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DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

Generally, students with learning disabilities or other special needs are not advised to take foreign language classes. It is a misconception that these students are incapable of learning a second language; it can be a challenge, but it is possible, depending on the individual student and the dedication of the instructor.

In this paper, I explore the use of dynamic assessment in lieu of traditional assessments with a special needs learner. Instead of taking his quizzes independently, in-class, he and I worked on them together. I used dynamic assessment principles to structure my interactions with the learner. In this way, he was able to participate in a joint activity with me. The result of this collaboration for me as the instructor was that I gained a solid understanding of what he was capable of doing and where he still had problems. The result for the learner was that he was able to experience success. The collaboration of learner and instructor, inspired by the work of Lev Vygotsky, makes this assessment strategy unique and effective. Despite the advantages and potential of dynamic assessment, I also found that it could be very challenges for teachers to use in many classroom environments.

Despite these challenges, and after researching the effectiveness of dynamic assessment, I found that it has positive effects on student achievement; also, I found that it fosters self-confidence and a heightened self-worth in regard to academics. This is a very important aspect of education—building a student’s self-esteem is a very rewarding and powerful outcome of this research.
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Introduction

In the field of education, improving assessment is always a topic of discussion. What is the best way to truly measure the skill and intelligence of students? While it is impossible to decide on a “best” way to measure student progress and knowledge through testing, it is possible to provide alternatives to the traditional “pencil-and-paper” tests that are often used in schools. One option that has been researched and presented to the educational community is “dynamic assessment.” This type of assessment is based on the Vygotskian concept of zone of proximal development. A student’s zone of proximal development ranges from their proficiency in completing a task alone and their proficiency in completing the same task in collaboration with “an expert”. The goal is to determine not only what the learner has already mastered but also what s/he has started to master but is not able to do yet with complete success. By providing mediation, which is carefully considered support (such as prompts, hints, questions, or feedback) for the learner, the assessor is able to see how the learner responds to intervention. This response can be anywhere from ‘low’ to ‘high’ meaning that the learner may correct his/her mistakes easily or may need sustained help to correct or even recognize problems. The assessment also provides relevant information about the learner that can aid in future instruction. Dynamic assessment allows the assessor to receive a very detailed synthesis of student abilities and knowledge. On a traditional, or “static,” test, the assessor only sees if a student has answered correctly or incorrectly. Through dynamic assessment, the assessor is able to get a view of the big picture: the learner’s initial response, their progress in response to strategic prompting, and their ability to retain newly learned information and apply it during the rest of the test or assessment activity. Dynamic
assessment has been very well researched in the area of special language, and is becoming well known in foreign language education due to the importance of interaction in language learning. The research presented in this thesis attempts to bridge these two areas as it deals with a learner identified with special needs in a mainstream foreign language classroom. To be more specific, the questions that I wished to investigate were:

1. How will the results of this learner’s dynamic assessment contrast with his performance on static tests used in the class? Will dynamic assessment provide additional or different insights into his knowledge?

2. Will dynamic assessment sessions enable me, as a student teacher in the classroom, help him progress and improve? Will his grades improve in the class?

3. What effects will dynamic assessment have on this learner’s self-confidence and perception of himself as a learner?
Background

I am a Spanish Education Major; I want to be a Spanish teacher. This area of research intrigued me—I wondered how I will choose to accommodate special needs learners that are enrolled in my foreign language classroom in the future. As required by my major, my final semester is spent Student Teaching; I was placed at State College Area High School. When I began at the school, I found that there was one student for whom accommodations were already being made—my mentor teacher had been orally administering tests to a particular learner, who I will simply call Felix, because of his difficulty completing the assessments independently. Felix had a tumultuous upbringing, including parental disinterest and even a small bout of homelessness; obviously, education was not his first priority at times. The student is pleasant and able to show proficiency in language in conversation but was unable to produce test scores outside of the failing range. While he does not have a specific learning disability identified by the school psychologist, and therefore no IEP (Individualized Learning Program), I decided that this student was a perfect candidate for my research. Felix demonstrated off-task behavior in class, handed in incomplete/unintelligible tests, and did not complete assignments. These can be characteristics of many students; however, these paired with his extreme difficulty reading English and following instructions, I came to believe that his behaviors had more to do with his confusion than a lack of effort. Not only would I be able to explore my interest in dynamic assessment, I would be able to help this student. I would be able to mediate him and give him the ability to perform proficiently on a test, improve his grades, and hopefully, his confidence. I talked with my mentor teacher, the
student and the student’s learning support teacher, and everyone thought our one-on-one sessions together completing tests would be a wonderful idea.
Methods

In order to conduct this research, Felix and I worked on assessments together during sessions averaging around 45 minutes. During this time, we would work on the same, or slightly adapted, assessments that everyone else completed in class. However, Felix and I were able to work together to find answers to the test questions; this provided not only an assessment of student proficiency, but a learning opportunity. Our sessions were audio recorded, with the permission of the learner, and later transcribed for analysis. There was also an interview portion where I was able to get an idea of Felix’s perceptions of himself as a learner.
Lev Vygotsky, Zone of Proximal Development and Dynamic Assessment

Before conducting any research, it was very important that I develop a solid understanding of the theoretical principles behind dynamic assessment that were worked out by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky was a psychologist who focused work mainly on general cognitive abilities and helping learners with special needs, although his theory is about understanding the human mind. He believed that people develop abilities by taking part in activities with others and being mediated to push beyond points where they have problems. According to his Sociocultural Theory, learners must mediate their thoughts with someone else before they can do it within their own mind (Antón 1999, p. 304). In Vygotsky’s terms, this is moving from other-regulation to self-regulation.

One of the most famous concepts created by Vygotsky is the zone of proximal development. This theory says that individuals have a range in which they can perform—and this includes tasks they are able to complete with guidance from someone else as well as the tasks they can complete independently (Antón 1999, p. 304). The model of development is that the mediation the individual receives is acquired and hopefully, next time s/he can internalize that same type of mediation and complete the tasks independently.

Using all of these techniques, the expert can scaffold the learner to a higher level of achievement. Vygotsky created the theory of the zone of proximal development, but he did not invent dynamic assessment. Poehner (2008, p. 38) explains that the following
quote expresses Vygotsky’s thoughts on ZPD and is also a partial descriptor of *dynamic assessment*.

Imagine that we have examined two children and have determined that the mental age of both is seven years. This means that both children solve tasks accessible to seven-year-olds. However, when we attempt to push these children further in carrying out the tests, there turns out to be an essential difference between them. With the help of leading questions, examples, and demonstrations, one of them easily solves test items taken from two years above the child’s level of [actual] development. The other solves test items that are only a half-year above his or her level of [actual] development. (Vygotsky, 1956: 446–47, cited in Wertsch, 1985: 68)

Poehner goes on to argue that for Vygotsky the two children have equivalent levels of ability but they also show abilities that are not equivalent, as he points out a bit further in the same passage:

From the point of view of their independent activity they are equivalent, but from the point of view of their immediate potential development they are sharply different. That which the child turns out to be able to do with the help of an adult points us toward the zone of the child’s proximal development. This means that with the help of this method, we can take stock not only of today’s completed process of development, not only the cycles that are already concluded and done, not only the processes of maturation that are completed; we can also take stock of processes that are now in the state of coming into being, that are only ripening, or only developing. (Vygotsky, 1956: 447–48; cited in Wertsch, 1985: 68) (Poehner 236).

Poehner (2008, p. 234) continues that over the years, the above description molded itself into what is now considered *dynamic assessment*. In a paper published over forty years ago by one of Vygotsky’s most esteemed colleagues, A.R. Luria, the ‘statistical’ and ‘dynamic’ approaches to assessment are contrasted. According to Luria, it is
inappropriate to assume that a person’s individual performance on a test can represent a complete picture of the person’s abilities. Luria argues that in order to see the full picture of an individual’s capabilities, one must look at two more pieces of information: the performance of a person with mediation from someone else and how well that person can transfer this assisted performance to different tasks or tests. From such statements from Luria, we can see that dynamic assessment has been around for quite a few years.

The most notable and important difference between inactive, “traditional” assessments and an interactive assessment is the active role taken by the instructor (Haywood & Tzuriel 2002, p. 40). More specifically, in dynamic assessment, the instructor is using specific techniques (the six strategies listed below) to alter student cognition with a positive impact. Help from the expert is not limited to content-knowledge; the expert may be giving organizational or test-taking advice that will lighten the cognitive load of the learner, allowing them to focus on the questions (Haywood & Tzuriel 2002, p. 40). Some researchers have attempted to make the idea of mediation more concrete and follow the idea of scaffolding.

The help that the expert provides the novice is characterized by six scaffolding functions:

1. Recruitment: enlisting the learner's interest in the task

2. Reduction in degrees of freedom: simplifying the task

3. Direction maintenance: keeping the learner motivated and in pursuit of the goal

4. Marking critical features: highlighting certain relevant features and pointing out discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution
5. Frustration control: reducing stress and frustration during problem solving

6. Demonstration: modeling an idealized form of the act to be performed by completing the act or by explicating the learner's partial solution (Wood et al., 1976, p. 98) (cited by Antón 1999, p. 305).

While there is flexibility in the mediation used during dynamic assessment, the above techniques act as a guide and can be referenced by someone less familiar with how to mediate a dynamic assessment session with a learner.
The Learner

Looking at a traditional quiz that Felix had completed in the test, it would be easy to assume that he had next to no knowledge of the content and would be incapable of passing the class. His test papers would come back less than halfway completed, full of errors and often lacking reason, as if he had simply guessed his responses. (An example can be seen in Appendix D) However, when talking with the student, one can see that he has knowledge of the subject matter. He may not be top of the class, but he has a level of proficiency that should enable him to pass the class. In other words, my determination as well as my mentor teacher’s, was that Felix’s performance on tests did not accurately reflect his abilities. To complicate matters further, Felix’s unusual home life leads to excessive absences, creating even more complications for his learning; for example, he misses the introduction to new material, time to practice and master the material, and many times he misses the day of an assessment, in which case he needs to find time to make it up.

In State College Area High School, foreign language classes are considered an elective; this means that they are not tracked. Therefore, in one classroom, there are very gifted students alongside students with special needs. This allows for an interesting classroom dynamic and the opportunity for peer collaboration, but it also creates a situation where a special needs learner could easily be left behind. With such a great range of abilities in the same classroom, teachers often respond by targeting their instructions to the population of learners somewhere in the middle. A good teacher will do his/her best to challenge all students who need a push and give extra help and attention to the students who are having trouble; but, this is a challenge made even more difficult
with classes containing 25-29 students. Without the opportunity to track students and place them in a class which is taught at a manageable pace for their ability, it can make it very difficult for special needs students to keep up with a foreign language curriculum.

Felix commented that he often felt overwhelmed while taking tests in the class, that there were too many things to focus on simultaneously and that as a result he would become confused, create errors, and eventually give up. However, it was clear from interacting with him and observing him in non-testing situations that Felix actually was learning a lot of Spanish. He knows a lot about Spanish—vocabulary and speaking; but, he gets lost when he is asked to put the pieces together on his own. Because of his history of poor scholastic performance, he has very low self-esteem when it comes to his academics. Oftentimes, he gives up on himself as soon as he is unsure of an answer. This lack of confidence causes him to hand in tests that are incomplete. This defeatist attitude also contributes to a hopeless cycle, including incomplete assignments, projects, and a lack of classroom participation. As Felix put it, if I am going to fail the test anyway, why try?
Dynamic Assessment Sessions

During these DA sessions, Felix and I approached the assessments as a team. The tests and quizzes were the same used in class, although some were shortened to accommodate time and avoid unnecessary redundancy. Most times, we would begin with a short review of the material that was on the assessment. Many assessments we were completing were weeks after the material had been taught, due to the student’s absences. This gave me the opportunity to refresh the information for the learner and reinforce steps and strategies that I wanted him to employ during test-taking.

Based on the learner, I would provide prompts and help when needed. Many times, this included providing vocabulary—it is impossible to produce the command form for “Go to sleep!” if one does not know the verb dormirse, to fall asleep. Other times, the prompts consisted of steps that the learner needed to follow to find the answer. Conjugations are very difficult for him—one strategy we began to employ was using charts. We would take the time to make a chart of the six conjugations that he was going to have to use. With help and encouragement, he was able to provide the information to actually produce the chart himself; using this chart that he created, he was later capable of answering test questions. This was especially revealing to both Felix and me because it showed us that he had the necessary knowledge and understanding of verb conjugations and was in fact able to mediate himself once he produced the chart. By lessening his cognitive load and breaking his tasks into smaller segments, he was able to find the correct answers using his own knowledge. The following is an excerpt from one of our sessions where I (A) am helping Felix (F) to correctly fill in the conjugations for the verbs ir and ser (ir- to go and ser- to be) in the preterit tense. He was then able to
complete the section of the test that asked him to conjugate the verbs in sentences, based on the context:

A: Okay. Let’s move on to the next assessment… let’s do a little review… remember how last time we made a chart? I want to do that again.

F: Okay.

A: (Draws chart… box with 6 slots for the conjugations.)

F: Fui?

A: Yes. Go ahead and write them in. … Good.

F: F… is this the este one?… fuistese…?

A: Almost!

F: Fuiste?

A: Good.

F: Is it –sta?

A: Almost, not “a.” Fuiste… but it’s not an English –a it’s the Spanish –e (says it phonetically (ay)).

F: -e?

A: Good. What about down here? (3rd space in chart)

F: I don’t know… Is this plural for this one?

A: This is he/she remember? One person.

F: Fui?

A: We have fui. What is this one?

F: Fu… I can’t say it. F-U-E?

A: Good. F-U-E is pronounced (fway).

F: Okay. Fue.

A: And over here? For nosotros?

F: Fuamos?

A: Almost, but it’s not an –ar verb.
F: Fuimos?
A: Good. Next one?

F: Fua... fui... fuisteis?
A: Good...
F: -tes?
A: You need an “i” before the “s.” Good, very good. And down here?

F: Fuen? Fuern?
A: It’s that one you are thinking of…

F: F-U-E-R-O-N?
A: Perfect. Now we have the chart, all we have to do is match.

F: Yea.
A: So? Vosotros?

F: Fuisteis.
A: Good. Luisa?

F: That would be “she…” Fue?
A: Good.

By working through the chart, Felix still used all of his own knowledge to complete the assessment. He used the chart as a reference that simplified the process for him and made it possible for him to get the correct answers. Had he approached the task by trying to simply pull the necessary form each time from memory, the task would have been much more challenging and in fact this was exactly the kind of test expectation that frequently overwhelmed Felix. Of course, if we think about the chart as mediation, we hope that Felix eventually can internalize it and will no longer need to write it down before working his way through exercises like this. But for now, this was for Felix a major step toward learning how to approach the test. It is also important to say that Felix
did need mediation just to produce the chart. As is clear in our interaction above, He knows the information, but needs constant reinforcement from me to sustain confidence and confirm what he has done, and he also requires reminders to keep focused on the task at hand. After working through this process with Felix two or three times, it also became clear to me that he has trouble retaining the information; he can go through a process and then forget how he did it before he can apply the same information to the next question. By using charts and steps that are written out, he is able to organize the information and fully absorb it.

In addition, another problem I identified working with Felix is his impulsivity during tests. He requires reminders to stop and think things through; he tends to spout off random responses to make it appear that he is producing an answer when he is unsure. His low self-esteem drives him guess without rhyme or reason. By providing positive reinforcement for though-out responses, he is slowly changing how he approaches questions.

A: Right. So desayunar is the part we have to conjugate. How do I conjugate it, like we did the other ones?

F: Well, it’s an –er verb… so…

A: Is it?

F: No, it’s an –ar verb…

A: Remember, we did one like this…

F: Umm…

A: Which other one that we’ve done is a positive command with an –ar verb?

F: Duchar?

A: Right, ducharse. So how did we change that one?
F: *Desayunar*?

A: That is the infinitive.

F: *Desayunais*?

A: Felix. Focus. I don’t want random answers, I want you to think.

F: Okay.

A: Look over here. We changed this from *ducharse* to *duchate*. The *duchar* changed to *ducha*. So what do we do with *desyunarse*?

F: Umm… desa… Is the desa… right?

A: Yes…

F: So it would be… *desayu*…

A: and what ending do we add?

F: *-ar*?

A: That brings us back to the beginning… we want a conjugation.

F: *-a*? So *desayuna*?

A: Good, and then what?

F: *Desayunate*.

A: Good. Perfect. We have one left, “Go to bed!” And we don’t know that verb?

F: I don’t think so.

A: The verb is *acostarse*. So it is just like this one…

F: *Acosta*?

A: Good, write that part down. And what do we add?

F: *Acostate*.

A: Good. And this one also has a stem-change. Look right here at the “o.” What do you think it changes to?

F: “a?”

A: What do the “o’s” usually change to? Look up at what we did with *dormir*.

F: An “e?”
A: almost…
F: “ue?”
A: Good.
F: So it’s going to be… *acuestate.*

In the above segment, the learner was able to be coached into looking at his previous work and using it as a reference to use for the rest of the test. While many learners might do this almost intuitively, it was not how Felix typically approached tests. Rather, each test item was isolated in itself as he did not appear to look for information that was needed for multiple items or how one question might be relevant to another. Some of our effort focused on helping him make these connections. This could both help him do better on the test and also learn more about conjugations. Also taking place is the opportunity for student learning; above, the learner and I are discussing the stem-changing of a verb when it undergoes conjugation. This is a detail that some may have overlooked in an attempt to have this learner find an acceptable, if not perfect, answer. However, since we had the opportunity to discuss and interact, he was able to figure out even the smallest details of the language.

One of the advantages to using dynamic assessment is the instructor’s ability to see exactly what the learner is and is not able to do. With this information, the teacher can adapt instruction to better meet the needs of the learner. After spending time with Felix and becoming familiar with his thought processes during an assessment, I believe that I am more capable of reaching him during instructional time. I know that charts work well for him—during class-time I encourage him to draw charts or reference the ones that
are in his notes during grammar exercises. This familiarizes him with the process of creating and utilizing resources to help him produce the work he is capable of doing.

A: Good. So let’s do this one: Yo/bailar
F: bailo?
A: Use the chart we just made!
F: (Laughs) bail…? (can’t understand ending)
A: Spell it for me?
F: B-A-I-L-E with an accent?
A: Yes. Sometimes you say them differently, but you spell them correctly.
F: That’s the problem, sometimes I don’t know how to say it, the pronunciation.
A: Okay. Well anytime you want to spell something for me, that’s fine.
F: Okay.

Another thing I have learned about Felix is the trouble he encounters with pronunciation. He told me in the above section, along with other times in our sessions, that he does not know how to say certain things. Now that I know that about him, I often ask him to spell things for me before I tell him that he is correct or incorrect. Other times, he struggles with spelling. This usually occurs when he is using a word that he has committed to memory from hearing it used in class; for example, there are commands and phrases that we use very often like, “Listen,” “Sit down,” and “Can I go to the bathroom?” that all of the students know from the repetition. Felix knows these phrases and what they mean; however, he has rarely seen them in text, so he does not know how to spell them. I have been working with him on simple techniques for sounding things out in the Spanish language—this type of interaction helps him immediately with the question we are working on; however, it also is a skill that he can apply in numerous other situations.
Below is a segment in which Felix is trying to figure out the spelling of a word in Spanish:

F: I don’t know.

A: What about listened? I’m okay with letting you get away without the other two, but you know this one. What do I say when I tell you guys to listen to me in class?

F: Escuchas?

A: Yea! What is the infinitive, the whole verb?

F: Escuchamos... escuchos... I don’t know...

A: Write it down for me.

F: I don’t know.

A: Yes you do, say it again.

F: Escuchos...?

A: Take it slow, what do all verbs end it before they are conjugated?

F: -os? –as?

A: hablar, cantar...

F: oh, -ar?

A: Uh huh...

F: escuchar

A: Okay... so? Say it slowly, sound it out.

F: escucho (says correctly but spelling is wrong.)

A: It’s correct and I know what it means... say the first part to me.

F: es-

A: How do you spell that part?

F: E-S

A: Good. Next part?

F: -cu-
A: and that?
F: C-U?
A: Yea. Next part?
F: -cho?
A: and that?
F: H-O
A: You need something before the -H
F: C?
A: Yep! You know how to do it.

Going through this process, step-by-step, can seem a little tedious or unnecessary; but, I hope that in the future, when he is about to give up on a question, he can think back and remember how we went through a word, syllable by syllable, and found the correct answer.
Results/Outcomes

The use of dynamic assessment with the learner, Felix, was very successful. Thanks to his willingness to spend the extra time working on assessments with me during his study halls and after school, he was able to greatly improve his achievement on quizzes. The quizzes he completed independently (before working with me) were incomplete and incomprehensible. He was unable to communicate his knowledge through these “traditional” assessments. In Appendix D, there is a copy of one of Felix’s quizzes from the beginning of this year. He received a grade of 50% (12.5/25) on this quiz; even this was generous, because we already made accommodations for him in grading. For example, we did not subtract points for spelling errors, as long as his work was understandable. On another quiz from the beginning of this year, he received a similar grade of 60% (12/20).

Later in Appendix D, there are examples of assessments Felix and I completed together during our collaborative sessions. The “before” and “after” demonstrate a huge change—it looks like the work of a completely different learner. His grades also illustrate the leap in performance: on four quizzes in the 3rd marking period, Felix received a 100% (26/26), 100% (20/20), 96% (27/28), and 90% (19/21). His overall grade in quizzes was a 97% (92/95). That is an unbelievable improvement from an average of 55% (24.5/45) from the first marking period!

More important than the improvement to his scores was how much I learned about Felix and his learning style. He is a very visual learner who responds well to organizational tools. In Appendix E, I have attached an example of a chart that we made...
together to work on a quiz about *ir* (to go) and *ser* (to be) in the preterit tense. By creating this chart, he had a reference to use in order to organize his thoughts and lighten his cognitive load. After learning this about Felix, I employed the strategy often and with success. I also incorporated more visual organizers into the in-class instruction. Not only does Felix benefit, but other learners like him.

By completing these quizzes together, Felix truly worked at the highest level of his *zone of proximal development*. The purpose of an assessment is to see what the learner is capable of—without the use of dynamic assessment with this learner, it would be impossible to see what knowledge he possesses of the content area.
Learner Confidence/Self-esteem

Possibly the most meaningful outcome of these sessions has been the increase in Felix’s academic self-esteem. He still lacks confidence in his abilities and doubts himself when we work together, but as our sessions continued, there were fewer instances where he gave up on himself. He has learned that he has the knowledge to work toward an answer, even if he does not know it right away.

A break-through that I found very significant occurred during one of our last sessions. We were working on a few assessments together, and we were chatting after completing one and before moving on to another. I casually asked how things were going and if he felt like our time together had been helping his performance in Spanish class.

A: Good. All done! How do you think it went?
F: It was hard.
A: Hard?
F: No, I’m just kidding. It wasn’t hard… I don’t know… I just feel like… if I would have… it wasn’t hard, I just… I didn’t think I knew this stuff. I think that’s more of it. I didn’t think I knew it.
A: But you did.
F: But I did. You proved me wrong. (Laughs)
A: Does that make you happy?
F: Yes.
A: Because it makes me happy.
F: It makes me happy, too.
A: Felix, I’m very proud of you.
F: Thank you.
This was a very short and informal exchange, but it was extremely powerful and moving. After hearing that our time together made a difference in his attitude and how he views himself, I truly felt like the dynamic assessment had achieved its goal. Aside from improving his grades and being able to assess his knowledge, it made a difference in his self-esteem and confidence.

Believing in oneself is a fundamental aspect of learning. Without confidence, no student can reach their full potential. Knowing that I made a difference in Felix’s attitude toward himself and his abilities as a learner makes me want to continue on with this type of work. I believe that it can make a difference in the lives of learners and can extend outside of one class into multiple facets of their lives. Once self-esteem is nurtured, a learner can apply it to any aspect of life—they may take on challenges that they had thought to be impossible.


**Practical Implications**

While I found dynamic assessment to be very worthwhile working with Felix, I also learned that it is not without its challenges. The opportunity to work one-on-one with a student to help them academically is something many teachers want but few are able to attain. The sessions are effective; however, they are time consuming and difficult to schedule. As a student teacher, I was able to work out a schedule with my mentor teacher so that I could work individually with Felix during 8th period, during his study hall. Without that flexibility, I doubt these sessions would have been possible. In Felix’s case, even after-school hours were inconvenient as he is on the track team—it is a good influence on him to develop a work ethic and keep his grades up. It is also has the possibility of opening up doors for him in the future.

It was therefore lucky that I was able to work with him during his free period. Unfortunately, teachers do not have the privilege of having another professional around to teach their classes when they have other commitments to fulfill. My situation of having a second adult with whom I could share the responsibilities of teaching is rare.

In some schools, aids are provided for classrooms containing students with special needs. Having an aid could be used as a valuable resource; however, the dynamic assessment sessions would be ineffective without the presence of someone who has already mastered the information. Even if the aid understood how to do dynamic assessment, an aid without knowledge of the content area (in this case, Spanish) would not be able to guide the learner through the assessment toward success. Having a second adult run the class while the teacher performed these individual assessments would be
unfair to the rest of the class—the responsibility of the instructor was lie with the group. Consequently, this sometimes results in lower-performing learners being “left behind.”

Another option for special needs learners looking for this kind of remediation is tutoring. Dynamic assessment can be used by anyone who has been trained in its methods and is an expert in the material. Peer tutoring is an option, as long as the “expert” student is familiar with how to use dynamic assessment and the content knowledge. Creating a tutor-training program introducing the principals of dynamic assessment could be effective in starting a strong peer resource; however, it is still impossible to use a peer as an evaluator of an assessment, so this could not be used in place of classroom assessments that are already in place.

I wish it could be possible for all students to have the opportunity to work one-on-one with their teachers. All students could benefit from dynamic assessment and teachers would be much better informed about the needs of their learners. However, it is not logistically possible for individual dynamic assessment sessions to be held with all special needs learners, let alone all students. Teachers can offer their time during free-periods and after school but it is more practical to find ways to incorporate dynamic assessment during class to larger groups of students. One way of doing that is by walking around during group work to provide mediation to a variety of students. Also, by using dynamic assessment during whole-class discussions, students may learn the methods and use them to assist their peers. It is a meaningful teaching technique, and any variation a teacher can incorporate into their classroom is a positive addition.


Appendix A

Dynamic Assessment Session, March 1, 2010

A: Okay. So you remember these are the commands, right? Let’s do a quick review. Up here we have the positive and negative commands, we did all this. And then we are not doing either of these sections. We have four left… we did half of the section already. So you can look up here for help, if you need it. And in this section, we are pairing a command with one of these direct object pronouns. Alright? For example, like here, you have hazlo for do it. Haz was the positive command and “lo” was the direct object pronoun, since it says it is masculine and singular. Perfect. And down here, you have “don’t look at us” and you put no nos mires, you picked nos because we’re talking about us and mires is the opposite tu form. So now we just have to do these four, and this test is done.

F: Okay.

A: So here we have, “Don’t drink them”

F: “Don’t drink it.”

A: Oh, “don’t drink it,” sorry.

F: Uhhh…

A: So what is our verb for drink, first?

F: Comer.

A: Close, that’s “to eat.”

F: Oh, coma. No… is it…? Drink… Wait, to eat is comer.

A: Yes.

F: Hold on, I know this one.

A: I know you do.

F: It’s not hablar?

A: No, that’s to talk.

F: Is it… bebe? So it would be… no bebe…

A: Well, let’s take it step by step.
F: So it would be “no bailo.” Would it be that?

A: No bailo?

F: I don’t know.

A: From bailar? To dance?

F: Oh… haha…

A: Well we have bebe, right?

F: Yea.

A: What is the infinitive? The whole verb.

F: Bebar?

A: Beber. Good. We have the “no” so let’s put that in. Now if we look at the other ones you’ve done, the next thing we have to put in is the direct object pronoun. So if we want to say “don’t drink it,” we need the “it.” And it tells us it is masculine, so what are we going to pick?

F: Lo.

A: Good. Now our verb we have is beber. Now what do we have to do with it to make it a negative command?

F: Put a “no” on it.

A: We have the “no.”

F: Conjugate it?

A: Yes. And how are we going to conjugate it. And you can look here, because we’ve done it a few times.

F: Would you…

A: We have mires. We got that from mirar. So if we have beber….

F: Bebars…

A: What?

F: Bebars…

F: Would it be an “a?” (writing)
A: Yes. And why is it an “a.”
F: Because it’s conjugated.
A: Yes. But how are we conjugating it, why do we pick “a?”
F: Because we have to change the ending…
A: Yea… to the opposite….
F: To the opposite ending.
A: “Make me.”
F: Did I put make over here? (Flips page) So it would be… hazme.
A: Perfect. “Close them.”
F: (Checks page.) Close isn’t on here, just open. So… So “close” is um…
A: How do we say that? What is the word?
F: For close?
A: Yea.
F: I don’t think I know this one.
A: Okay, well we usually say “to close the door.” Something… la puerta.
F: Um. Don’t know that one.
A: Okay. The infinitive is cerrar.
F: So would it be cerráis?
A: What did we do up here? What form does it go in? Yo form? Tu form?
F: Close them… so would it be nos?
A: No… what form did we use over here, for “eat it.”
F: Feminine?
A: The direct object pronoun is feminine… but what about the verb?
F: “Me,” so it would be me?
A: Well, *come* is in what form?

F: *Yo* form?

A: No… Uhhh… Wait… (Long pause) Ummm…

F: Like if I give you a verb, and I say *come, habla, escucha*… What form is it?

A: What form is it? Like?

F: Is it the “I” form? The “you” form?

A: You? No…

F: *Habla* is…

A: Like what would be in front of that? I? She? You? Us?

F: Us?

A: You have to look at the ending to tell you the answer. … What would you see in front of it? Which one would you put with *habla* or *escucha*? What subject goes with that?

F: *Yo? Él*?

A: Él.

F: So would it be… *él habla*?

A: Yea. So the verb is in what form? The *él/ella/usted* form.

F: Yea.

A: So you have to put this verb in that form.

F: *Cerrla*?

A: Well, it’s a stem-change. So that “e” changes to something else.

F: An “a?”

A: No…

F: An “i?”

A: Almost… What do you think will sound right? We don’t say *cerra*…

F: *Carra*? (Sarr-ah)
A: Well, what are our stem-changes usually?
F: The e changes to an a?
A: No…
F: The e changes to an i?
F: La? Es? No. Is it “as”?
A: It changes to two vowels.
F: An “o?”
A: No. If I have the verb querer…to want… How do I say “I want?”
F: *Me querer*?
A: How do you say “I want?” I want Taco Bell. Don’t think about this, just do it in your head.
F: *Querer*.
A: Do you want to say “quero?”
F: No. *Querar*?
A: No. We use an “-o” to say I want, but what about this part? (Pointing to stem change)
F: *Quero*?
A: Does that sound right?
F: No. Qu?
A: We use “qu” but what about this part? (Pointing to e) Okay. I would say *Yo quiero*. So this is an example of a stem change. The “e” changes to an “ie.” So we’re going to do the same thing with this verb, *cerrar*.
F: *Querr*… *Querrar*… (Pause)
A: Do we want to skip this one?
F: I’m not sure.
A: We don’t have to, if you want to work on it. If we put it in the el/ella/usted form, how will it end?
F: La? No. It would end in “ro”, too.

A: We need it in the él/ella/usted form. These up here are in the él/ella/usted form (habla, come, escucha) so how do we make this verb look like these?

F: Change the endings.

A: Yes. How do they change?

F: “-As?”

A: No, does this have “-as”?

F: No. La?

Does this have La?

F: No. (Pause)

A: This one changed from hablar to habla so this needs to change from cerrar to ….?

(Use of visual, writing in verbs)

F: Cerra?

A: Right. But then we said it’s a stem change. So this “e” changes to what?

F: I?

A: Remember we did all this work back here? It’s going to change to just “i?”

F: -ie?

A: Good. That’s the first part. Now if we have “them/feminine.”

F: Os? Nos?

A: Them/Feminine. Remember it’s like “they… them.”

F: Las.

A: Yes. Does it go before or after?

F: After.

A: Good, write that in. Okay. One more and we’re done this test. “Tell her.” What is the verb for “tell?”

F: I don’t know this one.
A: Look on the other side.
F: (Checks previous work) Digas…
A: What’s the whole verb?
F: Decir.
A: Right. Now we want the positive command, which is that?
F: Di.
A: Good. Now what do we pick for her?
F: Te?
A: For her? Te is you.
F: Los?
A: For her? Like a girl? Tell her?
F: Isn’t os for her?
A: Os is for ya’ll.
F: So her would be… would it be me?
A: That would be “tell me”
F: Dite?
A: That would be tell you.
F: Dilo?
A: That would be tell him.
F: Dila.
A: Yea. Okay, now we’re done this. Let’s move on to the next test.
(Picking a test)
A: I think we should work on this one because it has commands in this section.
F: Okay.
A: Now with these in this section, it is all about reflexive pronouns. Do you remember reflexive verbs?

F: Yea, I think so. I’m not sure.

A: Okay, an example of a reflexive verb is if I say, “I brush my teeth,” or “I brush my hair,” or “I put makeup on myself,” all of the things that I do to myself or you do to yourself. And they are the verbs with se on the end… like cepillarse los dientes or lavarse los manos. … So that means that the front part (the me, te, se) is going to match your ending. Because I’m doing it to myself, you’re doing it to yourself. Make sense?

F: Yes.

A: Okay, so in this section… this part gives me the verb ending, so I have to pick out the right pronoun. What are the pronouns?

F: Cepillarse…?

A: Just the little words… the me, te…

F: Me, te, se, os... nos, os, se

A: Okay, so if this is an –as ending, who is that talking about?

F: Her? Them?

A: If I say, “Felix, ¿cómo estás?”

F: Bien.

A: Right, but what am I saying?

F: How are you?

A: How are you? ¿Cómo estás?

F: So… te?

A: Exactly. So now, this ending is –imos. What ending is –imos?

F: os?

A: Os?

F: -mos

A: -mos, but what ending over here does this match?
F: Os? No, nos.

A: What about down here? The ending is –ais.

F: It would be –le?

A: No…

F: Mele? Wait, would it be me?

A: Levantais… it has the weird ending. (Pause) Okay, what about his one? What are you going to pick for baño? It has an –o ending.

F: Me.

A: What about this one? An –a ending.

F: Me?

A: You had -me over here for the –o ending.

F: Te?

A: Remember how we used –te up here? ¿Cómo estás?

F: So it would be… se?

A: Yes. Okay so now which ones are left? What haven’t we used yet?

F: Os.

A: So what do you think goes with levantais?

F: Os.

A: Okay. Now for this one, it’s the opposite. It gives us this part, the pronoun, and we have to conjugate the verb. (Pause) What’s that face for?

F: I don’t know (Looks confused.)

A: All we have to do is track it back. Okay. (Draw “conjugation boxes”) So… it gives us se, which is in “this box” and it says Jacinto (which is a man’s name), how are you going to conjugate lavar?

F: Lavais?

A: That would be if it was os. Os and –ais match.

F: So it would be…
A: Which one does *se* match?

F: *Lavais?* Would it be…? *Lavamos?* I’m confused.

A: Okay. What are our –ar verb endings?

F: -ar?

A: If I have the verb *hablar*, what are our endings?

F: Um.. er? Ir?

A: This is an –ar verb. What if I say *yo*?

F: *Hablo*.

A: Good. *Tú*?

F: Would it be *ös*?

A: Not os. (Pause) How would you ask me how I am?

F: *¿Cómo estás?*

A: Right.

F: *ös*.

A: What did you just ask me?

F: How are you?

A: Right. *¿Cómo estás?*

F: So it would be… *st... stais*?

A: What was the ending you just gave me?

F: *St? Es?*

A: *¿Cómo estás?Estás?*

F: -*as*.

A: Yea. What’s the next one? (Pause) He or she or *usted*. She talks.

F: (mumbles)

A: *Yo hablo. Tú hablas. Ella habl…?*
F: *Hablamos?*

A: No, that’s later. (Pause.)

F: I don’t know.

A: How do you say “we talk?” What is our “nosotros?”

F: *Hablar... hablo?*

A: Well, we picked *nos* over here (pointing to a word) this had an –*imos*. And this is an –ar verb, so it gets what?

F: *es?*

A: the *nos* is there, but it’s with an “a.”

F: *Hablamos.*

A: Good, what is the next one?

F: *Os?*

A: Well, *os* is the pronoun, what is the ending to match the spot?

F: *aimos... ais.*

A: -*ais*. What about the next one? They… *ellos... Hablamos... Hablais... Habl...*

F: I don’t know… I think I have it though, I’m not sure.

A: What do you think it is?

F: I don’t know, I can’t get it.

A: If I wanted to say, “how are they” instead of “how are you?” how would I say it?

F: *Nosotros... would it be ustedes?*

A: It’s the *ustedes* form, what ending will it get?

F: … *ets?*

A: If I want to say “they talk.” (Pause.)

F: I don’t remember.

A: Okay. *Hablan.* –*an* ending for these verbs. What about over here? Remember?
F: Umm…

A: Remember all of this we did up here? We said it is in the él form, right? That is the form we’re missing. So what ending will we get?

F: -a.

A: Okay. Now we have the endings, how are you going to conjugate lavar. It goes in the se spot. We have to pick the ending that matches the spot.

F: Would it be lavais? Lavas?

A: No… (References chart) We have “se” on this little chart, three down. So it has to be on the same spot in this chart.

F: Lava.

A: Good. Now we want to do the same thing down here, but it’s ellos. Does it make more sense when we set up charts?

F: Yea.

A: Okay, maybe we can try to do that more. So this one is “me…”

F: So it’s here (points to –o ending).

A: Good. And here?

F: Te.

A: Good.

F: ais… no… as… (Pause).

A: And here?

F: nos. Would it be –amos?

A: Yes. Now, down here we have commands like we did over here. What is the verb for “to bathe.”

F: Is it canla?

A: No… it’s kind of like the word for “bathroom.”

F: Baño…

A: Right, so what is the verb for ‘to bathe?’
F: Bañas?

A: Close. But remember, all of our reflexive verbs are going to end in ar, er or ir. So?

F: Bañar.

A: And it is reflexive so it’s bañar…

F: Ummm…

A: Reflexive verbs have the “se” on the end.

F: So it’s no bañarse?

A: Well, we have “no.” But we want to say “you don’t bathe yourself,” so what do we pick?

F: Me? Tu?

A: Well, we’re saying don’t bathe yourself. Look up here, this is what we’re picking from.

F: Te. Bañarte. Te bañarse?

A: Where does the “te” go? Before or after the verb?

F: Before.

A: Now what do we have to do?

F: Conjugate it.

A: Okay. So how do we change the ending? Over here, we had escuchar and we changed it to escuches. So how will we change this ending?

F: Bañases? Bañais?

A: The “se” is already taken care of. We changed it to this (pointing) te. So all we have left is bañar.

F: Baño?

A: We have to change bañar just like we changed this (escuchar) to that (escuches.)

F: So it would be bañes? No te bañes?

A: Good. Don’t forget your tilde… thank you. Okay. Let’s stick with the negatives. “Don’t sit down.”
F: No levantanse?

A: That’s to stand up. The opposite.

F: No sientense.

A: Okay, we want the whole verb, so we can do it step by step. Like, for levantanse, the infinitive is levantarse.

F: Sientar…

A: Good. Sentarse. So we want to follow the same pattern.

F: No te sentes.

A: Good. No te sientes. And here? Don’t have fun?

F: No te…

A: Well write that down, that’s right. How do we say “to have fun?”

F: I don’t know. I don’t know what that is.

A: How do we say something is fun?

F: I don’t know that one.

A: Okay. Divertirse is the verb. Ring a bell?

F: Yea.

A: Okay, so we have the “No te,” which takes care of the “se.” So we are left with divertir.

F: Divert (incomprehensible.)

A: How would you spell it?

F: -es.

A: This is an –ir verb.

F: -as. So diviertas.

A: Good, now we’re going to switch back to the positive commands, like this side. (Bell rings.)
Appendix B

Dynamic Assessment Session, March 3, 2010

A: So all we have to do is finish these positive commands… take a shower! Go to sleep! Eat breakfast! So they are not like negative commands, they are a different formation. Why don’t we talk about how to do it before we start?

F: Okay.

A: Well, how would I say, Felix, talk!

F: Felix, bailar.

A: Felix, dance?

F: Haha..

A: The verb is hablar. How do we change it from “to speak” to “speak!” (Practice on a paper.)

F: Hazlo?

A: That is one of the short irregulars…

F: You have to change the ending.

A: How?

F: Take off the –ar.

A: Then what?

F: Add an –o?

A: You’re thinking of negatives. For these, it’s even simpler. We get to skip a step.

F: I don’t know.

A: Think about it, I think you know. (Pause)

F: I can’t remember.

A: Okay. We’ll do one together, then you can do one on your own. If I have bailar and I want to make it a command. I put it in the él/ella/usted form to make it “dance!”

F: Bailo?
A: That’s for “yo.”

F: Bailas?

A: that’s for “tu”

F: Baila?

A: Baila. So how would you change hablar?

F: Habla.

A: Good. Now, the only thing that is different, is that you have to add the reflexive pronoun part (and they are up here…) So the first one is, “take a shower!”

F: Isn’t it… quemla…?

A: No… It starts with a “d.”

F: (Pause.) I don’t know.

A: Okay, the verb is ducharse.

F: Duchas?

A: Well, first we want to ignore the “se” and work with duchar.

F: Take the ending off…

A: and then what?

F: Change it…

A: Now what ending are we going to add?

F: This one?

A: No, we’re not worried about the “se” yet… we want to do what we did over here. (Points to bailar)

F: Just –a?

A: Right. Okay, now tell me. With negatives, this “te” went in the front. Here with positives, does it go before or after?

F: After.

A: And if I am saying, “Shower yourself,” what pronoun do we pick?
F: *Te.*
A: Good.
F: So it would be, *duchate*?
A: Good. Go to sleep! What is the verb?
F: *Dormir.*
A: Good…
F: *dormirse.*
A: Good, write that on the side.
F: Is it an “e?” (Spelling)
A: It’s an “o.” Now what?
F: Change the ending, now.
A: Okay…
F: I don’t know…
A: Just like up here. We had *ducharse,* we changed it to *ducha* and added *te.*
F: Would it be *dormes*?
A: Was this *duchas*?
F: No… so, *dorma*?
A: Okay, but this is an –ir verb.
F: So it would be –*er*… -*es*?
A: Do we have an –*s* up there?
F: Haha, no… Put an –*a* on it?
A: Well… it’s an –ir verb.
F: Doesn’t –ir change to e?
A: Yes…
F: *Dorme.*
A: Good. BUT… do we say dorme?

F: No…

A: What do we say? Do I say yo dormo?

F: Dormir?

A: No, that is the infinitive. When it is conjugated, what do we say? Is it dormo? How does it sound?

F: (Stumbles…)

A: Okay, let me show you what I want you to look at. (Writes down dormo) The ending is fine… but here…

F: Change it to –ir?

A: I don’t want you to re-conjugate it. I want you to look at this part right here (points to the first “o.”) And think about how you say it, and if you pronounce it like this, with an “o.” Dormo.

F: Duer… duerme?

A: Very good.

F: So, is it an “e?”

A: Say it again…

F: Duerme…

A: What does it sound like?

F: An “e.”

A: There is an “e,” but there is something before the “e.”

F: “U.”

A: Good. Now… what do we add?

F: Te.

A: Good, perfect. Let’s move on to the next one. Go to bed!

F: I forget how to say it.
A: What about this one? Get dressed! (Pause) Do you remember the word for “dress?” A girl’s dress?

F: Does it start with a “v?” Vestido?

A: Good. So that is the word for dress, so how do we make that the verb?

F: Vesteis…

A: In an infinitive… Remember, verbs end in –ar, -er, ir…

F: Vestir?

A: Good. And we say I dress myself…

F: Vestirse.

A: Very good… Okay, now what are we going to do?

F: Change the ending… so would it be…

A: What did we do for the other ones?

F: Veste?

A: Good. Now what?

F: Conjugate it.

A: We just conjugated it. What do we add?

F: -as.

A: We already did that, the –e is our conjugation. What do we have to add now?

F: Te?

A: Good. Now, one more thing… because I want you to do it perfectly. There is a change in the beginning, like in dormirse. The part I want you to change is here (writes and points to the “e.”) It’s not vestete… what do you think it is?

F: A?

A: No…

F: -i? It sounds the same…

A: Vistete.. it sounds like that. Okay… Eat breakfast!
F: *Come?*

A: *Comer* is to eat… but there is a special verb to say “to eat breakfast.” How do you say breakfast?

F: I don’t know.

A: (Acts shocked) Remember, we learned “breakfast, lunch, and dinner.”

F: I don’t think I was there?

A: You were there! It starts with a “d” if that helps.

F: (Pause)

A: Lunch is *almuerzo* and the verb is *almorzarse.* Dinner is *cena* and the verb is *cenarse.*

F: *Dinarse?*

A: You’re almost there.

F: *Dinarse?*

A: *Desayunarse.* Write it in on the side…

F: I don’t know how to spell it!

A: I’ll say it very slowly… *Des… a… yu* (with a “y”… “yu”)… *nar… se.* Now what?

F: Change the ending.

A: Okay, how?

F: *Desanar….*

A: Look at what we’ve done, so far. Where is the verb, if you take off the pronoun?

F: Here?

A: No… we have to take off what?

F: The se.

A: Right. So *desayunar* is the part we have to conjugate. How do I conjugate it, like we did the other ones?

F: Well, it’s an –er verb… so…

A: Is it?
F: No, it’s an –ar verb…

A: Remember, we did one like this…

F: Umm…

A: Which other one that we’ve done is a positive command with an –ar verb?

F: Duchar?

A: Right, ducharse. So how did we change that one?

F: Desayunar?

A: That is the infinitive.

F: Desayunais?

A: Felix. Focus. I don’t want random answers, I want you to think.

F: Okay.

A: Look over here. We changed this from ducharse to duchate. The duchar changed to ducha. So what do we do with desyunarse?

F: Umm… desa… Is the desa… right?

A: Yes…

F: So it would be… desayu…

A: and what ending do we add?

F: -ar?

A: That brings us back to the beginning… we what a conjugation.

F: -a? So “desayuna?”

A: Good, and then what?

F: Desayunate,

A: Good. Perfect. We have one left, “Go to bed!” And we don’t know that verb?

F: I don’t think so.

A: The verb is acostarse. So it is just like this one…
F: *Acosta*?

A: Good, write that part down. And what do we add?

F: *Acostate*.

A: Good. And this one also has a stem-change. Look right here at the “o.” What do you think it changes to?

F: “a?”

A: What do the “o’s” usually change to? Look up at what we did with *dormir*.

F: An e?

A: almost…

F: “ue?”

A: Good.

F: So it’s going to be… *acuestate*.

A: Great! You’re done with this assessment. You did a great job, I’m so proud of you!

(Break time, talking…)

A: Okay. Let’s move on to the next assessment… let’s do a little review… remember how last time we made a chart? I want to do that again.

F: Okay.

A: (Draws chart… box with 6 spaces for the conjugations.)

F: *Fui*?

A: Yes. Go ahead and write them in. … Good.

F: F… is this the *este* one?… *fuistese*…?

A: Almost!

F: *Fuiste*?

A: Good.

F: Is it –*sta*?
A: Almost not “a.” *Fuiste*… but it’s not an English –a it’s the Spanish –e (says it phonetically.)

F: -e?

A: Good. What about down here? (3rd box)

F: I don’t know… Is this plural for this one?

A: This is he/she remember? One person.

F: *Fui*?

A: We have *fui*? What is this one?

F: *Fu*… I can’t say it. F-U-E?

A: Good. F-U-E is pronounced (fway).

F: Okay. *Fue*.

A: And over here? For *nosotros*?

F: *Fuamos*?

A: Almost, but it’s not an –ar verb.

F: *Fuimos*?

A: Good. Next one?

F: *Fua... fui... fuisteis*?

A: Good..

F: -tes?

A: You need an “I” before the “s.” Good, very good. And down here?

F: *Fuen*? *Fuern*?

A: It’s that one you are thinking of…

F: F-U-E-R-O-N?

A: Perfect. Now we have the chart, all we have to do is match.

F: Yea.
A: So? *Vosotros*?

F: *Fuisteis*.

A: Good. Luisa?

F: That would be “she…” *Fue*?

A: Good.

F: Would this be “fue,” too?

A: Luisa and her mother.

F: *Ellos? Fueron*?

A: Good.

F: *Tu… fuiste*.

A: Perfect.

F: This would be… *me*?

A: It’s not me… what does the sentence say?

F: *La fecha de mi vuelo*… I don’t know… *fecha* is the date.

A: Right, the date of my flight. So we’re talking about the date. What box does that go in?

F: This one. (Points to he/she/usted box)

A: Yes! Felix, I’m so proud of you!

F: (Laughs.)

A: Okay. *Tu y tu hermano*.

F: Her? No, him?

A: What does “*tu y tu hermano*” mean?

F: My brother?

A: But “*TU y tu hermano?’” “*Tu*” is what?

F: You.
A: … y tu hermano?
F: and his brother?
A: Tu.
F: You.
A: y
F: is?
A: no… y… tengo manzanas, naranjas y uvas…
F: and?
A: Good.
F: You and my brother.
A: Not you and MY brother.
F: You and your brother.
A: Good.
F: so it would be ellos?
A: Not quite… because it’s YOU and your brother.
F: Vosotros.
A: Good.
F: (writes in answer)
A: Good. Down here, usted?
F: Fue
A: good. And here, yo?
F: Fui
A: And here? Mis amigos y yo?
F: My friends.
A: y yo?
F: *Nosotros*… so… (writes in answer)

A: Good. This section is done! Let’s look down here. How do you say “ya’ll went?”

F: *Fuimos*?

A: How do you say the ya’ll? You and your brother…

F: *Fuisteis*?

A: Good. now we want to say, “to the beach.”

F: *es*…

A: How do we say beach?

F: um.. I don’t know… I can see the packet in my head, I can’t see the verb.

A: why don’t we go through and do all the verbs, then we’ll come back and do the rest of
the sentences. Good plan?

F: Yea.

A: So, here… I went to the mountains.

F: *Yo fui*.

A: Good.

F: … *es las montanas*.

A: *a las montanas*. Good.

F: The plane was fast…

A: You have “el avión,” that’s good. How do we say “was fast.”

F: *Fuisteis*?

A: The plane?

F: The plane was fast.

A: What category does the plane go in?

F: *Fue*?

A: Now, I’m going to give you the word for “fast.” I gave it to everyone in class.
“Rápido.”
F: Okay. … Las chicas es comico…

A: Okay but we want to say they WERE funny.

F: This one? (Points to fueron)

A: Yes. Put in the funny.

F: Cómicas.

A: And guess what. 75% of people got points off because they put cómico. And you got it perfectly right, cómicas. Good!

F: (Laughs)
Appendix C

Dynamic Assessment Session, March 11, 2010

A: What are we doing in this section?
F: Answering the questions.
A: Right. What does the first one say?
F: ¿Dónde fuiste tú la semana pasada?
A: Good… what does that mean in English?
F: Where did ya’ll go… last week?
A: Almost, but it’s not ya’ll. What is the fuiste?
F: You.
A: Good. So what are we going to say?
F: yo... la semana pasada...
A: Tell me what you want to say.
F: I just went to school.
A: That’s fine. Tell me that. Tell me, “I went to school.”
F: Yo ir...
A: You have to conjugate ir.
F: Fui? Yo fui a escuela la semana...?
A: Good. You don’t even need la semana pasada.
F: So... yo fui a la escuela.
A: Good. What’s the next one?
F: Quien...
A: What’s quien mean?
F: It’s not what… where…
A: ¿Quién es tu mejor amigo?
F: Who?

A: Yes. So keep going.

F: ¿Quién fue el primer presidente de los estados unidos?

A: What does it mean?

F: Who was… the president of the United States.

A: Good, but which president? El primer president...

F: um.. the president?

A: But which? El primer… tenemos la clase de español el primer período (gestures).


A: So what are you going to write?

F: George Washington… el primero...

A: Well, what would we say in English?

F: George Washington was the first president.

A: Good… so?

F: Would it be fui?

A: How would you spell it?

F: F-U-E.

A: Good. Write that in, and copy the rest of the sentence. Next one?

F: ¿Donde fuisteis tu y tus amigos para esquiar?

A: What does that mean?

F: Was… where.

A: Good. You know this! Where…

F: Where was…

A: This isn’t was… this is the other meaning.

F: Where did you and your friends ski?
A: Almost.

F: Where did you and your friends ski?

A: Go to ski.

F: Go to ski.

A: So what are you going to say?

F: *Mi... amigos... fuisteis...* would you say *fuisteis*?

A: Well, if you’re saying *mis amigos y yo* ...

F: *Mis amigos y yo.*

A: Who is that?

F: Me and my friends… so *mis amigos...fuisteis* — *Fuisteis* is ya’ll… you want to say me and my friends

F: Um… me and my friends went… is it *fui*?

A: My friends and I… we…

F: *Ummm*

A: Which form do we want?

F: Nosotros?

A: Yes.

F: So *fuimos? Fuimos a Tussey Mountain?*

A: Perfect. But you need an *a*. Next one?

F: *Como fueron las clases del semestre pasado?*

A: And what does that mean?

F: What class…?

A: What is *como?* If I say *como estas?*

F: How?

A: Good.
F: How were your classes last semester?
A: Good.
F: So you would say… mis las clases…
A: You can say mis clases or las clases
F: Las clases… bien… el semestre pasado.
A: Good, but we need our verb.
F: Umm. You mean, like fui?
A: Right. And classes is 3rd person plural…
F: fui… fuisteis… fueron? Is it fueron?
A: (Draws conjugation chart.) Which box?
F: Oh boy. This box? (points.)
A: Classes?
F: This box?
A: Do not guess! Do not point at random boxes.
F: (Laughs) Okay.
A: Las clases is plural. Which side is plural?
F: This side (points to right side)
A: Good. Top box is first person, talking about me and my friends, right?
F: Yea.
A: Second box down is 2nd person… so you and your friends would work here.
F: Okay.
A: Third box down is 3rd person… she is he/she/it plural.
F: So it would go there?
A: Right… so?
F: fuisteis?
A: It’s not fuisteis. Look at the question. Should we be changing anything?

F: Fueron? Las clases fueron muy bien.

A: Good. All done! How do you think it went?

F: It was hard.

A: Hard?

F: No, I’m just kidding. It wasn’t hard… I don’t know… I just feel like… if I would have… it wasn’t hard, I just… I didn’t think I knew this stuff. I think that’s more of it. I didn’t think I knew it.

A: But you did.

F: But I did. You proved me wrong. (Laughs)

A: Does that make you happy?

F: Yes.

A: Because it makes me happy.

F: It makes me happy, too.

A: Felix, I’m very proud of you.

F: Thank you.

A: Okay, this one we just started. These starred answers are correct. We also have all the conjugations in this box, except for one. What goes in that first box?

F: Is it i?

A: It’s for the yo form.

F: Umm. Is it -o?

A: No, -o is down here.

F: Is it –i with a tilde?

A: No, but you’re close. –i is for er/ir verbs.

F: Umm..

A: Do you remember in class when we talked about spelling changes with verbs that end in –gar? If I had the verb jugar, how would I say, “I played?”
F: is that the -gue?
A: Yes. So what would the ending be that goes in this box?
F: -e?
A: Good. So let’s do this one: Yo/bailar
F: bailo?
A: Use the chart we just made!
F: (laughs) bail...? (can’t understand ending)
A: Spell it for me?
F: B-A-I-L-E with an accent?
A: Yes. Sometimes you say them differently, but you spell them correctly.
F: That’s the problem, sometimes I don’t know how to say it, the pronunciation.
A: Okay. Well anytime you want to spell something for me, that’s fine.
F: Okay.
A: So what are we doing in this section?
F: Writing it in Spanish.
A: Good. First one- ya’ll walked.
F: Isn’t that vosotros?
A: Yes. What is the verb for walk?
F: Umm.. I don’t know… is it…? No, bailar is dance… is it hablar?
A: That’s talk.
F: I don’t think I know.
A: We’ll come back to it then. I can give you the infinitive, but then you’ll only get half-credit.
F: Okay.
A: Next one, I played.
F: Jugo…

A: Right, but that’s not the conjugation. I played…

F: Is it jugar?

A: Jugar is the infinitive.

F: So it would be…. (spells it juege)

A: Well, this is good, but remember the spelling change? We want to keep it sounding like (-gay). What do we need?

F: A –u?

A: Good. She listened.

F: Would it be this one? (Points to el/ella/usted conjugation)

A: Yes. What is the verb for “listen?” I tell you guys to listen all the time! To listen to music…

F: Umm… listen, listen, listen… I don’t think I remember.

A: Okay we’ll come back to it. Next one is… “we sang.” What is the verb?

F: bailar.

A: That is to dance.

F: hablar?

A: that is to talk…

F: I don’t know sing! (Pause) Is it cantar?

A: Yes!

F: (Writes in answer)

A: We sang.

F: cantáis?

A: we sang.

F: this one is we? (points to nosotros conjugation)

A: Yes.
F: *cantamos?*

A: good. Next one, “you bought.” How do we say “to buy?”

F: *Vender?*

A: Close, that is to sell.

F: (Pause)

A: To buy, with *dinero*…

F: I don’t know that one. I thought it was *vender*.

A: You’re close, that is to sell.

F: I don’t know.

A: Okay, let’s move back up here. Do we remember how to say walked?

F: I don’t know.

A: What about listened? I’m okay with letting you get away without the other two, but you know this one. What do I say when I tell you guys to listen to me in class?

F: *Escuchas?*

A: Yea! What is the infinitive, the whole verb?

F: *Escuchamos… escuchos…* I don’t know…

A: Write it down for me.

F: I don’t know.

A: Yes you do, say it again.

F: *Escuchos… ?*

A: Take it slow, what do all verbs end it before they are conjugated?

F: -os? –as?

A: hablar, cantar…

F: oh, -ar?

A: Uh huh…
F: *escuchar*

A: Okay… so? Say it slowly, sound it out.

F: *escucho* (says correctly but spelling is wrong.)

A: It’s correct and I know what it means… say the first part to me.

F: *es-

A: How do you spell that part?

F: E-S

A: Good. Next part?

F: *-cu-

A: and that?

F: C-U?

A: Yea. Next part?

F: *-cho?*

A: and that?

F: H-O

A: You need something before the -H

F: C?

A: Yep! You know how to do it. Next part, I’m going to give you infinitives, and you can get half credit.

F: Okay.

A: To walk is *caminar.*

F: Okay.

A: And to buy is *comprar.* Conjugate them, please. And use your chart!

F: So this would be *camináis?*

A: Good. And down here? You bought?
F: *compras*?

A: Good. Now what do we have to do in this section?

F: Describe… three things… you did yesterday.

A: Right, just make sure you use an –ar verb. Remember *ir* is an –ir verb… it doesn’t count.

F: *Hablar*.

A: Good… I talked yesterday…

F: *hablé*?

A: Good!

F: *Bailé*…

A: Perfect.

F: *Canté*.

A: Great! You’re all done… You got a 19/21, that’s awesome. And on this one (other quiz) you missed *fuiste a la playa*…

F: Oh, *la playa*

A: Yes. So, you have 27/28. You have some of the best test grades in the class. Should we start on the next assessment?

F: Sure.

A: Okay. I also have a question for you. I’m writing a paper about what we’ve been doing together… you know that?

F: Yea.

A: Would it be okay if I include some of your tests, with your name crossed out?

F: Yea, sure.

A: You sure? I don’t have to.

F: No, that’s fine.
A: Okay. Thanks for helping me. (Break to talk about projects in the class, working with his LS teacher, etc) So… here we go. This is the open-notebook quiz, so grab your packet. What do the directions say here?

F: Complete the…

A: following

F: Complete the following sentences with the indirect object.

A: Yep, the indirect object pronoun. So that is these (gestures to IOPs)

F: *Te traigo flores para ti.*

A: Right, what does that mean?

F: I bring you flowers?

A: Right. And this part says the same thing, but instead of para ti, you want to use one of this indirect object pronouns. Who is para ti?

F: For you.

A: Right. So which one of these (IOPs) means for you?

F: te?

A: Perfect. And in the sentences, you want to look for the a and the para because they act as a clue that the next thing is the indirect object pronoun that we want to pick.

F: so for this one, we use nos?

A: Perfect. Next one?

F: *ella escribe una carta a mi?* So… she writes…

A: … a card.

F: … for me

A: So?

F: me?

A: Good. Next one?

F: *Yo compro libros para ellos.*

A: What does para ellos mean?
F: I don’t know.
A: the para?
F: I don’t know.
A: para means for.
F: for them?
A: Right. So which one means them?
F: Le?
A: Well it’s more than one person.
F: Les.
A: Right. Because this answers the question, “For who?” I buy books for who? For them.
F: El hombre da dinero a Lisa.
A: So what will we have? To whom?
F: To her… le
A: Good.
F: Tengo que trabajar para vosotros... so it would be os?
A: Good. And here?
F: nosotros preparamos la cena para Pepe. So that would be nos?
A: Nos?
F: What is Pepe?
A: It’s a boy’s name.
F: So le?
A: Yes.
F: Juan tiene los libros para mí.
A: What does it say?
F: Juan has books… for me. So it would be… me.
A: Good.

F: *Compro... faldas para ti*. So would that be *te*?

A: Good! You are officially caught up on your work. This is a 20/20, I’m very proud of you.

F: Thank you.

A: Anything else I can help you with?

F: Haha, these projects.

A: Well come see me if you have questions, and I can help you with the sentences if you need it.

F: Okay.
Appendix D

The following is an example of a quiz the learner did independently in class and turned in.

Give the English meaning of the following words. (5 pts)
1. Tener - __________
2. Reír - __________
3. Saber - __________
4. Hacer - __________
5. Ir - __________

Fill in the blanks with the correct conjugation of the verb. (10 points)
1. María y Chico __________ (encontrar) el mapa.
2. Tómas y yo __________ (recordar) la tarea.
3. Yo __________ (entender) las instrucciones
4. Ella __________ (preferir) el pollo.
5. ¿Te __________ (repetir) tú la pregunta?
6. ¿Cuánto __________ (costar) el pan?
7. Nosotros __________ (dormir) muchas horas.
8. Ustedes __________ (cerrar) la puerta.
9. La clase __________ (empezar) a las 1:36.
10. Vosotros __________ (querer) la comida ahora.

Write an original sentence using the provided verbs (10 points):
1. nosotros (venir)

2. los estudiantes (salir)

3. tú (recordar)

4. yo (conocer)

5. usted (poder)
Here are examples of quizzes the learner and I completed together, using dynamic assessment.
nombre __________________ clase __________________ fecha 2/15 20/20 pts

Escribe los pronombres de los objetos indirectos (6 puntos):

me nos
te os
le les

Completa la siguiente con el pronombre del objeto indirecto correcto (10):

1. Yo traigo flores para ti.
   Yo ____ traigo flores.

2. Ellos sirven la comida a nosotros.
   ____ sirven la comida.

3. Ella escribe una carta a mí.
   Ella ____ escribe.

4. Yo compro libros para ellos.
   Yo ____ compro libros.

5. El hombre da el dinero a Lisa.
   El ____ da el dinero.

6. Tengo trabajo para vosotros.
   ____ tengo trabajo.

   ____ preparamos la cena.

8. Juan tiene los libros para mí.
   Juan ____ tiene los libros.

   ____ compro las faldas.

10. Escribo una carta a mis tíos.
    ____ escribo una carta.

Traduce de inglés a español (4pts):

1. I write him a letter.
   le __________ una carta

2. You give me food.
   me __________ comida

3. She sings us a song.
   nos __________ una canción

4. He gives you the book.
   te __________ el libro
nombre  Felix  clase  1  fecha  2/12
8/26

Completa las oraciones con los pronombres reflexivos/verbos: (10 pts)

1. te acuestas a las diez.
2. nos __________ dormimos.
3. os __________ levantáis a las siete.
4. me __________ baño.
5. se __________ ducha.
6. Jacinto se __________ (lavar).
7. Ellos se __________ (secar).
8. Me __________ (sentar) en la silla.
9. Te __________ (afeitar) las piernas.
10. Nos __________ (peinar) el pelo.

Mandatos afirmativos/negativos: (8 pts)

1. Don’t bathe yourself!
2. Take a shower!
3. Don’t sit down!
4. Go to sleep!
5. Go to bed!
6. Don’t have fun!
7. Get dressed!
8. Eat breakfast!
nombre: [redacted]  
fecha: 27/28

Escribe la forma correcta de ir o ser en el pretérito. (10 puntos)

1. Nosotros _______________ a la playa para construir un castillo de arena.
2. Yo _______________ a las montañas para acampar con amigos.
3. Luisa _______________ a la isla por una semana con su madre.
4. Luisa y su madre _______________ al bosque para ver los animales y las plantas.
5. Tú _______________ a la ciudad para visitar el museo de Andy Warhol.
6. La fecha de mi vuelo _______________ el 19 de febrero.
7. Tú y tu hermano _______________ al centro comercial para comprar algunos trajes de baño.
8. Usted _______________ a su destino por avión.
9. Yo _______________ a mi destino a pie.
10. Mis amigos y yo _______________ al lago para nadar y tomar el sol.

Traduce a español. (10 puntos)

1. Y'all went to the beach.
   _______________

2. I went to the mountains.
   _______________

3. The plane was fast.
   _______________

4. The girls were funny.
   _______________

5. You went on vacation last week.
   _______________
Contesta las preguntas siguientes con la forma correcta de ir o ser en el pretérito. (8 puntos)

1. ¿Dónde fuiste tú la semana pasada?
   - Yo fui a la escuela

2. ¿Quién fue el primer presidente de los Estados Unidos?
   - George W. fue el primer presidente

3. ¿Dónde fuisteis tu y tus amigos para esquiar?
   - Mis amigos y yo fuimos a Tussey Mt.

4. ¿Cómo fueron las clases del semestre pasado?
   - Las clases del semestre pasado fueron muy buenas.

*Anything you want to share with us? Class? Question? Life?
Appendix E

This is an example of a chart (an organizational tool) that Felix and I completed before we worked on his assessment about *ir* (to go) and *ser* (to be) in the preterit tense.
Appendix F

Attached is an e-mail that I sent to the student’s Learning Support teacher, telling her about his progress making up quizzes and what he could do to further improve his grade (turning in 2 projects.)
Academic Vita of Andrea Rose Warren

Andrea Rose Warren
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Education
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Majors: B.S. World Languages Education – Spanish Option, B.S. Applied Spanish
Honors: World Languages Education
Thesis Title: Dynamic Assessment: Bridging the Gap between Special Education and Foreign Language Learning
Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Matthew E. Poehner

Teaching Experience
Student Teaching – State College Area High School
Spring 2010
• Fulfilled all responsibilities of a full-time Spanish teacher, including classroom management, lesson planning, documenting grades and creating a positive learning environment for students.
Pre-service Teaching – State College Area High School
Fall 2009
• Collaborated with mentor teacher to create meaningful lessons and teach Spanish classes.
Spanish Class Instructor – Saturday Morning Program
Fall 2008
• Worked successfully with a team of my peers to teach Spanish to a small group of elementary aged children, utilizing literature and culminating in a final performance.
Pre-K Classroom Assistant – Bennett Center; State College, PA
Spring 2008
• Spent time observing mentor teachers and interacting with Pre-Kindergarten aged children. Also utilized play and literature to introduce them to the target language.

Grants Received
Schreyer Ambassador Travel Grant, Spring 2009
Scholarships
Schreyer Honors College Scholarship (4 years)
Marilyn and John Rufner Scholarship in Education (2009-2010)
Marilyn and John Rufner Scholarship in Education (2008-2009)
E. Louise Ashburn Stethers Scholarship in Education (2007-2008)
Wentroble Scholarship in Education (2006-2007)

Awards
Named Student Marshal for the Department of World Languages Education
Undergraduate Certificate of Academic Excellence in Spanish
Penn State President’s Freshman Award
Dean’s List – All Semesters

Professional Memberships
The Pennsylvania State Education Association

International Education
University of Alicante
San Vicente del Raspeig, Spain
Study Abroad – Spring 2009

Language Proficiency
English and Spanish