



Dynamic Assessment for Identifying Spanish-Speaking English Learners' Risk for Mathematics Disabilities: Does Language of Administration Matter?

Adapted from

Cho, E., Fuchs, L. S., Seethaler, P. M., Fuchs, D., & Compton, D. L. (2020). Dynamic assessment for identifying Spanish-speaking English learners' risk for mathematics disabilities: Does language of administration matter? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 53(2), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219419898887>

Accurately identifying English learners at risk for mathematics difficulties is challenging because limited English proficiency can hinder test performance.

This study examined whether Dynamic Assessment, an approach to testing where students are instructed on tested material as part of the test, can improve the identification of mathematics difficulties in 392 first-grade English learners, with varying levels of language dominance. Students spoke mostly English with some Spanish, Spanish and English equally, mostly Spanish with some English, or exclusively Spanish. Students were randomly assigned to either a Spanish or English Dynamic Assessment condition.

Dynamic Assessment

LEVEL 1

During the Dynamic Assessment, testers provided students (a) instruction on addition and subtraction and (b) opportunities for practice and feedback



LEVEL 2

Testers then provided students with guided instruction on how to use a number line for addition and subtraction



LEVEL 3

Finally, testers provided scaffolded instruction to help students apply the number line strategy for solving addition and subtraction problems



Path analyses of student scores found:



en español

For Spanish-dominant English Learners, Spanish-Dynamic Assessment provided fairer access to the test than English-Dynamic Assessment.



Spanish-Dynamic Assessment was more likely to predict calculation skills in Spanish-dominant English Learners than English-dominant Learners, but there was no difference for word-problem solving.



English-Dynamic Assessment was predictive for both calculation and word problem solving, regardless of ELs' language dominance.



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Journal of Learning Disabilities®

This visual abstract is funded by a grant to the National Center on Improving Literacy from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with the Office of Special Education Programs (Award #: S283D160003). The opinions or policies expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of OESE, OSEP, or the U.S. Department of Education. You should not assume endorsement by the Federal government. Copyright © 2019 National Center on Improving Literacy.



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