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Dynamic Assessment (DA) in a university clinic for Danish children with Developmental Communicative Disorders (DCD) – problem-based practice as a means for training psychology students how to intervene with SLI-children.

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Dynamic Assessment (DA) in a university clinic for Danish children with Developmental Communicative Disorders (DCD) – problem-based practice as a means for training psychology students how to intervene with SLI-children

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Introduction

Our new University clinic applies a problem-based practice in training master students of psychology to intervene with SLI-children. The focus of the clinic is DA, which has been argued beneficial for children with SLI. The theoretical basis for DA is the work of Feuerstein and Vygotsky. The focus of DA is to mediate different learning strategies to the child through an assessor working with the theory of the child's zone of proximal development.

Our learning process consisted of further developing the context and method of working dynamically with 6 to 12-year-old children with DCD.

The four master students were each given an area of responsibility per child, forming a *reflecting team* seated behind a one way screen. This setup combined with DA has, to our knowledge, not yet been seen in any study concerning children with DCD.

Child	Therapist	Main observer (reflective team)	Parent supervisor	Technician	Supervisor
DCD01	PIA	KARINA	CHRISTINA	SOFIE	Supervisor 1
DCD02	SOFIE	CHRISTINA	KARINA	PIA	Supervisor 2
DCD03	CHRISTINA	PIA	SOFIE	KARINA	Supervisor 1
DCD04	KARINA	SOFIE	PIA	CHRISTINA	Supervisor 2

Problem-based practice

During the course the master students were given the task of planning the 7 sessions, taking into account several different aspects; the child's zone of actual development (pre-test), their interests, their response to the mediating process. In addition to this each session has been evaluated by the therapist and the reflecting team in order to discover micro-processes and possible advantageous learning strategies for the individual child.

The therapist focused on mediating in three areas: language, working memory and narratives.

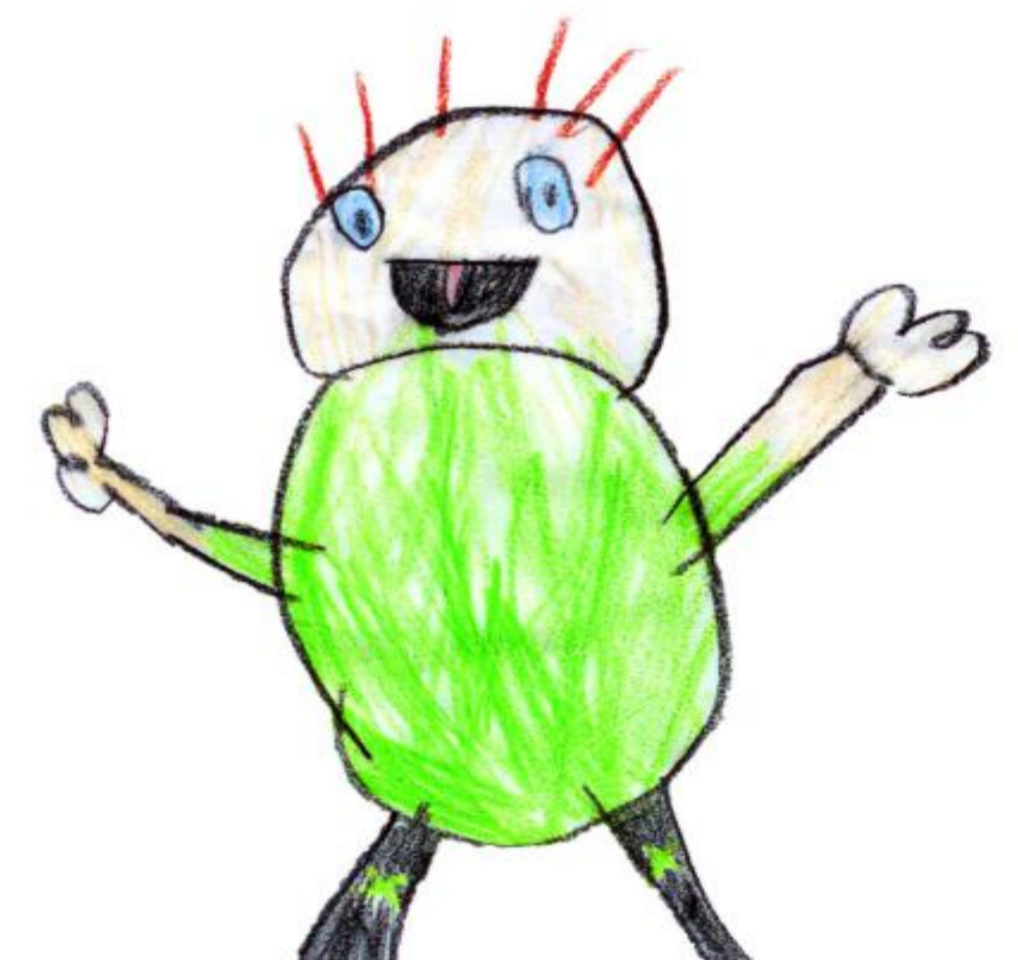
New tools and methods

During the sessions we applied several well-known tools such as the Danish CELF-IV (not yet standardised), Modified, Odd-one out and COST-narratives. Furthermore we discovered the necessity of developing new tools specifically constructed to fit the structure of the work in the clinic and the children's individual needs. Whenever we encountered such needs tools were developed and this was a central aspect of our problem-based practice.

- We further developed the use of cue cards as a tool to dynamically structure the children's narratives.
- SLI-children benefit from visual support which we used this to develop picture cards and the game Memory to further the children's sentence construction.
- A questionnaire administered to the child was developed to assess social abilities as a supplement to SDQ and CCC.

The construction of having the one way screen and the reflecting team has provided:

- the therapist with the opportunity of getting online feedback
- the reflective team with the option of instant intervention and participation during sessions
- the students with experiencing multiple roles as psychologists.



Awaiting awesome pictures from the clinical setting

What did we learn? Practice makes perfect!

With problem-based practice we developed our academic as well as our personal abilities in the following areas:

- An enhanced understanding of SLI-children as a group and as individuals.
- A more thorough theoretical and practical experience with DA (e.g. developing methods)
- The benefits of working with or as part of a reflective team
- Our own development in the role as therapist (e.g. handling unexpected events during intervention)

References

- Hasson, N., & Botting, N., (2010) Dynamic assessment of children with language impairments: A pilot study. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* 26(3) (pp. 249-272)
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Kilde til cue-cards

Thanks to

The participating children



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