

FROM THE CONCEPT OF ZPD TO THE PRACTICE OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

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Though the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is often presented as a theoretical basis of dynamic assessment, the theoretical scope of ZPD is much wider than the current practice of dynamic assessment. Vygotsky discussed the notion of ZPD in three different albeit interconnected contexts: developmental, educational, and assessment related. Vygotsky envisaged the notion of ZPD as applicable not only to such „pure” cognitive functions as perception, attention, and memory, but also to more complex cognitive processes associated with reading, writing, mathematical reasoning and so on. Historically the majority of dynamic assessment studies focused on a rather narrow task of demonstrating that this type of assessment helps minority children and children with special needs to reveal their “hidden” potential. As a result some potentially important applications of the ZPD theory remained neglected. One of them is a general distinction between an individual's current performance and his or her learning potential. Dynamic assessment allows us to see this difference not only in underachieving students but in all types of learners including high functioning children and adults. Another important question is that of modularity: Is learning potential a general trait of an individual, something like a learning equivalent of general intelligence score (*G*), or is it modular, dependent on modality and content of the tasks? Finally, the question is whether the ability to learn quickly from cues, models, and other prompts is distinct from cognitive modifiability that requires generalization and transfer. These issues will be illustrated by recent empirical results of dynamic assessment studies.