo in the Dynamic Assessment. As well as supporting the EP to create a nurturing environment in which learning could take place, the SENCo's task was to be open to learning and change and to actively participate in the problem solving discussion following the

assessment. She herself also described a role post assessment in using the understanding gained in the IEP and with potentially with other children in the school.

Finally the pre and post-assessment measures expanded on the responses from the interviews, by providing strong triangulated evidence of changes to the child's IEP, plans to involve other adults and changes in the SENCo's beliefs about the child. There was also evidence of changes in the way the SENCo worked with Bethany, changes for Bethany herself during the assessment and positive affective and professional changes for Nat during and following the assessment.

In the next chapter I explore how these findings as well as the findings from the interviews relate to the literature and my research propositions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter I provide a summary of my findings and consider how they relate to my research aims and propositions. I also discuss how my findings support or challenge previous research findings and literature.

I start by considering the sociocultural influences on EPs and their specific practices during Dynamic Assessment and go on look at the impact of the approach and the outcomes achieved, particularly focusing on the case study findings.

Summary of my findings

The findings of my research with the strongest evidence across the interviews and case study were as follows:

- EPs had taken part in a variety of training and professional development activities, including formal training from David Tzuriel or Ruth Deutsch, training as part of an EP service and/or activities carried out as a trainee EP. Many had benefited from peer support.
- EPs chose to use Dynamic Assessment because of the information it provided about the child, and as an alternative to psychometric assessment

- EPs used Dynamic Assessment with primary age children, children with learning and language difficulties, in mainstream schools and involved the child and SENCo.

- EPs used assessment tools from the Learning Propensity Assessment Device, tools published by David Tzuriel and toys. They also used frameworks and checklists to organise their thinking.

- The constraints to using Dynamic Assessment were time, materials, the culture of the school and Local Authority, plus skills, knowledge and confidence. Conversely, culture, training, continuing professional development and the involvement of peers were seen as supportive.

- EPs described Dynamic Assessment in terms of its focus on cognitive processes

- The roles involved in Dynamic Assessment included key tasks for the EP in carrying out and mediating during the assessment, in addition to feeding back afterwards. The child's role was to demonstrate reciprocity. The adults involved with the child joined together in consultation and were required to be 'ready for change'. Peers supported EPs with their Dynamic Assessment practice.

The outcomes of Dynamic Assessment were numerous. I found strong evidence across the interviews and case study that Dynamic Assessment provided rich information about the child. This included information about their strengths and difficulties, the affective factors impacting on their learning, their approach to tasks and the changes in their performance following mediation.

In addition the case study provided triangulated evidence that Dynamic Assessment can result in changes in the child's Individual Education Plan and the beliefs of the SENCo working with the child. I also found strong evidence of planning to involve other professionals following the assessment.

I also found some evidence during the case study of changes in the SENCo's approach to working with the child occurred following Dynamic Assessment. The Dynamic Assessment also had a positive emotional impact as well as providing a development opportunity for the SENCo.

Finally I also found tentative evidence of impact on the child's motivation and the potential for change for other children as the SENCo planned to generalise her learning to others in the school.

Significance of my findings

I undertook my research to investigate the question,

'What are the sociocultural and personal influences on and practices of EPs who use Dynamic Assessment?' and proposed that

'The Dynamic Assessment practice of EPs is influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors'.

This section of my thesis explores my findings in relation to this question and considers whether they support or undermine previous research findings and thinking with regards to Dynamic Assessment.

Subject

Training and professional development

I found that training and continuing professional development as well as the individual experiences and beliefs of EPs impacted on Dynamic Assessment practice. I found that EPs varied in how often they used Dynamic Assessment within their work.

Training received both as a trainee and 'in service' influenced the practice of EPs. It was my impression that the EPs who had not received training as trainees had been qualified for longer, although I did not check this with the participants. This pattern corresponds with the growth of interest and training available in the approach in the UK in the last decades. The type of training received in the two Local Authorities was different. In Southdale, EPs were less likely to have attended Dynamic Assessment training delivered by Ruth Deutsch or David Tzuriel as individuals but were more likely to have experienced whole service training, for instance in the use of the CAP. Consequently the majority of EPs in Southdale also used the CAP in their practice. EPs were aware that sometimes time and availability meant that access to training was limited and this had an influence on their practice.

Training also featured in some of the EPs' comments about the constraints on their practice. A lack of professional skills, knowledge and confidence was more of a constraint however. It is reasonable to assume that more effective training and continuing professional development opportunities would go some way to overcome this, a supposition supported by comments made by some EPs about past training and development opportunities having a profoundly positive effect on their practice.

Peer support was also mentioned as being important, and a proportion of EPs undertook individual development activities.

The presence of comments about training and CPD across the interviews, case study and in response to different areas of questioning, suggests that these features of the subject's sociocultural experience had a strong effect on EPs' Dynamic Assessment practice. This is further supported by the different pattern of training provision across the two authorities and the impact this had on their choice of tools. The clarity of these questions within the interview schedule means that it is unlikely that the methodology used in the research would lead us to question this conclusion.

My results support previous studies that highlighted the importance of training and CPD to Dynamic Assessment practice. Stringer et al (1997) found that the lack of availability of training was a constraint for EPs using Dynamic Assessment. Stringer et al also questioned the readiness of supervisors on initial training courses to provide support to trainees. All of the EPs interviewed in my research had received

training of some description either through whole service, initial training or individual training. A lack of access does not therefore seem to be the key issue. The fact that for many of the EPs a lack of professional confidence and expertise was a constraint despite having attended training seems to indicate that a better understanding of what constitutes effective CPD is needed.

Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) found that the lack of quality training was a barrier to EPs and that virtually all of the EPs asked believed that follow up would be useful to embed their learning. My supposition is that the importance of peer support identified by EPs in my research gives an insight into how training and CPD can have the maximum impact on outcomes from Dynamic Assessment. Joyce and Showers' (2002) research into the effectiveness of In Service training for teachers showed that theory, demonstration and modelling, practice and coaching are essential if practitioners are to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to change their practice. They found that the greater the complexity of the skill and distance from the practitioner's existing skill set, the more practice would be required to bring about change. EPs interviewed saw Dynamic Assessment as professionally and cognitively demanding, suggesting that it should be viewed as a complex skill to master. This finding is supported by Elliott (1993) who suggested that the expertise required to carry out Dynamic Assessment is not easily acquired, and furthermore that this complexity can deter EPs from using the approach (Lauchlan and Elliott, 2001). This would suggest that EPs not only need to have the time and opportunity to access appropriate and effective training (including theory, modelling and opportunity for practice), but also need this to be followed up with planned opportunities for peer

coaching and feedback. Only under these conditions will the barrier of a lack of professional confidence and expertise be overcome.

How much do EPs use Dynamic Assessment?

As previous research by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) and Woods and Farrell (2006) was subject to methodological difficulties, it was important to try to establish how much EPs use Dynamic Assessment.

My results supported the conclusion from the literature that EPs' use of Dynamic Assessment is limited but there were exceptions. In my research most EPs used Dynamic Assessment in less than half of their individual casework with children and young people, however there were a small number who used the approach in the vast majority of their interactions.

The most frequent users of Dynamic Assessment were also the most frequent users of individual casework in their practice. This finding gives weight to the idea of EPs needing time to practise the approach to overcome the issue of professional confidence and expertise. Southdale had more EPs using higher levels of individual assessment, suggesting that the extent of Dynamic Assessment use can be influenced by sociocultural factors as well as personal beliefs. This conclusion is supported by the finding that some EPs reported that the amount of individual assessment and Dynamic Assessment undertaken had changed over time, influenced by service delivery models and changing roles and professional identity.

My findings do provide greater clarity about the extent of EPs use of Dynamic Assessment, however methodological issues in my research mean that this finding should viewed cautiously. In the interviews more than half of the EPs either sought clarification of the meaning of the question or had difficulty reaching a conclusion about the extent of their practice.

This difficulty could have reflected poor question design, which could have been avoided with the use of a pilot study. Alternatively it may be the case that EPs do not typically quantify or categorise their activities in a way which would have made answering questions about the extent of their use of Dynamic Assessment straightforward. If this is the case, alternative research tools such as a practice diary would have been useful.

Why do EPs choose to use Dynamic Assessment?

My research indicated that there are powerful personal influences on EPs' Dynamic Assessment practice. Many of their decisions about whether to use Dynamic Assessment are based on beliefs about how they wish to work with children and young people, and how working in certain ways makes them feel as professionals. It also highlighted the importance to EPs of the information gained from the approach.

EPs were in agreement that they used Dynamic Assessment as it provided useful information about children and young people. This was also evident in the case study. This was a stable aspect of EPs' activity and was not mentioned in comments about changing practice over time. Literature focusing on why EPs should use Dynamic Assessment also regularly mentions this as an advantage of the approach.

Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) for example, stress that Dynamic Assessment provides information not available from other sources, and Bosma and Resing (2012) found that special school teachers reported a preference for practical and concrete recommendations characteristic of Dynamic Assessment reports.

The debate about the relative merits of Dynamic Assessment in comparison to other forms of cognitive assessment has also featured heavily in the literature. EPs in both the authorities stated that they chose to use Dynamic Assessment as an alternative to psychometrics. For most of the EPs this choice was linked to their experience of the assessment and their beliefs about the experience for the child. This is an extension to the arguments put forward in the literature which have tended to focus on the statistical and conceptual shortcomings of psychometrics, and on the potential negative consequences of the scores produced. EPs in my research were clear that they were unhappy at times to work with children in a way which might promote a sense of failure. One EP even recalled her own experiences of this type of testing as a child. Dynamic Assessment for these EPs represented a more ethical alternative.

There are a number of reasons why the EPs may have responded in this way, seemingly taking the discussion about the use of Dynamic Assessment as an alternative to psychometrics to a more candid level. It may be that the specific questions used encourage EPs to think about their emotional responses to assessment as well as the professional and statistical merits of their approach. Alternatively, it may be that authors have been wary of emphasising the ethical issues experienced by assessors during work with children or of arguing that

Dynamic Assessment offers an ethically more comfortable approach. Finally, it may be that as the EPs were known to me and in the course of our work we had previously discussed views about alternative approaches, they felt able to express views they might otherwise have not.

What is clear is that one EP's question about whether we actually know for sure that children experience the two forms of assessment differently is worthy of investigation.

Tools

My research found that EPs use a range of tools to assess children and young people and that these tools are subject to change over time as practice develops. Tools are also a source of contradiction in EPs' Dynamic Assessment activity. There are differences in the tools EPs use according to the training they have accessed.

The vast majority of EPs used Tzuriel's published tests or assessments from the LPAD. This is not surprising as most of the Oxshire EPs had attended a Tzuriel or Deutsch course and overall many of the EPs had received input on their initial EP training, introducing them to some of the LPAD tools.

EPs in both authorities also used toys as a tool for delivering Dynamic Assessment. The case study supported the idea that EPs use tools flexibly, with the EP using both published tests and materials to hand in the school as needed to maximise the child's engagement.

The tools used by EPs had been influenced over time. In some cases EPs had been influenced by experiences with particular cases, in others by external factors beyond their control. An example of this was an EP who moved away from using Curriculum Based Dynamic Assessment as the National Curriculum changed and she no longer felt confident to identify next steps that would be taught.

Across the two authorities the EPs routinely used checklists based on Feuerstein's Deficient Cognitive Functions to organise their thoughts and record their observations. Southdale EPs, trained in using the CAP, used this tool although this was identified as being problematic for many who were finding the twin responsibility of recording and assessing a significant challenge.

Deustch and Reynolds' (2000) research found that the majority of EPs surveyed used a combination of tools to assess children. This finding was supported in my research with 92% of EPs using a combination of tools from the LPAD, Tzuriel, Curriculum Based Dynamic Assessment, and adaptations to standardised tests and/or toys.

The inclusion of toys in EPs' Dynamic Assessment tool kit was not included in the survey carried out by Deutsch and Reynolds despite the launch of the 'Bunny Bag' approach by Waters and Stringer in 1997. In this respect my findings extend understanding of EPs' current approaches to Dynamic Assessment. Six of the nine EPs who said that they used toys with children used them with school age children as well as in the Early Years. My observation would be that the EPs working in this

way were those that appeared to have reflected at length on the principles underlying Dynamic Assessment. They had recognised that any learning interaction with a child could be meditational regardless of the tool. They were also those that were interested in and responsive to 'what worked with children' and were keen therefore to use materials that were intrinsically motivating to children and unthreatening due to their familiarity, as with the alphabet inset puzzle used by Rebecca in the case study.

This extension of our understanding about the tools EPs can and do use for Dynamic Assessment is of significance to the profession. Although Lauchlan and Carrigan (2013) acknowledge that any materials could be used to carry out Dynamic Assessment, the examples they provide relate to Curriculum Based Dynamic Assessment, therefore to date there has been no discussion in the published literature about the pros and cons of using toys and a sharing of practical ideas. It is also important that the use of toys for Dynamic Assessment purposes features in the training available to EPs, either as trainees or in service. This was already starting to happen in Oxshire where one of the EPs interviewed was also a tutor on an initial EP training course,

'Having worked with a trainee the year before I started at [the university], I realised that she thought that [the Organisation of Dots task] was a Dynamic assessment, that she hadn't really taken on board that it wasn't the tool it was actually the process. Last year again, people were struggling with tinies to actually do something like the complex figure drawing and the dots…So this year a colleague and I decided we'd

just take in a whole load of toys and things, which we did and chucked them at the students really and got them to think about the processes involved.'

Community

My findings in relation to the community involved in Dynamic Assessment indicated that EPs use the approach in a range of settings with all age groups and a wide variety of presenting difficulties including language difficulties, in contrast to the view of Haywood and Lidz (2007). Where EPs did not use the approach it was often because they lacked cases, for instance EPs mentioned not having a special school on their 'patch'. The interview responses and case study indicated that as well as the EP and child, staff in school and parents are typically involved in the assessment. This result is supported by the EPs' responses during the discussion about the division of labour, with discrete roles identified for those involved

The EPs' responses to the question about community involvement in Dynamic Assessment showed the highest level of variation between the two authorities for any question asked. This was most likely due to methodological weaknesses. The Oxshire EPs were given a questionnaire to complete in addition to being interviewed. Their positive response rate was higher for every possible community characteristic (for instance specific age range, difficulty or type of school). In addition, analysis of the questions asked during the interviews indicates that the amount and nature of prompts provided was not consistent between EPs. With regard to the involvement of the EP and child, it was clear from some EPs' responses that they took this as read, whereas in other cases leading questions were asked to elicit this response. Finally,

the terminology used to investigate whether EPs used the approach with children with learning difficulties changed over time. In the initial questionnaire (based on EPs' responses during the interviews) the EPs were asked whether they used the approach with children with severe learning difficulties, whereas in the second authority this question was broadened to learning difficulties more generally.

Overall, this aspect of the research was disappointingly weak and inconsistent and makes it difficult to interpret the significance of results about involvement of others in the Dynamic Assessment. However, it would be fair to say that EPs do involve others in the assessment and use Dynamic Assessment across a range of settings and difficulties, ages and difficulties. This is significant to professional practice as it means that the approach is flexible and has the potential to be used across a wide range of casework.

Division of labour

Responses in the interviews and the case study provide a clear understanding of who does what during Dynamic Assessment.

The EPs' responses focused on the activity before, during and after the Dynamic Assessment. The descriptions of the roles focused on the EP, the child, the school and the parent. This supports the centrality of these roles in the Dynamic Assessment process as found in the responses about community involvement described above.

During the assessment, the role of the EP was to manage the delivery of the assessment and provide a mediated learning experience. The number of responses mentioning the role of the EP as mediator was perhaps lower than might be expected (62% overall). If this result is indicative of a lack of understanding or importance given to the psychological and research underpinnings of Dynamic Assessment then this could support the concern of Woods and Farrell (2006) who highlighted the 'paucity of practitioner theory about psychological assessment'. However, this may have also simply been an example of the EPs finding it difficult to reflect on and explain the day-to-day workings of their practice.

The case study provided a useful insight into the roles played during the assessment, providing supporting data for the interview responses and allowing us to place greater weight on the veracity of these findings. Rebecca's role was to structure and organise the tasks whilst also assessing Bethany's skills and approach. The observation using the Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale suggests that Rebecca was highly meditational in her approach. The case study also extended the understanding of the potential role of school staff in the assessment itself. During the interviews, most EPs said that the role of staff was to observe, presumably to understand the child's difficulties and strengths for themselves. In two cases, the member of staff was expected or needed to take a more active role, supporting the creation of a mediated learning experience. In the case study Nat observed the assessment but was also there to provide reassurance and encouragement to Bethany, suggesting a more active participant role. Nat's reflections after the assessment also seemed to suggest that the observation of Rebecca's role had been

particularly useful in helping her understand the potential of working with Bethany in a different way.

This finding supports Yeomans' (2008) suggestion that teachers should be centrally involved in the process before, during and after a Dynamic Assessment if they are to make maximum use of the findings to inform intervention. Yeomans provided little theoretical explanation or empirical evidence for this suggestion, however if we return to the model of in service learning proposed by Joyce and Showers (2002) we can see that modeling of a new approach especially where it is different to the teacher's existing repertoire or a complex skill, is fundamental to bringing about change in classroom practice.

This is significant for EP practice as it would suggest that there is both a theoretical basis and empirical evidence to justify further conversation about whether school staff should be present when a Dynamic Assessment is carried out, particularly where the approach is new to teaching staff and they have little experience of using the findings in their work with children.

The vast majority of the EPs suggested that they would include a Joint Problem Solving session or consultation following the Dynamic Assessment. This was seen by all as a joint venture with EPs, school staff and parents each having specific roles. A number also talked about providing feedback to the school and sometimes parents about their findings. Southdale EPs placed a strong emphasis on the openness to change of those participating in the Joint Problem Solving. It is not clear from the

209

interview responses why this was a particularly strong theme in Southdale. My hypothesis would be related to the length of time consultation had been in place as the agreed service delivery model in each authority. Consultation was fairly new in Southdale at the time of the interviews, and the EPs had some training on the COMOIRA framework 18 months prior to the research taking place. It may be that the emphasis in the framework on exploring readiness for change influenced the practice of the EPs, or at least brought this aspect of consultation practice more into their conscious reflections.

There were more comments made about the problems and issues with the way tasks were shared between those involved in the Dynamic Assessment than in any other area of activity. Most focused on the practical difficulties for the EP in carrying out multiple roles during the assessment itself, particularly managing the need to record outcomes, confounded by challenges with tools available for this task.

Object

My definition of Dynamic Assessment offered as a result of analysis of existing descriptions in the literature review was as follows:

'Dynamic assessment describes approaches to assessment which focus on illuminating the cognitive processes and affective factors impacting on a child's performance through the child and assessor working together on a task. Integral to the assessment is the active role of the assessor in trying to create the optimum conditions for the child to learn both content needed for the task and more general

processes that can be applied to both the task and beyond. Working in this way allows the assessor to gauge the child's responsiveness to support and to use these observations to subsequently inform tailored intervention in the classroom which will help the child learn more effectively.'

To what degree did the EPs' responses fit with this definition?

The EPs were in agreement that the focus of Dynamic Assessment was on the cognitive processes underlying performance. They also highlighted the importance of identifying the child's learning potential. Interestingly, the affective factors impacting on performance were rarely mentioned.

The underplaying of the assessment of affective factors during the Dynamic Assessment is a surprise, but is backed up to some degree by responses to other questions about Dynamic Assessment. Few EPs mentioned tools for either assessing or recording affective factors, and this did not feature heavily in their responses about roles or possible outcomes of the approach. My literature review found that very few of the published definitions specifically mentioned assessment of affective factors. Da Silva Ferrão and Fiorim Enumo's (2008) review of the literature also found little explicit inclusion of affective factors in approaches to Dynamic Assessment.

However, assessment of and planning for Bethany's emotional responses to learning were clearly present in the case study. Likewise, information about affective factors

as an outcome of Dynamic Assessment is acknowledged in the published case studies reviewed. A number of tools also provide a structure for recording this information, for example the CAP (Deutsch and Mohammed, 2010). It may be that the affective factors are seen by EPs as being secondary to the cognitive factors impacting on performance and therefore less significant in their definitions. There may also be a sense in which EPs believe that staff in schools have the vocabulary and to some degree the understanding to describe a child's behaviours impacting on performance in comparison to their cognitive skills, which have perhaps historically been the EP's area of expertise.

Finally in some cases it maybe difficult to differentiate between the cognitive and affective aspects of a behaviour observed in a Dynamic Assessment. An example of this is when drawing conclusions about the degree to which a child remains on task throughout an activity. One possible reason for this would be the child's perseverance, an affective response, and another would be the child's capacity for sustained attention, categorised as a cognitive process.

The EPs were in agreement with the definition with regard to the active (interactive) role of the assessor. Around half specifically described the role as meditational, acknowledging the impact of Feuerstein's thinking on practice. The fact that this emphasis was not higher was mentioned earlier in this discussion, and our understanding of this is extended by our conceptualisation of Dynamic Assessment as an umbrella term where the importance of a MLE is given greater or lesser emphasis depending on the author.

The interview responses showed less emphasis on the outcomes of the assessment approach than might be expected, with less than 50% of the EPs mentioning these in their responses. The EPs I interviewed were more likely to mention the epistemological features of the information gained than how the information would be used for example. The most likely reason for this is the triadic elicitation technique used which encouraged the EPs to define what is meant by Dynamic Assessment in comparison with other forms of assessment. Certainly in comparison to psychometric cognitive assessment, the qualitative, subjective nature of the data obtained is of great significance.

In the case study, the definition of Dynamic Assessment provided by Rebecca in the Joint Problem Solving record was as follows:

'In contrast to standardised psychological assessments that provide scores to reflect the current performance of a child, Dynamic Assessment helps the educational psychologist to analyse the strategies and cognitive functions (thinking skills) used by a child to solve tasks. As it involves the educational psychologist actively intervening to question, prompt and teach the child, it also provides evidence of the child's response to mediation and allows consideration of what sort of mediation might benefit the child in future learning.'

This definition provides further evidence of the features mentioned above, but also omits affective factors. It does however does reference the use of the information gained to some extent.

The use of the triadic elicitation approach to explore EPs' constructs about Dynamic Assessment in this research was not without its problems. For those who have not participated in a triadic elicitation exercise before, the directions can appear complicated and difficult to follow. A script was used throughout to ensure the instructions given were clear and consistent, but many of the EPs sought and required further clarification. As discussed above, the approach may have also had the effect of encouraging EPs to define Dynamic Assessment in terms of its difference to other forms of assessment, which may have underplayed some salient features of the approach such as the focus on affective factors and possible outcomes. The results were also limited by the missing information from one EP, providing less data from which to draw conclusions and increasing the inequality between the number of EPs interviewed in each authority. However, overall the approach did provide a useful tool for exploring the EPs' constructs about Dynamic Assessment, and the information gained was supported by both the follow up question and the case study definition. There were also very few comments made about the historicity or contradictions in regard to what is meant by the term, suggesting that this is a relatively stable and well understood aspect of EPs' Dynamic Assessment practice.

Rules

Supports

Many supportive factors were evident during the case study. The context in which the assessment took place was important. There was a positive existing relationship between the EP and the SENCo, and the latter was open and ready for change. This was supported by a positive open culture in the school generally.

Within the assessment itself, Nat's observation of the assessment was seen as pivotal, and the information gathered was helpful in planning the intervention needed in school.

Culture was also seen as significant in supporting Dynamic Assessment in the interviews, along with training and CPD for the assessor which made them feel confident and skilled in the approach. The involvement of peers in professional development leading to the delivery of effective Dynamic Assessment was also a dominant theme. Although the information gathered and working relationship were mentioned as supports in the interviews, the response rate indicated that this was less important than the case study would suggest.

No major differences were noted between the two authorities and there were few comments on the contradictions about this aspect of practice, although one EP did

mention how moving to a new authority had been very supportive in terms of cultural expectations, highlighting a historical perspective on her practice.

The relationship between my findings and the literature is limited. A significant proportion of the literature on Dynamic Assessment written by or for EPs in the last two decades has considered why the profession may not be using Dynamic Assessment as much as it might, focusing on the constraints rather than the supports. In notable exceptions Lauchlan et al (2007) and Yeomans (2008) explored ideas about possible ways of overcoming challenges to Dynamic Assessment practice, both choosing to focus on the link between assessment and intervention. The positive impact of Nat's observation of the Dynamic Assessment supports Yeomans' thesis that teachers should be centrally involved in the assessment process. The Joint Problem Solving approach also provided multiple opportunities for the SENCo and EP to make sense of the assessment findings regarding Bethany's learning and emotional responses and link them to the intervention required. Interestingly, this conversation was not identified specifically as a support by Nat or Rebecca.

It is clear from my interviews with EPs and the case study that there are factors which appear to make it more likely that Dynamic Assessment will result in positive outcomes. Lauchlan et al (2007) and Yeomans (2008) started at the end of the last decade to open the professional enquiry into these factors. In future it may be helpful for the professional and research community to adopt the collective aim of carrying out a 'realistic evaluation' of Dynamic Assessment in which Pawson and Tilley's

(1997) question 'What works for whom in what circumstances' guides research and reflective practice.

Constraints

The questions asked about the constraints and supports to Dynamic Assessment practice were straightforward for EPs to answer and without exception, didn't require clarification or elaboration.

The four key themes in the EPs' responses to the question about what constrained their practice centred on skills, knowledge and confidence, time, cultural expectations and beliefs and finally materials.

Professional skills, knowledge and confidence and the 'right tools for the job' have been identified as barriers to effective practice in previous papers. These issues were also apparent in EPs' responses to my questions about the personal influences on their practice. There is therefore robust evidence supporting the existence of these professional challenges. These need to be addressed with some urgency, particularly as they are well within the capacity of the profession to change, unlike cultural beliefs which are clearly less straight forward to address.

Time was also seen as a major barrier to Dynamic Assessment practice, again supporting previous research findings. The interviews with EPs suggested a variety of reasons why time was an issue. These included the time needed to see the child on more than one occasion, time to work with schools to overcome cultural expectations, preparing and following up from the assessment and time to develop

their skills. These findings extend our understanding from the previous literature, which tended to focus on time allowed for assessment of individual children generally and also the time needed to carry out a Dynamic Assessment. Within the case study Nat also identified a number of time constraints. This is also an interesting addition to our understanding, as we have previously concentrated on the barriers for EPs.

My research also supported the view from the literature that cultural beliefs and practices can create a barrier to Dynamic Assessment practice. The impact of the Local Authority was particularly significant, with major differences between the two areas included in the research. In the authority where the SEN decision making panel required quantitative information about children's needs, this was seen as a key constraint to using Dynamic Assessment. In comparison, EPs in the Local Authority where the panel was happy to accept qualitative or quantitative information about children's needs did not see the culture as a constraint. Further support for the importance of this feature of the sociocultural context came from comments made by the EPs regarding the impact of changes of LAs on their practice, with examples of EPs both moving to a more supportive and less supportive authority.

The EPs' responses in my research also extends our thinking about cultural constraints by including the beliefs or expectations of individual schools as barriers to practice. This may fit into the wider issue mentioned by Elliott (1993) and Stringer et al (1997) about the epistemological bias in our western education system towards quantitative data, but from the EPs' responses it would also appear to be about the beliefs of individuals within this wider system. Interestingly, the EPs felt more able to

challenge or address this level of cultural constraint by spending time with key staff explaining the benefits of the approach, and when they had a strong sense of identity as an EP with well rehearsed ideas about their approaches to assessment.

Overall, my research findings suggested that there are clear supports and constraints which influence EPs' Dynamic Assessment practice. Some of these, including peer involvement, professional skills and confidence, tools and time are within the capacity of the profession to address and are, on one level, simply about the provision of time, effort and a structure for learning and practice. Others such as cultural expectations and beliefs may be more of a challenge, given that they involve influencing others and helping them to understand the benefits of the approach. This is where individual EPs need to be convinced of their own practice and the outcomes they achieve. Only then will they believe they are in a strong enough position to convince others of the merits of the approach.

Outcomes

In this section I will discuss the significance of my results in relation to the research question

- What are the outcomes of Dynamic Assessment?

And consider the strength and meaning of the evidence supporting the propositions introduced in Chapter 3:

- Dynamic Assessment provides information about the cognitive and affective factors impacting on a child's learning

- Dynamic Assessment provides information about how the child can be helped to learn more effectively

- Dynamic Assessment can impact on the practice and beliefs of adults supporting the child in school

Dynamic Assessment provides information about the cognitive and affective factors impacting on a child's learning

The Dynamic Assessment followed in the case study provided rich information about Bethany's cognitive and affective strengths and difficulties. These factors were evident to both the EP and the SENCo during the assessment itself and then made explicit in the Joint Problem Solving meeting and the subsequent written record. The written record also provided explicit information about Bethany's response to mediation and the impact this had on her cognitive skills and emotional responses to the task, including those factors impacting on her performance which were resistant to change.

All of the EPs interviewed suggested that Dynamic Assessment provided information about children's learning and performance, including the child's strengths, difficulties, the approach taken to their learning and their response to mediation. Two interesting features were highlighted by the interview responses.

The first was a marked difference between the focus on the child's strengths between EPs in Southdale and Oxshire. All of the Oxshire EPs stated that Dynamic

Assessment elicited information about the child's strengths whereas only two EPs of the six interviewed in Southdale said this. As with all views generated from interviews, this lack of response cannot be taken to mean disagreement with the premise that information about the child's strengths is generated from a Dynamic Assessment. This can only be taken to mean that for the Southdale EPs this was not a significant aspect of their thinking at the time of the interview. Indeed, looking carefully at the EPs' responses to other questions, two of the other EPs mentioned the generation of information about the child's strengths as reason for using the approach. As the line of questioning about the outcomes of Dynamic Assessment was used consistently across the two authorities, and these questions were unambiguous and straightforward for EPs to answer, this difference is likely to have some other explanation. It is possible that the two Southdale EPs who mentioned that they used Dynamic Assessment because it provided information about a child's strengths felt that this had already been covered in an earlier question so did not mention it was a possible outcome. However in Oxshire three of the EPs were in the position of having mentioned the focus on children's strengths as a reason for using the approach but then also went onto highlight this as an outcome of the Dynamic Assessment.

The reasons for this difference are not clear. However, having spoken about the finding to an EP who like me has worked in both areas, I would hypothesise that it reflects cultural differences between the two Local Authorities.

In Oxshire the culture of needing to provide quantitative information for statutory decision making means that Dynamic Assessment may have been more likely to be used for preventative work. In comparison in Southdale the purpose of Dynamic Assessment could have included helping decision makers determine whether a child met the 'threshold' for statutory assessment. It is possible that this led EPs in the different authorities to place a different emphasis on information about the child's strengths. Additionally, differences in culture within schools and the EP services, could have resulted in EPs in Oxshire promoting Dynamic Assessment as a way of a obtaining an optimistic view of the child, in a context where traditional approaches were more common.

The low number of responses focusing on information about affective factors as an outcome of Dynamic Assessment is also interesting. As discussed this omission was also noted in EPs' descriptions of the approach and comments about other aspects of their practice. The idea that affective factors are underplayed as a consequence of beliefs about the capacity of schools to address these issues and the prime focus on cognitive focus has already been explored. It is worthy of note that information about affective factors was elicited and shared during the case study, suggesting it is a part of what happens, but may not be at the forefront of EPs' thoughts.

The evidence in my research clearly supports the proposition that:

- Dynamic Assessment provides information about the cognitive factors impacting on a child's learning

This proposition is also supported by previous research including Feuerstein et al (2002) and Birnbaum and Deutsch (1996).

There was less support in my research for the proposition supported by Elliott et al (1996) and Birnbaum and Deutsch (1996) that

- Dynamic Assessment provides information about the affective factors impacting on a child's learning

However the inclusion of this information in the case study, does suggest it is an integral if underplayed outcome of at least some examples of Dynamic Assessment.

Dynamic Assessment provides information about how the child can be helped to learn more effectively

The case study provided useful information from which to plan the approach to Bethany's learning in school, referencing the strategies that had helped her make progress during the assessment. The practical relevance of the information provided was highlighted by both the SENCo and the EP.

Likewise, EPs in the interviews felt that an outcome of Dynamic Assessment was the provision of information about the intervention needed.

This was a robust finding across both the case study and interviews in response to unambiguous questioning. The case study also found triangulated support for this in the interview responses, observation of the Joint Problem Solving meeting and the record produced of this discussion.

Studies reviewed in the earlier chapter of this thesis also suggest that Dynamic Assessment provides information about the mediation required to help the child make progress in the assessment, thus there is strong support for the proposition that 'Dynamic Assessment provides information about how the child can be helped to learn more effectively'. What is interesting is whether this information then changes practice in the classroom and ultimately improves outcomes for the child.

Dynamic Assessment can impact on the practice and beliefs of adults supporting the child in school

There were no strong themes resulting from the EP interviews in relation to the impact on the practices and beliefs of adults supporting the child. However a small number of comments were made suggesting that there were changes in teachers' perceptions following Dynamic Assessment, although the precise nature of these differences was not clear. A few of the EPs also suggested that Dynamic Assessment could prompt school staff to reflect on their current practices and consider what might work better for a child in future.

By looking at the impact of the Dynamic Assessment using a variety of before and after measures rather than drawing conclusions from a retrospective study, my case

study extends our understanding of the impact of the approach on the practice and beliefs of adults working with children. The study found a range of evidence of changes to the SENCo's beliefs and practice.

As a result of the assessment, Nat's beliefs and understanding about the underlying cause of Bethany's difficulties and what would help her showed greater elaboration, and she became more positive about her potential for change.

The before and after questionnaire was helpful in demonstrating the increased focus on deficient cognitive skills as a possible reason for Bethany's difficulties. It also showed that following the assessment Nat believed Bethany could learn and change a 'great deal'. This supports Feuerstein et al's (2002) argument that Dynamic Assessment can change the beliefs of adults working with the child and identify a child's potential for change, even when this is not initially obvious. Nat's comments during our interview after the assessment added weight to this as she again mentioned Bethany's potential and what would be needed in order for her to achieve it.

Some aspects of Nat's approach to working with Bethany showed little change following the Dynamic Assessment. However these were features that continued to be appropriate and did not require changing following the Dynamic Assessment. Other aspects of Nat's way of working with Bethany did change. This was evident in Nat's responses to the interview questions and was supported by my observations of the two working together pre and post assessment.

Nat's comments during the interview indicated that she had internalised some of the key concepts from her observation of the Dynamic Assessment and the Joint Problem Solving discussion. Many of the strategies that had been modelled by Rebecca during the assessment and highlighted during the Joint Problem Solving were evident in Nat's post-assessment. This is encouraging as some writers have suggested that the information shared following Dynamic Assessment can be difficult for teachers to link to intervention (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Yeomans, 2008), although others have challenged this view, (Freeman and Miller, 2001).

There are a number of features of the assessment studied in the case study which may account for the success with which the information from the assessment was linked to subsequent intervention.

During the Joint Problem Solving meeting and for the most part in the record of this meeting, Rebecca didn't use the language of Dynamic Assessment that EPs have previously complained makes the approach inaccessible to teachers (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000). For example although the term cognitive functions is used in the JPS record, this is defined as meaning thinking skills. The report doesn't use the terms 'mediated learning' or 'structural modifiability', although clearly some of the ideas are included in the report in everyday language. Yeomans' (2008) concern that mediated learning experiences are not readily available in schools is also not supported by this study. Nat's teaching style scored highly for components of MLE before and after the assessment, with some evidence of a further development of her mediation of transcendence and task regulation following Rebecca's involvement.

Interestingly many of Yeomans' practical suggestions for linking Dynamic Assessment to intervention were also in place in the assessment studied.

- Rebecca talked to Nat before the assessment, although this did not fulfill Yeoman's suggestion of establishing shared goals for the assessment. Perhaps the need for this step was overcome by the positive trusting relationship between the two women.
- Nat was present during the assessment with Bethany
- A face to face discussion took place after the assessment which allowed Rebecca to mediate the findings
- An intervention plan was constructed on the basis of this discussion

Following Rebecca's involvement, Nat used many of the strategies agreed as a result of the Dynamic Assessment, with 15 of the 17 agreed in evidence during the post-assessment observation. Given the methodology used, it is impossible to say for certain whether this observation is indicative of a change in Nat's approach, as the strategies were not a specific focus for the first observation. However it was possible to ascertain that some of the strategies agreed were already present in the first observation from notes taken at the time.

Scrutiny of these notes suggests that strategies present in the first observation included approaches such as providing a clear structure and rules for the task, but

did not include others such as encouraging and modelling systematic information gathering and exploration of the problem.

One way around this methodological limitation would have been to use video to create a permanent record of the two teaching sessions which could then have been analysed in more detail post assessment.

Comparison of the IEP before and after Rebecca's involvement also provided some support for the conclusion that changes had occurred in the SENCo's practice following the assessment. To accept this as evidence of impact of Dynamic Assessment however, we must accept the assumption that the content of the IEP was reflective of Nat's practice and vice versa. This can be established by comparing the pre-assessment IEP with the pre-assessment observation to see if there are links between the two and then to repeat this exercise with the post assessment IEP and observation.

Comparison of the pre-assessment IEP and observation suggested there was a link between the suggestions on the IEP and the SENCo's practice. Three of the five IEP targets were in evidence and a number of the resources suggested were used to support Bethany's learning. Where other resources were used in the session, these were directly comparable to the IEP, for instance cards with letter sounds on were substituted for magnetic letters.

Post-assessment there was also a clear link between the observation and the IEP. The majority of the strategies listed on the IEP were used and three of four of the IEP targets were in evidence in the teaching session.

This would suggest that Bethany's IEP can be taken as a relatively good indicator of changes in practice. Following Rebecca's involvement, the IEP included cognitive processes as a target for individual work, and many more strategies to support Bethany's learning and address her emotional responses to learning. This change was noted by both Nat and Rebecca and the link to the assessment and Joint Problem Solving discussion was acknowledged explicitly.

Impact on other members of staff

No comments were made about the wider outcomes of Dynamic Assessment for staff in the interviews with EPs. The before and after measures in my case study also focused only on the key member of staff working with the child and EP in school, therefore the possible impact on other members of staff (for instance the teacher or TA) can only be suggested from the SENCO's comments in the interview about how she intended to share her learning more widely. As this information cannot be triangulated, any conclusions drawn from the results must be seen to be tentative and in need of further research.

The interview with Nat suggested that she planned to involve other members of school staff by passing on her learning from the assessment to Bethany's class teacher and the teacher due to teach Bethany in the next academic year. Nat also

mentioned that she intended to talk to staff more widely about the approaches that would be used with Bethany as they would be useful for other children, and would be building similar strategies into IEPs more generally. These results suggest that where the key person in school plans to take their learning forward with others, Dynamic Assessment can have an impact on other staff and processes in the school, and presumably therefore a potential impact on other children.

 Overall my study therefore supports the proposition that

- Dynamic Assessment can impact on the practice and beliefs of adults supporting the child in school

There are a number of reservations that must be placed on this conclusion however due to the following additional methodological limitations.

- My observations and interpretations may have been biased by my desire to find positive outcomes of Dynamic Assessment. This could only have been overcome by the involvement of a second observer to add some reliability to the conclusions drawn.
- The impact of the assessment was explored relatively soon after Rebecca's involvement. Conclusions cannot therefore be drawn which suggest that any changes to beliefs or practice were long term.
- The impact of the assessment in the case study may have been due to my involvement rather than the efficacy of the approach per se. The presence of this limitation is supported by comments made by both the SENCo and EP

wondering aloud whether changes to the way Rebecca normally practised were due to my presence. Although this may be true to some extent, it is unlikely to account for the level of impact of the assessment and cannot account for the triangulation with the supporting interview responses.

Impact of Dynamic Assessment on the child or young person

Although my research did not explicitly research the impact of the approach on children being assessed, it is clear from the Case Study and interview responses that this is an area where Dynamic Assessment can result in positive outcomes, and is worthy of future further investigation. The need for this research is clear, as one EP reflected in the interview on the lack of research into the child's experience of and views about different types of assessment. To summarise the findings, there was evidence across the two phases that Dynamic Assessment can have the following outcomes for the child being assessed,

- Provides the child with information about their learning (increasing their metacognition)
- Allows the child to be part of a positive learning experience in which they are able to experience success
- Changes the child's beliefs about their ability and skills as a learner
- Gives the child an opportunity to share their views about learning

Limitations of the method

Many of the limitations of my method have been discussed in the sections above, stating in each case how the methodological issue should influence our interpretation of the results found. However, in addition the following issues explored earlier in the methodology section must be considered as having a possible impact:

Activity theory

The critique by authors such as Daniels (2001) and Peim (2009) that Activity Theory underplays the importance of the subject position was very much supported by my research.

My findings in both the interviews and the case study, were that EPs' experiences and beliefs were clearly articulated and subject to sociocultural influences. Similarities and differences were present between EPs and the decisions they ultimately reached about their practice. The data very much reinforced the idea that although EP practice is heavily influenced by the practical and cultural aspects of the service and local authority environment, and by the attitudes of schools they work in, it is dependent on personal choice. It possible that these cultural factors make it more or less likely that an EP will make a choice to work dynamically with children, but ultimately there are those that make this choice regardless.

I would also suggest that the contradictions in Dynamic Assessment practice highlighted in my research raise questions about the nature of contradictions and their relationship with the subject position. In many cases, the contradictions

appeared to exist within an aspect of practice or between two different areas as Engeström theorised as discussed in Chapters and 4, for example the assessment materials used by an EP were unsuitable for use with secondary age pupils. However, there also were times when the significance of these contradictions seemed to be mediated by the subject position. As an example one EP reflected on how, as a newly qualified EP, the use of Dynamic Assessment tools felt problematic given the cultural expectations of her schools. However as she developed a stronger sense of identity as an EP and more confidence in her decision-making, this contradiction though still present, was approached in a different way, and ultimately accepted and ignored.

This would suggest again, that the role of the individual should be seen as pivotal to the development of the activity overtime, and that should be given at least equal weight with the other positions in the literature.

Although Activity Theory provided a useful framework for my research, the fluidity of the components within the Activity Systems described by EPs and studied in my case study was analytically challenging.

From a methodological stance, the identification of themes across questions focused on different areas of the Dynamic Assessment system demonstrates the fluid nature of this organisational framework. This fluidity does create difficulties with categorisation at times.

I found it particularly difficult to differentiate between the rules influencing the practice of EPs and contradictions arising from practice. As an example, the limited availability of tools as determined by service budgets or EPs' knowledge of how to use them could be seen as a 'rule', however the difficulties arising from this lack of availability could be viewed as a contradiction. For this reason there may be some overlap in the 'rules' and 'contradictions' reported, or some mis-categorisation of ideas shared by EPs. This difficulty was also compounded by a lack of time to consider the interactions between EPs' Dynamic Assessment practice and other activity systems influencing and being influenced by this activity. As an example, Nat's admission that time was a constraint to following up from the Dynamic Assessment could have been usefully explored by considering her activity when interacting with a range of professionals supporting children with SEN.

I believe that asking additional questions about current issues in practice would also have supported the differentiation of contradictions and constraints. The questions used in my interviews meant that examples of contradictions and historicity could only be identified from comments made spontaneously by EPs. Asking the additional questions below may have overcome this limitation:

- What are the key issues you currently face in your Dynamic Assessment practice?
- How has your Dynamic Assessment practice changed over time?

Interviews

The interviews with the EPs in the two Local Authorities and during the case study, were not without their limitations. In a number of the interviews, the EPs were clearly anxious about giving the 'right' answer, despite assurances of there being none. In others, the anxiety came from the unfamiliar experience of being recorded on tape. In one case, this anxiety was shared when the recorder failed, and the notes I took for each interview needed to be used as the record of the discussion.

The fact that I was known to those I interviewed also created tensions as well as having advantages. At times it appeared as if EPs were being more open about their practice than they might be with an unfamiliar researcher, however at others I felt like their familiarity with my thoughts on Dynamic Assessment was influencing their answers to some degree, or what they felt important to tell me, or to omit. This would only have been exacerbated by my management role in the two Local Authorities at the time of the interviews and case study.

Case study

The limitations of the case study design methodology are discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, with specific reference to establishing internal and external validity. The emphasis on triangulation in my work means that where possible, concerns regarding internal validity have been addressed. However, external validity, or the degree to which the findings of my research can be generalised to other examples of Dynamic Assessment can only be established through the generation of testable theory. It is to this challenge I turn in my final chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Introduction

My research found that Dynamic Assessment is influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors and that the approach can result in positive outcomes. Although further research is needed to overcome the limitations of my method and replicate these results, tentative suggestions as to the meaning and implications of these findings for professional practice can and should be made.

In this concluding chapter I describe my theory regarding EP Dynamic Assessment Practice and the ways in which this might be tested by further research in the future. I also describe the implications of my findings for EPs choosing to use the approach in their work and my personal reflections on what this means for me as both a manager and a user of Dynamic Assessment.

Theory

Figure 4 depicts a Dynamic Assessment activity system based on the strongest findings from my research. Strong findings were those where either or both of the following were present,

- At least 50% of the EPs interviewed gave the response. The finding may also have been present in the case study
- The finding was present in the case study alone but was triangulated across data sources.

It is my belief that this activity system should be taken to indicate best practice for EPs *at the present time.* The interview responses describe practices and approaches which have survived professional reflection and growth over time. The triangulated case study findings have been linked to positive outcomes using a range of pre and post assessment measures. It should therefore be used as a starting point for reflection on current EP practice. Implications for EP practice.

The 'best practice' Dynamic Assessment activity system constructed from my research would suggest the following:

- When promoting and explaining Dynamic Assessment to clients, EPs should emphasise the useful information obtained from the approach including the child's strengths and difficulties, their approach to learning, affective factors impacting on their learning, the intervention needed and the change in performance brought about by this support

- EP services should provide a range of tools for EPs to use when carrying out Dynamic Assessment. These should include both published assessments from the LPAD and from David Tzuriel's battery, but also a range of toys which can be used dynamically.

- EPs require access to a range of training opportunities including experiences as trainees and then again when qualified. These opportunities should include opportunities to learn formally and informally with peers in the same service, and access to courses where they are available.

EPs' beliefs, experience for EP and child, provides information, informs intervention, alternative to psychometrics

TEP, inservice, Tzuriel/ Deutsch training, peer support, reading key texts

Tests from LPAD/ Tzuriel, Toys, Checklists

Information about strengths, approach to learning, difficulties, learning potential, affective factors, changes to planned/ actual way of working, beliefs of key adult, planned involvement of others

Tools

Training/ CPD

Focus on cognitive processes, different modalities and learning potential. Interactive, qualitative and mediational

Choice

Subject

Object

Outcomes

Less than ½ of individual casework

Proportion

Assessment, mediation, feedback, reciprocity, peer support, participation in consultation, readiness for change

Constraints

Rules

Community

Division of labour

Type of school

Time, materials, school and LA culture, statistical rigour, professionally demanding, skills knowledge and confidence

Supports

Mainstream, special

Age

Who

Difficulties

Social emotional and mental health, Language difficulties, learning difficulties, acquired brain injury

Training, culture, peers, working relationship with, observation by, and qualities of key adult

Pre-school
Primary
Secondary
All ages

Teacher
Child
Parent
TA
SENCo

238

Figure 4. Best practice Dynamic Assessment Activity System

- Service managers should be prepared to support EPs to use Dynamic Assessment as a valid alternative to standardised cognitive assessment and should be supportive of EPs in their discussions with other professionals and parents who may have specific cultural expectations around the provision of standardised quantitative data.

- The use of the approach with children with language difficulties should be promoted, particularly given concerns about the verbal demands of many standardised cognitive assessments

- Dynamic assessment should be viewed as offering a useful tool to use within a consultative model of practice. The assessment can be carried out jointly with or observed by the person concerned about the child, followed by a joint problem solving session to consider what has been learnt about the child's strengths and difficulties, what proved helpful and how this relates to the classroom.

- The involvement of adults observing the child during the Dynamic Assessment is an effective way to challenge beliefs about the child's ability and to model a mediational teaching style. Unless there are particular reasons why the involvement of other adults in the assessment is not appropriate (for instance it would constrain the child's performance in some way) this should be promoted as part of the normal way of carrying out this work.

- In order for possible cultural barriers to Dynamic Assessment practice to be overcome, services should be prepared to both recognise the importance of

their own support for the approach and to challenge cultural beliefs held by partners such as schools. This support and challenge allows individual psychologists to practice in the knowledge that they have the support of their managers and peers when working in more traditional school cultures.

- EPs should embrace their professional judgement and capacity for decision making and choice within their Dynamic Assessment practice. Effort, determination and creativity will be needed to find solutions to the barriers to using the approach.

- The time taken for EPs to develop the skills they need to carry out Dynamic Assessment should be recognised and supported through plans for CPD. A model of CPD which takes into account research about what kind of training and follow up activities are effective should underpin a whole service approach to Dynamic Assessment. Within this approach, the importance of peer support in developing practitioner skills should be recognised.

- There is a clear need for EPs to develop a wider range of tools for both assessing children and recording their findings. Sharing ideas via professional networks and forums both within and between services will be crucial if learning across the profession is to happen effectively.

- It will also be important for EPs to develop tools which allow them to record their observations and thoughts in some way whilst simultaneously leading the assessment.

Personal reflections

During my research I was struck by the differences in practice of EPs using Dynamic Assessment. At one level there were strong similarities; the tools, the community, the division of labour and an understanding of Dynamic Assessment as an interactive endeavour with the child were widely shared. However the level of understanding about mediated learning, cognitive modifiability and the essential phases of Dynamic Assessment differed between EPs, as did confidence working within an interpretative paradigm. Many of the EPs acknowledged the gaps in their understanding however, supporting previous findings from the research carried out by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) which showed that EPs varied in their confidence levels with Dynamic Assessment and also recognised the need for further training. The range of practice expertise found in my research paralleled my professional observations of EPs using Dynamic Assessment.

The EPs participating in the research were representative of a broad spectrum of experience confidence and motivation to work with Dynamic Assessment. Some had worked hard over time to develop their practice and were leading the way in terms of adapting their approach to be as motivating as possible for children and achieving good understanding on the part of supporting adults. Others, it appeared were at the start of their journey with Dynamic Assessment, practising tentatively and with areas of misunderstanding, sometimes mindfully and sometimes unaware of the difference in the depth of their understanding to others. This is not surprising given the breadth of the EP role. It is perhaps naïve to believe that all EPs either are or could be

experts in every special educational need or school context they encounter, or likewise with every age. However, EPs are required by the Health and Care Professions' Council (2016) to keep their knowledge and skills up to date and only practice in the areas in which they have sufficient skills knowledge and experience. The issue therefore may be one of not whether EPs need to become more skilled if they are choosing to use Dynamic Assessment, but what being more skilled looks like and how to achieve this.

I would also argue that the range of practice expertise seen with Dynamic Assessment is not limited to this approach. In my professional experience, consultation (Wagner, 2000) is an area of practice in which EPs also differ in expertise and confidence. Consultation is also a complex, multi-faceted activity which, it is argued, can result in different outcomes dependent on the clarity of the underpinning theoretical framework (Sheridan, 1996). Kennedy et al (2009) recognise this situation and propose a curriculum from 'initial professional training to the development of a high level of consultant expertise' (p.610). A similar curriculum for Dynamic Assessment would be welcomed.

At present however no such curriculum exists and further there are no professional standards for the use of Dynamic Assessment which could be used as a benchmark for good practice. The British Psychological Society (2016) has published a Code of Good Practice for Psychological Testing, however this is biased towards psychometric testing rather than other methods of assessing cognition. Likewise the

society's Test User: Educational Ability and Attainment qualification focuses on the core skills needed for standardised testing rather than Dynamic Assessment.

The onus is therefore at present on individual professionals and their employers to ensure fitness to practice. As discussed previously, the importance of effective CPD which includes peer learning and coached feedback will be essential if this quality assurance exercise is to demonstrate consistently strong and informed practice across EPs using Dynamic Assessment. It may also be appropriate to develop agreed standards within the profession about the use of Dynamic Assessment which could sit alongside or within the BPS Code of Good Practice.

Further it may be the case that the profession needs to move further towards greater accountability in demonstrating outcomes of their intervention as a matter of routine rather than exception. Dunsmuir et al (2009) offered an example of an approach which could be used by EPs known as Target Monitoring and Evaluation based on the Goal Attainment Scaling method described by Frederickson in 2002. Beyond this there has been little discussion of evaluating impact in the professional literature and certainly no approach is used consistently across services (Lowther, 2013). This situation is significantly different to many Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services who routinely use Routine Outcome Measures such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) to contribute to national data sets, (British Association for Counselling and Therapy, 2013).

At a personal level, as a user of Dynamic Assessment my research findings have convinced me of the need to embed the approach fully within a consultation model by

inviting school staff to observe the assessment process in my future practice. This extends my current approach in which the assessment is carried out alone with the child in all but a very small number of cases (usually with very young children or those with challenging behaviour or communication difficulties) followed by a joint problem-solving meeting. Despite my commitment to this, the prospect makes me anxious, as my assessment skills will be on show in a way that is unfamiliar to me. As a result, the encouragement I will offer to EPs in my service to do the same, will certainly be accompanied by empathy should they prove to be reluctant.

Future research

This study has identified that there are a number of sociocultural factors impacting on EPs' Dynamic Assessment practice and that the approach can result in positive outcomes, including changes in beliefs and practices of those working closely with children in schools.

Wherever possible, I drew conclusions for this research by triangulating the findings within the case study, and between the case study data and the findings from the interviews with EPs. I also highlighted findings which existed either across both Local Authorities and those where there was a considerable difference in findings, suggesting a specific cultural effect. Despite these measures to maximise the validity of my findings, the limitations of a single case study design and small sample size in the interview phase means that future research is needed to investigate whether these findings are replicated in other Local Authorities. This is particularly true of the focus on the outcomes of Dynamic Assessment as the direction of investigation must

now be on linking the conditions in which Dynamic Assessment takes place, with the outcomes achieved, so that practice can be refined to achieve the best results for children and young people.

I would suggest that with further work to demonstrate the outcomes of Dynamic Assessment, the results of this study could be replicated. The evidence from my research and future studies could contribute to a 'Realistic Evaluation' based on Pawson and Tilley's (1997) approach. This evaluation could identify the mechanism for changes brought about following Dynamic Assessment and the context under which this mechanism is most likely to occur, resulting in clear evidence based practice guidance for EPs.

One finding from my work which requires further exploration as it was particularly unexpected was the lack of emphasis on affective factors by EPs during the interviews. The case study found that the provision of information about affective factors impacting on progress was an outcome of the assessment, and strategies for how to address the issues observed were included in the Joint Planning Meeting. It may be that research to replicate the findings of my work show that the Case Study was an anomaly, and Dynamic Assessment does not typically focus on this area of children's functioning. If however, further research shows this focus is usually included in the approach, it would be of interest to explore with EPs how important they think this information is for teachers, and how else they might gather this information if not through a Dynamic Assessment.

The methodological limitations in my study in relation to asking questions about the amount of individual assessment and Dynamic Assessment used, constrained the confidence with which my findings in this area can be viewed. Previous research has been equally if differently limited. This would suggest that if there is a need to know how much EPs use Dynamic Assessment, there is a need for robust further research in this area. One approach which may overcome the difficulties of my own and previous research, would be to use an event sampling methodology where EPs use diaries or calendars to record their assessment work over a given period, giving a more accurate representation of how EPs spend their time.

Many of the EPs stated that they used Dynamic Assessment as it provided an ethical alternative to standardised cognitive assessment, however as one EP commented,

> '[It would] be interesting to see if the children perceived any difference between the approach that was more dynamic.'

This comment made me question my assumptions about Dynamic Assessment and my long held belief (in common with many of the other EPs) that it represents a more pleasant experience for the child. Although my clinical experience of Dynamic Assessment has generally been very positive, there have been times when encouraging children to work through their difficulties to a shared solution has been challenging to me and I have occasionally felt it would be easier to 'give up' and allow them to stop when they have felt 'out of their comfort zone'. The nature of Dynamic Assessment means however that within limits as a psychologist you do persist under these circumstances and it has always been possible to mediate the child to

solutions which leave them feeling some success. Whether the overall experience is more pleasurable however I am not sure, and is pleasure the key experience we are looking for when trying to model a new way of learning to a child?

I agree therefore that it would, as a starting point, be interesting to see if the child perceives any difference between the two approaches, but I would also be interested to see whether these differences confirmed or further challenged my beliefs about the kinds of experiences I would like children to have when they work with me. This research could incorporate a repeated measures design where children were assessed using both a standardised test and a dynamic approach, and then their views sought about their experiences of each. This research design would be both practically and ethically acceptable as it represents the approach taken by a number of EPs in their clinical practice when they investigate a child's cognitive skills and approach to learning using a range of approaches.

Finally, many of the Southdale EPs mentioned having received training in or using the CAP as a tool during Dynamic Assessment. Little research has been carried out to date looking at how the CAP is being used or its effectiveness in solving some of the contradictions identified by EPs between the multiple roles they are expected to play during Dynamic Assessment. Research of this kind would again contribute to the growth of understanding of professional practice and solutions to the challenges posed by the adoption of the Dynamic Assessment approach.

Concluding statement

Dynamic Assessment is an approach which can yield highly useful information for adults working with children in schools. As well as adding to understanding of a child's strengths, difficulties and approach to learning, the approach can provide insight into what strategies help the child to learn more effectively.

When used within a consultative approach where the adult working with the child is an integral part of the assessment process, this increased understanding can result in changes to the way the member of staff thinks about and works with the child, and potentially how they work with other children too.

The Dynamic Assessment practice of different EPs share many significant features and there is a great deal of similarity between individuals both within and across authorities. There are however aspects of practice which constrain EPs' practice, and there is an urgent need to develop the approach to be fit for purpose and the context that EPs work in, as a collaborative venture across the profession. Only with this shared endeavour will the full potential of the approach be realised and in so doing, have the maximum impact for children and young people.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary of Dynamic Assessment tests and terms

	Description
Learning Propensity Assessment device (LPAD)	
16 word memory test	A test in which the child is required to memorise a list of 16 words with repeated exposure. It assesses verbal memory and the child's ability to discover and use an organisational strategy which will improve their performance.
Complex Figure Drawing Task (CFDT)	A test in which the child is required to reproduce and recall a complex visual figure with 18 elements. It assesses the child's visual organisation and memory skills.
Organisation of dots	A test in which the child is required to organise an unstructured set of dots into a series of geometric figures. It assesses the child's visual organisation skills and ability to overcome distraction.
Tests designed by David Tzuriel	
Children's Analogical Thinking modifiability test (CATM)	A test for younger children in which they are required to categorise 18 coloured blocks in 3 shapes and 2 sizes and then solve a series of visual analogies using the shapes.
Children's Seriational Thinking Modifiability test (CSTM)	A test in which child is required to put a series of cards in order depicting objects which vary according to size, number of objects and shade of colour.
Cognitive Modifiability Battery (CMB)	A test consisting of blocks of various colours sizes and shapes and boards on which the blocks can be arranged. The battery consists of a number of subtests which focus on the child's ability to put objects in order, reproduce patterns, solve analogies, recognise and continue sequences and recall visual information.
Seria-think	A test which consists of a set of cylinders of varying lengths and a wooden block with holes of varying depth. The child's task is to insert the cylinders such that they form a row of equal length, increasing length and decreasing length. This test requires computational skills and control of impulsivity.

Other tests/ approaches	
Learning potential test for minorities (LEM)	This test is designed for Key Stage 1 children from Ethnic Minorities. There are five subtests: Classification, Word-Object Association Recognition, Word-Object Association Naming, Number Series, Syllable Recall and Figurative Analogies. Instructions are given non-verbally, although the subtests are verbal and non-verbal.
Pre-school learning assessment device (PLAD)	The PLAD is an approach that is appropriate for children between the ages of three and five.
Let's Play (Bunny Bag)	A Dynamic Assessment procedure for assessing the needs of preschool children with complex communication needs. The Bunny Bag consists of a range of toys for children between 6 months and 4 and a half years old.
Other	
Cognitive Assessment Profile (CAP)	The CAP provides a structured framework for identifying cognitive and affective factors impacting on a child's performance. It uses rating scales to support EPs and teachers to understand the child's strengths and difficulties and plan intervention accordingly using a consultation approach.
Deficient cognitive functions	Underdeveloped cognitive skills or processes which act as a barrier to thinking and learning.
Mediated learning Experience (MLE)	Mediated Learning Experience refers to an interaction between a child and a more knowledgeable other, in which the latter deliberately guides the child's thinking and understanding. The key features of a mediated learning experience are that the child is helped to see how their learning relates to other experiences (transcendence), that the mediator intentionally tries to influence the behaviour of the child (intentionality) and that the child is supported to understand what is important in the situation (meaning).

Appendix 2: Data collection tools used in Phase 1

Appendix 2a: Interview Schedule

Introduction: Thanks for volunteering, changing your mind is OK at any point.

Phase of research: Doctoral thesis about DA – EP practice and outcomes – multiple case study design. Need to investigate practice in service broadly – diversity of practice.

Reporting: May write up – either internally as part of later thesis, or publish at some point or other, may form part of thinking process.

Confidentiality: Your responses are confidential, may quote you if you are happy, although won't attribute anything to you, or talk to anyone else about you having been involved in the research if you don't want me to.
-Are you happy to be quoted anonymously?
-Are you happy for others in the service to know you have been involved in the research?

Ethical dilemmas: Not carrying out this work as part of my senior EP role – I'm not interested in quality issues or judging practice. Looking at it as both a researcher and a Glos EP with an interest in the diversity of DA practice in our service.

Current research: Interview is about your DA practice, not looking for any particular answers. Semi-structured interview based on Activity Theory which seeks to understand things by looking at the social, cultural and historical context in which they occur. Also going to use a bit of PCP at the beginning to elaborate on what you mean by DA.

Any questions?

Research Questions

What do you mean when you talk about dynamic assessment? Use PCP technique to help with this –

> - With DA at the top, write down a number of different ways in which you work with children individually (Anywhere from around 5 to 7)
> - Pick any three of your list, where two have something in common and the third differs in this respect
> - Write down on the left side of the sheet how the two are the same and on the right side of the sheet how the third is different
> - Repeat this process a number of times until you have about 8 pairs of constructs written down on your piece of paper
> - Mark on the scales for each pair of constructs where you see DA

Are there any other ways that you would describe DA that we haven't discussed through this exercise?

1. What is achieved when you carried out a dynamic assessment?

2. Need to understand more about you as an individual EP who uses EPs:
   -What training have you had in DA?
   -What other CPD have you taken part in regarding DA?
   -What proportion/percentage of your casework involves working with children individually?
   -In what proportion of *this* casework do you use DA?
   -Why do you choose to use DA in your casework generally and in specific cases?

3. What supports and constrains your use of DA?

4. Who else is involved when you use DA?

5. How is the work shared between those involved?

6. What do you use when you use DA with pupils? (Prompt if needed: assessments, record sheets, reporting, visual resources etc)

7. Anything else that you think is relevant about the way you use DA that we haven't discussed?

Conclude

Any questions? Thank you.

Appendix 2b. Supplementary 'community' questionnaire

Please can you indicate who is involved when you use Dynamic Assessment:

Parent	
Child	
Teacher	
TA	
EP	
SENCo	
Outreach worker	
Other adult in school (please specify)	
Other professional(s) (please specify)	
Other EPs	
Managers within the EPS	
Other (please specify)	

Please indicate whether you use Dynamic Assessment in the following types of schools:

Mainstream	
Special	

Please indicate whether you use Dynamic Assessment with the following age groups:

Pre-school	
Primary	
Secondary	

Please indicate whether you use Dynamic Assessment when a child has:

BESD	
Language difficulties	
EAL	
SLD	
ABI	
Other (please specify)	

Appendix 3: Data collection tools used in the case study

Appendix 3a: Pre-assessment SENCo questionnaire

Completed by: Role: Date:

Please complete the following questions. I will ask you to complete the questions again when we review ……………………'s progress.

1. Why do you think…………………is experiencing difficulties with learning?

2. What do you think you could do to help …………………learn better?

3. To what extent do you think that ………..……..'s ability to learn can be improved? (Please put a ring around the answer that describes your view most closely)

Not at all……Just a little……Somewhat……..Quite a lot…….A great deal

4. Why did you choose to answer Question 3 as you did?

Appendix 3b: Post assessment SENCo questionnaire

Completed by: Role: Date:

1. Why do you think…………………is experiencing difficulties with learning?

2. What do you think you could do to help …………………learn better?

3. To what extent do you think that ……….……..'s ability to learn can be improved? (Please put a ring around the answer that describes your view most closely)

Not at all……Just a little……Somewhat……..Quite a lot…….A great deal

4. Why did you choose to answer Question 3 as you did?

Appendix 3c: Observation schedule - SENCo working with child (pre-assessment)

Date:	Time:	
Name of adult:	**Job title:**	**Child's name:**

Information about task: (e.g. subject, learning objectives/ aims for session, child's previous knowledge or experience of content)

Concrete tools used to support child's learning:

Focus on non-intellectual factors: **Direct references/responses from adult during session (to be checked out with adult after the session):**

Aspect of MLE	Observations (E.g. Present? Simple? Elaborated? Related to process or principle that may be internalised by child? Consistent?)	Rating
Intentionality Intentionally engaging & maintaining child's involvement in a way that promotes self-regulation of attention. Includes sharing of purpose of activity.		
Meaning Elaborating upon child's perceptions in a way that helps the child know what to notice/ignore and now to go about noticing/ignoring. May explain why some things are important.		
Transcendence Promoting child's ability to make connections among current future and past experiences. May elicit causal and inferential connections between events from the child.		
Sharing (joint regard) Physically/mentally attempting to 'see' things from the child's point of view. Includes emphasising the 'we-ness' of a situation. May also include empathic comments helping the child to articulate thoughts and reactions.		
Sharing (of experiences) Telling the child about a thought or experience the mediator had/has that relate to the current experience		
Task regulation Manipulating the task to facilitate mastery by the child, whilst promoting strategic and planning thinking in the child		
Praise/encouragement Verbal/non verbal communication that the child did a good job. May be related to aspects of the child's performance that appeared helpful.		
Challenge Maintenance of the task within the child's ZPD, neither too difficult nor too easy. May include feedback to child about difficulty of task and need for scaffolding.		
Psychological differentiation Maintenance of idea that role of mediator is to facilitate child's learning, welcoming their efforts and prioritising process over product if/when necessary.		
Contingent responsivity Responding to the child's cues and signals in a timely and appropriate way.		
Affective involvement Showing warmth, enjoyment and caring in the presence of the child.		
Change Communicating to the child that she has improved or changed in some way (related to process and/or product), compared to the starting point. May include encouraging child to say what changes they have noticed.		
Reciprocity Level of receptivity of the child to the mediation offered by the adult.		

Comments made by Teacher / TA about how typical session was of their usual way of working with the child + how successful approach was in meeting their aims/objectives
(To be completed after session)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Neither successful nor unsuccessful	Successful	Very successful

Why did they choose that answer?

How typical was the session of how they would normally work with the child?

If untypical how would they typically have worked?

Other comments: (To be completed after session – e.g. balance of developing strengths to correcting weaknesses, focus of mediational comments relating to cognitive functions, how typical was child's behaviour/learning during the session)

Appendix 3d: Observation schedule - SENCo working with child (post-assessment)

Date:		Time:	
Name of adult:	**Job title:**		**Child's name:**

Information about task: (e.g. subject, learning objectives/ aims of the session, child's previous knowledge or experience of content)

Concrete tools used to support child's learning:

Focus on non-intellective factors: **Direct references made by and behaviours carried out by adult during session** (interpretations to be checked out with teacher following session)

Specific recommendations/strategies arising from assessment:	Evidence of use?	Examples

Aspect of MLE	Observations (E.g. Present? Simple? Elaborated? Related to process or principle that may be internalised by child? Consistent?)	Rating
Intentionality Intentionally engaging & maintaining child's involvement in a way that promotes self-regulation of attention. Includes sharing of purpose of activity.		
Meaning Elaborating upon child's perceptions in a way that helps the child know what to notice/ignore and now to go about noticing/ignoring. May explain why some things are important.		
Transcendence Promoting child's ability to make connections among current future and past experiences. May elicit causal and inferential connections between events from the child.		
Sharing (joint regard) Physically/mentally attempting to 'see' things from the child's point of view. Includes emphasising the 'we-ness' of a situation. May also include empathic comments helping the child to articulate thoughts and reactions.		
Sharing (of experiences) Telling the child about a thought or experience the mediator had/has that relate to the current experience		
Task regulation Manipulating the task to facilitate mastery by the child, whilst promoting strategic and planning thinking in the child		
Praise/encouragement Verbal/non verbal communication that the child did a good job. May be related to aspects of the child's performance that appeared helpful.		
Challenge Maintenance of the task within the child's ZPD, neither too difficult nor too easy. May include feedback to child about difficulty of task and need for scaffolding.		
Psychological differentiation Maintenance of idea that role of mediator is to facilitate child's learning, welcoming their efforts and prioritising process over product if/when necessary.		
Contingent responsivity Responding to the child's cues and signals in a timely and appropriate way.		
Affective involvement Showing warmth, enjoyment and caring in the presence of the child.		
Change Communicating to the child that she has improved or changed in some way (related to process and/or product), compared to the starting point. May include encouraging child to say what changes they have noticed.		
Reciprocity Level of receptivity of the child to the mediation offered by the adult.		

Comments made by Teacher / TA about how typical session was of their usual way of working with the child + how successful approach was in meeting their aims/objectives
(To be completed after session)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Neither successful nor unsuccessful	Successful	Very successful

Why did they choose that answer?

How typical was the session of how they would normally work with the child?

If untypical how would they typically have worked?

Other comments: (To be completed after session – e.g. balance of developing strengths to correcting weaknesses, focus of mediational comments relating to cognitive functions, how typical was child's behaviour/learning during the session)

Appendix 3e: Observation schedule - EP and child during Dynamic Assessment

Date:	EP:

Information about tests/tasks set: (name, description of steps in test/task administration, standardisation used)

Concrete tools used: (eg test materials, recording, checklists, tools to support child's learning etc)

Focus on non-intellective factors: **Direct references made by EP and behaviour observed** (interpretations to be checked out with EP following assessment)

Aspect of MLE	Observations (E.g. Present? Simple? Elaborated? Related to process or principle that may be internalised by child? Consistent?)	Rating
Intentionality Intentionally engaging & maintaining child's involvement in a way that promotes self-regulation of attention. Includes sharing of purpose of activity.		
Meaning Elaborating upon child's perceptions in a way that helps the child know what to notice/ignore and now to go about noticing/ignoring. May explain why some things are important.		
Transcendence Promoting child's ability to make connections among current future and past experiences. May elicit causal and inferential connections between events from the child.		
Sharing (joint regard) Physically/mentally attempting to 'see' things from the child's point of view. Includes emphasising the 'we-ness' of a situation. May also include empathic comments helping the child to articulate thoughts and reactions.		
Sharing (of experiences) Telling the child about a thought or experience the mediator had/has that relate to the current experience		
Task regulation Manipulating the task to facilitate mastery by the child, whilst promoting strategic and planning thinking in the child		
Praise/encouragement Verbal/non verbal communication that the child did a good job. May be related to aspects of the child's performance that appeared helpful.		
Challenge Maintenance of the task within the child's ZPD, neither too difficult nor too easy. May include feedback to child about difficulty of task and need for scaffolding.		
Psychological differentiation Maintenance of idea that role of mediator is to facilitate child's learning, welcoming their efforts and prioritising process over product if/when necessary.		
Contingent responsivity Responding to the child's cues and signals in a timely and appropriate way.		
Affective involvement Showing warmth, enjoyment and caring in the presence of the child.		
Change Communicating to the child that she has improved or changed in some way (related to process and/or product), compared to the starting point. May include encouraging child to say what changes they have noticed.		
Reciprocity Level of receptivity of the child to the mediation offered by the adult.		

Others involved during assessment (with respective roles)

Comments made by EP about how typical dynamic assessment was of their usual way of working:
(To be completed after assessment)

Other comments: (To be completed after assessment)

Appendix 3f: Observation schedule - EP feedback

Case study:	EP:	Date:	Present:

Actions taken by EP:
Explanation given by EP of approach/key concepts:

Observations fed back from assessment (including cognitive functions, mediation and non-intellective factors)

Suggestions made re follow up in the classroom (+ how identified)

Questions asked of others present re:
Validating observations/interpretations:

Strategies in the classroom:

Other

283

Actions taken by others: S=SENCo T=teacher TA=teaching assistant P=parent/carer
Questions asked

Suggestions made

Validation/contradiction of EP observations/interpretations/suggestions

Offering own interpretations

Other

Tools used during feedback (e.g. to support understanding or record discussion)

Future steps agreed (including dates if appropriate)

Appendix 3g: Interview schedule: SENCo (Post assessment)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This part of my research (including the observation of you working with X, the IEP and the questionnaire that you are going to fill in) is about looking at what difference if any the EP being involved made.

What I'm going to ask you to do is reflect on the EP's involvement to this point and we'll try and unpick what its impact on you has been and what aspects of the work have been particularly helpful or unhelpful. There are definitely no right or wrong answers here – we are very much exploring what happens rather than looking to see if you've done something specific, so please try not to feel anxious. Also although I have ideas about what the EP may have done at various points, I'm trying to not presume I'm right if that makes sense, so if some of the questions seem a bit straightforward please forgive me. There's also quite a lot of questions so we'll get started, but hopefully most will be fairly easy to answer.

So if we recap…………(summarise and check out EP involvement in general terms during Dynamic Assessment).

Questions

1. During the assessment itself can you describe to me your understanding of what the EP and X did together and why? How do you know?

2. What happened after the assessment? Can you describe what happened in the meeting between you and the EP?

3. What kind of follow up have you had from the EP since the assessment? (Either in writing or discussion). Can you tell me a little bit about that?

4. What did you do after the assessment/ after receiving any paperwork or follow up?

5. How (if at all) have you shared the information from the assessment with other members of staff working with her or her parents?

6. What (if anything) did you learn about X as a result of the assessment?

7. How (if at all) have your beliefs about X changed as a result of the assessment?

8. What (if any) difference has the assessment made to the way you work with or do things with X?

9. Have there been any other changes as a result of the assessment? (Prompt for instance the support she is given, parental involvement, responses from members of staff etc)

10. What (if anything) did you find helpful about the way the EP worked?

11. What (if anything) did you find unhelpful or less helpful about the way the EP worked?

12. What (if anything) would you have changed about the whole process? What makes you say that?

13. Is there anything about working in this school at this time that has made a difference to the impact the assessment has had on you? (Prompt: policies, the way staff generally are, what the school is currently working on etc)

14. Is there anything about you personally that has made a difference to the impact the assessment has had on you? (Prompt: beliefs, experiences, the way you typically work etc)

15. Can you identify anything else that might have influenced or be influencing the way you have responded to the assessment?

Any questions

Appendix 3h: Interview schedule: EP (Post assessment)

1. Why did you choose to use Dynamic Assessment in this case?

2. What were you hoping to find out?

3. What were you hoping would happen as a result of the assessment?

4. Did you do any preparation with the school before the assessment about what you were going to do?

5. Why did you choose to use the test materials and tasks that you did?

6. How effective did you find them in finding out about the child?

7. (If appropriate) You involved xxxx in the assessment. Why did you choose to do that?

8. Did xxxx play the role you had in mind during the assessment?

9. When you did your follow up why did you chose to do it in the way you did?

10. What were you hoping the outcomes of that follow up would be?

11. How effective do you think the follow up was in this case?

12. Thinking about the assessment as a whole, what factors contributed to its successes for you?

13. Were there factors which you think constrained or were a barrier to the assessment in any way?

14. Have you got any idea about what the impact of the assessment has been so far?

15. What would your plan be for what to do next with this case if anything?

16. Is there anything about the assessment that on reflection occurs to you?

Appendix 3i: Mediated Learning Experience Rating Scale (Lidz, 1991)

[Due to copyright protection, the form is redacted. Please refer to the original source for information.]

Form 3.1

Lidz, C.S. (2003). Early Childhood Assessment. NY: Wiley.
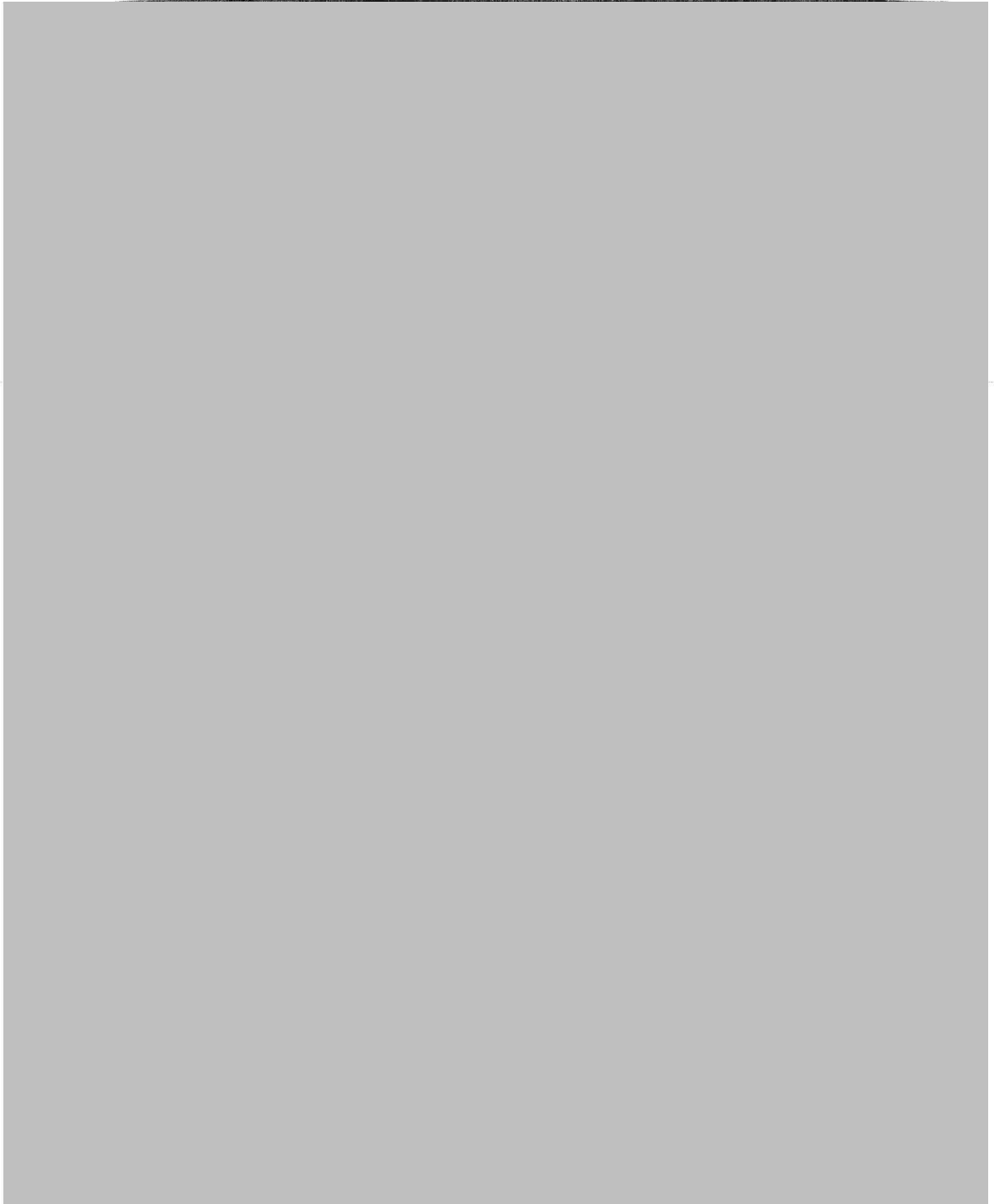
Form 3.1 (*continued*)

Form 3.1 (*continued*)

Lidz, C.S. (2003). Early Childhood Assessment. NY:Wiley.

Form 3.1 (*continued*)

Lidz, C.S. (2003). Early Childhood Assessment. NY:Wiley.

Form 3.1 (*continued*)

Lidz, C.S. (2003). Early Childhood Assessment. NY:Wiley.
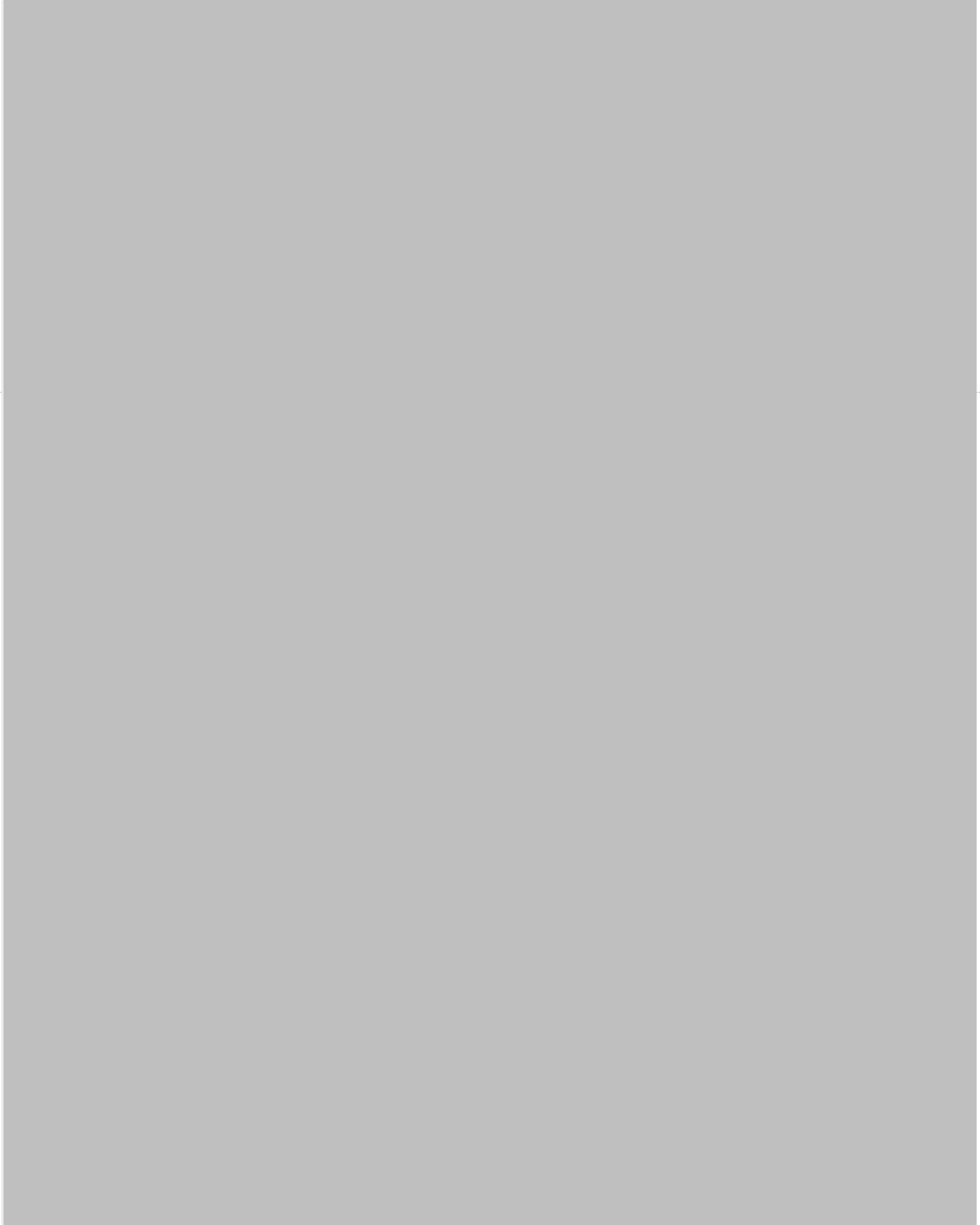
Appendix 4: Sample interview transcript

Interviewer: Just looking at that, is there any other way or any other ways that you would describe an dynamic assessment that you haven't touched on there?
Respondent: What I haven't touched on is about how it looks at where the gaps are. I guess that sort of comes into strategy. But in an opposite of being summative I scrubbed out summative, I think if I'd had summative or an opposite of summative would be filling in the gaps somehow for looking at gaps. I don't think there's anything else.
Interviewer: If you were describing it to someone else who didn't know what it is, say to a teacher who never encountered it before is there any other words or concepts that you would use which you haven't?
Respondent: There probably are but I can't…
Interviewer: If they come to you, or it may well be that there aren't, that's fine, just say 'oh, coming back to that page one, that's fine, I'll leave that there for you to think about as we go. When you carry out a dynamic assessment, what is achieved?
Respondent: What is achieved? From my perspective or the kid's perspective?
Interviewer: From I suppose your own and the children's.
Respondent: I think from a child's perspective they get to do things they've probably never done before, which sometimes can be quite fun, sometimes can be quite threatening or challenging, but in the main I would try and make it quite enjoyable I suppose. From my perspective I get to look at difficulties that either somebody has suggested that they're having or that I might hypothesise that they are having, using what I think are quite an interesting set of tools.
Interviewer: Interesting for you or for whom?
Respondent: Oh for me, mine. And also interesting to show back to a teacher how the child has performed with a totally different set of tools really. The other thing I

think you get is you start to make a relationship with a child because of the way you're interacting with them and personally I get very, very frustrated administering tests where I can't help them, where I can't support their thinking, where I can't cue them, where I can't scaffold and if I can do those things in the context of the dynamic assessment I think I get a better performance out of a child and the child is more willing to, not cooperate, just I think it's easier to create a climate where they can have a go if you are questioning them and scaffolding for them and cueing them and seeing where it is they need those scaffolds rather than trying not to indicate that they've got yet another one wrong, which just drives me crazy and I find very difficult because I wonder how a child goes away from this after they really know they've got so many wrong.

Interviewer: I can see where you're coming from.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Right, what I'd like to do is understand a little bit more about you as an individual who uses Dynamic Assessment really, so what training have you had?

Respondent: I had a, about three or four days Dynamic Assessment training from Ruth Deutsch, which we had as a whole service in xxxxx BoroughHer sidekick Michelle, can't remember her name, trained with me. I think they work together in Haringey or somewhere like that.

Interviewer: And how long ago was that?

Respondent: How long ago was the training I had? I was just about to go on maternity leave with Luke so five years, so I hardly used it really. I used it…

Interviewer: Right, so since then…

Respondent: We had the training in about the May, and I went off in July so I spent about 3 months, kind of using it, you know everyone in the service got a real urge to go off and use everything she'd given us. And then I went on maternity leave, then I thought, can I pick it up when I came here. Would I remember what I was doing?

Interviewer: And since then you've been trying it out…
Respondent: I have, I've been trying it out using bits and pieces.
Interviewer: And when you went on maternity leave, that's when you had a gap…
Respondent: And next came to work here. And obviously I've only got a certain repertoire of things. I am sure there are other things, like I've got that recent book and it seems to have lots of other things in it that are referred to that I don't know about.
Interviewer: The Haywood and Lidz one?
Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: Have you read that then?
Respondent: I've read bits of it. I've read the early years bit, because I was thinking about it in relation to xxxx. I've used it with one child in xxxx and I've used it with two children who are xxxx children but I've used it when I've seen them in schools. I felt more able to do it not in the xxxx context.
Interviewer: That's interesting.
Respondent: Yes it is and I'm aware of that. The child I did use it with at xxxx it was a disaster. We ended up with the fifteen bricks all over the room. But he is a very disturbed child; he just chucked everything around the room followed by his shoes and socks [laughs] while I hid in the corner. No, he just went loop the loop and started to bang them around and throw them.
Interviewer: [Laughs] I'd have loved to see that.
Respondent: I just pushed it further than he could really manage.
Interviewer: So what tipped him?
Respondent: Making him do something he didn't want to do or making him do something full stop. That you directed as opposed to him.
Interviewer: So directing his play and intervening in his play…
Respondent: And all I'd done was give him the bricks, I hadn't even directed him to do anything with them. I just said 'have a look at these bricks'…[makes sound of something whizzing through the air.]
Interviewer: You're a very pushy EP, [both laugh].
Respondent: God, the door's not even open [laughs].
Interview: Is there any other CPD that you've undertaken.

Respondent: No not re Dynamic Assessment no. I'm trying to think, a bit later I think we had a service afternoon where we all came back together and talked about what we'd used so far and at that point people had started writing reports and had kind of stock little paragraphs that they used to explain certain tests and we pooled all of that and someone wrote a document with 'this is a good way of explaining this test' and 'this is a good way of introducing that' and I use that a lot in reporting.

Interviewer: And you did that on a whole service level?

Respondent: We did that as a whole service after we'd been using it for a couple of months. Again it was before I left, so I've got a little document that goes 'these are good words to report, which I find really useful and was really glad I hung onto.

Interviewer: Are you using them now?

Respondent: Yeh, I'm using them now.

Interviewer: So they exist in terms of written paragraphs that you refer to?

Respondent: Yeh, yeh. So if anyone wanted those it would be absolutely fine.

Interviewer: What proportion of your casework involves working with children individually? Not just Dynamic Assessment but any sit down time or kneel down time with the child, what proportion of your casework involves doing that?

Respondent: That's quite a difficult question because of xxxx. Although I would say when I'm observing at xxxx I'm sitting down playing what they're playing. Sitting on the floor building, but I'll be in the middle of a classroom rather than out of a classroom. Or sitting at a table threading, but not necessarily in an individual assessment context. They don't always want to work like that those children.

Interviewer: Do you define that as a way of working with a child individually?

Respondent: Er yeh. It's kind of individual work and I would report that.

Interviewer: So including that, what kind of proportion of your casework do you think?

Respondent: Ah, at least half if not more. Maybe more than half.

Interviewer: And of that individual casework where you are working individually with a child, how much of that, what proportion of that activity involves Dynamic Assessment?

Respondent: I would say that working with…in my head I have separated out the Battledown children from the other children, if I was just thinking about everyone else, if I was doing an individual assessment of any child, I would throw in a Dynamic

Assessment test almost invariably. The only child this term where I haven't done one thing with individually was that child at Glenfall. That just wasn't in the equation at all.
Interviewer: So that's a high proportion of the work outside xxxx?
Respondent: Yeh. Then when I think about the xxxx children that I've worked with individually, three of them I've definitely used it with, so I'd say it is a high proportion. I'd say almost all of them, say 90%. I would generally throw in something.
Interviewer: Why do you choose to use Dynamic Assessment generally and in specific cases?
Respondent: I think it provides a very obvious view of how a child approaches tasks and also tasks that are quite different from anything they've ever done.
Interviewer: What is it about that, that makes you choose to use it? Because some people might say, well it's a novel task so you're not going to see something here. What is it about it being different that appeals to you?
Respondent: Um, I don't know. It just, sometimes if you just give the child the kind of task that they do all the time in class, or that they know they are going to fail at, they'll approach it in a less willing way I guess. Sometimes children are more willing to approach a task they've never seen before. Some aren't. But often those children are afraid to approach anything; they're so terrified of failing. For instance I saw a child last week and what they wanted me to do was some attainment stuff, and I said to the child, we're going to do some spelling and he was like, I had a spelling test yesterday and I got zero out of twenty and that was the first utterance I had out of him and I thought oh my god what am I doing this for this is just ridiculous. And the only reason, I saw two children on two consecutive days at that school, and the first day I had a lot more time than I did on the second day and on the first day I started the assessment with some PCP and some how do you see yourself as a learner stuff and then we moved into the what they wanted, but on the second day I didn't have enough time so I did two minutes, I thought I'll get the attainment stuff out of the way and if I have enough time later I'll do the other stuff and then that was the first thing that came out of his mouth and I thought I've done this wrong, I should have done it the other way round regardless of how much time I had because I needed to make him feel comfortable and he clearly didn't.
Interviewer: SO part of it for you is getting the best out o the child and leaving them

with a positive sense or feelings of working with you.
Respondent: Definitely. And he was a child who in the afternoon I found myself administering a test I had never administered in my entire life. Thinking, well I'll talk to you about this again, thinking just because this school makes me feel so disempowered, I'm sitting here doing something I've never done before in my life and this child is failing at and at the end I said to him, thank you so much you've worked really hard and I finished the sentence and he'd gone, he was out the door. Which says everything to me about why I don't work like this. So I just prefer things…
Interviewer: What was the test that you used, just out of…
Respondent: Oh what I was doing, it was the reading comprehension from the WIATT.
Interviewer: This leads us on really to what supports and constrains you, the constraints you experience when using Dynamic Assessment? You were talking about the school…
Respondent: School expectations and being able to challenge that and having the time to challenge that, and I think when schools don't have that many visits and they feel pressurised in what they want you to get through in the visits, there isn't enough time to challenge it in a way that isn't just going to make them feel, I don't know, a sense of panic I guess. They think oh gosh we've got this new EP and she's doing all these weird things and it's not going to get through panel because they're not going to understand it. And they push that panic onto you in a way which in turn can make you feel, this is too difficult to deal with and I guess I have one stroke two schools that do that to me and I haven't quite got to the bottom of why.
Interviewer: Sometimes I just think it takes time.
Respondent: Yeh, just time to get your head round why they making you feel the way they are.
Interviewer: Are there other constraints about…
Respondent: I guess there are constraints within the local authority, I don't know, expectations or what I perceive are the expectations of the numbers. A school said to me last week, well actually that school said to me, well we'll wait for your scores…I was like don't hold your breath [laughs] you'll be waiting for some time…'we'll wait for your scores' I just though I don't want to turn into the type of EP that I never wanted to

be because I feel pressurised here.
Interviewer: Differently to where you were before?
Respondent: Yeh. Nobody had that expectation where I was before, it was a non-psychometric authority. Absolutely, totally, totally. You know people used the WORD and the WOND and those things.
Interviewer: But not psychometric cognitive tests?
Respondent: No. Nobody used the WISC or the BAS. We didn't have them in the service. They just didn't exist. It was too much the other way, I don't know, but everyone worked with it and the heads had no other expectations it was this how it is here.
Interviewer: So this is quite a different local authority?
Respondent: Quite different. Quite different. And for someone to say to me we'll wait for your scores, I was like 'god!' Yeh, I need to find a comfort level somewhere. An in-between comfort level.
Interviewer: Are there factors which support you here?
Respondent: Yeh, there are, but I'm not sure how overt they are. Maybe I haven't found them either, because I do see people around me doing what the schools seem to want, so I think where are the people that are working the way I'm used to working, maybe I just haven't discovered them yet [laughs].
Interviewer: But you are still using Dynamic Assessment?
Respondent: I am till using it yeh, I am still pushing those boundaries. Also there a couple of schools where I've said to them, like to xxxx downstairs, look I'm not really a cognitive assessment kind of person, and certainly not in this kind of context with these kinds of children. I just don't necessarily think it's the most appropriate way to go about things. And she said absolutely fine, I'd much prefer you to do play-based assessment. So it was almost like there I had a go ahead, a green light, a support, and I thought I'm not going to annoy here if I don't…because I don't like to annoy schools, I don't want to be antagonistic but on the other hand I don't want to feel pressurised into doing something that I feel takes up huge amounts of time and doesn't necessarily get you where something else couldn't have got you. Similarly, another school that I get on very well with, xxxx Infants, I was very up front with her and able to be. And she was absolutely fine with that.

Interviewer: So you're, are you describing schools where you feel you've got a positive relationship with, or are able to feel open about the way you want to practice.

Respondent: Definitely. And I don't feel threatened and I don't feel that I've got to come up to some …in order to be acceptable to them I've got to reach some mark or provide them with something. So you know, I'm still feeling my way.

Interviewer: It would be interesting to come back at some point and pick apart how it was different for you previously, because you certainly come from a different culture to the one we have. Not having had that experience myself, it would be interesting to compare and contrast the two and how practice can develop really. Who

Respondent: Yeh, yeh.

Interviewer: Who else is involved when you use Dynamic Assessment and what do you do, how is the work shared between those involved?

Respondent: Um…

Interviewer: So basically when you sit down and do a Dynamic Assessment, who's there?

Respondent: Me and the child mainly, but I did do one the other week, one of the Battledown children in his receiving school and I had an outreach worker with me.

Interviewer: Watching or doing?

Respondent: Well, she was keeping him focused really. Between us we were keeping him focused. And I was doing lots of really short things with him, including some dynamic assessment and some other things but in a more dynamic way as it were. So she was there.

Interviewer: So is that something you've done just the once or…

Respondent: Yeh, I've never done that before. And it was really good because she could focus on keeping him focused and I could focus on throwing out the activities in as quick succession as possible to keep his interest. And when he lost it and there was no way he was going to do anymore it was a joint decision, it wasn't just me thinking oh I'm going to have to give up now because he's not going to do anything else. It was her and me thinking he's got to the end of what he can do in quite a joint way which was really nice.

Interviewer: Anyone else involved, not necessarily in the assessment itself but in the preparation or feedback or

Respondent: I would feedback to a SENCo or a class teacher depending on who I was going to see. Sometimes I feel that they don't want to hear about it and maybe that is cultural. It's almost like they think it's some add on bit of interesting activity that you've thrown in, rather than something that is going to give them anything useful. I don't know that's just a sense I get, just a feeling I get. They don't really want to invest in understanding what it was you did or what it was about, even if you're saying this seems to be the strategies he has and this is what's missing and this is where you need to fill in the gaps. I don't know…

Interviewer: Anyone else you would involve?

Respondent: I might involve the parent if I was reporting back, if I was seeing a parent, and I think sometimes parents are quite interested because they are interested in what their kids have done and sometimes parents want to hear about things their kids have done well and I think you always pull out strengths from Dynamic Assessment even if they're really marginal ones. It's not all about failure, negatives and they can't do this that and the other which I think parents are much more interested in.

Interviewer: Absolutely. What did you use currently when you work with children? What tools do you use?

Respondent: Do you mean what specific things do I use?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Okay so I would use the CATM, the coloured blocks and the cards.

Interviewer: That's what went flying?

Respondent: [Laughs] That's what went flying but I did make sure we had all 16 blocks! Yeah I really like that because there's so many things you can do with it.

Interviewer: That's the analogies one?

Respondent: Yeah and it's so open at the earlier stages of it, they can just manipulate it. Like that child I saw when I had the outreach worker there he was just gob smacked when he turned it over and it was a different colour, it took him about 5 minutes to recover from how exciting it was, so I like that particularly with younger children And I do the organisation of dots, which I like and I think kids like, they get fed up after one page but that's fine you don't usually get further than one page, but it's like a puzzle isn't it, its like a puzzle they wouldn't normally do in school and I use

the CFDT…
Interviewer: The complex figure?
Respondent: Yeah, the complex figure drawing and the simple one.
Interviewer: The simple one…
Respondent: Yeah, the simple one for younger children.
Interviewer: Is there an adapted version?
Respondent: There's a much much simpler one. The complex one is the one that looks like a rocket. There's a much simpler one for younger children. Have you seen that?
Interviewer: I've got two, but I didn't see the other one as being a lot simpler so it would be great to see it actually.
Respondent: Oh it is a significantly simpler one. I like that. I like that when you get a kid who tells you they are good at art. One of the kids I saw last week, year six kid, so-so at everything else, told me he was good at art and amazed himself by being able to do that from memory, really good scale and was just really quite pleased with himself.
Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that sometimes you work dynamically using other things. Did I hear that correctly?
Respondent: Oh yeah, you mean like using puzzles. I was in Battledown last week using some compare bears except they weren't bears they were frogs.
Interviewer: Compare frogs.
Respondent: There were bears and frogs in the same bucket and the little boy I was working with I decided I was going with the frogs instead of the bears because they seemed a bit cooler. SO in a sense I was almost mapping the CATM onto what I had in front of me and I think that's not difficult to do with all sorts of things really.
Interviewer: Like…
Respondent: Well anything. You can do it with coloured paper clips if you can sort them. Do you know what I mean? Or bricks you can do it with. Just so you're using those questions and getting them to form patterns. A child I saw at xxxx, the xxxx child I saw at xxxx, his ability to pattern anything was non-existent and that had come out in some BAS that someone had done in the summer, it must have been xxxx and I wanted to see if there'd been any improvement in that because she thought it was to

do with his lack of pre-school experience and whether there was any improvement in that. So when he'd messed around with the actual blocks we were looking at trying to put some patterns together and he was absolutely hopeless so they had pegboards so I tried it with pegs instead and he could not see a pattern at all, he just put the pegs on the board all over the show.

Interviewer: So you're actually fundamentally looking for the skills across a range of contexts to see whether they are there?

Respondent: Yeah. I wish I had had the frogs. Maybe he would have engaged with the frogs. The frogs were great. I'm trying to think if there's anything else I use, there's something else I use from the Dynamic Assessment batteries.

Interviewer: The CITM?

Respondent: I have used that. I haven't had a situation where I've used that recently, but I have used the 16-word memory test.

Appendix 5: Full results tables

Appendix 5a: Amount of time spent on Dynamic Assessment by EPs

Theme	Amount of time	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Proportion of time spent on assessment	More than 1/2	43	100	69
	Less than1/3	57	0	31
Proportion of that time spent on Dynamic Assessment	Less than half	71	83	77
	High proportion of work	29	17	23

Appendix 5b: Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) received with regards to Dynamic Assessment

Theme	Percentage of EPs		
	Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Training received as an EP	86	100	92
Training and experiences as a trainee EP (TEP)	57	100	77
Individual development activities	71	67	69
Peer support	57	67	62
Other	29	0	15

Theme	Training or development undertaken	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Training received as an EP	Training provided in service meetings	43	100	69
	Tzuriel/ Deutsch training course	86	33	62
TEP training and experiences	Training during TEP course	57	83	69
	Other experiences as EP in training	43	33	38
Peer support	Peer support/ supervision	43	67	54
	Service discussion	14	0	8
Individual development activities	Reading Dynamic Assessment texts	29	50	38
	Reflection on cases	14	17	15
	Reflecting on CPD needs/ making future plan	29	0	15
	Practise following training	14	17	15
	Dedicating time to look at assessment materials	14	0	8
	Setting up Bunny bag	0	17	8
Other	Training as Assistant EP	14	0	8
	Project work in a school	14	0	8
	Teaching trainees	14	0	8
	Talk by Feuerstein	14	0	8

Appendix 5c: Choosing to use Dynamic Assessment

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Information provided	86	100	92
Experience of the assessment	86	67	77
Relation to other assessments	57	67	62
Usage	43	33	38
Features of the assessment	29	33	31
Theory and research underpinnings	14	17	15
Other	14	0	8
Outcomes	0	17	8

Appendix 5d: Experience of the assessment

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Reason for using DA**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Experience of the assessment	EP experience of and beliefs about assessment	86	67	77
	Child's experience	86	50	69
Information provided	Provides information about the child	57	67	62
	Provides information that is of practical relevance	29	67	46
	Focuses on strengths/ possibility for change	29	33	31

	Provides ipsative information	0	33	15
Relation to other assessments	Alternative to psychometrics	57	67	62
	Complements psychometric information	14	0	8
Usage	Useful with particular children or in certain cases	43	33	38
Features of the assessment	Flexibility of approach	29	0	15
	Speed	0	17	8
	Ecological validity	0	17	8
Theory and research underpinnings	Theoretical underpinnings	14	0	8
	Evidence base for approach	0	17	8
Other	Not conscious choice	14	0	8
Outcomes	Changes beliefs about child	0	17	8

Appendix 5e: Outcomes

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Provides information about the child's performance and or learning	100	100	100
Provides information about intervention needed	86	83	85
Results in changes in teacher	43	33	38
Results in changes in child	43	33	38
Provides information for child	29	33	31

Child's experience of assessment	43	17	29
Child's voice	0	17	8
Provides observable evidence	0	17	8
Changes in situation	0	17	8

		Percentage of respondents		
Theme	**Outcome of Dynamic Assessment**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Provides information about intervention needed	Provides information about intervention	86	83	85
Provides information about the child's performance/learning	Strengths	100	33	69
	Approach taken	43	83	62
	Difficulties	71	33	54
	Change in performance with mediation (learning potential)	43	67	54
	Affective factors	29	50	38
	Provides general information about the child	43	17	31
	Provides information that is practical	43	17	31
	Approach taken in different tasks/ modalities	14	17	15
	Progress over time	14	0	8
Results in changes in teacher	Changes in teachers	43	33	38
Results in changes in child	Outcomes for children	43	33	38
Provides information	Provides information for	29	33	31

for child	the child			
Child's experience of assessment	Child experience	43	17	29
Child's voice	Child's view	0	17	8
Provides observable evidence	Provides data from observation	0	17	8
Changes in situation	Change in situation	0	17	8

Appendix 5f: Tools

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Tests	86	100	92
Toys	71	67	69
Adapted standardised tests	43	0	23
Adapted curriculum activities	14	33	23
Assessments for particular groups	0	33	15
Checklists/frameworks	43	83	62
Tools for feeding back	29	17	23
Recording equipment	14	17	15

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Tool used**	**Oxshire**	**South-dale**	**Overall**
Materials used with the children and young people				
Tests	LPAD	86	83	85
	Tzuriel tests	71	50	62
Toys	Other toys	57	33	46
	Let's Play	14	33	23
Adapted standardised tests	Adaptations to standardised tests	43	0	23
Adapted curriculum activities	Curriculum based Dynamic Assessment	14	33	23
Assessments for particular groups	Assessments for pupils with ASD	0	33	15
Other tools used				
Checklists and frameworks	Deficient cognitive functions	43	67	54
	CAP	0	83	38
	Affective factors checklist	0	17	8
	Motivation scale	0	17	8
	Recording sheet for Complex Figure Drawing task	0	17	8
Feeding back	Written report	29	17	23
	Joint Problem Solving	14	0	8
Recording equipment	Writing equipment	14	17	15

	Test	Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
		Percentage of EPs		
LPAD	Complex figure drawing task (CFDT)	86	83	85
	Raven's Matrices	29	0	15
	Organisation of Dots	57	0	31
	16 word memory task	29	17	23
Tzuriel Test	Children's Analogical Thinking Modifiability Test (CATM)	71	50	62
	Children's Seriational Thinking Modifiability Test (CSTM)	0	17	8

Appendix 5g: Object

Theme	Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
	Percentage of EPs		
Focus of assessment	100	100	100
Nature of task	86	100	92
Nature of information obtained	71	80	75
Nature of relationship between assessor and child	57	40	50
Outcomes	43	40	42
Other	0	60	25

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Description of Dynamic Assessment**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Focus of assessment	Cognitive process	100	60	83
	Learning potential	57	100	75
	Emotional factors	29	0	17
	Child's limitations	14	0	8
	Views of the child	0	20	8
Nature of task	Interactive and unstructured	71	60	67
	Focuses on different modalities	29	60	42
	Structured and adult led	43	40	42
	No right/wrong answers	29	40	33
	Child led	14	20	17
Nature of information obtained	Qualitative	29	60	42
	Subjective	43	40	42
	Quantitative	0	40	17
	Non-projective	14	0	8
	Context important	0	20	8
Nature of relationship between assessor and child	Mediational	57	40	50
Outcomes	Informs intervention	29	40	33
	Increases metacognition	14	20	17

	Increases well being of child	0	20	8
Other	Theoretical	0	40	17
	Ethical	0	40	17

Appendix 5h: Constraints

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Logistics	100	83	92
Culture	100	67	85
Professional expertise and commitment	83	100	85
Statistical rigour	57	17	38
Linking assessment to intervention	14	17	15
Effectiveness of approach	0	17	8
Nature of EP assessment	0	17	8

		Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Logistics	Time	100	67	85
	Materials	57	50	54
	Questions asked	0	17	8
	Return visits	0	17	8
Culture	School	57	67	62
	LA	86	17	54
	EPS	14	17	15
	Other services	0	33	15
	Wider influences	14	0	8
Professional expertise and commitment	Skills/ knowledge and confidence	57	67	62
	Lack of interest in EPS	43	17	31
	Negative experience	14	0	8
	Training	29	33	31
	Demanding	14	50	31
	Emotional demands	14	17	15
	Competing priorities	0	17	8
Statistical rigour	Statistical rigour	57	17	38
Linking assessment to intervention	Linking assessment to intervention	14	17	15

Effectiveness of approach	Mediation	0	17	8
Nature of EP assessment	Not shared activity	0	17	8
	Power imbalance with child/teacher	0	17	8

Appendix 5i: Supports

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Involvement of others	86	83	85
Professional expertise and commitment	57	50	54
Culture	43	50	46
Logistics	43	33	38
Linking assessment to intervention	0	17	8
Nature of EP assessment	0	17	8
Flexibility	0	17	8

Theme	Supports for using Dynamic Assessment	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Involvement of others	Peers	57	50	54
	Child	14	33	23
	Feedback from school	14	17	15
	Relationship with teacher or school	29	0	15
	Parents	14	0	8
Professional expertise and commitment	Training/CPD	57	50	54
	Justification for approach	0	17	8
Culture	Culture	43	50	46
Logistics	Time	29	33	31
	Materials	0	33	15
	Particular schools/ settings	14	0	8
Linking assessment to intervention	Provides framework for using results	0	17	8
Nature of EP assessment	EP ways of working	0	17	8
Flexibility	Flexibility of approach	0	17	8

Appendix 5j: Community

Theme	Community involved	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Role	Teacher	100	83	92
	Child	100	50	77
	Parent	57	83	69
	EP	86	33	62
	TA	71	50	62
	SENCo	71	50	62
	Unspecified or other school staff	29	67	46
	Peers	29	33	31
	Multi-agency colleague	29	0	15
	Adults involved with child (unspecified)	29	0	15
	Depends	29	0	15
	Outreach worker	14	17	15
	Not alone	14	0	8
Age of child or young person	Primary	100	100	100
	Pre-school	100	83	92
	Secondary	86	83	85
	All ages	57	67	62
Type of school	Mainstream	100	50	77
	Special	71	33	54

Nature of difficulties	BESD	86	100	92
	Language difficulties	100	67	85
	Learning difficulties	71	100	85
	EAL	71	33	54
	ABI	57	0	31
	Social communication difficulties	0	33	15
	All difficulties	29	0	15
	Sensory difficulties	0	17	8
	Physical difficulties	0	17	8

Appendix 5k: Division of labour

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Tasks during the dynamic assessment	86	100	92
Tasks during the follow up from the assessment	100	100	100
Tasks after the follow up from the assessment	29	50	38

Theme	Task carried out	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	Southdale	Overall
Tasks during the dynamic assessment	Assessing the child during the Dynamic Assessment	86	100	92
	Child reciprocity	71	100	85
	Mediation	57	67	62
	Peer learning and support	0	50	23
Tasks during the follow up from the assessment	Participation in consultation	86	100	92
	Feedback	57	50	54
	Readiness for change	0	83	38
	Peer learning and support	14	0	8
	Record	0	17	8
	Provide advice	0	17	8
	Response to feedback	14	0	8
Tasks after the follow up from the assessment	Receiving feedback	14	33	23
	Linking with parents	14	17	15
	Challenging practice	14	0	8
	No further role	14	0	8

Task carried out	Percentage of respondents indicating that the task was carried out by a specific person							
	EP	School	Parent	Child	Peer	Joint	Other prof	Adult
Tasks during the dynamic assessment								
Assessing the child during the Dynamic Assessment	69	38	23	0	0	0	0	0
Child reciprocity	0	0	0	85	0	0	0	0
Mediation	54	8	0	0	0	8	0	0
Peer learning and support	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	0
Tasks during the follow up from the assessment								
Participation in consultation	54	35	31	0	8	15	8	15
Feedback	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Readiness for change	0	23	8	15	0	0	0	8
Peer learning and support	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
Record	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provide advice	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Response to feedback	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Tasks during the follow up from the assessment								
Receiving feedback	0	15	15	0	0	0	8	0
Linking with parents	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Challenging practice	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
No further role	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix 5l: Historicity

	Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Subject	100	100	100
Rules	29	67	46
Tools	43	50	46
Community	29	50	38
Division of labour	14	17	15
Object	0	17	8
Outcomes	0	17	8
Other	0	17	8

		Percentage of EPs		
Theme	**Focus of change over time**	**Oxshire**	**Southdale**	**Overall**
Subject	Training	100	100	100
	CPD	86	83	85
	Choosing to use the approach	57	33	46
	Proportion of DA/ individual assessment	14	50	31
	Sense of identity	0	17	8
Rules	Culture in the work place	29	67	46
	Having statutory work	14	17	15

	Constraints	0	17	8
Tools	Change in tools	43	50	46
Community	Community	29	50	38
Division of labour	Division of labour	14	17	15
Object	Object	0	17	8
Outcomes	Outcomes	0	17	8
Other	Awareness of historicity	0	17	8

Appendix 5m: Contradictions

	Subject	Tools	Object	Outcomes	Rules	Community	Division of labour
Subject	29% Oxshire 50% Southdale 38% overall		0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall	0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall	29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall		0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall
Tools		29% Oxshire 17% Southdale 23% overall				14% Oxshire 17% Southdale 15% overall	14% Oxshire 50% Southdale 31% overall
Object			29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall				
Outcomes				14% Oxshire 17% Southdale 15% overall	29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall	14% Oxshire 0% Southdale 8% overall	0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall
Rules						0% Oxshire 17% Southdale 8% overall	
Community						29% Oxshire 0% Southdale 15% overall	29% Oxshire 17% Southdale 23% overall
Division of labour							43% Oxshire 50% Southdale 46% overall

Appendix 5n: Differences between authorities

Aspect of activity	Theme	Percentage of EPs		
		Oxshire	**Southdale**	**Difference**
Division of labour: Tasks during the follow up from the assessment	Readiness for change	0	83	83
Tools: Checklists and frameworks	CAP	0	83	83
Rules: Cultural constraints	Local Authority	86	17	69
Outcomes: Provides information about the child's performance / learning	Strengths	100	33	67
Community	Mainstream school	100	33	67
Object: Nature of information obtained	Other	0	60	60
Subject: Time spent on assessment	More than 1/2	43	100	57
	Less than1/3	57	0	57
Subject: Training and CPD	Training provided in service meetings	43	100	57
Tools: Materials used with the children and young people	Organisation of dots	57	0	57
Community	ABI	57	0	57
	EAL	71	17	54
Subject: Training and CPD	Tzuriel/ Deutsch training course	86	33	53
Community	EP	86	33	53
	Child	100	50	50
	Language difficulties	100	50	50
Division of labour: Tasks during the assessment	Peer learning and support	0	50	50

Appendix 6: Case study raw data

Appendix 6a: Staff questionnaire (Pre-assessment)

Why do you think Bethany is experiencing difficulties with learning? Bethany has a very short attention span She finds it difficult to follow instructions in a large group in the classroom   Bethany's language (in general) is significantly delayed She has a poor visual memory
What do you think you could do to help Bethany learn better? Keep tasks short   Ensure Bethany has instructions repeated or differentiated in large groups Use a multi-sensory approach to learning   To help Bethany over-learn in terms of sounds and sight vocabulary
To what extent do you think that Bethany's ability to learn can be improved? Quite a lot
Why did you chose to answer question 3 as you did? I think that Bethany's individual needs are quite specific therefore I'm sure that there is probably a very different approach that could be implemented to help her learn more effectively.

Appendix 6b: Staff questionnaire (Post-assessment)

Why do you think Bethany is experiencing difficulties with learning? Finds it difficult to gather information systematically Tendency to respond impulsively Often distracted by concrete materials which are being utilised to aid her understanding and learning Difficulty in the understanding and knowledge of vocabulary to describe abstract concepts
What do you think you could do to help Bethany learn better? Provide a very high level of adult modelling during learning activities Use a high level of concrete resources and kinaesthetic approach to learning but also use language intensively to describe info   Pre-teach curriculum specific vocab – using pics and objects Develop comparative behaviour ie opportunities to notice similarities and differences
To what extent do you think that Bethany's ability to learn can be improved? A great deal
Why did you choose to answer question 3 as you did? Bethany needs to have her learning based on very basic pre-literacy skills… to enable her to learn strategies and systems ie categorising, sorting, spot the difference before she is able to then apply them more effectively to the curriculum as a whole.

Appendix 6c: Observation: SENCo and Child (Pre-Assessment)

Date: 11.06.09	**Time:** 10.30 –11.10	
Name of adult: Nat	**Job title:** SENCo	**Child's name:** Bethany

Information about task: (e.g. subject, learning objectives/ aims for session, child's previous knowledge or experience of content)

Reading individual sounds, identifying sounds at the beginning of animal names and matching them to grapheme, reading and writing CVCs, writing her forename and part of her surname.
Identifying semantically linked pairs of concepts from pictures eg bucket +spade (described by SENCo as a language task), counting items in group below 10 using one-to-one correspondence.Informal discussion about Bethany's rabbit resulting from picture stimulus of a cage and hamster.

Concrete tools used to support child's learning:

Cards with letter sounds on
Alphabet with jolly phonics picture next to each letter
5 CVC words with 5 matching picture cards eg cat, dog
Picture of a zoo with a variety of animals
ELC Jigsaws with 2 pieces 'Things that go together' with photographs of semantically linked objects
Personalised book with widget supported text
White board and pen
Jolly phonics actions

Focus on non-intellective factors: **Direct references/ responses from adult during session: (to be checked out with adult after session)**

- Told Bethany who I was when she arrived and appeared shy.
- In response to Bethany gasping when the door made a noise gave verbal reassurance that it was nothing to worry about (twice)
- Gave Bethany a hug then directed her to the task when she appeared shy at the start of the session
- Twice redirected Bethany's attention back to the task when she leaned towards her when challenged by the work or Nat (appeared to be an avoidance strategy). On one of these occasions Nat moved task onto a different point without pursuing point being taught.
- Allowed Bethany to rub out her work unnecessarily once, then redirected to the task.
- Allowed Bethany to get up and walk over to the window look at the aeroplane when distracted then returned her to the task.

Aspect of MLE	Observations (E.g. Present? Simple? Elaborated? Related to process or principle that may be internalised by child? Consistent?)	Rating
Intentionality *Intentionally engaging & maintaining child's involvement in a way that promotes self-regulation of attention. Includes sharing of purpose of activity.*	Directed Bethany where to sit initially, redirected her attention to the task when she became distracted. Focused Bethany's attention on her, 'Now listen', 'Look at me'. Named the tasks they were going to work on as they were presented eg. 'We are going to do the how things go together jigsaw.' Regulated her impulsivity by saying 'hang on a second' and 'go slowly'. Removed a tissue physically that Bethany had been playing with.	2 (no statement of principle)
Meaning *Elaborating upon child's perceptions in a way that helps the child know what to notice/ignore and now to go about noticing/ignoring. May explain why some things are important.*	Directed visual attention 'Look carefully', 'look at these', (referring to visual resources), 'look Bethany' asking Bethany to look at her mouth as she modelled articulation of the 's' sound. Modelled jolly phonics actions.Referring to Bethany's fingers when counting said, 'go slowly Bethany we need to be able to see them all'	3
Transcendence Promoting child's ability to make connections among current future and past experiences. May elicit causal and inferential connections between events from the child.	Referring to the jigsaw of the bucket and spade…'When you go to the seaside…'	1 (simple)
Sharing (joint regard) Physically/mentally attempting to 'see' things from the child's point of view. Includes emphasising the 'we-ness' of a situation. May also include empathic comments helping the child to articulate thoughts and reactions.	Emphasised 'we-ness' on occasions 'What have we got left?' Noted verbally that Bethany liked to rub out (expressing empathy).	3
Sharing (of experiences) Telling the child about a thought or experience the mediator had/has that relate to the current experience	Told Bethany that she had a pair of gloves for planting in response to her comment about a picture. 'I saw your daddy in the shop'.	1 (simple)
Task regulation Manipulating the task to facilitate mastery by the child, whilst promoting strategic and planning thinking in the child	Jigsaw task: asked Bethany why the two pieces went together, Provided Bethany with one piece of the jigsaw then asked her to find the other piece, provided a hint as to the type of relationship 'can you find something that would go in the cage'. When asking Bethany to count the cards said let's start at the top and go all the way down.' Frequent modelling of language, including direct requests for Bethany to repeat key words.	3
Praise/encouragement Verbal/non verbal communication that the child did a good job. May be related to aspects of the child's performance that appeared helpful.	Multiple examples of general praise eg 'you did really well'. Examples of use of specific praise for specific aspects of performance eg. 'good counting' 'well done I heard you say hippo', 'that's really good blending'. Drew a star next to Bethany's writing. Gave her a sticker at the end of the session and a certificate for gaining 5 stickers.	2 (frequent but no general principle)
Challenge Maintenance of the task within the child's ZPD, neither too difficult nor too easy. May include feedback to child about difficulty of task and need for scaffolding.	Jigsaw task: After initially giving Bethany on piece of the jigsaw and asking her to find the other, then asked her to find a pair. Asked Bethany whether she would like to practice writing 'Oxley' (progression from current IEP target). Challenged Bethany to say whether the letter she had written was like the 'e' in her name or a 'g' when it was written the wrong way round. Literacy tasks pitched at appropriate level – Bethany able to do them at times independently, some with verbal support and prompts and with visual resources. When moving onto another task 'that's was easy, now you've done that…' Supported Bethany to get the answer right rather than allowing her to fail then pointing out errors.	2 (no articulation of principle)
Psychological differentiation Maintenance of idea that role of mediator is to facilitate child's learning, welcoming their efforts and prioritising process over product if/when necessary.	Welcomed Bethany's idea to put jigsaw pieces in a line. Allowed Bethany to choose order of animals during phonic work. Allowed her to choose which task to finish with from two. Allowed Bethany to talk at length about her rabbit (seen as opportunity to develop her language skills).	3
Contingent responsivity Responding to the child's cues and signals in a timely and appropriate way.	Looking carefully and reacting to Bethany throughout.	3
Affective involvement Showing warmth, enjoyment and caring in the presence of the child.	Greeted Bethany warmly. Smiley and communicative throughout, joked with Bethany on occasions. Animated when Bethany had done particularly good work eg counting animals correctly.	3

Change Communicating to the child that she has improved or changed in some way (related to process and/or product), compared to the starting point. May include encouraging child to say what changes they have noticed.	Referring to Bethany's progress over time – 'You've been learning your sounds'	1
Reciprocity Level of receptivity of the child to the mediation offered by the adult.	Very receptive inititially, in the last 10 minutes showed momentary reluctance at times, but quickly overcome by redirection from Nat.	2

Comments made by Teacher / TA about how typical session was of their usual way of working with the child
(To be completed after session)

How typical was session of how they would normally work with the child? If untypical how would they typically have worked?

- Typically use a slightly more multisensory approach to support letter formation Ipreviously has used glitter tray and play dough) although have recently been progressing on from this method of teaching. Typical of follow up to work covered in letters and sounds lessons.
- Would often be working in a small group.
- Have also used precision monitoring methods.

Other comments: (To be completed after session – e.g. balance of developing strengths to correcting weaknesses, focus of mediational comments relating to cognitive functions)

- Nat commented that Bethany would not typically be as likely to be discouraged when she was challenged or show non-verbal signs of seeking reassurance/ trying to avoid task when working one-to-one: typically very comfortable with Nat – suggested it was likely to be due to my presence.

Appendix 6d: Observation: SENCo and Child (Post-Assessment)

Date: 30.06.09	Time: 9.40-10.20	
Name of adult: Nat	**Job title: SENCo**	**Child's name: Bethany**

Information about task: (e.g. subject, learning objectives/ aims of the session, child's previous knowledge or experience of content)
Differentiating between 2 sounds (phonic sorting task)
Counting with one to one correspondence (in different contexts)
Spot the difference (identifying same and different, visual scanning), Kim's game (visual scanning, visual memory) – single missing item recall and as many items as possible
Language: articulating sounds 's' and 'sh', naming vocabulary from line drawing and objects

Concrete tools used to support child's learning:
Post boxes for sorting objects into 's' and 'sh' sounds with magnetic phonemes and jolly phonics pictures attached.
Piece of faux fur and pencil to touch when discriminating between s̲oft and s̲harp
Tray covered in cloth with variety of everyday objects/pictures starting with 's' or 'sh' underneath (including toy snake used as reward)
Line drawing of a scene from the Enormous Turnip. 2nd drawing of scene with differences for spot the difference. Highlighter pen for marking differences.
Kim's game using 6 of objects from sorting task.

Focus on non-intellective factors: **Direct references made by and behaviours carried out by adult during session** (interpretations to be checked out with teacher following session)
In response to Bethany becoming distracted: ignoring, told Bethany she could hold the snake when she had done all the other things. Reassured Bethany when she dropped a seed on the floor – don't worry we'll get it later. Expressed non-verbal theatrical mock disapproval when Bethany started to cut a picture card with scissors. Said 'no…it's listening to me.' . Indicated consequences of Bethany's inattention, 'no you've got to look Bethany otherwise it won't work.'

Aspect of MLE	Observations (E.g. Present? Simple? Elaborated? Related to process or principle that may be internalised by child? Consistent?)	
Intentionality	Selectively introduced equipment needed to complete each task, introduced tasks verbally. Moved to specific areas of the room to complete certain tasks with verbal prompt. Removed snake when it was distracting and told Bethany that she would be allowed to play with it after completing a task 'we'll move it further back over there'. Moved objects away when they had been used. Introduced element of surprise by covering toys in cloth. Clear directions for tasks. Pretended snake could talk (gave encouragement and feedback)	2
Meaning	Pointed at magnetic letters and jolly phonics symbols. 'Look look look'. Waited until Bethany's attention was with her before modelling correct articulation. Pointed at part of spot the difference where she wanted Bethany to focus her attention. Used highlighter pen for recording spot the difference.	2
Transcendence	Gave cues to aid recall of vocabulary from her experience eg you like to eat it, you would find it on a beach, you have planting them in the garden. Before playing Kim's game said 'we're going to use your memory, remember when you played the fish game?' Encourage Bethany to demonstrate to teacher how to say snake when she got back to class. The 'Enormous Turnip' picture chosen to relate to Reuse, recycle, reduce topic after children had been planting seeds in the garden – this was not shared with Bethany.	2
Sharing (joint regard)	When seed dropped on the floor said 'don't worry' in response to Bethany's gasp. Frequent use of the term 'we'.	3
Sharing (of experiences)	Told Bethany 'I can see something in the sky' on the spot the difference task. Also 'I can see something growing'.	1
Task regulation	Prompted Bethany to 'think again' when she had got a wrong answer and encouraged her to use jolly phonics action when saying sound. Supported conceptual labelling (big/small) by physically comparing objects. Instructed Bethany to make all her marks on one page during the spot the difference task (possibly mediating methodical recording technique). During counting task said 'Let's go down like this' gesturing counting one line then the other. Articulated what process needed for Kim's game, 'we're going to use your memory'. Indicated when strategy not being used, 'no you've got to look Bethany otherwise it won't work.'	3
Praise/encouragement	Frequent use of non-specific praise eg good girl. Hand on arm to emphasise her pleasure at Bethany's achievements. Reflecting back achievements with positive non-verbal cues: 'you're getting quick at this one.' 'You did it all on your own well done.' 'You were listening very carefully when you were doing your sounds.' 'That was brilliant counting, you went all the way along there and then along there' (accompanied by gesture). 'Well done Bethany that's really good looking.' 'You remembered everything, you used your memory, you did lots of thinking.'	3
Challenge	Provided Bethany with two options when she had made a mistake articulating eg 'is it dickers or stickers'? Used phonic and action prompts to aid recall. Introduced terms to extend Bethany's vocabulary. When Bethany could not recall objects in Kim's game, allowed her to look for a second time and provided increased reminder to 'look'.	2
Psychological differentiation	Allowed Bethany choice to not post snake. Responded with enjoyment (laughter) to Bethany's suggestion about the role of the dog in the line drawing and did not contradict although offered an alternative explanation saying 'maybe'. Allowed Bethany to hide objects in Kim's game and to bend the rules by hiding more than 1.	3
Contingent responsivity	Sustained throughout. Highly responsive to verbal and non verbal cues.	3

Affective involvement	Smiley, warm and interested throughout activity whilst also maintaining learning-focus. Sat on floor with her.	3
Change	No evidence noted	0
Reciprocity Level of receptivity of the child to the mediation offered by the adult.	Bethany remained receptive throughout and was fairly easily redirected when she became distracted. She was particularly animated when playing Kim's game.	2
		27

Specific recommendations/strategies arising from assessment:	Evidence of use? (examples)	
Provide high level of modelling, imitation, repetition and practice	✓	Used when teaching articulation of sounds and vocabulary
Use concrete resources plus visual and kinaesthetic approaches	✓	See 'concrete tools used'
Repetition of specific and accurate labels and vocabulary to describe concepts	✓	New labels provided including conceptual vocabulary such as big and small, same and different.
Encourage Bethany to imitate and use language to describe. Use verbal prompting to help her recall target vocabulary.	✓	Multiple examples of asking Bethany to name objects/feelings etc, prompts using phonetic and semantic cues, modelling of new vocabulary, requests to imitate. Prompted her for 'shell' with 'you find it on the beach'
Relate new vocabulary to her experiences	✓	Semantic prompts given relating to her experience eg you really like eating these (sweets), you've been planting these in the garden
Pre-teach curriculum specific vocabulary using pictures/objects		No evidence
Notice similarities and differences	✓	Spot the difference. Attention drawn to difference between big shoe and small seed to emphasise language.
Identify and work on small focus area at a time	✓	'S' and 'sh' only targeted in phonic work. 6 items chosen for Kim's game.
Model what is expected from the start	✓	Asked Bethany to clarify whether the correct pronunciation was 'tickers' or 'stickers', advised her to 'think again' when she when she made a mistake. Gave rule for what to do in activity, modelled how to make sound by asking Bethany to look at her mouth, corrected her for 'strawberries'
Provide clear structure and rules for the task	✓	Clear instructions given for each task. Structure and format for each task very clear.
Include interactive game format (including turn taking)	✓	Included Kim's game with Bethany taking a turn at hiding objects.

Gradually expose resources/ information with only relevant resources available	✓	Commented before Bethany arrived that she had 'hidden' everything so that she wouldn't start 'poking'. Did spot the difference in two stages – not revealing comparison picture and purpose of exercise until after full discussion of 1st.
Allow opportunities to participate in favoured activities for short periods	✓	Allowed Bethany to play with a toy snake intermittently throughout assessment as a reward
High level of repetition until recall/use of concept is rapid and consistent (precision approach)	✓	Encouraged speed of response within sorting activity (emphasised verbally)
Use of gesture to draw attention to information available	✓	Pointing to resources. Gestured order in which Bethany had completed the task.
Encourage and model systematic info gathering and exploration of the problem (eg what else can you see/ do you notice…?)	✓	Used verbal prompts to encourage Bethany to look for something specific in picture, eg. I can see something growing in this picture. Gave rule that she had to look otherwise it wouldn't work.
Link new knowledge and concepts to personal experiences to make it meaningful		No evidence (beyond prompts for vocabulary)

EP: Rebecca
Information about tests/tasks set: (name, description of steps in test/task administration, standardisation used) 1. Shape sorting task: initially not given instructions to see what Bethany would do. Asked how many blue there were, repeated for different colours. Asked to name shapes – given sound prompts or labels when needed. Attention brought to different heights provided with labels tall and short. Checked Bethany's understanding of short long, longest and shortest by asking questions about the length of everyone's hair. Initial modelling of then request to sort by colour. Initial modelling then request to order by height. Asked to recall how many red blocks (without visual prompt). 2. Simple figure drawing task: Initially gave Bethany paper and asked her to write her name. Bethany then drew the faces of the people in the room. Mediation given to encourage Bethany to add identifying detail to the pictures. Phases: copied figure, memory, mediation (Rebecca drawing over top of figure in sections whilst talking through labels eg/ square, kiss, copy drawn to side), copy 2, memory 2. Lay pictures out to look at what she had remembered. 3. Alphabet inset puzzle (Bethany chose this from the classroom to complete during a 'break', then chose Rebecca to help her with it) 4. CATM: Asked to name colours, prompted Bethany to look at shapes and name them, Rebecca constructed matrix, asking Bethany to join in. Naming shape/size/colour, then when unsuccessful naming colours at speed, naming shapes at speed. Played game where shape hidden – Bethany asked to name shape and colour. Last turn asked to name a shape that had been hidden when another shape had been put in its place (requiring inferential reasoning with more than two clauses)
Concrete tools used: (eg test materials, recording, checklists, tools to support child's learning etc) 1. 4x5 3D shape sorting board (5 shapes, 4 colours, 5 heights) 2. Copy of SFDT on plain white paper. Selection of coloured pencils – asked to use 3 different colours over time to aid Rebecca's recall of how Bethany approached the task) 3. Wooden alphabet inset tray with pictures starting with each sound 4. David Tzuriel's CATM Lined paper for recording (few notes made)

Focus on non-intellective factors: Direct references made by EP and behaviour observed (interpretations to be checked out with EP following assessment)

Initial anxiety: smiled and told Bethany she remembered her from her previous visit, asked to see a card that Bethany had been making for her dad
Gasp at a noise from another room: ignore on first occasion, later
Looking at SENCo (possibly for reassurance): 'It's okay Bethany you're doing well'
Made noise during 2 as if to give up: ''Keep going…some more'
Distracted: Physical prompt (hand on arm) redirection to task + ~~verbal prompt~~ 'Bethany is there any more?', allowed her to get out of seat to pick up a small piece of paper from floor, validated her action with 'are you being tidy?', later in the assessment acknowledged concentration drop 'are you getting tired?', allowed Bethany to take a break and play. Said we're going to do five more minutes of concentrating, used watch as a timer, gave feedback on how many minutes had passed when Bethany tried to see.
Impulsive behaviour: verbal prompt to wait, physical removal of objects, hand used as physical barrier to prevent Bethany from moving things, verbal prompt to 'not touch'.
Bethany putting her hands over her ears when noise in another classroom: 'Ooh noisy'
Distracted by equipment: moved them out of her way physically

Others involved during assessment (with respective roles): Nat (SENCo) observed (whilst doing a job to prevent Bethany from becoming overwhelmed by the number of adults in the classroom), gave Bethany verbal reassurance once when she sought it, non-verbal reassurance facially when sought, acknowledged how hard she was working. Looked at her efforts on completion of SFDT and on request from Rebecca noted what Bethany had remembered in each trial.

Comments made by EP about how typical dynamic assessment was of their usual way of working:
(To be completed after assessment)

Rebecca commented that she didn't feed back to Bethany about what strategies had helped her explicitly giving example, 'it really helped when you…', or when else she may have found it helpful, although she would do so with older children. When asked whether she would typically with children of Bethany's age stated that she didn't often do a lot of assessment with younger children.
Rebecca noted after the assessment that as statutory assessment may be necessary for Bethany she was thinking about how she might collate evidence without the need for standardised assessment (given the recent change in policy to remove the need for 'scores')

Other comments: (To be completed after assessment)

- EP noted before assessment that she had deliberately tried to make the assessment as real as possible and had decided not to spend too much time trying to make each task/activity perfect
- Used actions and gestures repeatedly to scaffold language
- EP noted that her notes written during the assessment were very scant and indicated that it was difficult to write at the same time as carry out the assessment (Bethany had also looked quizzically at Rebecca when she started to write) – Rebecca suggested that this had affected her later recording but did not explain how or why
- Mistakes and errors not fed back to Bethany on vast majority of occasions – typically supported to reach correct solution or moved onto next task. On one occasion asked to look again or gently teased, 'is that right…I'm not sure?'
- EP indicated that prospect of observation had caused her anxiety the night before

Appendix 6f: Observation: EP feedback

Date: 18.06.09	Present: Rebecca, Nat (SENCo)

Actions taken by EP:
Explanation given by EP of approach/key concepts:
Explained she was developing her skills with the approach so would need time to go away and think about the assessment
Observations fed back from assessment (including cognitive functions, mediation and non-intellective factors)
-Bethany's difficulties compared to her brother's-Difficulties with systematic visual scanning (gave example, then later clarified that this did not mean counting skills when asked), language including articulation, distractible, found it difficult 'to change learning pattern' once incorrect, doesn't look intently, naming at speed
-Strengths: socially skilled (engaging), couldn't demonstrate understanding of tallest/shortest with blocks but could identify longest and shortest when looking at hair, kept going a long time, responded to challenges (indicates she feels sufficiently supported to try things), used language from her own experiences
-Strategies she was using: her tracing over shapes,
-Things that were helpful/needed: rules and structure in games, modelling of language

Suggestions made re follow up in the classroom (+ how identified)
-Needs modelling (2nd)
-Needs to get it right from the start: 'errorless learning'
-Clear guidance to focus
-Vocabulary for labelling
-Modelling language with encouragement to imitate as doesn't do so spontaneously
-Rules made specific
-Teaching through games
-Introduce fun element to activities
-Build speed of response-Using timer to prolong her attention
-Using pictures to promote discussion and use of vocabulary based on social situations
-Gain advice from SALT re speech sounds (2nd)
-Need to get to the point of accuracy without her becoming distracted
-Teach vocabulary such as 'can' 'cardboard' etc (2nd – following Nat's suggestion that vocabulary taught would need to be topic specific which was currently recycling)
IEP to target speech sounds
-Needs opportunity to learn things on repeated occasions (2nd)

Questions asked of others present re:
Validating observations/interpretations:
Prefaced/ended many observations with 'Did you see how…' and 'Didn't she?' (non-verbal behaviour did not invite a response)

Strategies in the classroom:
'What are the things we've said?' (non-verbal behaviour did not invite a response)
Asked what was on IEP – specifically whether it targeted speech sounds and what support she was getting in this respect

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Actions taken by others: S=SENCo T=teacher TA=teaching assistant P=parent/carer
Questions asked
-Whether to continue using 'communication in print'
-Clarified whether a strategy to develop visual scanning skills meant develop her counting skills
-Whether to work on three words at the same time (eg big blue square)

Suggestions made
-'It's the modelling of everything really' (1st)
-Vocabulary taught needs to relate to her topic eg reduce reuse recycle
-Questioned whether to use particular published pictures to develop vocabulary
-Questioned whether precision monitoring approaches might be useful in helping her develop her fluency

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Validation/contradiction of EP observations/interpretations/suggestions
-Bethany good at avoiding things in sessions with her
-Linked Bethany's need for errorless learning with her ongoing difficulties with articulation
-Reflected anxiety that using a sand timer would prove distracting for Bethany
-Suggested that if work completed during session had been done over the course of a week Bethany may have retained her knowledge of shapes (1)
-Acknowledged surprise (non-verbally) at Bethany's willingness to 'have a go'
-Stated Bethany would rather look around room or at you than at work
-Agreed need to talk to SALT as some speech sounds would develop before others
-Observed that Bethany couldn't cope with big and small

Offering own interpretations
-Noted that certain (avoidant) behaviours were evident when Bethany was 'stumbling'
-Considered whether visual comparison was a higher order skill (presumably alluding to why Bethany found it difficult)
-Compared Bethany's behaviour when she had pointed out of the window in imitation when asking where Rebecca was going next with her father's behaviour and motivation to focus on direction and where things are. Reflected on whether this was either a way of thinking or a learnt behaviour

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Tools used during feedback (e.g. to support understanding or record discussion)

Rebecca gestured to assessment materials which had been left out on the table to illustrate a point. At the end of the assessment Nat was invited to look at Bethany's attempts at the SFDT and notice what she had remembered. Brief notes kept by SENCo and Rebecca on

paper.
Future steps agreed (including dates if appropriate):   Rebecca initially said she would write a report, then said that typically they would have completed a JPS form in the meeting, then agreed to go away and complete a JPS form. Rebecca to go away and look back at notes and 'think about cognitive skills' SENCo to write IEP (NB Rebecca commented to me after the assessment that she would use Feuerstein's cognitive functions to think about Bethany's performance)

[Respondent is discussing the changes made to Bethany's IEP and was reflecting on the activities she had just completed with Bethany]

Respondent: I think basically the focus was taken off the literacy type thing so in a way it was kind of less stressful trying to push her because she was more engaged than when you tried to push those things that actually are beyond her in a way. All boring aren't they, because they are difficult. But then you've always got to have something for her that she is engaged with. I mean I know I didn't model and I used… but I think that is where we are going aren't we, with her?

Interviewer: Yes, getting it right to start with.

Respondent: Because you sometimes feel that with a lot of children when you are modelling, that actually you are giving the answers, so I think I was happier that I can be giving all the prompts – you know you are wanting her to get it right, it's like what you said or Rebecca said, it is like the area of learning because otherwise she gets it in her head and it's wrong. So it actually felt easier to know that that each little bit…

Interviewer: But there were times when you said to her as well, "you do it this time" and didn't prompt her so you were just providing that basis for her to take the next step, weren't you?

Respondent: But it was trying to link in a little bit with what they are doing if they are doing the literacy. But they are doing recycling and planting and that kind of thing..

Interviewer: Planting?

Respondent: We kind of thought that was a way we could feed in some of the sounds that she was working on, but I did notice with the Kim's game as well, it was using the same things that we had already used for the vocabulary… the same pictures and all sorts of things, but actually it was memory there she didn't…until we got into it and repeated the same things, she didn't know, because she wanted to do it with her eyes closed, so while I was saying "look at them", she was doing it like this, so she needed quite a few goes at that didn't she so she could get into it and realise that actually what she needed to do was to focus on that and look. And that has come out today that that needs a lot of looking at I think.

Interviewer: Yes, that was really interesting wasn't it, because that took a good while, I thought, to realise what she was doing.

Respondent: But once she'd done it, she was fine. But she wanted to do it effortlessly, didn't she? And she has got this thing about closing her eyes and wanting to do it by memory, but she has got to realise that she's got to keep looking first, hasn't she.

Interviewer: And commit it to memory before she can recall it. That's really interesting. So these questions really are just – well of them might seem a little obvious and hopefully they will be fairly straightforward to answer – but there are no right or wrong answers, and I'm not looking for something particular, just looking for what happened really. And what I'm trying to get at, is what impact the assessments have on you, and also what particular aspects of the way they went and whether they were helpful or less helpful – how you would want it, how you would see it developing in the future the more you see kids.

Interviewer: So, during the assessment itself when Rebecca worked with Bethany, what did they do together, and why do you think they did that?

Respondent: Well, that was a very different way of Rebecca working with Bethany that I hadn't seen her do regarding an assessment before. And initially, I mean they were

obviously doing their different shapes, trying to sort sizes, colours and shapes, and I could see she was trying to get her to be systematic but obviously Bethany was not particularly following or picking up. I think she was trying to pick up on Bethany's thinking skills – by processes and understanding as opposed to doing a cognitive assessment. Actually, I was quite surprised when they were doing it because I thought there would be a lot more input from Rebecca, but obviously she was giving minimal input to get as much out of Bethany to see what just came naturally. So initially I thought mmmm, I'm not quite sure what she was doing but then I could see that something that worked with Bethany, Rebecca hardly said anything. She would say "These go in order" and if Bethany knew what she was doing, she would just do it straight away, which was quite interesting because I think it is the same with a lot of children – developmentally they are at the right stage you do something and they just take over, don't they. Whereas, and you could see where it was difficult, she would just play with the bricks and swap them around. So it was quite interesting to see actually.
Interviewer: Interesting in what way?
Respondent: I think interesting to see Bethany's relationship working with somebody else, but also the way it was done, because I thought it would be a lot more led by Rebecca, which, in a way, it was almost kind of minimal input from Rebecca to see where Bethany was going with things and she obviously developmentally knew where Bethany should be going and then she sort of intervened obviously to try and bring her back on track.
Interviewer: That's really interesting. I think you're right.
Respondent: And it was nice for me, as well, to see where if she didn't get it or she doesn't know what you want, she will just do her own thing anyway, didn't she? She was oblivious to what the right thing was or to what somebody's wanting, whereas a lot of children are anxious wanting to get it in order of colour or size, but she wasn't worried at all.
Interviewer: Following the assessment, can you describe what happened in the meeting between you and Rebecca?
Respondent: Yes, well normally we then do the Consultation straight after, so she'll do an observation or an assessment and then we will do the Consultation together and quite often with the class teacher and often with the parents as well. So I wasn't sure that we were doing that then, but we did still - it was interesting then to have a chat while I scribbled. I have to scribble when I was dealing with Rebecca because she comes up with all these words and lovely targets and unless I've written them down, I can't remember a thing! That was interesting then, we just went through a few of the things with me scribbling down a few things that could be used as targets and she could have pulled out some of the areas, like the systematic looking (I've got everything written down!). That was good then to just get those few things that I would going to need to look at in relation to the IEP and then obviously she sent her report afterwards to fill in some of the gaps.
Interviewer: Do you think you had role in that conversation? What do you think that role was?
Respondent: Yes, I think we always do it through discussion, because I suppose Rebecca says things but then it is putting how you think can work in school and with the speech side as well, it's knowing more than Rebecca at the time, where she is with her speech.
Interviewer: So your role is doing that thinking about how would fit in with school and the curriculum?
Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: You had the report/Consultation form, what's your impression of what information you've been given – how would you describe that document?
Respondent: Oh, it's very informative and it follows the same format that I'm used to having,

like the strengths and difficulties. This one was great because it a whole host of strengths. It had the same amount of difficulties, but sometimes you're struggling with children with that many strengths, so that was good, and that's obviously the bit that we need to use with Bethany for the approaches to her learning. There was loads and loads of information, which was interesting, and also the bit at the back was fantastic with the strategies, because they are really, really important, both for Bethany and with saying about the transition – all those things mean I can now talk to the new class teacher and there are things that we may need to implement on a daily basis.

Interviewer: Because she is Y2, isn't she?

Respondent: She's Y1 now but she will be going into Y2.

Interviewer: OK, so you were talking about the transition between Y1 and Y2.

Respondent: Yes. So this was incredibly detailed and really, really useful, so I use Rebecca's report as the basis for the IEP.

Interviewer: So, after the assessment itself, what were your next steps? What did you do? After the assessment, it may have been that you waited until you had the paperwork, but I am trying gauge…

Respondent: Well I had a look my through scribbles initially. Rebecca did 'phone me actually, and we had another chat and she just wanted to check when you were coming, to make sure I had a good report! Yes, we then had a chat on the 'phone, but we would do that as well. I think we have a very good working relationship actually, so we are very lucky. So we pulled out a couple of the major strategies on the 'phone and I did actually wait to do the IEP until I had the report and that came a couple of days later. And now, which I haven't done, I need to share the report with parents and class teachers and I need to do the IEP and send that to parents and teachers.

Interviewer: Is that the class teachers of Y1 and Y2?

Respondent: Yes, then I can finish off where she's at now, and it involves the new class teacher for September.

Interviewer: So what would you do with parents? Would you have them in, would you do that as a joint discussion with class teachers, or how is it done?

Respondent: No, probably, due to time lines, I usually just have them in on their own and I'll go through that, particularly with Bethany's parents, I don't think that [gesturing at report] would be very good arriving on the doorstep. So literally, I would just pull out the major parts and then give them the IEP so they have a simplified format.

Interviewer: What did you learn about Bethany as a result of the assessment?

Respondent: I think, in some ways, her strengths, although I kind of knew them, to see them written down like that does help. She's obviously using an awful lot of strategies all the time because her expressive language is so poor. I think it kind of just reminded me that actually she has got a lot of strategies in place to try and help her expression to be understood. I'm also, another thing highlighted, was her short-term visual spatial memory – that kind of thing where she was doing that picture, the one for memorising – that was quite a strength and it just highlighted to me like I was saying to you earlier, that actually, she has so many pre-literacy basic skills that she needs to be learning. It comes over that we look at her again and think we are going too far, we need to take a step back and look at her skills really. So it has been great seeing Rebecca work with her and then you and Rebecca and the discussion, because I know we're talking about Bethany now, but it actually will extend to other children because I know now when I do someone else's IEP I will know exactly the same applies. And, her ability, her loveliness, as we call it, we should just make sure that she doesn't go off on a tangent. Again, that's one of her lovely strategies, isn't it, because

life it hard. I find it very engaging.
Interviewer: This might be the same question and you may have answered it already! But how have your beliefs about her changed as a result of the assessment?
Respondent: My beliefs? Yes it's very similar isn't it, in as much that I think there's a lot she can do, but I think she just needs an awful lot of modelling, imitation. It's made me very aware about her learning and the fact that it will be dependent on how she's picking up…unless we're modelling, she's picking things up wrongly and then doesn't get past that. I also just think that she will be OK because she is one of those characters and she loves being 1:1 and she's learning and making progress. It's changing how we work to help her make progress now.
Interviewer: What difference did the assessment make to the way you do things?
Respondent: I think it's just a reminder to make sure it is all very visual and kinaesthetic, make sure there are as many resources, touchy, feely things that she's able to handle. I think that's the major thing really.
Interviewer: Have you made any other changes as a result of the assessment? For example the IEPs for the other children and looking at the strategy and changing the focus away from resources and talking to parents and other teachers and I guess there will be actions that will result from them. Have there been any other changes as a result?
Respondent: Well, I think for the whole staff as well, it is just a reminder with communication in print and the visual aspect of the learning. I think it is pretty good across the school, but it's made me think I need to check out reminders to make sure because it's not just Bethany, there are lots of children that need visual reminders and visuals cues a lot of the time.
Interviewer: So how would you take that forward with your staff?
Respondent: I do quite a lot of staff meetings and with the TAs I do a lot of training, so it's through that kind of way…and I have a speech and language staff meeting in September, so that's the kind of thing that would fit in nicely anyway.
Interviewer: So you use that as reminder of the kind of strategies that would be useful for all children.
Respondent: And I think, actually, then I will then also say what we've done and just talk about the usefulness and about the fact that actually, not flogging the fact of learning five words in six months when actually some of these other things are far more important. If it's not working it needs to done differently and approached it in a different way. But it is sometimes difficult to come up with a strategy and a new strategy and it's all about achieving and targets and being able to tick off the checklists and you can do that a little bit with Bethany, but there are kinder ways of doing it.
Interviewer: What did you find, if anything, helped about the way that Rebecca worked?
Interviewer: Well, it was a brilliant opportunity for me because I don't ever get to see Rebecca assessing, so I enjoyed the Dynamic Assessment and the way she used the shapes and way she did the picture and that sort of thing, with the memory and it was almost like a demonstration as well, in a way, when she did that picture of showing, again, of how to get her to add to it the next time, of noticing different things, counting another time and putting it away and then doing another building on it, basically.
Interviewer: Helped to develop her 'picture' in a way – what she'd achieved.
Respondent: Yes, no, it was the way she had to do it on her own and then Rebecca fed in a little bit and then she had to do it again and you know they kept coming back to it and doing another copy, and it was seeing that, although it was something that perhaps Bethany is not that bothered about, looking at a picture with shapes, she had actually built on her experience hadn't she, by Rebecca saying actually there are five circles or …

Interviewer: I see what you mean. So the kind of the way that the adults support could be used to help her move through the target.
Respondent: Yes, which was in a way what I was trying to do with that was by looking at one and then comparing.
Interviewer: And what you seemed to be doing there is just gradually exposing her to each section and she'd have had to spot the difference and you wouldn't have got any of that lovely vocabulary, or the opportunity to work on the sound work because she would have been fixed on the spot the difference, so it was breaking it down and it worked really well.
Respondent: Which I think is why I'd liked what Rebecca had done with that. I forgot what it's called – it's called something, drawing that picture.
Interviewer: Oh the 'simple figure drawing test' or 'complex figure drawing test" was it?
Respondent: Yes, but that was almost for me, although that was an assessment for them, for me it almost like being taught and I could put that in teaching. It was also interesting to see her level of concentration and to be able to sit back and watch and think I know at this point she's lost everything. It was a long session and actually she did incredibly well.
Interviewer: Is there anything that you found less helpful about the way that Rebecca worked?
Respondent: No. I enjoyed the assessment, the only thing is often afterwards that's when we sit and talk about this sort of thing but you were going off somewhere – I think that's all it was, but I often like to have a little bit of time to think about the targets straight away.
Interviewer: So usually you have that time available to do that thinking and then you wait for the report?
Respondent: Yes, yes – but that's fine because that comes through fairly quick but I think that's just a time issue.
Interviewer: So usually if you have pieces of paper you can start thinking about it and working on it immediately.
Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: Is there anything you would have changed about the whole process – apart from not having me here!
Respondent: No.
Interviewer: Is there anything about working in this school at this time that has made a difference to the impact the assessment is having – thinking about your working context and whether that allows you to act on the assessment or whether it will constrain you in any way. Your policies, your ways of working, the staff and what you are working towards in the school – has any of that thwarted your ability to take forward what you learned?
Respondent: I am very lucky in as much that the Head is there if there are things that I want to do or take forward, I'm able to.
Interviewer: OK, so you are given free reign to respond to the children's need as you see appropriate.
Respondent: Yes. Likewise, if I think, I mean it's not always easy getting people to take on change but pretty much I can then go to people as well and say "try this…" and usually people will be on board and will use it as well. At the moment I am doing the on-line speech and language communication training as well, so I need to do some more language things but that I can disseminate to the school so no, really, that's just helps with it because I have other people to see Bethany.
Interviewer: So it's almost fitting in with your development work that you are already doing– is that what you mean?

Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: And is there anything about you personally that constrains or supports the work?
Respondent: Well, I'm probably thinking of words that I can print off – I mean I just do my own thing! What's the question – my memory!
Interviewer: Is there anything about you particularly that has supported or constrained your ability to take forward some new learning from the assessment?
Respondent: No, nothing's constrained me. No, I was interested obviously to do this for Bethany to take her learning forward, but I knew it would fit some other children as well. So no, I was just happy to learn the ability to change things, and I think I've learned an awful lot. It's such a short process, isn't it, so no, no constraints – there's time in as much that sorting out new IEPs and reading all the other thing when you've got hundreds of things ongoing, there's always the time constraint, but then that hasn't stopped me because I've wanted to do it.
Interviewer: No, no, so they've been over-ridden by your personal motivation haven't they?
Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: And the last question is can you identify anything else that might have influenced the way you've responded to the assessment?
Respondent: Well, I've only done all this because the work that you and Rebecca have put in.
Interviewer: Yes, it's really because we take for granted sometimes that the work we do at school actually has an impact and might sometimes have a greater impact and sometimes it doesn't and I'm not sure that that is always just about how we approach it or the person that we speak to – sometimes there are other factors which get in the way really, you know some of them are contextual, some of them are personal, and it is just trying to unpick what makes the difference.
Respondent: Well, I just feel it's been great doing it. I think because it was a different assessment, we've never done a Dynamic Assessment in school and I think that's what had the impact right here because I just liked the way it was done. If we'd done a cognitive assessment, yes we know that she would probably be in the bottom percentiles. I think we know that and so then what does that show you – where this has brought a whole load of strategies. So I think that this will be particularly good as an assessment tool basically. Have I answered the question now?
Interviewer: Yes – that's lovely. Thank you.

Appendix 6h: Interview with EP

Interviewer: Why did you chose to use Dynamic Assessment in this case?
Because this little girl was making some progress but there was concern about what sort of long term progress she would be able to make and how we could help her make it and I thought it if I do a cognitive assessment it wouldn't show anything other than that she struggles and really I needed to find out how we could help her more
Interviewer: What we you hoping to find out?
What would help her more. More about the interactive elements of the assessment, what factors need to be present there to help her learn, which I think I found a lot out about.
Interviewer: And what were you hoping would happen as a result of the assessment?
That the SENCo working with her would know she was doing the right thing and what to do and that the school would feel they know how to support her better from then on and it was helpful have someone to observe because I've never seen them working with her individually in the sessions although I could have arranged to do that, I've only seen her in the classroom, her seeing me she might have got stuff from that.
Interviewer: Did you do any preparation with the school before the assessment about what you were going to do?
Only that I'd work with her to try to find out what would help
Interviewer: You told them that?
Yeah.
Interviewer: What made you decide to tell them that?
Well they were considering whether they needed to put her forward for statutory assessment and I talked with them about well she's making progress but really what we need to find out what severity of difficulty she has with making progress and there's a number of ways I can find that out. I didn't really need to do that much preparation because I'd worked with the school so long; I think they just trusted me to do what they needed really.
Interviewer: So partly it was about the trust and relationship
If it has been a different school and they had been less confidence in me or been more unsure about what outcomes they wanted it would have needed more explanation.
Interviewer: Why did you choose to use the test materials and tasks that you did?
Because they were practical and hands on and she had needed that in her learning previously and because she has language difficulties and they weren't massively dependent on language skills to be able to problem solve with them, because they are ones that I knew.
Interviewer: How effective did you find them in finding out about her?
Quite effective, I think maybe I'd chosen possibly too, that they were too similar some of the things that I used, I could have used more variety, I used a lot of shapes and colours but part of that was not knowing her that well and making sure that I had some things to judge her level, part of that was gauging, feeling confident that I, if I had a used a recognised dynamic assessment I would have known what her level was and then what was needed to make her improvement any greater.
Interviewer: So they were tapping into the same concepts, but they were at different levels and required different levels of reasoning and cognitive skills is that what you're saying?
Partly but more I was trying to gauge what she already knew and could do before I did a more precise, right I'm going to try to move you from there to there.
Interviewer: So something that was well within her ZAD before moving onto something where you could stretch her?

So I could gauge more what the ZPD was likely to be
Interviewer: Yeh that makes sense. You involved Nat in the assessment in that she came and observed. Why did you choose to do that?
Because she would be a willing participant in that, and I knew she would be really interested in it and hopefully would learn stuff from it and I knew she would follow through on anything she learnt
Interviewer: The role that you had in mind for her did she play it out in the way you expected during the assessment?
Yeh, I mean I wouldn't have wanted her to do anymore or any less than she did. It was that balance of her pretending to be on the computer but actually she was watching and that was best for Bethany that it was like that because you know she would have been distracted if she had been sitting at the table in the sense that she already tried to engage with Nat quite a bit didn't she? But I thought it was enough that we still managed to make her feel, she still felt okay and I was still managing to do quite intensive work with her.
Interviewer: When you did your follow up why did you chose to do it in the way you did, with the conversation and the note taking?
I thought that it was interesting and that's why I think there might have been an effect of knowing that I was being observed because, it was a combination of knowing I was being observed and knowing they possibly wanted statutory assessment out of this and we automatically we went into Nat started to say, okay so I'll do, it was interesting that or the next thing I 'm going to do is so it automatically went into problem solving so I hadn't really thought I was going to do a record of problem solving/consultation but I could have done, and that's what I did afterwards though wasn't it but I think that was just because Nat wanted to engage in the discussion about it and .I could have just left and said ok I'll write this up as a report but actually I think it was much more effective to talk about it then.
Interviewer: So that sort of arose as a natural progression from the assessment and from Nat's response?
Yeh because I hadn't planned to do a consultation, I hadn't set up I'll do the asst you'll observe it then we'll talk about it, although that's what you always do a bit after an assessment you always have a bit of feedback time, but I think because of the way Nat is and because of what she saw and stuff it went into that problem solving didn't it? But that would be the ideal and if I was better practised at it and more confident in it I would do feel more confident to do a shorter assessment and a consultation as a routine practice.
Interviewer: What were you hoping the outcomes of that follow up would be once you got into it?
That Bethany would make better progress, they would be more able to engage her in a way with learning that was more helpful that the Y1 class teacher wouldn't feel she hadn't helped her and the Y2 teacher would have a greater knowledge of how to help her and that if the school want to pursue statutory assessment there would be evidence that they could provide for that.
Interviewer: When you talked to Nat how effective do you think it was in this case?
I find that quite hard to answer because I haven't been back to see whether there have been any changes, you've probably got more idea about the answer to that than I have. I think it was effective in that it was really good information on the basis of which to do problem solving.
Interviewer: The information that you gained from the assessment?
What was really interesting was that although I looked at the book, a lot of the things that naturally came up through discussion, although we hadn't used the technical terms but used the particular phraseology and stuff, most of that we had kind of broached in some way or

another through the discussion
Interviewer: Is that reassuring?
Yeh a little bit.
Interviewer: Thinking about the assessment as a whole, the assessment itself the follow up and the report writing the joint problem solving writing what factor contributed to its successes for you?
The engagement of school, the person observing, this is what I would be assume if I went back and saw things had changed, you know sometimes it really makes me think gosh if I did more assessment I could be more effective being really specific about what would help, because the consultation, the observation and consultation and gathering teacher information I'd do that first and I'd already done that with Bethany, but the actual sort of individual really looking intently gives you really clear things that you know you definitely want to aim for, but that's not the question what was the..?
Interviewer: It was about what factors contribute to its successes but I think that is an answer to the question because it's about the specificity and the depth of knowledge that you've gained really.
Yeh yeh.
Interviewer: Were there factors which you think constrained or were a barrier to the assessment in any way?
Not really.
Interviewer: Have you got any idea about what the impact of the assessment has been so far? You phoned Nat didn't you between the feedback session and sending her that report?
Yeh I've phoned her and I've had some emails from her because she wanted to update me on a another case and she said oh yeh I noticed I should have sent you Bethany's IEP here it is and she said thanks for the great report on Bethany that's all she said its been really useful.
Interviewer: So she said thank you for the report and here's the IEP. Did you get a chance to look at it?
Yeah. You can see how the IEP has changed from being more about what resources they use to what strategies they'll apply.
Interviewer: It's quite a significant change isn't it?
Yeh it is cut and pasted from my report but even just doing that shows that… you know it will make a difference don't you in Y2
Interviewer: Is it a direct copy and paste?
I think so.
Interviewer: That's interesting.
But not a direct copy, there's topic vocabulary book with pictures that's different phraseology, that's the same the same, all of the rest up there's the same but Nat's put different bits on there, but the targets are different, comparative behaviour to notice similarities and difference the emphasis on using the language for…then using that for problem solving and then we talked about asking speech and language therapy, Nat said she'd contacted the speech and language therapist but she hasn't had any feedback yet
So she was just giving you feedback by email?
Yeh.
What would your plan be for what to do next with this case if anything?
When I go into school next in September I will ask what they want to happen next really what progress she has made, I'd probably, well I would, I'd do a review and hopefully have the involvement of speech and language and see whether her rate of progress has changed and

what needs to happen…
Interviewer: Who would you involve in the review?
Nat and the Y2 class teacher and they'd probably invite the speech and language therapist I would think.
Interviewer: They're good aren't they?
Yeh.
Interviewer: Is there anything about the assessment that on reflection occurs to you?
Is this your catch all question?
Interviewer: Yeh, I'm just making sure I haven't missed anything.
Yeh just that you have to be flexible to get the best, you know she needed breaks she wanted to go and play with the letters, partly using the letters wasn't what I planned to and it became quite curriculum specific but…
Interviewer: What in your little break?
Yeh. Actually I really enjoyed it after I got over the fact I was being watched and stuff.
Interviewer: I really enjoyed it too and I think she did.
Yeh well I think you see that don't you, she's quite tactile isn't she but she's got good non-verbal communication, she didn't mind did she?
No.
And I didn't have to say any of the other stuff that sometimes when you've done assessment to the point of failure where you have to say, right well you got six of those right and they which ones did I get right, you don't have to do any esteem building because its inherent within it isn't it?
Interviewer: No you don't have to quell their anxieties about their failure do you? No, you don't let them get to that point do you, you take them through it so they succeed eventually even if they've experienced some failure along the way.
Yeh.

Most of the discussion during the JPS focused on strategies which would support Bethany. This meant Nat needed to think through what the targets would be.
The targets set on her IEP encompass many of the strategies discussed
The targets are quite broad and not SMART
The focus of the targets has moved from literacy skills to pre-literacy skills
Targets are also focusing on language skills
Strategies will be very useful for the teacher in the classroom
The IEP has moved away from listing equipment which will help Bethany learn
On the previous IEP 'strategies and resources' had become 'resources'
IEPs for children with BESD have become more strategy based
Intention to go back and look at all IEPs on the basis of what has been learnt
Bethany's IEPs contains a lot of information re strategies
The IEP will be useful for the teacher in the next class
When Nat saw the extended descriptive section in the JPS record she laughed and thought she would need to look at the conclusion
The JPS form does not usually contain as much detail
Typically amount of detail given would be when a report was needed for panel although this maybe something Rebecca was thinking

Appendix 6j: Written EP feedback

Record of Joint Problem Solving (Consultation) meeting with Educational Psychologist

To be filled in at consultation meeting. Actions etc. agreed by those present. Copies kept by school and EP, school staff to share with parents, other copies as agreed and specified at end of document.

Pupil: Bethany   **Age**: 6 yrs 4 mths
School: xxxx   Stage: **SA+**   Year Group: **1**
Those Present: Rebecca (EP) Nat (SENCo)
Date of Meeting: **18.6.09**

The following relative strengths and difficulties were identified through assessment and discussion:

Pupil's Strengths	*Pupil's Difficulties*
* Very sociable, affectionate, playful and engaging nature * Good non-verbal interaction skills * Motivation and enthusiasm to participate * Ability to persevere and sustain concentration with adult support * Short term visual-spatial memory * Short term auditory memory * Liked order/neatness, completion * Enjoyed colouring * Fine motor skills for writing and colouring * Use of visual/kinaesthetic approaches to support learning	- Expressive language skills (speech sounds, vocabulary knowledge, sentence construction) - Spontaneous use of expressive language to aid learning - Understanding and knowledge of vocabulary to describe abstract concepts - Ability to systematically and precisely gather information - Speed of acquisition of new concepts - Tendency to respond impulsively and be distracted by concrete materials - Anxiety when tasks are challenging - Working independently in the classroom - Academic attainments

Additional notes

Bethany has been making progress with her literacy and numeracy skills through daily focused intervention with 1:1 support. Bethany wrote her own name. She demonstrated that she could visually match a named image to the corresponding letter on a puzzle. She could accurately count objects (at least 7) when these were systematically presented. Bethany's expressive language was difficult to understand out of context and because I was not familiar with her speech patterns.

Some dynamic assessment was undertaken using a shape sorting toy, the Children's Thinking Modifiability Test (CATM) and a simple version of the Complex Figure Drawing Test, (CFDT). In contrast to standardised psychological assessments that provide scores to reflect the current performance of a child, Dynamic Assessment helps the educational psychologist to analyse the strategies and cognitive functions (thinking skills) used by a child to solve tasks. As it involves the educational psychologist actively intervening to question, prompt and teach the child, it also provides evidence of the child's response to mediation and allows consideration of what sort of mediation might benefit the child in future learning

During the assessments Bethany sustained concentration relatively well given the length of time we worked together (1 ¼ hours) and the difficulties she experienced with the tasks. This participation was achieved through a high level of social interaction (in order to provide positive feedback, reassurance, prompts to focus and mediation), allowing her to become focused on self chosen activity for short periods, changes of activity and short breaks.

When presented with the materials for the shape sorting task Bethany understood that she needed to place the 20 3-D wooden pieces into the corresponding shaped space on the insert board. Bethany successfully inserted all the blocks using a random approach and some trial and error responses. Bethany traced her finger over the shape of the cross when asked to name the shape and was able to verbally label this and the circle but needed other verbal labels (square, triangle, rectangle) to be provided. Bethany struggled to recall and produce these labels at speed. Bethany could be encouraged to display a more systematic approach when required to complete the puzzle again one row at a time but despite modelling Bethany was not able to simultaneously organise the blocks from tallest to shortest. However Bethany later showed that she understood the concept of shortest when applied to a real life situation (hair length). When counting the number of a specific colour Bethany counted some blocks twice because she did not display a systematic approach.

On the simple version of the Complex Figure Drawing Test, which involves organisation, perceptual, and memory skills, Bethany was required to copy a complex figure as accurately as possible and to then draw it again from memory. Mediation was then provided in relation to the original and Bethany's own drawings and the figure was again copied and then recalled from memory. Bethany used her right hand to copy the figure, demonstrating an awareness of the largest shape but having difficulty deconstructing the figure into it's component parts. She benefited from expectation that there was more to be noticed and drawn, conveyed through interaction and verbal/visual prompting. When she felt she had finished she chose to start colouring in part of the drawing. Setting a limit around this, with the possibility that she could do more colouring later was sufficient fro her to move on to the next task. When copying Bethany did not refer back and forth frequently between her drawing and the original in order to check and compare similarities and differences. When asked to recall the drawing from memory Bethany quickly reproduced a drawing very similar to her original suggesting good visual spatial memory in the short term. Mediation involving focusing her attention to visual details, counting circles and lines, drawing over the image and providing language to label and describe parts of the figure was then used. A closed question and gesture enabled Bethany to decide if some lines went up and down or from side to side. Bethany reproduced the drawing more quickly on her second copy including the same parts she had previously noticed. She was not able to significantly adapt her original plan and her drawing was relatively similar to her first copy, although she did display greater accuracy on items that had been counted. Again her second recall from memory was similar to her copy and she retained the small improvements. This assessment suggests that with a high level of adult mediation Bethany can make and retain small improvements in her performance. It would also seem important for Bethany to develop precise information gathering and effective planning approaches from the very start of a task as otherwise it seemed difficult for her to subsequently adapt this.

On the CATM Bethany was required to sort 18 wooden double-sided pieces according to shape, colour and size. This assessment looks at the development of early thinking skills such as comparison and categorisation. Bethany noticed and specified the differing colours of the pieces. Bethany knew circle but had not retained square and triangle as verbal labels from the earlier assessment. Bethany was required to organise the blocks into a 3 x 3 matrix on the basis of colour and shape. When this was approached in a step by step approach requiring attention to one or two concepts at a time Bethany was able to select the correct piece to complete the grid, especially when the irrelevant pieces for each step were kept out of reach. Bethany was able to visually match the small pieces to the big pieces on the basis of shape and colour. When she made an error based on shape she noticed and corrected this. Bethany suggested we could have a game of hiding a piece, which I said we would play later. Bethany could not describe a piece using size, shape and colour. She could quickly and accurately give the colour when I touched a piece. She needed repeated practice and repetition of shape names in order to describe a piece on the basis of shape and colour. Although she made errors when independently naming shapes, when given a choice of two shapes she did select correctly and was confident of her choice. Bethany followed the complex verbal instructions for the hide and seek activity, remembering to tell me to close my eyes and to open them. When I hid a piece from Bethany she was assisted to use the grid to work out the shape and colour of the missing piece. When I hid a piece and then moved one of the top pieces Bethany needed a prompt to notice the rearranged piece (I touched the piece), which she then reorganised into it's correct place. Bethany seemed to enjoy this game and seemed keen to continue taking turns.

Key areas of concern

The level and clarity of Bethany's expressive language skills mean that she often struggles to communicate with others and consequently she has developed excellent non-verbal social interaction and communication skills. Bethany's knowledge of vocabulary and her limited use of language to describe and interpret problems means that she relies heavily on visual and kinaesthetic approaches. Because the vocabulary is not readily available to her she struggles to communicate her understanding and to consider a range of information simultaneously.

When interpreting and gathering information Bethany can be unsystematic in her approach and not attend to relevant details. She has difficulty manipulating a range of concepts simultaneously and needs intensive adult mediation and a high level of repetition to develop and extend her performance.

The following points were agreed as a result of discussions with the EP, based on information available to date and should contribute to the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Strategies/actions/targets	**To be carried out by**
• In general provide a very high level of adult modelling, imitation, repetition and practice during learning activities.	• School staff
• Discuss key objectives for Speech and Language development with SALT and incorporate targets onto IEP so that everybody can support development of focus areas	• N Barby
• Continue to use a high level of concrete resources and visual and kinaesthetic approaches to support learning but use language simultaneously to intensively describe information	• School staff
• Provide a very high level of repetition of specific and accurate labels/vocabulary to describe concepts.	• School
• Encourage Bethany to imitate and use language herself to describe information. Use verbal prompting to help her recall target vocabulary	• School staff
• Relate new vocabulary to her experiences to help increase meaning and recall	• School staff
• Pre-teach curriculum specific vocabulary using pictures/objects	• School staff
• Develop comparative behaviour through opportunities to notice similarities and difference (eg categorising/sorting activities, spot the difference games)	• N Barby

• During Interventions and when supported in the classroom:
 	
   ▪ identify and work on small focus area at a time
   ▪ model what is expected from the start
   ▪ provide clear structure and rules for the task,
   ▪ include interactive game format, with turn taking to inhibit hasty responses
	• N Barby/CT/TA

- gradually expose resources/info, with only relevant resources available
- allow opportunities to participate in favoured activities for short periods,
- provide high level of repetition until recall/use of concept is rapid and consistent (precision approach)
- use lots of gesture accompanied by language to draw attention to information available.
- encourage and model systematic information gathering and exploration of the problem (E.g. Ask 'what else …can you see?/do you notice?)
- Link new knowledge and concepts to personal experiences to make it meaningful
-

• Send copy of current and subsequent IEP to R	• N Barby

Date of next IEP review:

Arrangements for sharing this information with parents:

Mrs x to discuss and share copy with parents

This form completed by: **Rebecca** ……………………….**Educational Psychologist**

Copies to:- Parents (via school)