



***DAS International***

EMPOWERING SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

# EVALUATION OF DAS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

*DAS International is a subsidiary of the  
Dyslexia Association of Singapore*





*DAS International*

EMPOWERING SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

## SPECIALIST TUTORING

### OUR APPROACH

DAS International has a team of specialist tutors who have extensive experience in supporting students with specific learning differences and other learning needs.

Specialist Tutoring is an individualised, one-on-one service that is tailored to meet the needs of students with learning differences. Tutoring is provided based on the profile of the child obtained from our multidisciplinary team of educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and in consultation with parents and educators. Specialist Tutoring has an individualised problem solving approach where skills focused include:

- Literacy, Numeracy, Oracy, & Writing Skills
- Individual Curriculum support
- Study skills and Exam preparation
- Behaviour and Social support

Our tutors are experienced in the international, private and public school systems; they have an understanding of the curriculum and the demands that today's education systems place on your child. They listen with sensitivity to the concerns that parents have and provide a total solution with an Individualised Education Plan to support their child's needs. Regular verbal feedback is provided at the end of each tuition session. Informal assessments on progress is made to monitor and track your child's progress. We strive to empower successful learning and nurture each individual child to achieve their full potential.

# DAS International Services

## Specialist Tutoring

**Anaberta Oehlers-Jaen**

*Head of DAS International and*

*Programme Director for On-site School Based Programmes*

*Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN PROGRAMME**

DAS International, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore since its inception in 2011 has been providing one to one Specialist support for students with literacy and Maths challenges through a customized one to one programme. In response to demand DAI has responded with new initiatives that aim to support students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) in Singapore and the ASEAN region.

Services provided by DAS International include:

- ◆ Specialist Tutoring
- ◆ Regional Awareness
- ◆ Overseas Assessments
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Consultancy

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SUB PROGRAMME**

This programme is intended for students with Specific Learning Differences such as Dyslexia, Maths Learning Difficulties, who seek or require one to one Specialist Tutoring. Specialist tutoring adopts a problem-solving approach through the development of an individualised programme that aims to bridge the gaps in the child's learning.

## **SPECIALIST TUTORING**

Specialist Tutoring offers an individualised problem-solving approach:

Preschool and Primary Level

- ◆ Literacy, Numeracy, Oracy, & Writing Skills
- ◆ Behavioural and Social support

## **SPECIALIST TUTORING FOR HIGHER LEARNING.**

It is recommended for students who are currently studying in:

- ◆ Upper Secondary
- ◆ International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme
- ◆ GCE A-Level Examinations
- ◆ Tertiary Institutes

## **INTENSIVE SPECIALIST TUTORING**

This programme is designed to bridge the learning gap with mainstream education.

- ◆ Intensive tutoring is aimed at supporting children who are unable to secure a place in an international school,
- ◆ Struggling in an international or mainstream curriculum.

## **PERSONALISED ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE: ONLINE TUTORING**

Specialist Tutoring Sessions are delivered through an online learning platform bringing intervention into the home

- ◆ Online lessons are flexible and customised to suit the learners needs.
- ◆ Students are located overseas
- ◆ Geographical barriers restrict student access to structured support programmes
- ◆ Continued support during school holidays

## **CURRICULUM BASED REMEDIATION**

The highlight of this programme is that it provides a strong link between the curriculum and remediation, all the while keeping in mind the child's learning differences. The focus is on the strengths of the learner as the curriculum is explored.

- ◆ Bridging remediation and curriculum support
- ◆ Extending the strategies and effectively adapting them to curriculum Exam Skills



	<b>SPECIALIST TUTORING</b>	<b>INTENSIVE PROGRAMME</b>	<b>CURRICULUM BASED REMEDIATION</b>
<b>TEACHING AND DELIVERY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Regular weekly sessions</li> <li>◆ Does not interfere with school hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Block sessions</li> <li>◆ Ideal for vacation breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Works closely with school to support homework and curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>RECOMMENDED FOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students who have completed the intensive programme</li> <li>◆ Students who require a consistent personalised tutoring session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students who require intensive tutoring to close learning gap with mainstream education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students who are lagging behind curriculum</li> <li>◆ Students who require a consistent personalised tutoring session</li> </ul>

## **ENTRY CRITERIA**

The programme is open to Preschool students at risk of Dyslexia as well as to Primary, Secondary, and tertiary students with a valid diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difference.

## **WHO THE PROGRAMME IS FOR**

The aim of Specialist Tutoring is to effectively support the development of each child. Each child is seen as an active, competent learner, especially children who have Specific learning differences (SpLd), wanting and in need of a value-added programme / specialist support.

Specialist tutoring is individually tailored, based on the profile of the child obtained both externally through previous psychological reports or through our in-house psycho-educational assessments, and in consultation with parents and educators. Specialist Tutoring further supports the learning needs of our more challenged students who may have difficulty entering International schools in Singapore.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Classroom observations for all DAS International Specialist teachers are conducted once every financial year to ensure that our teachers uphold the standards of quality teaching set out by the organization. All Specialist Teachers are evaluated on their Individual Education Plan (IEP), lesson planning, lesson execution, communication, and classroom management to meet the IEP objectives. A total of 8 Specialist Teachers were assessed for quality assurance in classroom teaching practices in 2017-2018. The observations were conducted by the Head of DAS International and contributing members for Specialist Tutoring who are Senior Educational Therapists. The observations were conducted either through in-class or video observations of their lessons.

## **TEACHER TRAINING**

A total of 5 educational therapists, with at least 2 years of experience teaching literacy to students with dyslexia, were trained and they underwent the 15-hour Certificate in Individualized Education Programme (IEP) Planning for an SpLD Learner by DAS Academy, followed by a 5-week practicum with 2 informal and formal observations. In addition, they attended 2 insets conducted by the Head of DAS International. These inset sessions addressed issues such as IEP planning, parent communication, and translating what they had learnt into meeting the one to one IEP short term and long-term goals for their students.

## DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVES TAKEN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR

2017 saw DAS International guided in providing a customized and individualized one on one Specialist Tutoring to include the following programmes initiatives:

- ◆ Personalised Online Learning Experience: (Online tutoring) an overview of the programme based on current online students.
- ◆ Intensive Tutoring: Insights into Intensive Tutoring through a case study of a 17 year old overseas Thai student who received 30 hours of Specialist tutoring.
- ◆ UNITE SpLD 2017 International Session

In line with DAS International efforts to outreach to likeminded organization in the ASEA region we saw at the Unite SpLd 2017 conference a highly successful International sharing session that was held. We saw various organization come together such as the Madras Dyslexia Organisation, the Indonesian Dyslexia and the Sarawak organization share their experiences to captive international and local audience. The initiatives and stories shared by organisations although from different cultures all shared a common theme which was:

- ◆ Building Awareness for the main stake holders: Ministries, schools, teachers, parents, donors
- ◆ Supporting students with SpLd
- ◆ Teacher training

At the upcoming UNITE SpLD Conference, 2018 we are again looking forward to more insights with our neighbours at the International session, whereby we can learn from one another and provide support through the various initiatives.

## STUDENT NUMBERS

<b>TOTAL ENROLMENT FOR 2017</b>	<b>47</b>
Students attending International schools	15
Student attending Ministry of Education Schools (MOE)	32
Specialist Teachers	8

## PROFILE OF ST STUDENTS

PROFILE OF SPECIALIST TUTORING STUDENTS	NUMBER
Dyslexia	27
Dyslexia / Maths Learning Difficulties	12
Dyslexia / Speech and Language Impairment	2
Autism	2
Dyslexia and Autism	1
ADHD	3
Total Number of Students	47

## SOURCES OF REFERRAL

SOURCES OF REFERRAL TO SPECIALIST TUTORING	NUMBER
DAS SpLD Assessments Services	12
Word of Mouth—Relatives	6
Word of Mouth—Friends	7
Word of Mouth—Teachers	10
DAS Website	12

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank our Specialist Teachers: Bhavani, Nicole Chua, Samunn, Tam Shuyi , Catherine Yap, Veena, Gladys Wee, Eugene Ng, Shipa Madane for the dedicated work in providing one to one tutoring.

Special mention to:

- ◆ Nicole Chua for her contribution to the case study with T
- ◆ Samunn for his contribution to the Personalised Online Learning Experience.
- ◆ Bhavani for her contribution to Quality Assurance

## TESTIMONIALS / SUCCESS STORIES

Names have been anonymised

*I was only officially diagnosed with Dyslexia when I was secondary 4. This means that I take a longer time to understand and learn a concept. Plus, my carelessness and my complacency during my exams also lead to me not doing well in my studies and causing me to lose hope especially my favourite subject, science. However, when I was promoted to secondary 4 I knew I had to do better so that I will have more paths to go for my tertiary education. With the help of my teachers and my DAS teacher, Teacher Bhavani. Teacher Bhavani taught me how to annotate the questions properly which although mainly used in English comprehension, but I found it to be useful in all of my subjects. She also taught me to read the questions first then the passage so that I can look out for the answers while reading. This really helped to prevent my carelessness. I am thankful for her! Overall for me trying your best and consistently working both hard and smart, applying what you learnt for study skills helps. It is a long but rewarding journey with some failures along the way and one should not give up.*

*Secondary 4 student X with Specialist Teacher Ms Bhavani (2017)*

### **Ms Bhavani's reflection on her student: X**

*X attended Specialist Tutoring for 4 months at DAS Rex house learning centre. XI was a Secondary Four student at Admiralty Secondary School (Express Stream). She was referred to Specialist Tutoring as she had weakness in composition writing, lack of understanding in phonological decoding, passage-reading accuracy and reading comprehension*

*X is a pleasant and polite student who always appears calm during my lessons. Although X was able to engage in daily conversations, she found it challenging at times to express her thoughts during oral conversations. She would constantly mention how difficult it is to get the word out and prefers to write her thoughts instead. X and I had a good chat over her verbal outbursts in school when she was stressed at school. We had good conversations on how to control one's emotions and how failures can be learning experiences.*

*I incorporated spelling drills, oral conversations based on selected topics, essay writing (expository) and reading comprehension passages in the sessions. We did many reading comprehension passages and had lots of verbal conversations surrounding the topic to prepare her for the upcoming O level Oral Paper. X is a hardworking and self-disciplined student. She would read the topics ahead of the session to ensure she had relevant knowledge. X shared her interest in pursuing Zoology and was always an independent learner.*

*X attained a B3 for her O level English when initially she used to obtain C6. I am heartened to see that X's efforts paid off and she did very well her for O level exams. Good Job X! Ms Bhavani*

*To whom it may concern,*

*Teacher Gladys Wee-Bourne has been working with John for the past 2 years. We have seen tremendous progression in his literacy skills as she prepped him for P1 entry in 2018. He has also emerged to be more confident and outspoken. She has been very patient working with John who is prone to tantrums and has instilled in him a more methodical and disciplined approach in how he tackles each piece of work.*

*We truly appreciate her dedication and effort in working with John.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Maggie, Mother of John*

*Hi All,*

*Thank you for your prompt assistance. The classes are fantastic, and my kids have enjoyed them.*

*Many thanks, Sue*

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### **DAS INTERNATIONAL SERVICES—SPECIALIST TUTORING**

[www.dasint.org.sg](http://www.dasint.org.sg)

Scan me to find out more

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### **ANABERTA OEHLERS-JAEN**

*Head of DAS International and Programme Director of School-Based*

*Ms Anaberta Oehlers-Jaen started her career at DAS in 2005 as an Educational Therapist and has since held various portfolios. For 4 years, she was the Preschool Manager of the DAS Preschool Service and was actively involved with children at risk of literacy delay and helped to launch the service at the DAS. She assumed the position of Head of DAS International in 2011 in order to support both the local and expatriate international community of students, who may be experiencing learning differences through Specialist tutoring and Assessments. In her role as Maths Programme Director in 2014, Anaberta has presented at International conferences delivered in Singapore, ASEAN region and the UK.*

*She is also actively involved in research and has published articles in the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences. She holds a Masters Degree in Special Needs from NTU, BA( English Language and Literature) from SUSS, a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from the London Metropolitan University as well as a Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers (Dyslexia), along with Early Childhood Diplomas. She is also a qualified trainer with the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) by the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ). She has Fellow status at RETA, Register of Educational Therapists (Asia), and is also a Senior Educational Therapist. Delivering a professional service to the families of students with Specific Learning Differences is high on her priority and hopes to continue to serve this community both in Singapore and the region.*

# DAS International Services

## Specialist Tutoring Online

**Mohamed Samunn**

*Specialist Tutor and Senior Educational Therapist*

*Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

DAS International can reach students wherever the internet can reach them. Our virtual lessons incorporate an online real-time synchronised teaching technology that combines teacher-led tutoring and student-paced hands-on multi-sensory activities and assessments. These lessons are one-on-one, easy to follow, and an affordable way of receiving online educational therapy, curriculum and behaviour support from the best specialist tutors in the industry.

Currently, we have three online students from Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. They attend international schools. We meet with them at least twice a week online for educational therapy, curriculum support in Math and English, and behaviour support. Samunn has over 100 hours of online intervention with these three boys during the past 16 months. These online specialist tutoring sessions empower his students to learn differently and help them understand how to learn and how to use their strengths to overcome their learning and social challenges while following a mainstream curriculum in their respective schools.

### **HOW DOES ST ONLINE WORKS**

An overseas client flies in to Singapore for a comprehensive psychological assessment to identify his/her learning differences conducted by our assessment team of registered psychologists at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS), or a client walks in to DAS International with a comprehensive psychological assessment done elsewhere and approaches us for intervention. Based on the evaluations and recommendations of the psychological assessment, a client starts an intensive face-to-face intervention program of at least 10 hours with an Educational Therapist (EdT) in Singapore before the commencement of the online intervention. This initial face-to-face session helps establish a good work relationship between the EdT and client.

Once the client is in his/her home country the online specialist tutoring services will be offered at least once a week.

## OUR PEDAGOGY FOCUS

We at DAI believe in changing the design of the learning environment rather than changing the learner. Therefore, our personalized learning plans (PLPs) are based on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework where meaningful learning experiences are intentionally designed and delivered to reduce barriers so that we can see a learner in every child.

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

We work in a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) environment. Therefore, our technology infused lessons are carefully designed to be delivered via any platform and they are made sure to capture the interest of our students where they can have meaningful engagement with the content. Eventually, our lessons will help the kids establish real-world connections with or without technology support where learning extends outside the online classroom.

In summary, we work on the following simple formula:



## CHALLENGES

We work in an environment where we face a mix of hardware, software, curriculum and social challenges. Moreover, integrating technology in a meaningful and measurable way into lessons is also considered a challenge. As a specialist tutor, making a social presence for the SpLD students who are connected online is the great challenge. And this online social presence that we aim to maintain with the students has a direct impact on their perceptions of learning and satisfaction – an aspect to be explored in the future.

In conclusion, we are confident that our personalised learning experience delivered online to the kids will certainly make a difference to them as they have no access to specialist tutoring in their own environments. At the end of the day, we strongly believe that the instructional choices that are constructed exclusively for each student will make the difference rather than the technology that is used.

## GOING FORWARD FOR ONLINE TUTORING FOR 2019:

We plan to offer the client a package based on the following 5 PLUS package model:

- ◆ Overseas client comes to Singapore for a psychological assessment
- ◆ Receives Intensive Specialist Tutoring (10 or 20 hours) in Singapore
- ◆ Concurrently Parent may also seek to attend DAS Academy Training Courses whilst child is receiving Specialist tutoring in Singapore
- ◆ Follows up with the Personalised Online Learning Experience (Online ST)
- ◆ Receives periodic Intensive Specialist Tutoring (10 or 20 hours) in Singapore

Future plans include the evaluation of progress over time, and questionnaires on parent and student satisfaction.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### **MOHAMED SAMUNN**

*Specialist Tutor and Senior Educational Therapist*

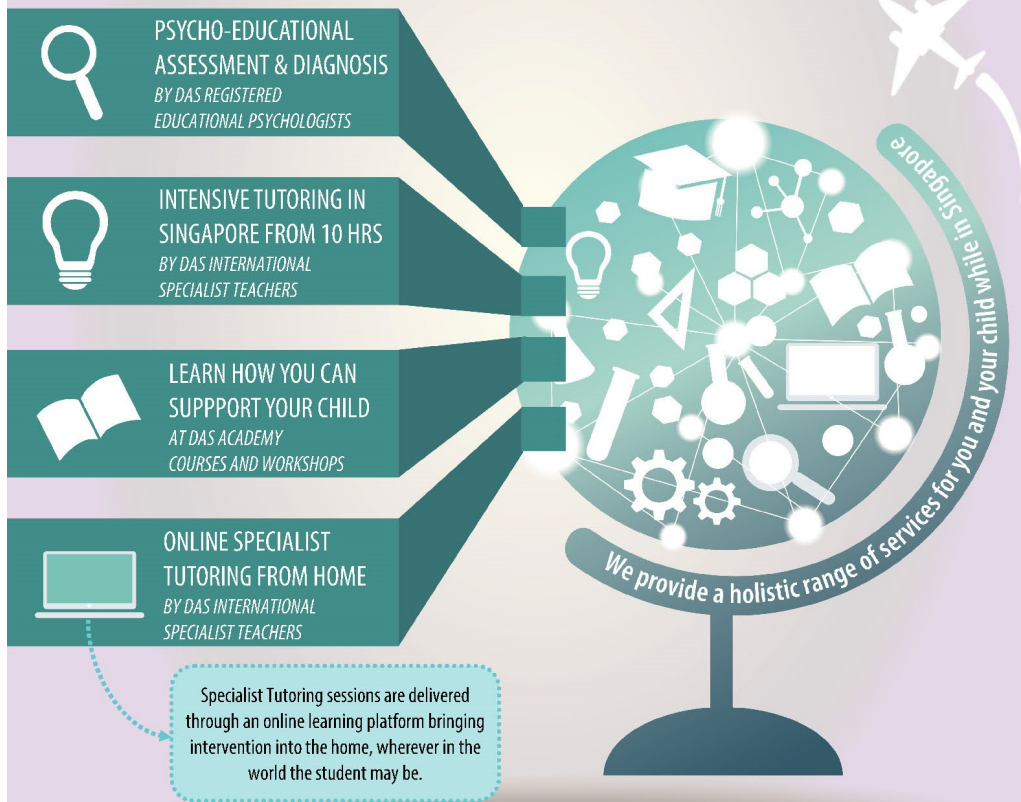
*Samunn is a Senior Educational Therapist and a Dual Specialist (Maths) at Tampines Learning Centre. He holds a Master's degree in Specific Learning Differences (MA SpLD) from London Metropolitan University, UK. He delivers intervention and/or remediation lessons in literacy, numeracy, English language, and math to children with dyslexia and other SpLDs. Additionally, he conducts holiday workshops in summary writing for secondary school kids and real world math workshops for primary kids. He has 33 years of experience in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). Before joining the DAS in 2008, he was attached to the MOE Maldives for 11 years as a ESL teacher (secondary) preparing students for the Cambridge O Levels and IGCSE Examinations. His research interests include supporting adult learners with SpLD in higher education and offering assistive technology and e-learning solutions to children with SpLD.*



# Supporting STUDENTS IN THE REGION

DAS IS A ONE-STOP CENTRE PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD WHILE IN SINGAPORE.

DAS can provide a holistic range of services that will help your child get a head start on achieving academic success. Parents can fly in and take advantage of our professional services. Psycho-Educational Assessments to support future planning for your child's learning needs as well as Intensive Specialist Tutoring to provide a head start to a positive learning experience. Meeting your Specialist Teacher will help to develop a good working relationship for future collaboration using our online tutoring programme to support your child in the comfort of your home country. While in Singapore you can learn more about your child's learning difference by attending a course or workshop at DAS Academy.



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# DAS International Services

## Higher Education Specialist Tutoring

**Nicole Chua**

*Specialist Teacher and Senior Educational Therapist  
Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

DAS International also support students who are in Higher Education or at Tertiary level. The aim of the case study is to show the development of a 17-year Thai student T who attended specialist tutoring through an intensive 30 hour one to one Literacy programme which was spread over 4 weeks. The following case study documented the progress made during the 30 hours reflected T's potential in significantly improving his English Literacy.

### **CASE STUDY**

*A Case Study of how an Adolescent with Dyslexia uses Meta-Cognitive Strategies to Significantly Increase his Reading Abilities in a 30-hour Reading Intervention*

### **PROFILE**

T is a 17-year boy diagnosed with dyslexia when he was 12. T. was an interesting subject as he possesses high meta-cognitive functions and a positive outlook towards learning which are less typical of a learner with dyslexia of his extent. His parents are aware of and are knowledgeable about his condition and actively support his academic journey through maintaining close ties with his schools and seeking bi-weekly literacy intervention for T.

T displayed typical characteristics of an adolescent with dyslexia whose reading and spelling abilities are exceptionally delayed. His psychological report shows him to have an IQ of 126 which is within the Superior range. Initial assessment found that T possesses little word attacking skills and decoding ability, making reading difficult and effortful.

He is almost unable to decode without teacher's guidance and guesses wildly at words based on their initial and final sounds or base of what the words 'look' like. He was also unable to read the first 100 high frequency words successfully. The gap in his reading abilities transgresses into his spelling and writing as well. Initial writing assessment revealed T's lack of knowledge in sentence construction and grammatical conventions even though the quality of ideas that he tries to put across are indeed those of an above average learner. It can be observed that T is a high performing learner, clearly hindered by his ability to read and write at the level that is expected of a high school student. It has been suggested through the reading assessment that at the time that T entered this intensive intervention, that he was reading below the age of 8 years old.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As part of DAS International service, we provide intensive tutoring for learners who require a specific intervention during a limited time frame. Many times, we get students from overseas seeking remediation that is otherwise not available in their home country. T is a 17-year-old learner who is graduating to Grade 11 in a bilingual school that teaches in Thai but encourages students in their school to speak English to one another. Teachers in the school also speak English widely to students. T's father is of Thai-British descendant and spent some of his childhood years in United Kingdom, therefore, speaks English fluently. T is exposed to English daily as he lives with his British grandmother and his parents since birth. T is effectively bilingual and the intervention he seeks at DAS International is conducted in English. T's father was concerned that T was not receiving the help he needs to help him read and write in English, so he approached the DAS International for a 30-hour reading intervention for his son. Before the intervention commenced, a reading comprehension and fluency test was conducted using PM Benchmark Reading Assessment. It was assessed that T's reading age was below the age of 8-year-old. It was decided that it was best that T's remediation focused on his immediate need, reading.

## **WHAT IS META-COGNITION?**

Meta-Cognition can be defined as taking control of and directing one's own thinking processes and being aware of one's own cognitive strengths and limitations. It is the ability to understand, monitor and self-regulate cognition and is inseparable from intellectual functioning and learning. An important aspect of metacognition is the ability to show reflective awareness about the self, and knowledge in tandem with conscious monitoring during learning (Goldfus, 2012).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF META-COGNITION DURING INTERVENTION

During the intervention plan, the greatest challenge was seeking the best approach to teach him. Most available materials were either too child-like or too complex for him. Therefore, all strategies and materials used during this intervention were customised by the teacher herself according to his interest and reading level. As Thai language was his first language and one that he is most comfortable expressing himself in, it is significant to note that his tutor is also bilingual in English and Thai. This is a key contributing factor as meta-cognition involves thinking about thinking and having a common language has also allowed his tutor to gain insight to the problem he faces and understand his thought processes, therefore, facilitating effective self-questioning, self-monitoring and self-reflection that took place through these sessions.

A study by Goldfus (2012) suggested that the development of meta-cognitive awareness is an important tool in intervention for dyslexic and/or learning-disabled students. Therefore, she stresses the importance of meta-cognitive intervention to take place before or together with any form of literacy intervention. The same finding was found in a similar study on dyslexic teenagers on spelling.

Chua (2015) found that the use of morphological instruction that uses meta-cognitive strategies, using Structured Word Inquiry (Bowers 2006), has empowered her students to be able to think about how and why a word is spelled in a certain way. Each time the learner experiences success in helping themselves make sense of a word, they became more motivated to do more which increases their academic self-concept. This cycle continues and meta-cognition continues to develop.

However, with T, he possessed meta-cognitive strategies that were his own and probably developed through the years that he found himself to be different from his peers but was not sure how. He went through primary school not knowing why he was different and had to stay back a year as his teacher found him to be "slow" and was not able to read and spell like the rest.

Despite his rough start, he moved into another primary school where it was more conducive for his learning and more "understanding" to his learning differences. At 12, he visited a child psychiatrist and was then diagnosed with Dyslexia. From then on, his academic journey has been memorable, and his current school has a strong learning support system that accommodates his learning needs using assistive technologies.

## THE INTERVENTION

When T commenced his first lesson, he sat for a reading assessment. When given the reading material, he flipped it front and back and observed the pictures on them. He was required to read silently on his own and answered some questions then after. These questions were arranged according to their complexity i.e. literal, inferential, applied knowledge. After his silent reading, he answered all the questions correctly. Some of his questions were not found in the text and he was reminded to seek answers only from the text. After which he managed to provide answers that were close to the suggested answers. Next, he was required to read the text out loud to measure his reading fluency. It caught his tutor by surprise that he found the text to be difficult and he seemed to be struggling. Puzzled, his tutor asked if he understood what he just read. He said no and when questioned how he managed to answer all the questions. He explained that he tried to make sense of the pictures in the text (it showed a girl holding a cup in front of a basin) and using his prior knowledge together with what he felt the questions wanted from him, he made up his own answers.

After calculating the result, it was found that he was reading below the age of 8. That was highly surprising as T was well-versed in the English language and express himself well. At 17, it was amazing that T was able to cope and do well for his English subjects, though he has been failing Thai language all through school. He found the Thai language complex and had no interest to be better at it. He explained that he does not see the need of doing well in Thai language as he will be pursuing his learning through the English route. He has planned for further studies in Canada or America.

Over the few sessions, the tutor closely observed the way he learnt and got to know T on a personal level. The tutor felt it was crucial to understand how he managed to develop such sophisticated coping strategies to compensate for his literacy deficits, therefore being able tap on what he already knows or on how he processes information to maximize the intervention efforts. His tutor who coincidentally also spoke some Thai and is partial Thai parentage, has helped in building the rapport as she could help him expressed some of his thought processes otherwise a challenge for him to convey in English. Many times, when he does not understand certain words or concepts, she was able to clarify in Thai (which is his first language) and checked for understanding by getting him to retaliate back in Thai. Even though less than 10% of the time Thai is being used, it worthy to note that a common ground has helped T open up faster and helped put him at ease in his learning environment. This can be clearly seen in a classroom recording session where he had to read a set of lifestyle quotes that he could not read the first time round. Through the session it shows how well the teacher knew T and how she was able to

pin-point exactly what he knew and encouraged him to recall what he knew but still could not apply automatically. Being able to provide him that assurance, promotes confidence in the learner to challenge himself, knowing that it is something that was within his knowledge. Through prompting and guided reflection, he was able to attempt many words on his own. The modeled thinking that the teacher provides together with his own meta-cognitive strategies can translate such interaction to a very effective way to retain learning and raising self-esteem.

### An Example of Self Questioning

T: /f/.../a/.../rrr...What is this word?  
Teacher: Far  
T: No...it can't be far, it does not look like it!  
Teacher: Why not?  
T: I mean this word makes me think of something long and it is way too short to be 'far'

### An Example of Self-Monitoring

T talking aloud to himself: The kite fell on to the waiter. Why would a waiter be in the sea? (laughs) Does not make any sense! (tried to decode.) water! Of course, it is water. Jesus Christ!

### An Example of Self Reflection

When asked why he reads the word "caught" as "control"  
"When I read this word silently, I could read the word 'caught' but when I read it out loud it came out wrong. I don't realised that (until you told me).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of his atypical profile, finding the best way to support him in the way that it maximises his potential would be a challenge for any adult supporting him. Within the next two years before he graduates high school, it is important to increase his reading capabilities to prepare him for college education. It is recommended that he continues to attend similar intensive remediations to escalate his reading age and reinforce previous skills learned in past sessions. At present although the reading assessment shows a gain in reading age of at least a year, it is based on the increased number of words that he is now able to read and recognise, compared to the beginning of the intervention, as well as his overall text comprehension.

However, he does pause on certain words and may even take a while to read the word. There is still a need for deliberate practice reading sessions to sustain his progress. It is crucial that the adult supporting him initiates reading opportunities that are of high interest, pegged to his reading level and his topics of interest. These are some incidental type reading materials that may suit him:

Text-based tales Apps - these short stories are being narrate in the form of text messages. It is a conversational style story telling where words are short and simple.

Life Quotes - these quotes can often be found shared on Facebook and Instagram. These words often contain quite a number of affixes and have underlying meanings which promote discussions.

Newspaper Headlines - bite-sized wordings that give a big picture of the story.  
Brochures - avoid travel/tourist brochures, focus more on event brochures and flyers where language used are friendlier.

It might be good for the adult that is supporting him to consider word study i.e. <equal> expands to various possible spelling of this word such as <equality>, <equalized>, <inequality>, discuss various scenarios in which the word <equal> is used and providing him real sentences where the selected words are being used. This is an excellent way to get him to remember a word as it involves using his strength in analysis and making sense out of things.

In planning for an intervention plan that suits his profile, meta-cognitive strategies such as self-questioning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation need to be embedded in teaching to allow the learner to independently make sense of what he is learning and make learning meaningful to him, thus, easier to remember. With such planning, the learner will then be able to experience success through automatic application of the skills taught and transfer them to the various aspects of his academic journey.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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*Nicole Chua holds a Masters degree in Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) with London Metropolitan University, UK and has been teaching children with specific learning differences for over 9 years. Since joining DAS in March 2009, she has been trained in the Orton-Gillingham Approach and Project Read by Learning Circles. She is experienced in conducting intervention for dyslexic learners from all age groups and also learners with other learning needs that require literacy-based intervention.*

*As a Senior Educational Therapist at DAS, she was part of the Main Literacy Programme Curriculum Development team and oversees the development of the recently launched Advanced Writing Pack. She conducts training for new and existing teachers on how to teach writing to higher ability learners. Her passion and love for writing have led to the start of the DAS Creative Writing Workshop series which she infuses Orton-Gillingham teaching approaches into all learning activities to give children with learning differences an edge in learning. Nicole has conducted a string of very well-received workshops since the series launched in 2013.*

*Nicole, also a keen researcher, has presented at The Fifth Asian Conference on Education 2013 (ACE2013) in Osaka, Japan. RehabTech Asia Conference 2013 in Singapore, International Conference "ICT for Language Learning 2012" in Florence, Italy and Success with Technology, Singapore's first conference in Assistive Technology in 2011.*

*My students are my strongest motivator that keeps me going, they teach me new things every other day. What can be more rewarding than a job that doesn't have a dull day.*