



What are the Contexts and Mechanisms That Contribute Towards Educational Psychologist Use of Dynamic Assessment Having Positive Outcomes?

Find the full study here: <https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/96848/>



Aims/Background context



(why did we do it)

Educational Psychologists (EPs) use assessment to explore factors impacting learning for children and young people. This can include dynamic assessment (DA). DA involves the use of mediation or scaffolding, where the assessor provides help to the learner to support their performance on the task. This allows exploration of cognitive and emotional factors impacting learning, and may identify next steps for intervention in the classroom. Some studies have suggested that EP use of DA may lead to positive outcomes for the child, teacher and EP involved.

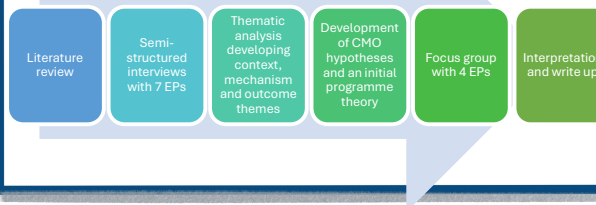
This study aimed to explore when, why and how EP use of DA may contribute towards positive outcomes. This is important so that EPs can make and justify decisions based on evidence and maximise positive outcomes from their involvement. Currently, there are gaps in the research in this area, and the current study hopes to contribute to the development of theory and understanding around EP use of DA.

Design/Methods

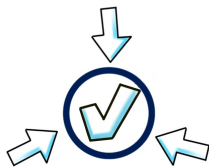


(what did we do)

This study used thematic analysis within a realist evaluation methodology. Seven EPs took part in semi-structured interviews, and themes were developed which related to contexts (environment or people), mechanisms (actions or thinking patterns) or outcomes which could be involved in DA. From these, theories were suggested and explored further in a focus group of four EPs.



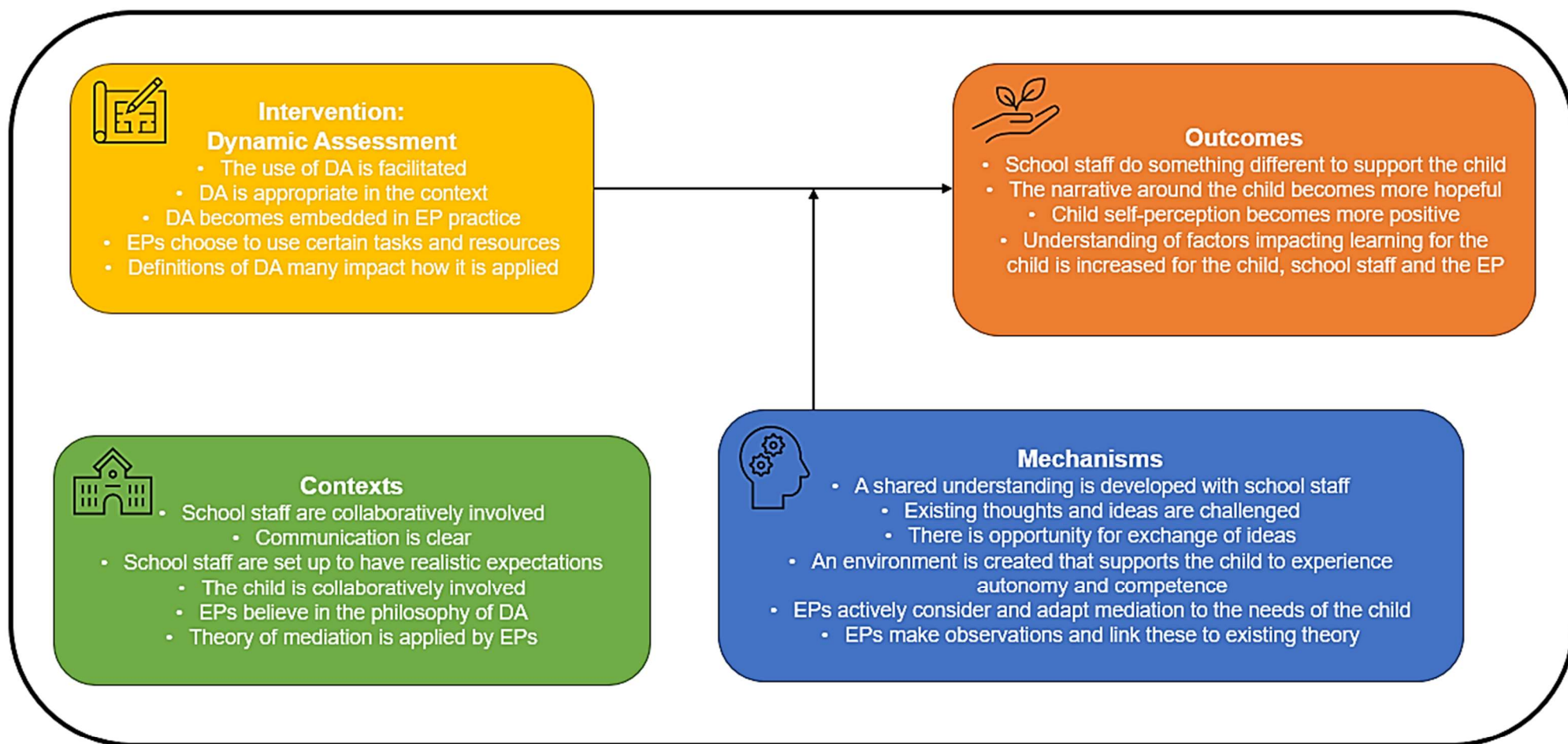
Results/Discussion/Impact



(what does this mean for children & families in Suffolk)

- Findings suggest that positive outcomes from DA may occur when school staff and children are collaboratively involved in the process, and this may lead to changes in thinking and behaviour because of the environment created during the assessment and opportunities for communication.
- This study has strengths and limitations, for example it only explores the views of EPs, and they all worked in the same local authority. Therefore, further research could be done in this area.
- If an EP works with children, families and school staff in Suffolk, they may decide to use DA. This study hopes to contribute to best practice and support positive outcomes. In addition, EPs could use the findings when reflecting on their practice.

Summary provided by Dr Josie Newman, Educational Psychologist, October 2024



Initial Programme Theory