Dynamic Assessment

(Overview and Tools)
Dynamic Assessment Model for Academic and Language Contexts

- **Overview:** Dynamic Assessment (DA) is a fluid evaluation process that changes with development and learning versus a static model that identifies knowledge previously learned.

- **Purpose:** DA assists in describing a student’s ability to learn, retain, and transfer learned information or concepts. DA can reflect the gap between the student’s actual development and their developmental potential. This is referred to as the “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD).
  
  - The size of the “zone” can be determined by using a “test-teach-retest” format. The number of prompts given in the teaching phase and the transfer effect helps determine the Zone of Proximal Development.
  
  - DA can assist clinicians/educational staff in determining when and how to intervene. For example, children who show limited change during the assessment may require extensive assistance in order to facilitate changes in language or academic behavior. In contrast, children who show significant changes during the assessment, and who can maintain those changes, may not need specialized academic or language services.

- **One type of a DA approach: Test – Teach – Retest**
  Within this paradigm, the examiner first identifies deficient or emerging skills that may or may not be related to a lack of experiences with that skill. The examiner then provides an intervention or lesson designed to modify the child’s level of functioning in the targeted areas. By teaching the principles of the task, the test situation changes from an *evaluative* interaction (typical of traditional test situations) to a *teaching* interaction where the examiner maximizes the child’s feelings of competence. The performance on the posttest (retest phase) serves as an indicator of the child’s modifiability following multiple teaching experiences. It should be noted that even though this approach is of non-standardized research from Pena reflects that both the specificity and sensitivity are within acceptable parameters. However, it should be noted that the fidelity of implementation may impact the validity of the results, the reliability is grounded by the included criteria rubric for both the learning strategies checklist and modifiability scale.

  - Clinicians/educational staff should also use qualitative data to describe changes in the pertaining to the student’s responses. This may include the types of scaffolding and supports required during the teaching activity.
A rating scales checklist can help staff identify differences that relate to limited educational opportunity (rather than disorder). The scales are also helpful to determine what it takes to effect change, such as the amount of effort/intensity, time, type of cue, and type of modification that may be needed for the student to complete the task. This scale can be developed using a Likert-type of rating scales (e.g., none of the time, some of the time, etc…) for a variety of variables. The data can also be noted anecdotally.

- **Validity and Reliability:** It should be noted that Dynamic Assessment is a non-standardized approach to identify how a student learns, retains, and transfers information. However, according to Pena’s research, the specificity rate (e.g., the classification of a traditional learner) was 95.3% (good – Plante & Vance, 1994) and the sensitivity rate (the classification of low language ability) was 77.8% (fair – Plante & Vance, 1994). In addition, the reliability was noted at .82 and higher. Pena also noted that gains were not due to the “practice effect” but due to the MLE treatment. However, it should be noted that fidelity of instruction can impact the validity and reliability of results.

- When an appropriate teaching experience is provided, children who are different, but typical language learners, are capable of demonstrating efficient response to intervention (i.e., ability to learn, retain, and transfer new information). On the other hand, students with language-learning disabilities may benefit from a targeted teaching session, but will demonstrate little quantitative change or need significant accommodations and modifications to complete the task. Students with language-learning disabilities have a difficult time learning, retaining, and transferring new information in an efficient manner.

- Conclusion: The measure of learning change, such as MLE score changes, ratings of modifiability, and qualitative changes, may be useful in differentiating language differences from disorder, identifying targeted learning strategies for a specific student, and assist in the decision-making process to address a student’s individualized needs.

This document is made up of excerpts from the following sources


Recommended Steps in a Dynamic Assessment
(Test – Teach – Retest Format)

I. Pretest

- Identify skill area deficits (this can be obtained from one or more of the following)
  - Observation
  - ESL test data
  - Second Language Acquisition checklist results
  - Teacher report
  - Work samples
  - Standardized or criterion-based measures
  - Curriculum-based measures
  - Language sample

- Set up mechanism to establish baseline data
  - Develop a criterion-based assessment tool
  - Use raw or standardized scores from language or academic instrument

II. Teaching Phase (i.e., Mediated Learning Experience)

- Ideally a minimum of 3 – 5 sessions
  - Can start after the pre-test
  - Minimum of 30-minute sessions
  - Sessions should be at least 1-2 days apart and not more than 1 week.
  - Session should be individual or in small group (note: when in small group, comparison to other students may assist in data collection)

- Pre-test items used during the teaching phase
  - It’s OK to use some of the items
  - The teach phase should include targeted concepts not listed in pre-test

- The focus of the teaching phase is to teach a targeted concept (e.g., labeling, verb tense, sound-symbol relationships, etc…) not to be content specific for the 3 sessions (e.g., only teach animal names).

- Be able to scaffold a concept to assist the student at their learning level and within their “Zone of Proximal Development”
  - Move from an expressive task to a receptive task
  - Use visuals or manipulatives
  - Break task down into discrete hierarchical parts
• Lesson should include the main components of “mediation”
  o Intentionality: *Statement of goal and purpose of interaction*
  o Meaning: *Why concept is important and how it relates to student*
  o Transcendence: *Develop metacognitive skills – asking “what if questions”*
  o Panning/Competence: *Children think about what they have learned and how they will use that skill the next time they are asked to complete a similar task*
  o Transfer: *Summarize a lesson and help children think about how they will generalize the skill they have been learning to other situations*

• Dynamic assessment focuses on the cognitive functions and processes (e.g., attention, maintenance, impulse regulation, and strategy application).

• Following each teaching session, the clinician/educator rates the child on the Learning Strategies Checklist (LSC) and Modifiability Scale (MS).
  o On the LSC, the clinician notes the child’s responsivity and ability to apply learned strategies
  o Note accommodations, modifications, and scaffold techniques used in order for student to be successful
  o The MS is used to summarize the clinician’s judgment of overall student change (i.e., examiner effort, student response, transfer).

• Use the Dynamic Assessment Observational Checklist if needed for additional data

• Dynamic assessment can be used to target a communication concept (i.e., content, form, and use), a reading concept (i.e., phonemic awareness, word attack skills, comprehension skills, etc.), math skills (i.e., calculation & reasoning), and writing skills (i.e., orthographic, organization, etc.).

**III. Post-Test**

• No more than 2 days from the final teaching session
• Use same tool and items from pre-test to determine student growth

*Remember:* Transfer of knowledge from pre to post-test provides only one dimension of information. The multidimensional utility of Dynamic Assessment is to identify “how a student learns information, how they retain information, and how they transfer information.”
Concepts of the Dynamic Assessment Teaching Session
(i.e., Mediated Learning Experience)

During the teaching session, the clinician/educator carefully supports the child’s learning at a level that is somewhat above what they are able to do without support (i.e. ZPD). Examiners do this by pointing out:

- The learning goal
- Explaining why that goal is important
- Helping children develop and follow a plan for learning
- Helping children think about possible relationships between the learning goal and everyday situations and events.

During a teaching session, the examiners observe the strategies children use to meet the demands of the learning goal. Examiners ask four main questions:

- Are children able to form a more complete or more coherent answers with examiner support?
- Do children pay attention to and include more elements of the targeted concept when the examiner uses interactive teaching?
- How hard does the examiner have to work in order for children to make positive changes?
- Is learning quick and efficient or is it slow and labored?

The answers to these questions become the basis for determining whether initial low performance is likely due to a language-learning disorder, lack of experience, or a language difference.

5 Basic Components of the Teaching (i.e., Mediation) Phase

**Intentionality:** Strategies are used to explain the goal of the activity to the student. It is important for the student to understand the goal(s) of each teaching session. Understanding the goal helps the student maintain focus on the target task and ignore irrelevant stimuli. The examiner should periodically remind the student of the goal or ask if the student remembers the goal.

**Example:** Today we are going to talk about different parts of a story.

**Meaning:** Strategies are used to explain to the student why the task or goal is important. This helps the student attend to the important features of the task and understand task relevance.

**Example:** (When teaching sequencing and use of temporal prepositions within the context of a story): When we tell or write a story, it’s helpful to use words that describe the order of when things happened. This helps the listener or the reader to understand and remember what and when things happened. We use words like first, next, then, last, before, and after.

**Transcendence:** Teaching strategies are used to help a student develop metacognitive and metalinguistic skills related to a task. The examiner may engage the student with concepts pertaining to who, what, when, where, and why related questions. In addition, the examiner should introduce “what if” questions to facilitate thinking about alternative strategies and answers. Students may also discuss with the examiner the relative benefits of alternative scenarios or strategies. This type of teaching encourages independent, hypothetical thinking and learning.

**Example:** Lets talk about who was in the beginning of the story. When we talk about “who” is in the story, we call that person or animal a character in the story. Where did the story take place? We call the place where the story took place the setting.
**Planning:** The student verbalizes or uses strategies to engage or complete a targeted task.

**Example:** We can use our fingers to remember the 5 “Ws”: Who, What, When, Where, Why

**Transfer:** A summary of the session is discussed to help the student think about using their new skills in related settings or situations (i.e., story time, creative writing, answering teacher questions, etc…).

**Example:** Tell me the important parts of a story again. Tell me a word that we learned that describes when things happened in the story?

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**Over**

*Example Supports and Scaffolding Techniques the Examiner Can Use during the Teaching Session (or Mediated Learning Experience)*

- Provide a model or example of the concept, idea, or linguistic structure the student needs to learn.
- Shorten the directions given to the student.
- Require the student to restate the directions.
- Give the student extra time to organize their thoughts.
- Give the student cues to assist in word retrieval.
- Provide a more elaborate explanation of questions and instructions.
- Use expansions of the student’s statements.
- Encourage elaboration by asking questions.
- Use simple terms when explaining concepts.
- Respond positively to the student’s verbal attempts.
- Teach the student some strategies for asking for assistance and/or clarification.
- Give instructions and examples on using descriptive language.
- Use questions to help the student make connections between old and new information.
- Use semantic maps of stories and expository texts.
- Pair pictures and objects with directions or explanations of concepts.
- Simplify the questions posed to the student.
Dynamic Assessment Scoring Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Strategy Checklist</th>
<th>Scoring Criteria (Circle One)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student exhibits an orienting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>response and focus to task-relevant stimuli</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Specific Performance</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student performs features of</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>the target task (e.g., answer</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>questions, describing,</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sequencing, use comparative</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>relationships, summarizing,</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student verbalizes or uses</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>systematic strategy to task</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self Regulation / Awareness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student waits for instructions,</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>seeks help when needed, corrects</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>self, or rewards self</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student shows enthusiasm for</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>task &amp; persists in the face of</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>frustration</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction with Adults</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Seeks help when needed &amp;</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>changes responses according to</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>adult cues</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Learning Strategy Score__________ (Use score for Analysis on Reverse Side)

**Modifiability Scale** (Note: overall performance after each teaching session)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extreme (1)</th>
<th>High – Moderate (2)</th>
<th>Moderate-Slight (3)</th>
<th>Slight-None (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examiner Effort</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Responsivity</td>
<td>None (1)</td>
<td>Slight (2)</td>
<td>Moderate (3)</td>
<td>High (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>None (1)</td>
<td>Low (2)</td>
<td>Moderate (3)</td>
<td>High (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Modifiability Score__________ (Use Score for Analysis on Reverse Side)

*Note: See Attached Scoring Criteria Description for Assistance*
Differentiation Criteria

Learning Strategies Checklist:

6 Points Profound Learning Challenges
7-12 Points Severe Learning Challenges
13-18 Points Moderate Learning Challenges
19-24 Points Mild Learning Challenges
25-30 Points Typical Learning Characteristics (i.e., Efficiently Learns, Retains, & Transfers Information)

Modifiability Scale:

3 Points Observed Learning Patterns - Atypical & Severe
4-6 Points Observed Learning Patterns - Atypical & Moderate
7-9 Points Observed Learning Patterns - Atypical & Mild
10-12 Points Observed Learning Patterns - Typical

Note: To maximize the validity of the Dynamic Assessment results, the teaching lessons need to be within the student’s “zone of proximal development” (i.e., within their developmental range). If a targeted lesson is too easy or challenging, the results of the Dynamic Assessment can be compromised.

Adapted from:
Dynamic Assessment Scoring Criteria

Learning Strategies Checklist

Attention: The student exhibits an orienting response and focus to task-relevant stimuli (i.e., ignoring irrelevant stimuli), throughout length of task. Student who is distractible may need greater repetition of instruction and may require more mediation (i.e. direct instruction) to learn.

1. High distractibility and minimal attention 75-100% of the time
2. Prompting / repetition needed more than 40-70% of the time
3. Prompting / repetition needed between 10 – 30% of the time
4. Attentional prompts needed only at the beginning of mediation session.
5. Orienting response and on-task behavior without prompts.

Task Specific Performance: This activity targets the specific teaching and student response of a targeted learning task. This may include basic receptive and expressive tasks. However, it can also include teaching more advanced language and academic tasks that require both metacognitive and metalinguistic skills related to a task. The examiner/teacher may engage the student with concepts pertaining to who, what, when, where, and why related questions. In addition, the examiner could also introduce “what if” questions to facilitate thinking about alternative strategies and answers. Students may also discuss with the examiner the relative benefits of alternative scenarios or strategies. This type of teaching encourages independent, hypothetical thinking and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Learner Awareness</th>
<th>Learner Independence</th>
<th>Performance Descriptors</th>
<th>Performance Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5. Expert | • Reflects on the task performance | • Spontaneously uses target behaviors | • Performs at a mature age/grade level  
• Always appropriate  
• Always consistent  
• Always precise  
• Always complete  
• Always spontaneous  
• Always independent | • Has 0-1 errors or minor deviations (which are age appropriate)  
• Clearly conveys meaning |
| 4. Competent | • Is conscious of the task performance | • Regularly uses target behaviors | • Performs at an established level  
• Usually appropriate  
• Usually precise  
• Usually complete  
• Usually spontaneous  
• Usually independent | • Has 2-3 errors or several minor deviations (which which are age appropriate)  
• Errors rarely interfere with meaning |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Limited Language and/or Academic Skills</strong></td>
<td>Requires repeated direct modeling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not use targeted behaviors in an expressive manner.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Primary mode of communication may be at a receptive level.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Beginner</strong></td>
<td>Is not self-directed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Requires delayed models</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rarely uses targeted behaviors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Uses patterns and rules randomly, if at all</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Usually inappropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually inconsistent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually imprecise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually incomplete</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually needs prompts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually needs support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Advanced Beginner</strong></td>
<td>Is an active learner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actively participates in the targeted task</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sometimes uses targeted behaviors, or uses targeted behaviors with support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Uses rules and patterns at an emerging level, not firmly established</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sometimes appropriate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sometimes inconsistent</td>
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<td>Sometimes imprecise</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sometimes needs support</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planning:</strong></td>
<td>The student verbalizes or uses a systematic strategy to engage or complete targeted task.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. **Use or verbalization of systematic strategy to task with minimal difficulty or prompting.**
4. **Use or verbalization of systematic strategy to task between 50-90% of the time with prompting.**
3. **Use or verbalization of systematic strategy to task between 25-50% of the time with prompting.**
2. **Use or verbalization of systematic strategy to task less than 25% of the time with prompting.**
1. **No systematic strategy used for the task.**
**Self-Regulation:** The student demonstrates self-awareness and self-regulation skills. For example, the student waits for instructions, asks for assistance when task becomes difficult, responds to instruction with minimal prompts, is aware of correctness of own responses, and may use self-rewarding behavior.

4. Use of self-correction and self-reward between 50-90% of the time. Waits for instruction throughout the session.
2. Impulsivity and fidgety 50% of the time with repeated impulsive responses
1. Impulsivity and fidgety throughout the session with random impulsive responses.

**Motivation:** The student shows enthusiasm for the task and persists in the face of frustration.

5. High enthusiasm about task as noted by verbalization, body language, and/or facial expressions.
4. Willingness to try most tasks throughout the session, despite difficulty.
3. Occasional attempts to end the teaching activity.
2. Frequent attempts to end the teaching activity.
1. Refusal to participate in the teaching activity.

**Interaction with Adults:** The student seeks help when the task becomes difficult. The student changes responses according to adult cues and feedback

5. Consistent use of verbal / nonverbal requests for help when task becomes difficult. Response consistently changes based upon adult input.
4. Use of requests for help most of the time. Occasional repetition of old errors in spite of adult input (between 10-20% of the time).
3. Inconsistent change in responses despite adult feedback (between 20-50% of the time).
2. Frequent repetition of old errors despite adult feedback (between 50-80% of the time).
1. Minimal change in response even after adult feedback (between 80-100% of the time).
**Modifiability Scale**

**Examiner Effort**: Using the data from the learning strategies checklist, identify the amount and intensity or effort required to induce change during the teaching session.

1. Slight – None (0-25% of the time)
2. High – Moderate (50-75% of the time)
3. Moderate – Slight (25-50% of the time)
4. Extreme (> 75% of the time)

**Student’s Response to Teaching**: Using the data from the learning strategies checklist, rate the student’s overall responsiveness to the examiner’s teaching during the lesson.

1. None (7 or more major errors, with several minor errors, that require repeated scaffolding and direct modeling)
2. Slight (4-6 major errors with several minor deviations with repeated scaffolding and delayed modeling)
3. Moderate (2-3 errors with several minor deviations with periodic needed scaffolding)
4. High (0-1 errors with no or minor repeated supports)

**Ability to Transfer**: Using the data from the learning strategies checklist, rate how the student applies the learned strategies to a new task.

1. None (7 or more major errors, with several minor errors, that require repeated scaffolding and direct modeling)
2. Low (4-6 major errors with several minor deviations with repeated scaffolding and delayed modeling)
3. Moderate (2-3 errors with several minor deviations with periodic needed scaffolding)
4. High (0-1 errors with no or minor repeated supports)

Questions to Help Determine How a Student Processes or Learns Information

*Use a Frame of Reference in Assessing Students*

- Does the student attempt to paraphrase information when having difficulty understanding information? Yes / No
- Does the student use rehearsal of the information as a method of remembering information? Yes / No
- Is the student frequently unaware of errors in understanding (processing) information? Yes / No
- Does the student frequently ask questions when unsure? Yes / No
- Does the student try to understand information when he/she is having difficulty processing it, or does he/she give up? Yes / No
- Does the student ask for help when struggling? Yes / No
- Is the student confused by long, complex, and/or embedded information? Yes / No
- Does the student require frequent repetitions in order to understand the material? Yes / No
- Does the student have difficulty following multi-stage instructions? Yes / No
- Does the student need additional cues (visual, manipulative, auditory, etc.) to understand the information? Yes / No
- Does the student show irritability towards others when having difficulty? Yes / No
- Does the student show frustration when learning new information? Yes / No
Possible Indicators of a Language-Learning Disability

Culturally and linguistically diverse student with language-learning disabilities demonstrate problems in both their primary language and English. These problems may be observed in the following areas:

- Difficulty in learning language at a normal rate, even with special assistance in both languages
- Deficits in vocabulary
- Short mean length of utterance
- Communication difficulties at home
- Communication difficulties when interacting with peers from a similar background
- Auditory processing problems (e.g., poor memory, poor comprehension)
- Lack of organization, structure, and sequence in spoken and written language; difficulty conveying thoughts
- Slow academic achievement despite adequate academic English proficiency
- Family history of special education/learning difficulties
- Slower development of siblings (as per parent report)
- Reliance on gestures rather than speech to communicate
- Inordinate slowness in responding to questions
- General disorganization and confusion
- Difficulty paying attention
- Need for frequent repetition and prompts during instruction
- Need for a program of instruction that is more structured than that used with most other students
- Need for a program of instruction that is more structured than that used with most other students
- Difficulties impacting grammar and sentence structure
- Difficulties in the use of precise vocabulary and overuse of words such as *stuff*, *things*, *you know*, etc…
- Inappropriate social use of language (e.g., interrupts frequently, digresses from topic, is insensitive to the needs or communication goals of conversational partners, cannot stay on the topic of discussion, cannot take turns in conversation)
- Poor sequencing skills. Communication is disorganized, incoherent, and leaves listener confused
- Overall communication skills that are substantially poorer than those of peers

The Warning Signs of Learning Disabilities

Susan Bergert, December 2000
ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
(References included with original publication)

(Below are excerpts from Ms. Bergert’s Article)

1. Warning Signs in Preschool Children: Although growth patterns vary among individuals, uneven development or significant delays in development can suggest characteristics of a specific learning disability. It is important to keep in mind that the behaviors listed below must persist over time to be considered warning signs. Any child may occasionally exhibit one or two of these behaviors during the course of normal development.

Language
• Slow development in speaking words or sentences
• Pronunciation problems
• Difficulty learning new words
• Difficulty following simple directions
• Difficulty understanding questions
• Difficulty expressing wants and desires
• Difficulty rhyming words
• Lack of interest in story telling

Motor Skills
• Clumsiness
• Poor balance
• Difficulty manipulating small objects
• Awkwardness with running, jumping, or climbing
• Trouble learning to tie shoes, button shirts, or perform other self-help activities
• Avoidance of drawing or tracing

Cognition
• Trouble memorizing the alphabet or days of the week
• Poor memory for what should be routine (everyday) procedures
• Difficulty with cause and effect, sequencing, and counting
• Difficulty with basic concepts such as size, shape, color
Attention
• High distractibility
• Impulsive behavior
• Unusual restlessness (hyperactivity)
• Difficulty staying on task
• Difficulty changing activities
• Constant repetition of an idea, inability to move on to a new idea (perseveration)

Social Behavior
• Trouble interacting with others, playing alone
• Prone to sudden and extreme mood changes
• Easily frustrated
• Hard to manage, has temper tantrums

II. Warning Signs in Elementary School Children: It is during the elementary school years that learning problems frequently become apparent as disabilities interfere with increasingly demanding and complex learning tasks. Difficulties in learning academic subjects and emotional and/or social skills may become a problem. Warning signs for this age group may include any of those listed above for the preschool children in addition to the following.

Language / Mathematics
• Slow learning of the correspondence of sound to letter
• Consistent errors in reading or spelling
• Difficulty remembering basic sight words
• Inability to retell a story in sequence
• Trouble learning to tell time or count money
• Confusion of math signs (+, -, x, /, =)
• Transposition of number sequences
• Trouble memorizing math facts
• Trouble with place value
• Difficulty remembering the steps of mathematic operations such as long division

Motor Skills
• Poor coordination, or awkwardness
• Difficulty copying from the chalkboard
• Difficulty aligning columns (math)
• Poor handwriting
**Attention / Organization**

- Difficulty concentrating or focusing on a task
- Difficulty finishing work on time
- Inability to follow multiple directions
- Unusual sloppiness, carelessness
- Poor concept of direction (left, right)
- Rejection of new concepts, or changes in routine

**Social Behavior**

- Difficulty understanding facial expressions or gestures
- Difficulty understanding social situations
- Tendency to misinterpret behavior of peers and/or adults
- Apparent lack of “common sense”

**III. Warning Signs in Secondary School Children:** Some learning disabilities go undetected until secondary school. Physical changes occurring during adolescence and the increased demands of middle and senior high school may bring the disabilities to light. Previously satisfactory performance declines. Inappropriate social skills may lead to changes in peer relationships and discipline problems. Increased frustration and poor self-concepts can lead to depression and/or angry outbursts. Warning signs of learning disabilities in secondary students include the following, which again, should occur as a pattern of behaviors, to a significant degree, and over time.

**Language / Mathematics / Social Studies**

- Avoidance of reading and writing
- Tendency to misread information
- Difficulty summarizing
- Poor reading comprehension
- Difficulty understanding subject area textbooks
- Trouble with open-ended questions
- Continued poor spelling
- Poor grasp of abstract concepts
- Poor skills in writing essays
- Difficulty learning a foreign language
- Poor ability to apply math skills
Attention / Organization
- Difficulty staying organized
- Trouble with test formats such as multiple choice
- Slow work pace in class and in testing situations
- Poor note taking skills
- Poor ability to proofread or double check work

Social Behavior
- Difficulty accepting criticism
- Difficulty seeking or giving feedback
- Problems negotiating or advancing for oneself
- Difficulty resisting peer pressure
- Difficulty understanding another person’s perspectives