

# An introduction to Dynamic Assessment

Dr Jane Yeomans

# What is Dynamic Assessment?

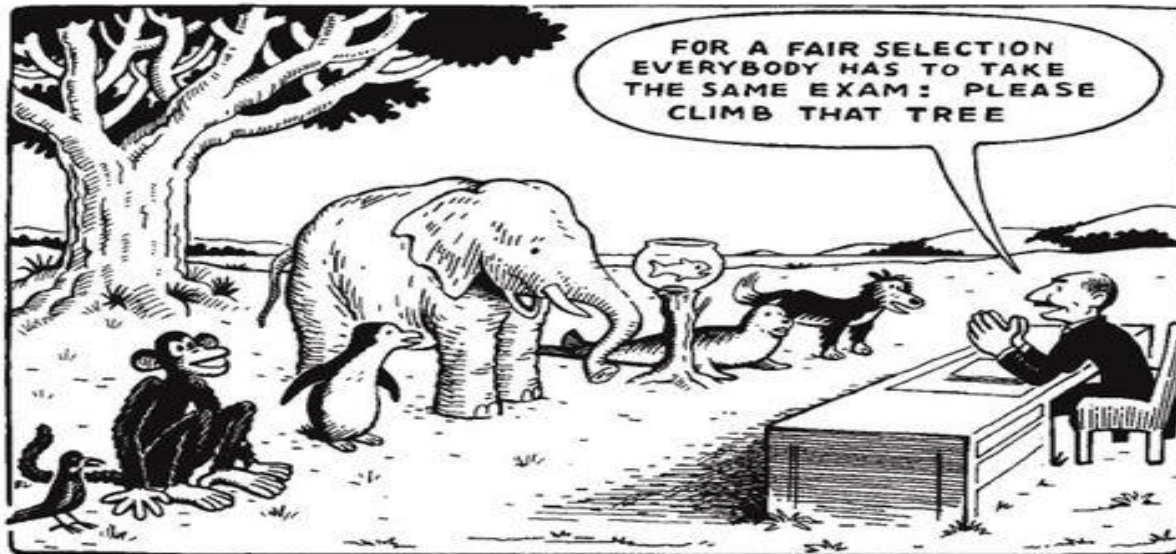
# Assessment paradigms

- Norm referenced
- Criterion referenced
- Dynamic Assessment

‘If we wish to determine how far the child’s knowledge base deviates from the norm, we will continue to administer a psychometric measure. If we wish to determine the content of a child’s specific knowledge base within a specific domain, we will administer a curriculum based or criterion referenced test. If we wish to derive hypotheses about how the child learns, how responsive the child is to attempts to intervene, and what seems to be interfering with the child’s ability to profit from existing attempts at instruction, we will use dynamic assessment.’

Lidz, 1991

# A fair test?



# What is DA?

DA focuses on the processes (rather than the products) of learning. Lidz (1991) suggests three essential characteristics:

- Broadly utilising a test-teach-test format
- Emphasis on modifying the learner
- Assessment always leads to intervention

DA is an 'umbrella' term for a number of approaches to assessment.

Standardised testing is about yesterday's learning

Dynamic assessment is about tomorrow's learning

# Purposes of DA

Purposes of DA:

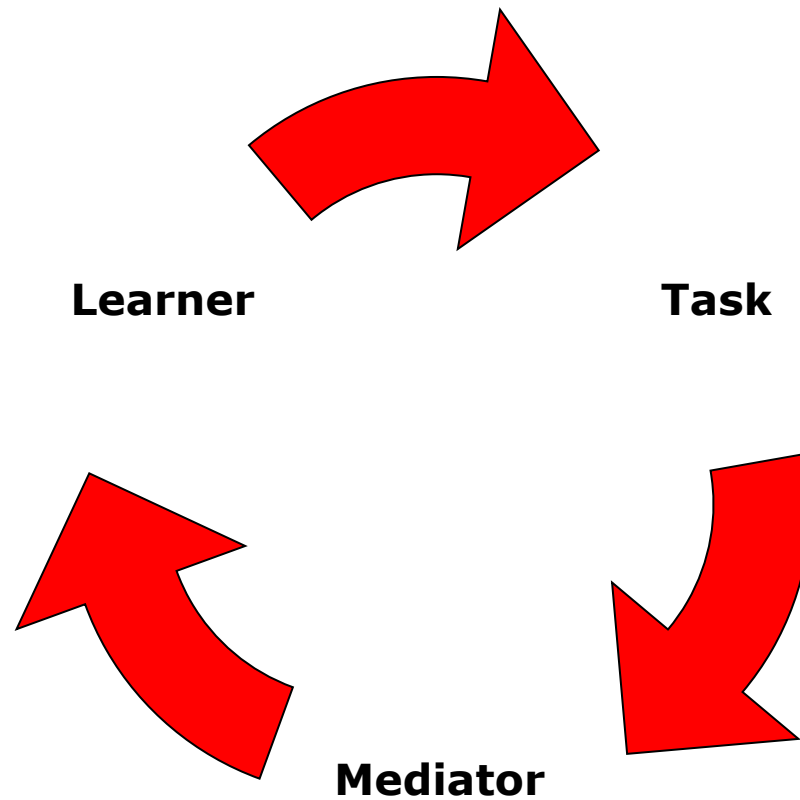
- Maximal performance
- How the pupil learns
- What we need to do in order for the pupil to learn
- Identification of process deficiencies underlying learning failure
- Identifying how to correct these deficiencies

# Key elements of DA

Key questions in DA are related to:

- Cognitive functions
- Mediation
- Pupil response
- Impact of non intellectual factors

# The tripartite learning model





# The learner: cognitive functions

Examining the cognitive functions of the learner at three stages:

➤ Input

➤ Elaboration

➤ Output

# The learner: non intellectual factors

- In Dynamic Assessment, non intellectual factors are also considered when assessing the learner
- These have particular relevance to literacy/dyslexia/SpLD:

*‘While feelings of frustration and anxiety are not the causes of dyslexia, they can exacerbate its effects and result in low self-esteem and disaffection.....Some dyslexic children seek alternative rewards and recognition by becoming ‘the clown of the class’ and amusing their peers during lessons, or become disruptive to avoid yet more difficult tasks. Others may become very withdrawn, either as a result of feeling daunted by what they are asked to do, or because they are tiring from finding reading and writing so effortful. ‘ Rose Report, page 122*

# The mediator

**Definition of mediation:** ‘The way in which stimuli are transformed by a mediator who selects and organises stimuli appropriate for the child. Through this process the cognitive structure of the child is affected.’ (Feuerstein et al, 2002).

Essential characteristics:

- Intentionality and reciprocity
- Meaning
- Transcendence (bridging)

# ‘Sandwich’ approach to mediation



# 'Cake' approach to mediation



# The task

The task element of the tripartite learning model involves analysing tasks according to seven dimensions:

- Content
- Modality
- Phase
- Cognitive operations
- Complexity
- Abstraction
- Efficiency

How is DA relevant to dyslexia/SpLD?

# Cognitive functions and dyslexia

- The purpose of DA is not to diagnose
- Strengths and weaknesses in cognitive functions that relate to a dyslexia diagnosis can help with determining suitable interventions
- DA includes mediation of the affective aspects of learning (non intellectual factors), making links to self esteem intervention



# Links to specific cognitive functions

Concepts of underlying ability and cognitive processing might relate to specific cognitive functions related to literacy that can be improved through mediation. For example:

- Gathering information systematically
- Precision and accuracy
- Considering and working with more than one source of information
- Sequencing
- Comparison
- Hypothetical thinking
- Restraining impulsivity
- Overcoming blocking

# Metacognition and dyslexia intervention

- Dr Gavin Reid\* states that intervention should: ‘Incorporate metacognitive aspects – this should be seen as an integral component of all programmes –this helps with bridging and transferring knowledge, understanding and skills. Essentially it involves thinking about thinking and the learners self-questioning of how a particular response was arrived at.’
- Sutton Trust research suggests that metacognitive approaches to teaching and learning are the most **cost effective** (much more so than use of Teaching Assistants, individual instruction or one to one instruction)

\*source: [www.drgavinreid.com](http://www.drgavinreid.com)

# Examples of literacy interventions using a metacognitive approach

## **Reciprocal Reading (Palinscar and Brown):**

- A way of teaching pupils reading comprehension
- It teaches this aspect of reading by **explicitly** teaching pupils the key skills that they need to read for meaning:
  - Predicting
  - Questioning
  - Clarifying
  - Summarising

## **Using self regulation to improve writing (Educational Endowment Foundation):**

- Teaches pupils to plan, monitor and evaluate their writing
- Self regulation looks at how negative thoughts can affect performance (overcoming blocking)
- Self regulation also helps the pupil to slow down and take their time (restraining impulsivity)

How can I find out more?

# The Cognitive Abilities Profile (CAP)

- Consultation and observation tool (not a questionnaire or tick sheet)
- Framework for a collaborative process
- Flexible tool
- Based on principles of dynamic assessment

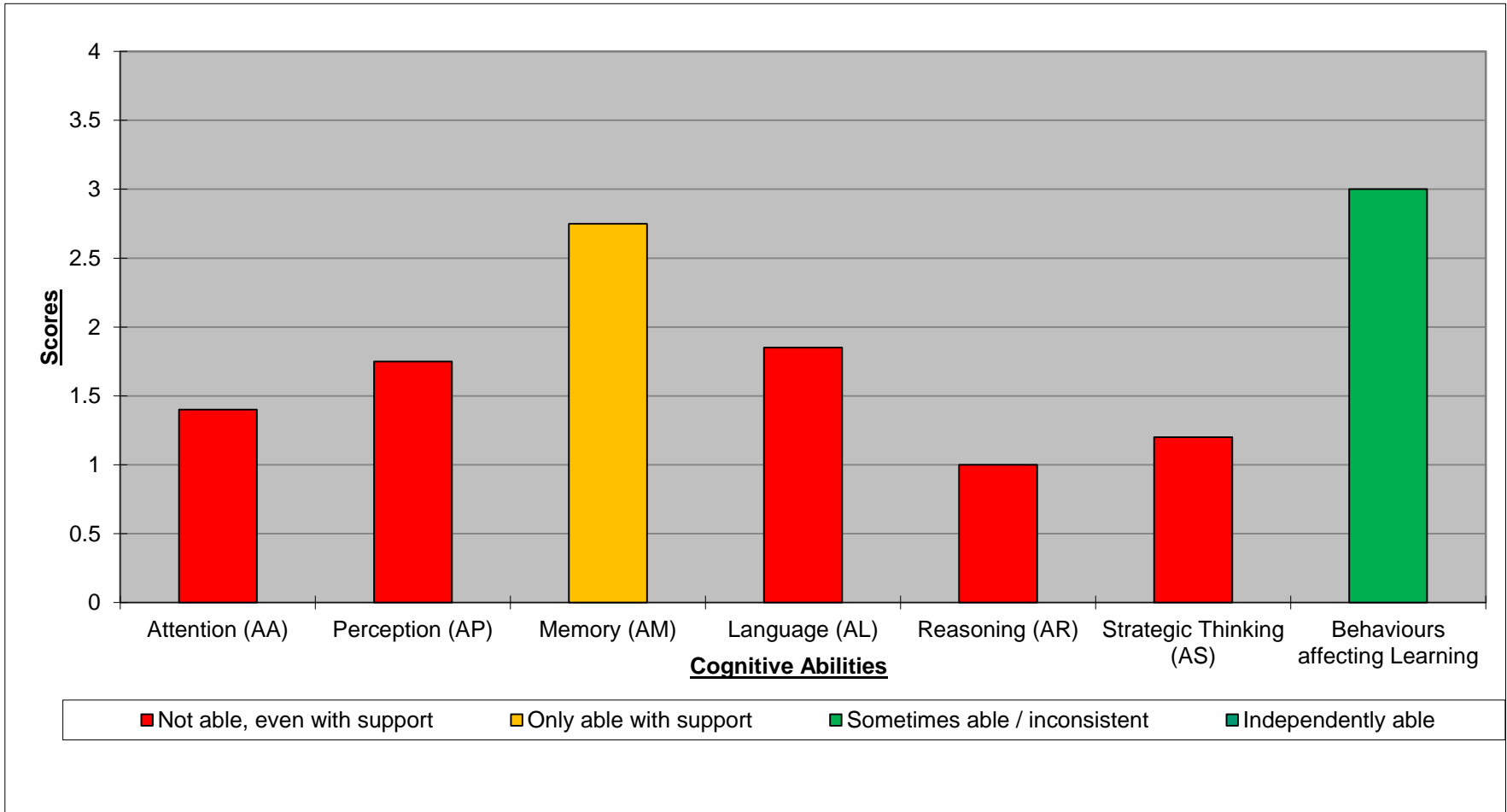
# Goals of the CAP

- Benefits of dynamic assessment without having to do dynamic assessment
- Link with consultation approach
- To highlight cognitive skills in order to develop cognitive IEPs/provision maps
- Link to intervention and what makes a difference
- Multi-agency approach
- Follow-up and review

# Structure of the CAP

- Section A: Cognitive abilities of the learner
- Section B: The learner's response to teaching and mediation
- Section C: Task analysis and the context of learning
- Summary: summary profile and intervention plan

# Example of a CAP graph





# A mediational approach to teaching and learning

- Teaching can be mediational (but it doesn't happen by accident!)
- Metacognitive awareness can be an important element in dyslexia intervention because it teaches how to apply strategies
- Adult language can be mediational; for example:
  - What does finished look like?
  - What do you need to do first/next?
  - When is another time you need to.....?

# Summary

# In summary.....

- Dynamic Assessment give us different information from other approaches
- It takes a positive and optimistic view about the capacity to learn and profit from instruction
- Dynamic assessment can enhance information about underlying ability and cognitive processing by giving information that feeds directly into intervention
- Some specific literacy interventions draw on learning processes/metacognition
- The CAP can be a useful way of beginning to work dynamically

# Thank you!

## Any questions?