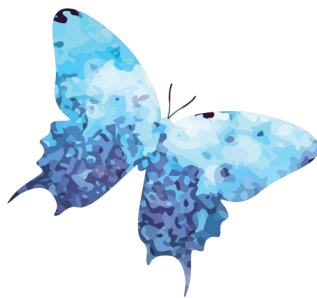




DAS Academy

ENABLING EXCELLENCE

DAS ACADEMY



You can **SUPPORT** children with Specific Learning Differences!

The DAS Academy is a Private Education Institution (PEI) registered with the Council for Private Education (CPE), and has achieved a 4-year validity period, under the council's Enhanced Registration Framework.

Led by a multi-disciplinary team that has extensive experience in providing direct support to people with specific learning differences (SpLD), the lecturers are able to use their skills and expertise in the design and delivery of the programmes offered by the DAS Academy. These programmes provide an academic pathway in the field of SpLD from foundation to postgraduate levels.

Having established a good professional standing in the field of SpLD, Das Academy works in collaboration with the government, educational and professional bodies to empower individuals who wish to make a difference in the lives of people with SpLD.

- ✓ Certificate Courses
- ✓ Workshops*
- ✓ Specialist Diploma
- ✓ Masters

**Caregivers Training Grant (CTG) is available for some workshops. Caregivers can tap on to a \$200 annual subsidy to attend the courses, with a co-payment of \$10 required. Please call 6336 2555 to find out more.*



www.dasacademy.edu.sg



DAS Academy
ENABLING EXCELLENCE

CPE Registration No.: 201003689Z | Validity: 30 December 2013 - 29 December 2017
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Success of the DAS Academy

June Siew

Head of DAS Academy

Formerly the training arm of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS), DAS Academy is now a Private Education Institution (PEI) registered with the Committee for Private Education (CPE) since 2010. As Singapore began to respond to the vision of an inclusive society in 2004, the desire to create an inclusive learning environment in schools grew, and the demand for special needs training subsequently followed. We responded by increasing the repertoire and depth of special needs courses we offered. This move necessitated our registration with the CPE. DAS Academy currently specialises in training for teachers and professionals and empowers them to support children with specific learning differences (SpLD). The DAS Academy's courses provide a multi-disciplinary perspective of SpLDs, tapping on the practical experience of educational therapists, psychologists and speech therapists at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore.

SpLD is a group of cognitive conditions - Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Attention Deficit Disorder - that affects the way an individual learns and processes information, and often interfere with their competency in school and life. SpLDs affects roughly 10-15% of the population; with many people unaware of their condition even until adulthood. However, early diagnosis and early intervention can level the playing field for these children. Armed with the right coping strategies, they learn to cope with their learning difficulties and have the same chances of success compared with their peers.

DAS Academy operates in this niche but captive market. DAS Academy is a key training provider for SpLD training in mainstream, international and

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special schools. Currently, the DAS Academy offers a wide range of courses. Practical workshops provide quick strategies, specialist diplomas provide a comprehensive blend of theory and practice and academic postgraduate masters aim to transform seasoned practitioners into domain experts. For a decade, the DAS Academy has been tasked by the Ministry of Education to deliver the Diploma in Special Education (Dyslexia) to their Allied Educators. The Masters of Arts in Special Educational Needs (MA SEN), offered by DAS Academy, in collaboration with the University of South Wales is a platform for seasoned educators to develop themselves as domain experts in this sector.

Through support from funding bodies, DAS Academy strives to make our courses more accessible to community partners and stakeholders who will benefit from SpLD training. With course objectives and outcomes aligned to the core competency roadmap outlined by Social Services Institute (SSI), some of our certificate courses have received support for funding. Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) working with clients with SpLD can benefit from our training by tapping on the VWO-Charities Capability Fund (VCF). This will enhance partnership between VWOs and create a collaborative approach towards caregiving. Additionally, the Caregivers Training Grant (CTG) administered by the Agency of Integrated Care (AIC) has made our parent workshops more attainable for caregivers who need to build capabilities to better support their children with SpLD at home.

Led by a multi-disciplinary team that has extensive experience in providing direct support to people with specific learning differences (SpLD), the lecturers are able to use their skills and expertise in the design and delivery of the programmes offered by the DAS Academy. These programmes provide an academic pathway in the field of SpLD from foundation to postgraduate levels.

Having previously worked with London Metropolitan University, in delivering a Master of Arts in Specific learning Differences, the DAS Academy formed a partnership with the University of South Wales, UK in 2013 to launch the Master of Arts in Special Educational Needs (MA SEN). Accredited by the University of South Wales and jointly delivered by the DAS Academy, this programme has been well received by both educators and caregivers of people with special educational needs since its launch.

Visiting lecturers include Dr Shirley Egley, Dr Carl Peters, and Amanda Kelland, pathway Leader for SEN. The ongoing collaboration is working well, with the course initially taught by the University of South Wales and shadowed by DAS staff, with DAS staff taking the major responsibility for delivering the course after this initial familiarisation period. The capacity that the DAS Academy has developed for academic teaching is powerful, and key members of staff are now working towards



The DAS Academy Graduation in 2015, pictured from left to right, Priscillia Shen, Dr Carl Peters, Dr Shirley Egley, Dr Adam Oei, Amanda Kelland and June Siew

achieving a PhD registered with well-regarded universities. It may be seen that staff are well qualified to deliver an academic course, with extensive experience of practice to enhance their teaching.

Over the past few years, the DAS Academy has introduced an academic structure that would grace any university throughout the world. They have adopted a rich programme of instruction, coupled with rigorous administrative procedures that ensure equity and reliability in their deliberations, overseen by an examinations board that monitors outcomes, led by Emeritus Professor Angela Fawcett, research advisor to the DAS. Angela supervised the Masters degrees of the key staff, Head of Academy June Siew and Assistant Head of Academy, Priscillia Shen, who both achieved outstanding marks in their studies. The quality of their teaching is reflected in the solid achievements of their students.

For a decade, the DAS Academy has been tasked by the Ministry of Education to deliver the Diploma in Special Education (Dyslexia) to their Allied Educators.

THE COURSES

POSTGRADUATE LEVEL PROGRAMMES

Master of Arts in Special Educational Needs (MA SEN)

The Master of Arts in Special Educational Needs (MA SEN) has been designed to provide for the continuous professional, academic and personal development of participants who are drawn from a range of backgrounds which are related to the field of Education. Course participants include teachers and leaders in schools, allied educators and parents and caregivers who work with children with a range of special educational needs (SEN).

Having its foundation in the professional and established SEN framework from the University of South Wales (USW), the MA SEN programme in Singapore is further supplemented with local perspectives and practices to ensure its relevance for the local context. This is a programme that brings together high quality evidence-based SEN practices from the East and the West.

The programme provides access to a coherent framework of professional development in the area of SEN and encourages the effective synthesis of theoretical and practical knowledge. The intellectually rigorous context allows practitioners to progress to the next level of professional development by developing their skills of communication, analysis and research in the field of SEN at Master's level.

Quality Assurance

As a partner institution of the USW, the programme follows the delivery systems and processes at USW, with reference to Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others. Additionally, USW's systems and processes to protect academic integrity are in line with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b

The University is also subject to periodic review by the Quality Assurance Agency, the most recent review being in 2015, which the DAS Academy has participated in. The outcome of the review is that the panel is fully satisfied with the quality of partnership.

Every course is subject to Annual Monitoring, the purpose of which is to: evaluate and improve course quality; ensure the best possible student experience with the resource available; identify and disseminate good practice; build up information

needed for the course review process and for external reviews and audits; encourage reflective practice among module and course tutors; ensure appropriate action is taken to remedy any shortcomings and enhance provision. Clear mention has to be made in course monitoring reports of any partner institution where the course is also delivered.

The Quality Assurance Committee in USW receives reports on the outcomes of the external examining system and of annual course monitoring.

DIPLOMA LEVEL PROGRAMMES

Diploma in Special Education (Dyslexia Studies)

The Diploma in Special Education (Dyslexia Studies) is a bespoke 9-months training programme (part-time) that allows allied educators in the Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) schools to gather theoretical knowledge on dyslexia (and co-occurring difficulties) as well as practical skills to support learners in this field. The specialist diploma aims to empower allied educators to exhibit professional responses and take practical steps to ensure that mainstream students with learning difficulties enjoy equal access to the broader curriculum, just like their typically developing peers. Allied educators undertaking this programme will have to complete three modules for the Diploma in Special Education (Dyslexia Studies) award.

Students' Feedback (2016 class of 20 students)

The allied educators have expressed that the DAS academy has an excellent grasp of what is happening at the ground in schools. They have also commended on how the training has complemented their initial teacher education training at the National Institute of Education (Singapore). They have specifically pointed out that the modules taught have equipped the AEDs with a repertoire of theoretical and practical knowledge to carry out their scope of duties well. In fact, some have expressed that the DAS Academy training should have come earlier on so that they would be better prepared earlier.

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Specialist Diploma in Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)

The Specialist Diploma in Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) is designed by the DAS Academy to meet the increasing demands for higher education in the field of specific learning differences. Offering a platform that promotes interactive and collaborative learning, this Specialist Diploma will engage students in the learning process as they explore, reflect and share knowledge and experiences as an individual and as a group. The Specialist Diploma can be attained with the successful completion of six Certificate level modules.

Students' Feedback (2016 class of 10 students)

Students appreciated the well rounded and structured curriculum which provided them with strategies to support struggling learners in academic learning. They have maintained it is a good introduction to the world of teaching students with learning difficulties. At the same time, there was a request for dyslexia to be covered in broader as well as deeper strokes and more coverage of behavioural issues.

CERTIFICATE LEVEL PROGRAMMES

Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy teaching

The Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching Course is one example of the Certificates that DAS Academy offers. This course utilises the Orton-Gillingham principles in the remediation of persons with language and processing problems associated with dyslexia. The training encompasses the theoretical as well as the practical and experiential aspects of learning, allowing participants to truly appreciate the core principles of dyslexia teaching.

Students' Feedback (2016 class of 15 students)

The majority of these students were parents, and they were delighted with the course, because it gave them a greater understanding of their own children and the problems they encounter, as well as how to help them more effectively at home. The course leaders evaluation of the effectiveness of the course showed the course to be most relevant and up to date, following a revision and reprint of the ELA manual, with a good balance of theory and practice.

Certificate in Dyscalculia and Numeracy Teaching

This is another popular Certificate offered by DAS Academy. This Certificate aims to enable parents and educators to understand and support learners who have difficulties in learning mathematics, including those with dyslexia. Participants will be

introduced to the theoretical and practical implications of mathematical learning and understand how individual differences affect the learning of mathematics. Participants will also learn the skills of identifying and assessing individual needs as well as practical strategies in supporting struggling learner in mathematics.

Students' Feedback (2016 class of 15 students)

Majority of these students were parents, with 5 DAS educational therapists. and they found the following topics particularly useful: games in teaching maths, fractions, percentages, number bonds, supporting learner 1-111, the Concrete Pictorial abstract (CPA) approach, error analysis, practical examples & tools, maths learning styles & resources shared by tutors, testing, techniques/styles to teach topics, manipulatives to teach, place value, planning lessons according to thinking styles, better understanding as to how pupils process math information, perspective of targeting teaching techniques.

Certificate in Educational Psychology

This course aims to equip participants with an understanding of the key theories in educational psychology and their impact on parenting, teaching, and learning styles. Participants will be shown the practical implications of the theories and will learn to use them to encourage, motivate and influence their students' learning.

Students' Feedback (2016 class of 18 students)

Students agreed that there was good coverage of theoretical understanding of teaching and learning processes. Some felt the course was too theoretical but the others thought that this course has helped to bridge theory to practice. There were general agreements that class discussions were fruitful.

WORKSHOPS

Our workshops had their beginnings in 2004 when the training department was formed in the DAS. Now under the purview of the DAS Academy, the workshops continue to serve the purpose of equipping parents and educators with knowledge, skills and attitudes to support learners with dyslexia at home and in school. We have based our workshops on broad scientific consensus of what is needed to become a good reader. The five essential elements of effective reading instruction, as advocated by the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000), are Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. In addition, our workshops cater to other aspects of learning difficulties, such as Chinese language, Mathematics and Parenting support. The phonics, spelling and math workshops have been popular

ones among parents and educators. Most parents and educators find the strategies learnt in our workshops practical and helpful. Moreover, parents of children with formal diagnosis of learning difficulties are given Caregivers' Training Grant (CTG) of \$200 each year, which they can utilise to attend the workshops. We have also been delivering customised workshops for mainstream primary and secondary schools, depending on the specific needs of the teachers and allied educators.

DAS ACADEMY KEY STAFF



JUNE SIEW- Head of DAS Academy

June Siew has more than a decade of practical experience in the field of Specific Learning Differences. She is a Fellow with the Register of Educational Therapists (Asia) and is a qualified trainer with a WSQ Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA). Her previous experiences as an educational therapist augments her current role as a lecturer. She has written a paper on "Educational Therapy in Singapore: Towards Professionalisation and Professionalism" which has been published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences.

Her postgraduate academic achievements include a Master of Arts in Specific Learning Differences and a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, London Metropolitan University, UK. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education programme at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore and the University College London, Institute of Education (IoE) with a special interest in cool and hot executive function in children with reading difficulties.

Highest Qualification:

Master of Arts (Specific Learning Differences), London Metropolitan University, UK

Teaching / Training Qualification:

PGCert in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education, London Metropolitan University, UK
Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA)



PRISCILLIA SHEN
Assistant Head of DAS Academy

Priscillia Shen began her special education journey as an Educational Therapist at DAS and has more than 10 years of experience in the field of special educational needs, especially in dyslexia. Her previous experience working closely with SpLD learners has allowed her to take on a constructive and practical pedagogical approach. She believes in keeping up with current developments in the field to continually refine teaching practices and maintain professional passion. She is also a qualified trainer with the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) by the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ). While lecturing at the DAS Academy, she is currently pursuing Doctorate in Education (EdD) at the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore and the Institute of Education (IOE) in UK, London.

Her research interests are in dyslexia, Chinese language and Mathematics. She has been co-presenting papers on learning difficulties in Chinese language and Mathematics in relation to dyslexia at conferences since 2012.

Highest Qualification:

Master of Arts (Specific Learning Differences), London Metropolitan University, UK

Teaching / Training Qualification:

PGCert in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education, London Metropolitan University, UK
Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA).