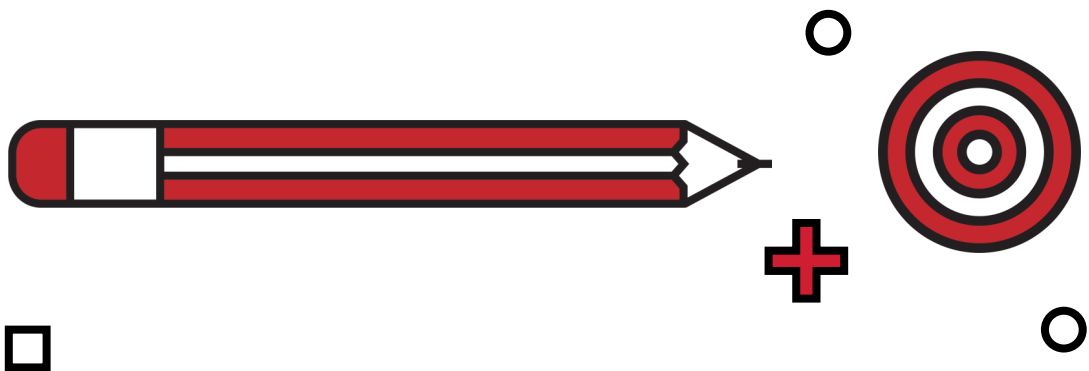
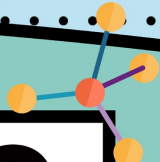






# INTRODUCTION






# WHAT WE DO


**240**  
**PROFESSIONAL STAFF:**  
INCLUDING SPECIALIST  
PSYCHOLOGISTS AND  
EDUCATIONAL THERAPISTS

**3500++**  
**STUDENTS**  
FROM PRESCHOOL TO  
SECONDARY SCHOOL

**14**  
**CENTRES**




## SPLD ASSESSMENT





DAS carries out psycho-educational assessments in the area of Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) for learners from pre-primary to adulthood!

**ARRANGE  
FOR AN ASSESSMENT  
TODAY!**



## OUTREACH & AWARENESS


At DAS, we conduct free Awareness Talks about learning differences for educators, parents, medical practitioners and the general public.



## RESEARCH & ADVOCACY


DAS conducts research to validate its programmes as well as further our understanding of learning differences.

Research is published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences and covers theory into practice.



DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION  
OF SINGAPORE  
HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

6444 5700  
[www.das.org.sg](http://www.das.org.sg)  
[info@das.org.sg](mailto:info@das.org.sg)



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!  
[facebook.com/dysSG](https://facebook.com/dysSG)

# CEO's Message

## Lee Siang

*Chief Executive Officer*

*Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Hello and welcome to a very special edition of the Annual DAS Handbook. This is a Handbook that was compiled during a pandemic year! It has been a very challenging time for everyone but I am so heartened that Singapore and DAS has not allowed the virus to stop us from our work and our support of the children!

The transition of over 3,000 students from physical to online classes in end March 2020 was a momentous task and there was not surprisingly great angst among teachers, students and parents. But I am so proud of all of them as they overcame their initial apprehension and challenges and succeeded in teaching and learning online.

There were in fact many positives:

- ◆ 98% and 97% of students enrolled on our Main Literacy Programme (MLP) and with Specialised Educational Services (SES), respectively were able to receive direct teaching for two hours a week online via Google Meet.
- ◆ Over 100 DAS students with no access to devices received refurbished laptops during the circuit breaker and 10 also received free internet.
- ◆ Attendance on MLP improved significantly to just 1% of students with less than 75% attendance.

"The transition of over 3,000 students from physical to online classes in end March 2020 was a momentous task there was not surprisingly great angst among teachers, students and parents ."

- ◆ Parents were able to observe all classes online and have gained greater confidence in DAS classes. We received many compliments from parents during this period.

But DAS staff did not let the circuit breaker and the need for safe distancing measures hold them back from reaching out and supporting more students in need:

- ◆ Our annual Preschool Seminar in March 2020, Teams Teaching Teams and UNITE SpLD Conference in June, DAS Academy Graduation Ceremony in September, World Dyslexia Awareness Week in October and the DAS Student Graduation and Achievement Awards Ceremony in November were all held fully online.
- ◆ As at October 2020, virtual awareness talks has been conducted for over 20 schools and organisations.
- ◆ Student enrolment for Specialised Educational Services surpassed 2019's enrolment in October 2020.
- ◆ Specialist Tutoring hours under DAS International from April to September 2020 was higher than the same period in 2019.
- ◆ DAS Academy started providing online training during the circuit breaker and dual mode training (in person and online concurrently) after the Circuit Breaker. Their enrolment for the Master of Arts in Special Educational Needs and Workshops from April to September 2020 also surpassed their numbers for the same period in 2019.
- ◆ DAS Academy also conducted their first virtual training for MOE Allied Educators in September 2020.

Besides reaching out and supporting more children, DAS colleagues did not neglect their academic pursuits with the Chinese Programme of Kong Yun Rui, Sha Lan, See Lay Yen, Kwan Cailyn and Li Dong publishing their paper "Evaluating the effectiveness of intervention in Chinese for dyslexics and struggling learners" in the July 2020 issue of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences. In the same journal issue, their DAS colleague Deborah Hewes published her article "Entrepreneurs with Dyslexia in Singapore: The Incidence, Their Educational Experiences, and Their Unique Attributes". And there are the developments in curriculum, staff expertise and improved programme evaluation that form the bulk of the content of this Handbook !

The above achievements amidst the pandemic are remarkable and reflect the commitment and can do spirit of staff, students and parents! I am confident that all of them will go on to achieve even more success as we live with COVID-19 in the coming year !

**LEE SIANG**

CEO—Dyslexia Association of Singapore

*Siang joined DAS on 15 December 2001 and assumed the post of CEO on 1 September 2014. He also sits on the Board of DAS subsidiaries, DAS Academy and DAS International. Siang was on the Board of the US-based International Dyslexia Association and Chair of their Global Partners Committee from 2016 to 2018, he still remains a member of the Global Partners Committee representing Singapore. He has played a key role in the rapid growth of DAS into a thriving social enterprise with a multi-disciplinary professional workforce that provides a continuum of services. He emphasizes that DAS "must strive to fulfil our social mission by combining entrepreneurial and business skills with the philanthropic characteristics of non-profits".*

*Siang obtained his BA from the National University of Singapore via the sponsorship of the Singapore Armed Forces. He also has a Certificate in Dyslexia Studies, a PGC in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and a PGC in Specific Learning Differences from London Metropolitan University, a PGDip in Financial Management from the Singapore Institute of Management and an MBA from the University of Western Australia. It is this unique balance of experiences and qualifications that have allowed Siang to oversee the diverse services and functions of the DAS family.*

*Siang contributes regularly to the DAS CEO BLOG. (<https://www.das.org.sg/news-events/blogs/39-from-the-ceo-desk-ceo-thoughts.html>)*

*Siang's current focus for DAS is Scope, Expertise and Reliability: The continued improvement of the scope and range of DAS programmes and services continued investment in the expertise of DAS staff and continued programme evaluation and research to add to the efficacy and reliability of DAS programmes and services*

*Additionally, DAS will strive to ensure that children with dyslexia from lower income families are able to access much needed DAS programmes through the provision of bursaries which are enabled by generous donations from sponsors and supporters of DAS.*

# HOW WE HELP

## EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The English Language Literacy curriculum integrates key essential learning components that are crucial in remediating students with learning difficulties.

- Phonemic Awareness and Phonics
- Reading Fluency
- Reading Comprehension
- Vocabulary
- Writing

## OTHER PROGRAMMES

- Preschool
- English Exam Skills
- Maths
- Chinese
- Speech and Drama Arts
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Specialist Tutoring
- Post-secondary

## Educational Technology

is used in our classes as a complementary teaching tool to enhance students' academic success and independence too!

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

DAS believes that no child should be left behind because he or she cannot afford the cost of DAS education. DAS Families can take advantage of the financial schemes available for SpLD Assessments, our Education Programmes and many more!

**DAS**  
DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION  
OF SINGAPORE  
HELPING DYSLIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

☎ 6444 5700  
🌐 [www.das.org.sg](http://www.das.org.sg)  
✉ [info@das.org.sg](mailto:info@das.org.sg)

👍 LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!  
[facebook.com/dysSG](https://facebook.com/dysSG)

# Editor's Message

**Emeritus Professor Angela Fawcett**

*Research Consultant*

*Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

It is a very great pleasure to share with you the sixth of our DAS Handbooks, edited by myself with Managing editor, Deborah Hewes. This year has been one like no none other in living memory, with the advent of the coronavirus pandemic changing the world as we know it. It has been a revelation to me how smoothly and professionally DAS has managed to deal with this complex and challenging situation. Despite the restrictions which the pandemics imposed upon us all worldwide, DAS has continued to flourish and extend their reach, showing us all how it is possible to successfully adapt your practice in in order to deliver a world-class online educational provision. This has been in the face of restrictions which have circumscribed our daily life in ways which we have never encountered before.

I am exceptionally proud to be associated with DAS this year in recognition of this outstanding and determined endeavour to continue to deliver their educational programmes to the many children who are dependent on support in order to achieve their potential. In most countries across the world schools have been closed and children have been dependent on home support and the availability of technology in order to access the curriculum. This has been a major challenge for everyone involved and the impact on children with dyslexia and other learning difficulties has been immense with standards and progress falling back over many months.

In this situation, it is particularly satisfying to see the progress that so many children are making working with DAS and more specifically, their satisfaction with this change in approach to benefit from and enjoy ongoing provision online. Moreover, it is particularly

“DAS has continued to flourish and extend their reach, showing us all how it is possible to successfully adapt your practice in in order to deliver a world-class online educational provision.”



gratifying to note the complete professionalism of the DAS staff and the presenters at the UNITE SpLD conference in June, in their first virtual conference online. Most strikingly, the conference was able to reach an even wider audience than our usual Asia-Pacific participants, attracting a worldwide audience with presentations available on YouTube for future reference. I have participated in a number of virtual conferences this year and I have to say that UNITE SpLD 2020 was the most professional and informative that I have had the pleasure of taking part in. I am sure that the new format will bring us many new participants in future years even when the pandemic has been fully controlled.

In this year's DAS Handbook, we adopt the successful format from previous years, with the first sections on the DAS SpLD Assessment Services, (SAS) which is continuing to grow, and now includes a 3-year review which can be used to determine eligibility for concessions in school and national exams. The psychological services developed for DAS include dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, intellectual disability, giftedness, visual processing and school readiness. Growing numbers are now seeking diagnosis, and this year we have included further referrals for adults as well as post-secondary students. This year staff focused their research on the enhancement of the curriculum-based assessment (CBA), MAPtrack, piloting a new CBA norming project on word lists for reading and spelling, which will be of great benefit in ongoing annual testing. In terms of professional development, a number of new assessment tools have been acquired and the relevant staff familiarised with their usage, and further in-depth training on autism and ADHD accessed.

The next section is an in-depth report on the DAS Main Literacy Programme (MLP) funded by the Ministry of Education, consolidating the existing banding as well as the programmes, iReach™ and iStudySmart™, both introduced last year. This year MLP has introduced and evaluated a new case study approach to autism spectrum disorder, following a young boy through from pre-school and identifying the major constraints against his progress and a formalised system to deal with these constraints. The associated case study is particularly strong and provides evidence of an excellent system which is being thoroughly evaluated by teachers, forming a significant step forward for the DAS into wider realms of Specific Learning Differences (SpLD). Evidence from this study has suggested the need for further social skills training for staff, as well as a recognition that children may benefit from a change in therapist once their progress has plateaued. In conjunction with this, research has also focused on a longitudinal study on the progress of children undertaking the MLP, with solid and significant evidence of ongoing progress over time. iREACH™ has been evaluated with a number of children and DAS is reaching out to Madrasah's who are eligible for MOE funding but may benefit from the use of these programmes. iStudySmart™ has produced it's first batch of graduates who



were able to give effective oral presentations based on the training they had received. Finally a new initiative, CalmED was introduced in 2019 in order to nurture educational well-being amongst staff, producing an Educator's guidebook to a system which can be successfully rolled out in the classroom. This has provided particularly meaningful support during the pandemic, when mindfulness has shown considerable potential for alleviating the stress of the ongoing situation. The section is capped by an article on the young achiever of the year, representing another interesting insight into the effectiveness of DAS support. This section is followed by an extensive section highlighting the latest initiatives in staff professional development, along with ongoing progress on the research journal, Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD), which suggests that DAS training is second to none.

The following sections on the Specialised Educational Services (SES) programmes provide tangible evidence of the progress of the ArtVenture programme, which provides an opportunity to express the positive aspects of dyslexia. The Chinese programme, presents an analysis of successful intervention and support with primary and secondary pupils, and has now undertaken scope and sequence, refining the existing materials, and support for secondary students in the bridging scheme has been extended. Perhaps most strikingly, strong links have now been formed with schools in China, with training provided for over 100 participants. This year the Maths programme has surveyed parental satisfaction, and identified some areas for improvement, including longer lessons, introducing short-term programmes as well as open house meetings on Maths, successfully extending their approach to interns from the National Technological University. The PREP 2 PSLE programme once again demonstrated very successful impact on their students, also undertaking a research study on the effectiveness of the approach over 10, 20 and 30 weeks, demonstrating the importance of ongoing support over time. New initiatives from this team included the Boot Camp, which was very well received, and a holiday workshop with younger children, involving creative use of slime following a taught session, as well as parental engagement. In the Preschool programme, results indicated very significant improvement in all areas, with large effect sizes, and included an evaluation of the use of computerised e-books to help comprehension, indicating they could contribute to effective support in conjunction with print books. This year a number of new initiatives were undertaken including seeking donor support for this programme, revision of the pre and post assessment to include segmentation and nonsense words, as well as development of letter formation packs, and ongoing engagement with pre-school teachers. The Preschool Seminar and UNITE SpLD conference were successfully undertaken again this year, and a broad range of assessment and awareness courses presented, as well as collaboration with other preschool providers in a new initiative. Speech and Drama Arts presented a range of successful performances which are beautifully illustrated here. The Speech and

Language Therapists conducted some excellent research on the positive impact of their training on measures of the CELF, a standardised instrument for evaluating aspects of speech and language. New and ongoing initiatives included development of a social skills programme with Pathway school, as well as a programme at Northlight School. The programme contributed to conferences and to the DAS Academy courses, and provide an unusual case study, and feedback richly illustrated with What's app quotes. Finally, in this SES section, a new programme the Science Explorers short-term initiative was found to lead to promising improvements in knowledge for Primary 3 and Primary 4 children.

This year we again present an analysis of the DAS International Programme, that now tackles a wide variety of developmental differences, from preschool to tertiary, with the approach further enhanced by visits to China, and the success of the online UNITE SpLD conference. The DAS Academy is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year. The Masters course with the University of South Wales goes from strength to strength, and this year a new specialist diploma was launched including an initiative on e-learning, which is very topical.

Finally, in our Embrace Dyslexia section, we present a fascinating case study of a young boy Kane, who has overcome his difficulties with anxiety and extreme shyness in a report from Muzdalifah Hamzah, a Lead Educational Therapist at DAS. Her case study shows the transformation achieved through drama, liberally illustrated with superb photographs of the many successes he has achieved in stage presentations, culminating in the Shining Star award. The next article presents a fascinating study of the impact of applying elements of emotional well-being to staff at DAS. This article from Harsheeni Rajoo and Madinah Begum introduces these important concepts, which have proved so vital to many staff during the coronavirus pandemic. An insight into the elements Dyslexia Friendly Publishing is provided in the next article from Deborah Hewes, Assistant Director of Publicity and Publications and Managing Editor of this Handbook. This is followed by a celebratory section from myself as Editor, on the achievement of Deborah Hewes and Geetha Shantha Ram, who have had their submission to the British Dyslexia Association International conference, which is held every 3 years, accepted for inclusion in a Positive Dyslexia symposium. Finally, the article on Entrepreneurship and Dyslexia by Deborah Hewes will be reprinted here with permission from the APJDD. Congratulations again on these ongoing achievements.

In conclusion, the DAS should be rightfully proud of their achievements, which have gone from strength to strength this year, even during a period of intense pressure worldwide, when faced with the constraints of remote teaching during the pandemic.

This is surely a true marker of ongoing success for a vibrant organisation!



**EMERITUS PROFESSOR ANGELA FAWCETT**

*Research Consultant*

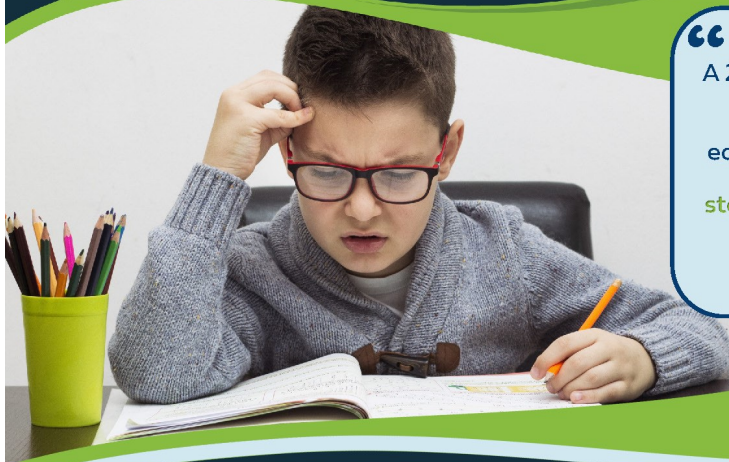
*Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

*Emeritus Professor Angela Fawcett is a leading international researcher into dyslexia and other developmental disabilities, encompassing a range of theoretical and applied contributions to this field. Her approach is broad and interdisciplinary ranging from child and cognitive development to educational screening and intervention, as well as developmental cognitive neuroscience. She is the Vice President of the British Dyslexia Association and also the Former Chair and Director of the Centre for Child Research at the Swansea University, UK.*

*Angela has worked with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore for a number of years and is currently a Research Consultant to DAS. She is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences.*

## PSYCHO EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### The Importance of Early Identification of Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)



“

A 2013 study conducted by DAS confirmed the findings of several early intervention studies, **that students who started intervention early achieved the most in literacy gains.**

”

**Early identification and early intervention  
of SpLD is vital for a child's well-being and  
educational progress.**

A psycho-educational assessment provides useful information about an individual's learning profile or behavioural challenges and helps to identify the presence of a learning or developmental difficulty.

Delayed identification, can impact learning which may lead to:

- ♦ emotional distress
- ♦ poor self-esteem
- ♦ frustration in learning
- ♦ further behavioural issues.

A psycho-educational assessment identifies:

- ♦ strengths and weaknesses in terms of cognitive abilities and academic skills
- ♦ appropriate intervention strategies.

So it is vital that we understand the signs and symptoms of SpLD and avoid labelling underachievement as a result of laziness or apathy.

A psycho-educational assessment is vital to unlock the support strategies needed for individuals with SpLD.

**Find out more about DAS Psycho-educational Assessments - [WWW.DAS.ORG.SG](http://WWW.DAS.ORG.SG)**



**DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION  
OF SINGAPORE**  
HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

**CONTACT US**

**6444 5700**

(Mon to Fri—9am to 5:30pm)