

Can a dynamic test in kindergarten predict reading difficulties in Grade 1?

Preliminary results from a longitudinal study

ANNA STEENBERG GELLERT & CARSTEN ELBRO

The aim of the research reported here was to examine the validity of a new dynamic test of the initial development of reading. In the dynamic test, participants are taught three novel letters and how to synthesize the letter sounds into new words. This test was administered along with traditional tests of reading, letter knowledge and phonological awareness to 176 children at the end of the kindergarten grade. Three months into Grade 1, traditional tests of reading were administered to the same children. It was found that performance on the dynamic test correlated highly with concurrent performance on traditional tests of reading, letter knowledge, and phonological awareness in the kindergarten grade. Importantly, the dynamic test contributed significantly to the prediction of reading abilities in Grade 1 even after controlling for traditional pre-school predictors: letter knowledge and phonological awareness. The dynamic test was found to contribute to the early identification of children at risk of poor reading abilities among native speakers of Danish as well as among children with Danish as a second language. These results provide preliminary support for the validity of the dynamic test of reading.