

Beyond Traditional Testing: Exploring the Use of Computerized Dynamic Assessment to Improve EFL Learners' Reading

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Abstract

The present study implemented a computerized dynamic assessment (CDA) program in EFL classes at a university in Taiwan. Unlike a traditional assessment, the CDA program provided learners with pre-programmed mediation during assessment. This study examined the effects of the CDA program in enhancing Taiwanese college EFL students' reading skills. The participants in this study were 137 non-English major students, who were divided into a control and an experimental group. The procedure included a pre-test, CDA intervention phase, and a post-test. The three reading skills investigated in the study were identifying main ideas (FMI), using contextual clues (CC), and making inferences (MI). The research questions included: (1) Is there a significant difference in the participants' reading skills between and within the control and experimental groups before and after the CDA program? and (2) What is the frequency of the computerized mediation usage in the intervention phase? Inferential and descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions. The findings showed that the experimental group improved more significantly than the control group in FMI, MI, and overall reading skills. However, the CDA program did not have a significant impact on the participants' CC skill in either group. The improvement in the FMI and MI skills is believed to be caused by the design of the computerized mediation. Also, in the FMI and MI tasks, the frequency of mediation usage decreased gradually and consistently throughout the intervention sessions. Furthermore, although the participants' in both groups showed significant progress in their FMI skill, the experimental group improved more due to the CDA intervention.

Keywords: *computerized dynamic assessment, EFL reading, mediation, MLE, ZPD*