

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE: DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING PROCESSES IN CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISTURBANCES

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Abstract: This article elaborates three case studies of children - one with autism, one with brain damage and one with Down syndrome whose learning processes were evaluated using Feuerstein's LPAD (Learning Propensity Assessment Device). The dynamic evaluation showed the children's modifiability, their capacity for higher abstract thinking and development. This opened up a different perspective on the child's educational potential and consequently a more active educational intervention. The examples have been drawn from a series of 250 children with learning disabilities, with varying degrees of severity and etiology, whereby Feuerstein's LPAD (Learning Propensity Assessment Device) has been performed. The LPAD is based on Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience and Structural Cognitive Modifiability, which basically has a dynamic and constructive view on intelligence. In dynamic assessment there is a teaching phase and the examiner interferes with the process, so as to produce a mediated "peak" performance. The examples show that test outcomes may be significantly higher after mediating learning processes and strategies. They show what kind and amount of mediation are needed to bring about change. They suggest that dynamic assessment may bring about a positively influential cycle in the family and school system and is more suitable for educational planning than a classic, psychometric and static testing paradigm.