



Editorial Comment

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It is a very great pleasure to publish the 13th issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, now in its seventh year of publication, which is published by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. The response to the previous issues continue to be extremely gratifying, and we intend to maintain these high standards in this issue and forthcoming issues. We have now amassed an even stronger editorial board, and I am grateful for the support of the academics and professionals involved in resolving any issues arising.

In this issue, we present seven articles representing international research on a number of important issues addressing theory and practice. In this issue, we cover the full range, from early education through to university, and highlight a range of approaches that have proved useful with children or adults with developmental differences.

In the first article from Lee Er Ker and colleagues, Speech-Language Therapists at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, the authors set out to investigate the impact of their therapy on the progress of children with language difficulties on subtests of the CELF®-4UK, a key measure of language in common use in speech therapy. This was evaluated in a controlled study with the intervention group making significantly greater progress over the course of the intervention than the control group. This is an interesting study in an area which is rarely tackled in the literature because it is difficult to construct an appropriate study for children who can suffer from a range of differences in their language.

In the following two articles, a range of approaches are considered with children who suffer from visual deficits in their processing, that have been associated with dyslexia. In the first study presented by Isobelle Wong she undertakes an analysis of the level of visual deficits in a group of 30 children receiving support from the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. This study introduces a number of technical terms associated with visual deficit which are important for the following study as well. The results of this study identified a greater proportion of visual deficits in dyslexic children than in the general population, with some children showing evidence of quite severe deficits that would be predicted to impact on their progress in reading. Recommendations are made that future studies should routinely consider these aspects of processing.

A further study on visual deficits in dyslexia from Sharanjeet Kaur and colleagues in Malaysia considered the potential advantages of using ChromaGen II lenses to support children with difficulties. In a pre- and post-test study of performance before and after wearing the lenses, no effects were found on reading accuracy or rate, and no significant impact on binocular vision apart from stereopsis. Together, these articles provide a useful contribution to the literature, showing the need for appropriate support, and an evaluation of one approach to providing this support.

An article from George Cowie addressed the issues of inclusion for a child who suffered from high functioning autism at secondary level at an international school in Vietnam. In order to ensure that this boy felt more comfortable with his peers, a series of interventions were undertaken with staff and students in school. A presentation was made to both groups with an accompanying questionnaire, with support from the autistic boy's mother, as well as other pupils with autistic difficulties, in order to explain unusual aspects of behavior in autism. Following this intervention, staff expressed a need to be kept informed of the individual education plan for this boy and requested regular updates on the progress of autistic pupils in order to ensure the best possible outcomes. Although his peer group were less ready to come forward with comments, it was clear that they too, had developed greater awareness of autism and its consequences. This study identified that working with both children and families seemed to provide a useful way forward for ensuring smoother inclusion at school.

In the next article from Kristina Addis, she addresses the viewpoint of adults with dyslexia in the United Kingdom. In the article, the uptake of support provided by the disabled students allowance is considered. This is an important aspect of success for dyslexic students and others with disabilities and allows extra provision to ensure the greatest chance of reaching their potential. Using both questionnaires and quantitative measures the study established that the majority of these students did not take up all the support they were provided with. The article made it clear that there were many issues preventing full uptake, including difficulties in accessing the support provided and the timing of the assessments. This has important implications for other regions that have not yet established a support system for this age range.

The next article in this issue returns to the best type of support to ensure young children can learn effectively. Here Patricia Ng considers the importance and usefulness of echo poems that are designed to encourage children to verbalise and develop a sense of rhyme and rhythm. This has been shown to be a key aspect of early learning, that can easily be delivered using this charming traditional approach in a playful educational context.

Finally, an interesting case study on the importance of workplace culture in terms of mindfulness and resilience for Educational Therapists at DAS is presented by Harsheeni Rajoo, which builds on the use of creativity to build a positive working environment. This

approach is unique and holds considerable promise for further development. Overall, these seven articles provide a range of insights across a broad spectrum of ages and learning differences, including not only those with difficulties, but also the therapists that work to enhance their learning.

We hope that this issue will have something to offer every reader, whatever their background and area of interest. We look forward to welcoming many friends and colleagues back to Singapore in June 2020, from 24th to 26th to participate in another exciting UNITE SpLD Conference, with the abstracts of the articles reproduced in the next issue of Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD).