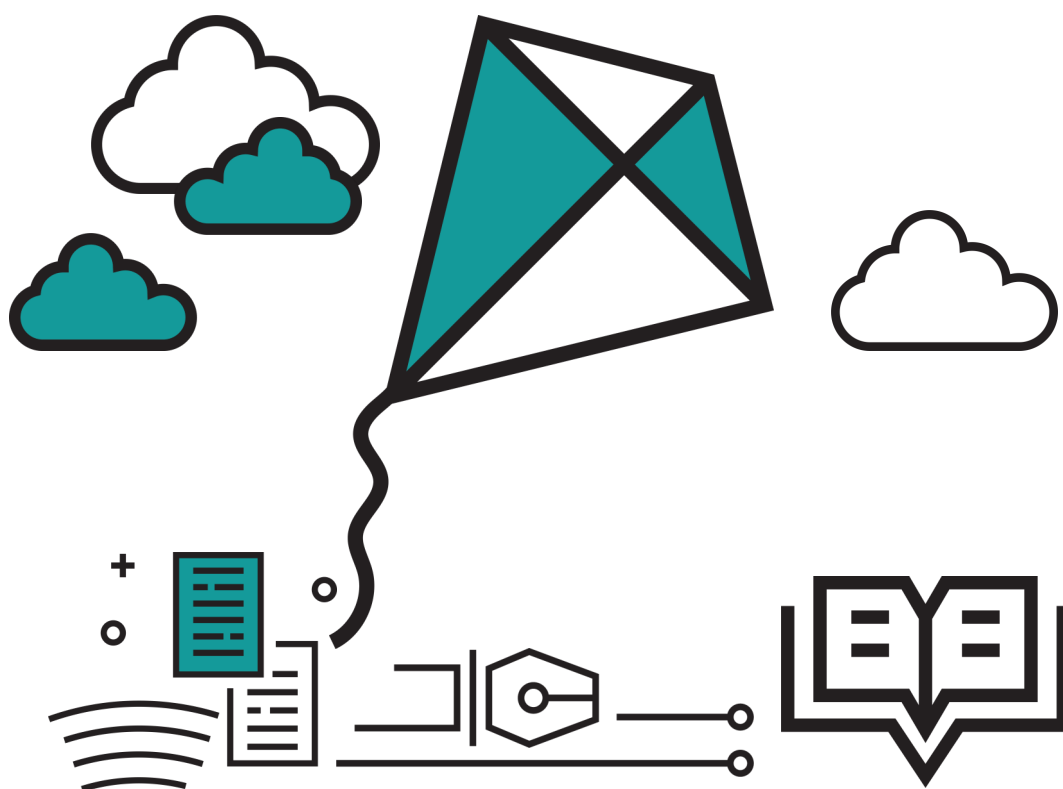




PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



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.

DAS DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE
HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

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info@das.org.sg

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DAS Staff Professional Development

Geetha Shantha Ram¹, Manmeet Kaur², Fong Pei Yi³ Sujatha Nair⁴ and Hani Zohra Muhamad⁵

- 1. Director of SpLD Assessment Services, English Language and Literacy Division and Staff Professional Development and Head of Research*
- 2. Staff Professional Development Division Executive and RETA Administrator*
- 3. Manager and Registered Psychologist, SpLD Assessment Services*
- 4. Assistant Director, Educational Advisory*
- 5. Educational Advisor and Lead Educational Therapist*

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

1. INTRODUCING THE STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (SPD) FRAMEWORK

DAS has well thought-out staff day activities through which staff have the opportunity to engage with each other in a casual setting.

DAS has also invested in training staff by funding their training with external agencies and in providing continued training throughout the staff's service in the form of in-service training. Annually, staff are also identified for conferences and further training, both local and overseas.

The implementation of the Staff Professional Development Division is to further enhance the professional and career development of DAS staff and is a mark of the organisations' commitment to staff welfare - by ensuring that staff are exposed to various strategies to effectively manage their job responsibilities - and to ensure that the service we offer is of the highest quality possible.

While DAS has career and professional development pathways for all staff, individual attention will be given to everyone's personal professional wants and individual initiated professional development is not only supported, it's applauded.

Wherever possible, opportunities to develop in the individual's area(s) of interest will be created.

Listed below is an elaboration of some of these platforms used by SPD to provide continued professional development for DAS colleagues.

THE STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



2. ATTACHMENTS

Learning from others and sharing what we know

There are 2 types of attachments at the DAS:

Teachers from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and/or other Educational Institutes coming into the DAS for lesson observation

- ◆ The duration for the attachment is between 1 – 5 weeks
- ◆ The EdT who the teacher is attached to has to have a minimum of 2 years' experience
- ◆ Reports are requested from the teachers who attend attachments at the DAS

DAS EdTs going for lesson observations to MOE schools and/or other Educational Institutes

- ◆ SPD usually will liaise with schools to arrange for an attachment
- ◆ We try to send at least 1–2 EdTs
- ◆ Classes requested for observation
 - ◇ At Primary Level - Standard Class, Foundation Class, School-based Dyslexia Remediation (SDR) & Learning Support Programme (LSP)
 - ◇ At Primary Level – Express, Normal Academic & Normal Technical
- ◆ EdTs who go for these attachments are required to submit PD Reports

The table below shows the number of attachments we have had in FY19/20:

DAS TO OTHER SCHOOLS	TO THE DAS
A total of 11 EdTs have observed classes in 3 different schools	<p>A total of 1 teacher from 1 school observed classes at DAS.</p> <p>1 NIE Masters student observed a class to find out more about the role of an Educational Therapist</p>

3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE.

[a] Teams Teaching Teams (TTT)

This is a yearly event, which SPD has been organising since 2013. It is compulsory for all staff to attend this event. The event encourages sharing of knowledge between staff and the topics shared range from academic to non-academic. We have at least 20 sessions, each of a 45 minute duration.

To view a sample site, please view this link: <https://sites.google.com/a/das.org.sg/ttt-2019/>



In 2019, we had a total of 16 presentations out of which 3 were 90 min sessions & 1 session was repeated twice. From the 16, 9 were academic topics & 7 non-academic.

[b] Training – Internal & External

DAS is an organisation that is very proactive when it comes to staff training. A report in 2015 showed that the DAS spends 7 times the national average on staff training.

Internal training consists of updating our staff with knowledge on the new programmes we offer, changes in processes where new systems are concerned and on enhancements to the curriculum and resources. Our staff also attends certificate courses conducted by the DAS Academy. Some of these courses are Professional Certificate Courses that our staff attend to be dual specialised in another programme (English Exam Skills, Chinese, Speech & Drama, Mathematics, Preschool, Specialist Tutoring & Public Speaking)

External training is usually budgeted training that staff identify to attend to professionally develop themselves. A few of the external vendors that our staff go to for external training are the British Council, Social Service Institute & Bridging Talents.

In FY19/20, a total of 203 staff attended paid training (this includes staff who attended more than 1 training course). A total of 2384 paid training hours were achieved, which is about an average of 11.7 hours per pax.

Staff are also encouraged to submit articles and/or do a sharing or training after attending training.

In FY19/20, we have had a total of 39 articles submitted by our ELL & SES for the various publications – BLOG, FACETS & RETA Chronicles.

[c] Consultants

As we believe in training our staff, especially the EdTs to equip them with the expertise and knowledge to develop themselves, so that our children benefit from what they are taught, we engage consultants.

We have a Research Consultant Professor Angela Fawcett and programme specific consultants who guide both ELL and SES programmes. These consultants give their views on how to improve teaching resources as well as feedback on any research that takes place within the DAS

[d] Conferences within and outside Singapore

[i] Sharing our findings - UnITE SpLD, a DAS organised conference.

The UnITE SpLD Conference seeks to bring together parents, teachers and practitioners working with children with specific learning difficulties and special educational needs. This conference showcases research that covers aspects of behavioural, literacy and social emotional support, intervention and assessment for children with special learning needs. Research is typically presented in short, engaging and entertaining sessions accompanied by poster presentations and the chance to talk directly with researchers who are making a difference in the Asian region. In 2019, the UnITE SpLD Conference took place between 26 to 28 June 2019.

At the pre-conference on 26th June 2019, we had two workshops in the morning:
Getting into the world of a child who has multiple challenges
EdTech to Value-Add Learning

In the afternoon, we had an open house showcasing all the DAS programmes and the resources we create and use.

The main conference was on 27th and 28th June 2019 where we had:

Nine conference themes:

- ◆ Differentiation - 5 Presentations
- ◆ Assessment - 3 Presentations

Table 1. Poster Presentations at UNITE SpLD 2019		
NO	NAME	POSTER TITLE
1	Patricia Ng	Robots and children learning differently: A brief review of robot applications for young children
2	Stella Pong Ke Xin, Lau Jia Xian & Wesley Tan Chee Wah	Development of Adaptive Experiential Learning via Interactive Contemporary Education with Virtual Reality (AELVICE)
3	Kristiantini Dewi	Level of Understanding of Dyslexia among Indonesian Professionals, Teachers and Society
4	Angelica Benson	Dyslexia And The Imagery-Language Connection: Theory, Research, Practice
5	Li-Chih Wang	Auditory, Visual and Cross-Modal Temporal Processing Skills among Chinese Children with Developmental Dyslexia
6	Parameswari Shunmugam, Vijayakumar V, Muthusamy KA	Saccadic Suppression in Dyslexics
7	Cheryl Yeo Li Phing, Mastura Natasha Malek & Tan Soek Kiang Joanne	Behaviour IS a form of Language
8	Shakthi Bavani D/O Sathiasilan & Tai Wei Ting Vera	Building Comprehension Skills
9	Elizabeth Lim Yien Yien & Lee Er Ker	Nurturing Social Skills And Social Smarts
10	Sylvia Foo and Nadia Binte Mohd Ali	Playing with Sounds
11	Siti Mariam Daud	Perspectives of students with SEN on the inclusion
12	Fong Pei Yi	Evaluating a Reading Comprehension Curriculum
13	Chua Minqi	Educational Therapists' Perceptions after Training
14	Sharyfah Nur Fitriya	An Evaluation of the Preference-Based Teaching
15	Sujatha Nair & Sridhar Pratyusha	Evaluating Reading Gains in Learners with Dyslexia
16	Yeo Jing Jing Rebecca	Difficulties in expressing numbers in words - A study on Grade Four Dyslexic Students in Singapore
17	Leong Mingjian Edmen	The Construction And Evaluation Of An English Exam Skills Test For Primary School Students With Dyslexia

- ◆ Edutech & Assessment - 3 Presentations
- ◆ Differentiation & Assessment - 4 Presentations
- ◆ Edutech & Differentiation - 3 Presentations
- ◆ Teacher Support - 8 Presentations
- ◆ School Leaders - 3 Presentations
- ◆ Advocacy - 4 Presentations
- ◆ Intervention - 2 Presentations

2 Keynote Presentations

- ◆ Geetha Shantha Ram - "Lifting the Bottom" - Helping the Disadvantaged
- ◆ Jim Lee - Assistive Technology - Enabling Learners

A total of 75 presenters:

- ◆ DAS Staff – 39
- ◆ Non - DAS Staff (Local) - 14
- ◆ Non - DAS Staff (Overseas) - 22

17 Poster Presentations (see previous page)

[ii] Presentations at other conferences

LOCAL/OVERSEAS	NO. OF CONFERENCE	NO. OF PRESENTATIONS
Local	3	4
Overseas	2	5

The following are the conferences presented at:

NO.	CONFERENCE	LOCAL/ OVERSEAS	NO. OF PRESENTATIONS
1	AUSPELD 2019	Overseas	4
2	Singapore Learning Design and Technology 2019	Local	1
3	Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) 2019	Local	1
4	EduTech Asia 2019	Local	2
5	International Dyslexia Association (IDA) 2019	Overseas	1

5. COMMITTEES UNDER STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to encourage multidivisional work, and incorporate the experiences and strengths of various divisions under the DAS, SPD oversees several committees with distinct objectives.

[a] The Research Committee

At the DAS, staff are encouraged to conduct research. Some of these researches are initiated by staff and some are proposed by the DAS for staff to conduct. The research findings are then presented at local and/or overseas conferences and journal articles written to be published in journals such as the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD) and a few external journals recommended by our Research Consultant, Angela Fawcett.

Any research requested that requires our students and/ or staff to be involved has to go through the Research Committee for approval. Researchers are required to complete a Research Application form and submit all supporting documents such as consent forms, survey questions, etc. These are then reviewed by the Research Committee who will provide feedback two weeks from the date the application is received. If no amendments are required, an approval letter will be sent to the researchers to proceed with the research.

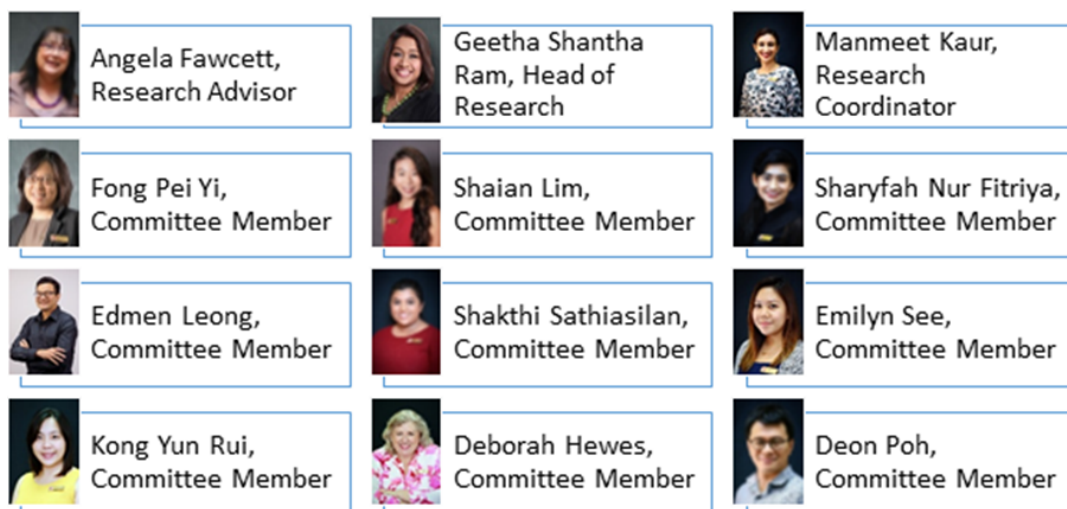


Figure 1: DAS Research Committee Members

[i] Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences – A peer reviewed journal

The Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD) is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. It is a journal that is unique in addressing a range of special educational needs including dyslexia, autism, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and ADHD.

The journal covers theory into practice and provides a showcase for research in the Asian context as well as highlighting research areas that have implications for further research within Asia and beyond.

In FY 19/20 we had a total number of 14 journal articles published. These were a combination of submissions by both the DAS staff as well as external researchers.

The articles contributed by our DAS colleagues are as follows:

NO.	NAME	TITLE
1	Sharyfah Nur Fitriya	An Evaluation of the Preference-Based Teaching Approach for children with Dyslexia and Challenging Behaviours
2	Siti Mariam Daud	Perspectives of Mainstream Students with Special Educational Needs on Inclusion
3	Tuty Elfira Abdul Razak	An exploration of the impact of picture books on students with dyslexia.
4	Serena Abdullah and Isabelle Shanti Benjamin (ELCOT Consultants)	Teachers' perceptions on the Explicit Teaching of Reading Comprehension to Learners with dyslexia: The Importance of Teacher Training in Ensuring Quality Delivery and Instruction
5	Lee Er Ker, Ho Shuet Lian, Sharon Reutens & Elizabeth Lim Yien Yien	Effectiveness of DAS Speech-Language Therapy: A controlled evaluation
6	Harsheeni Hanna Rajoo	The importance of creative and positive workplace culture: A case study on how creative initiatives foster better relationships, resilience and mindfulness at work for Special Education Teachers

After the completion of the research, researchers who wish to submit their journal article to be published with APJDD will have their papers reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief and two other reviewers either from the Editorial Board or from the Scientific Board before finally being published.

[ii] Editorial Board Members and the Scientific Review Committee

Between September to November 2018, DAS initiated and established the Scientific Review Committee. The role of the Scientific Review Committee members is to review up to two articles per year for the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD) as instructed by the Editor-in-Chief.

We have 19 members, which include 7 DAS Staff who are on the Research Committee. Members of the Editorial Board and Scientific Review Committee are detailed in the following tables.

[iii] Approved Research

As DAS continues to invest time and resources in ensuring that the services offered are evidence-based and effective, other aspects of research development are also encouraged, so that services continue to be enhanced and have the opportunity to grow. Research, therefore, is critical as it feeds into our provision of support.

To achieve that end, we have classified the research into 3 different categories

1. Research on efficacy (per prog.)
2. New initiatives and viability
3. Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives

Table 4: Nature of Research

RESEARCH ON EFFICACY (PER PROG.)	NEW INITIATIVES AND VIABILITY	GAPS IN PROGRAMMING / AREAS OF IMPORTANCE IN CURRENT PERSPECTIVES
2	9	10

ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES—EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Professor Angela Fawcett, DAS Research Consultant, Emeritus Professor Swansea University, Honorary Professor, University of Sheffield.
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Professor John Everatt, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Dr Helen Boden, Director at Dyslexia & Neurodiversity In-Sight (DANDIS), UK
Professor Hugh Catts, Florida State University, USA
Professor James Chapman, Massey University, New Zealand
Professor Steve Chinn, Educational Consultant, UK
Professor Kevin Kien Hoa Chung, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Kate Curawalla, President, Maharashtra Dyslexia Association, Mumbai, India
Dr Kristiantini Dewi, Dyslexia Association of Indonesia, Indonesia
Dr Shirley Egley, University of Wales, University of South Wales, UK
Dr Gad Elbeheri, Dean, Australian College of Kuwait
Professor Ester Geva, University of Toronto, Canada
Professor Connie Ho, University of Hong Kong
Professor Sunil Karande, King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, India
Junko Kato MD, Japan Dyslexia Research Association
Professor Sharanjeet-Kaur, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Dr Lim Boon Hock, Special Education Consultant, Malaysia
Dr Beth O'Brien, National Institute of Education, Singapore
Dr Dina Ocampo, Philippine Dyslexia Foundation, Philippines
Professor Ong Puay Hoon, Dyslexia Association of Sarawak, Malaysia
Professor Kenneth Poon, National Institute of Education, Singapore
Dr Gavin Reid Educational Consultant, Canada
Associate Professor Susan Rickard Liow, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Dr Thomas Sim, Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors, Australia
Geetha Shantha Ram, Director & Head of Research, Dyslexia Association of Singapore.
Dr Purboyo Solek, Dyslexia Association of Indonesia, Indonesia
Professor Su-Jan Lin, National Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan
Professor Akira Uno, Tsukuba University
Professor Taeko N. Wydell, Brunel University, UK
Associate Professor Dongbo Zhang, University of Michigan, USA (formerly National Institute of Education, Singapore)
MANAGING EDITOR
Deborah Hewes, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW COMMITTEE

Dr. Shaimaa Abdelsabour, Researcher and Teacher of English, Ministry of Education, Kuwait

Dr Neil Alexander-Passe , Head of AEN/SENCO (SEN Researcher and Author), Additional Educational Needs, East Barnet School, London

Dr Yousuf ALmurtaji, Lecturer, Public Authority for Applied Education & Training, Kuwait

Dr Amanda Denston, Researcher, University of Canterbury, NZ

Pei Yi Fong, Specialist Psychologist, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Dr Janet Hoskin, Senior Lecturer Special Education, University of East London

Dr Kwok Fu Yu, Postdoctoral Researcher, Macquarie University, NSW Australia

Edmen Leong, Director, Specialised Educational Services, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Shaian Lim Jia Min, Specialist Psychologist, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Dr Emma Moore, Edinburgh University, Department of Music

Sharyfah Nur Fitriya, Senior Educational Therapist & Educational Advisor, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Suvarna Rekha, Consultant Psychologist at IIIT-H and Moolchand Neurocenter

Dr Amir Sadeghi , Assistant Professor for the Department of English Language Teaching, Islamic Azad University, Damavand Branch in Iran & Adjunct Researcher for the Language and Literacy Research Lab, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Ami Sambai, Assistant Professor, University of Tsukuba

Shakthi Bavani D/O Sathiasilan, Senior Educational Therapist & Specialised Educational Services Preschool Core Team Member, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

See Hui Zi Emilyn, Senior Educational Therapist, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Perle Seow, Specialist Psychologist, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Dr Pawadee Srisang, Lecturer, Science and Arts, Burapha University, Chantaburi campus, Thailand

Thomas Wilcockson, Lecturer, Loughborough University

Table 3. Research Approved by the Research Committee

N O	NAME & ORGANISATION	RESEARCH TITLE	NATURE OF RESEARCH
1	Chua Minqi, Pearllyn Kang, Shaian Lim, Beatrice Sim DAS	Curriculum-based Assessment (CBA) Norming Project	New initiatives and viability
2	Tuty Elfira bte Abdul Razak, Siti Asjamiah Binte Asmuri, Wang Dingxiong Andy & Leong Mingjian Edmen DAS	Progress monitoring of dyslexic primary school learners enrolled in an English Exam Skills Programme	Research on efficacy of the programme
3	Li Dong DAS	Investigating the impact of reciprocal teaching method on the reading comprehension ability of secondary students with dyslexia-related reading difficulties	New initiatives and viability & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
4	Teo Su Yi DAS	The effect of Font size on Reading Speed for Students with Dyslexia	New initiatives and viability & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
5	Nicholas Lee, Sean Yeow & Gerald Nyeo Raffles Institution	Assisting Dyslexic Individuals in Improving their Means of Reading	New initiatives and viability
6	Harsheeni Hanna Rajoo, Tarsheeni Tania Rajoo & Sridhar Pratyusha DAS	The importance of creative and positive workplace culture: A case study on how creative initiatives foster better relationships, resilience and mindfulness at work for Special Education Teachers.	New initiatives and viability & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
7	Sim Gek Leng, Steven DAS	Teacher attributes fostering positive learning for special needs: the voice of the learner	Research on efficacy (per prog.) & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
8	Azilawati Jamaludin & Neo Wei Leng NIE	f-MACE: fNIRS Modelling for Game-based Affective and Cognitive Math Learning	New initiatives and viability & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives

Table 3. Research Approved by the Research Committee (Cont.)

N O	NAME & ORGANISATION	RESEARCH TITLE	NATURE OF RESEARCH
9	Damaris Carlisle University of Western Australia	Learners with mild special educational needs in their first year at university: A study of the historical background, recent developments, and current concerns for students in Singapore.	Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
10	Alice Chan, Wendy Toh, Kong Yun Rui & Li Dong NTU & DAS	The Effects of Different Modes of Chinese Character Learning Among Young Bilinguals	Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
11	Scarlet Leong, Shaian Lim, Natalia Lew, Charlyn Poh & Tan Zhi Hui DAS & TP	Effects of self-affirmation in dyslexic individuals on executive functioning performance, sense of adaptive adequacy and academic belongingness	New initiatives and viability & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
12	Chua Yong En Beatrice, Dr Chris Clarke & Dr Dagmara Dimitriou University College London, Institute of education	Understanding Secondary School Selection support for typically developing and Dyslexic children in Singapore	Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives
13	Sim Han Cong SUSS	Social Enterprises (SEs) and Social Service Agencies (SSAs): A Successful Adoption of SE Model by SSAs to Increase Sources of Income	New initiatives and viability
14	Tan Ah Hong, Kong Yun Rui, Lucy Sim & Christine Lee Cher Hiang NIE, DAS, SCCL & MOE	Curriculum Adaptations: Improving Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension	New initiatives and viability & Gaps in programming / areas of importance in current perspectives

[iv] Number of Research Application received in FY19/20:

APPROVED	NOT APPROVED	STAFF	NON- STAFF	COLLABORATION BETWEEN STAFF & ANOTHER INSTITUTE
11	3	3	5	3
14		11 Approved		

We had 14 research requests and 11 were approved. Out of the 11 approved, only 3 were by DAS staff while 5 were from external institutes – National University of Singapore (NUS), Raffles Institution (RI), Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), University of Western Australia and University College London, Institute of Education.

The three collaboration we had were with the following:

- ◆ Temasek Polytechnic (TP)
- ◆ Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
- ◆ Ministry of Education (MOE), National Institute of Education (NIE) and Singapore Centre for Chinese Language (SCCL)

[b] The SpLD Committee

The SpLD Committee was formed in May 2019 with members comprising Directors of the Main Literacy Programme (MLP) as well as Specialist Education Services (SES), a Psychologist, a Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Therapists (MLP & SES Preschool). The aim of this committee is two-fold:

- i. to better understand the needs of the SpLD learners at DAS so as to better support them and assist the educational therapists teaching them
- ii. to investigate and review the current context in teaching approaches and provide recommendations on:
 - a. curriculum changes so as to effectively support our learners
 - b. training and resources required for educational therapists and paraprofessionals to facilitate this support within DAS.

DAS receives varied profiles of learners each year. It is imperative that these learners be given skills and knowledge that meet their learning needs. In addition, educational therapists would require relevant proficiencies to guide our students. As a survey conducted by the committee revealed that educational therapists are concerned with students who display significant language difficulties and poor language acquisition. Hence, the first study that this committee undertakes will be looking at the group of students who display these traits. The study intends to gather the perspectives of educational therapists with respect to the challenges they face in supporting these children in their literacy attainment.

In line with the objectives of the committee, learners with SpLD have to be defined strictly so as to provide better classroom support through enhancements made to student profiling, teacher training and education, as well as curriculum and resources creation. With these objectives in mind and together with the results obtained from the study, this committee aims to put forward recommendations to the organization for the changes identified and monitor the outcomes of the implemented changes.

[c] The Adult Services Committee

DAS acknowledges that the needs of those with dyslexia extend beyond preschool, primary and secondary level schooling and the dyslexic experience continues into tertiary education and work spaces. For adults with undetected and/or unaddressed dyslexia, the struggle with literacy is likely to be even more pronounced.

In view that many young adults may not be aware that their experiences are influenced by their dyslexia, the Adult Services Committee was initiated to address this gap.

Currently, this committee is conducting a study by assessing adults who may have dyslexia and interviewing them to better understand their experiences. This initial study seeks to understand the impact of undiagnosed dyslexia in adults, as well as how these individuals have coped with their difficulties. It is also a step towards identifying helpful strategies and avenues for support for adults struggling with literacy. With further development of the Adult Services Committee, the DAS can act as an advocate and support young adults in need through their tertiary education and work experiences.

[d] The Quality Assurance Committee

This committee was formed to look into creating a harmonised measure of the quality of teaching that takes place across the different programmes within the organisation. Through the years, we have developed different programmes to support the varying needs of the dyslexic learner and we want to ensure that although the programme might be different there is uniformity in measurement of effective lesson delivery.

In the long run, the committee hopes to achieve the following objectives :

- ◆ Effective quality assurance policies are in place throughout all DAS programmes
- ◆ Be the coordinating body for the DAS and to :
 - ◇ Ensure that if there are any recommendations either internal or external – it is adapted and adopted across all programmes
 - ◇ Promote the dissemination of good practices

While DAS seeks to continuously improve the quality of services provided, the educators who deliver this service need both recognition and opportunities to demonstrate their value within our educational system. The DAS Educator of the Year is an example of an award that is peer nominated to reward excellent colleagues.

Besides reviewing the Key Performance Indicators for all educators, the Quality Assurance Committee has embarked on a study to better understand what teacher effectiveness means to the DAS and thus improve the measures of quality while encouraging certain behaviours and mindsets among this most critical staff group.

[e] The Retention Committee

This committee was formed in 2017 with the intention of reducing withdrawals and increasing placements into the programme. Another reason for forming this committee is also to facilitate inter-division communication and making cohesive efforts and initiatives to retain students in the programme. The committee consists of representatives from different divisions:

- ◆ English Language and Literacy Division
- ◆ Specialised Educational Services Division
- ◆ DAS Learning Centres,

- ◆ DAS International Services
- ◆ DAS Academy
- ◆ Corporates Services Division

During these meetings - the following information is shared :

- ◆ Review of withdrawals and placements across the divisions
 - ◇ The division representatives present on the student withdrawals and students numbers.
 - ◇ A comparative analysis is also provided to see if there is a net increase in the number of students.
- ◆ Client Satisfaction Survey Report
 - ◇ These surveys are sent out twice yearly - once at the end of Term 2 and another one at the end of Term 4.
 - ◇ The Term 2 survey is primarily focused on Educational aspects and the Term 4 survey is a slightly longer survey which includes other administrative aspects, i.e. DAC - training, P&P questions, LC administrative questions etc.
 - ◇ Parent Orientation Feedback - from Central Parent Orientation
 - ◇ Educational Therapists Communications Logs and Meet The Parents reports
 - Analysis Quality of reports that are sent out by Educational Therapists

Learning and Growing together: Bringing our Professionals Together as a Community of Practice – RETA

Register of Educational Therapists (Asia) – RETA, is an initiative by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore to bring together practitioners in the field of specific learning differences while at the same time recognising their professional status and endorsing their qualifications. RETA has two advisors representing both the local and international needs and standards:



Professor Angela Fawcett
Registrar, Register of Educational Therapists (Asia)
Research Consultant, Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Angela is a leading international researcher into dyslexia and other learning differences, with a range of theoretical and applied contributions. Angela is now Emeritus professor at Swansea University, following her retirement in January 2011. She was awarded a 2-year Leverhulme Emeritus fellowship until March 2014, to complete her research projects in Wales. She is one of the co-authors of the Dyslexia Screening Test (DST) and her visit to India in July 2012 to lecture at the World Education Summit generated 45 articles in the press on the launch of the DST-J India. Angela is Academic advisor to the DAS, and editor of the APJDD.



Ms Geetha Shantha Ram
Director of SpLD Assessment Services, English Language and Literacy Division, Staff Professional Development and Head of Research

Geetha Shantha Ram joined DAS in 2004 and assumed the post of Director of the English Language and Literacy (ELL) Programmes on 1 December 2014, which includes the Main Literacy Programme (MLP) and has led curriculum enhancements for the DAS through the Essential Literacy Approach and the current integrated MLP curriculum. Besides ELL, Geetha oversees the SpLD Assessment Services

and Staff Professional Development division, where she leads the development of professional pathways and quality assurance of all educational efforts. She also heads the DAS Research Committee and is an advisor in the Register of Educational therapists (Asia) (RETA).

Formerly the Assistant Director of the DAS Academy, Geetha trained Allied educators, parents and other professionals and continues to present at conferences, most recently at the 2019 Dyslexia Speld Foundation Conference in Perth. Geetha has a Masters in English (NUS) and a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (Distinction) (LMU) and is currently pursuing her doctorate in the area of twice-exceptionality. With over 16 years of experience supporting children and adults in the area of dyslexia, Geetha aims to provide a quality service to dyslexics that searches for and realises their true potential and provides them with a view to appreciate their own unique abilities.

RETA CASE MANAGEMENT SESSIONS

The following are the RETA sessions we had in Financial Year 2019/2020:

28 June 2019 - Case Management at UNITE SpLD 2019

Discussion on Supporting adolescents with learning and behavioural issues at DAS by Hani Zohra Muhamad, Roslan Bin Mohamed Saad & Madinah Begum Binte Rahmansha with Angela Fawcett as moderator



Adolescence, described as the years between 13 and 19, can be a period of great challenge for many teenagers as they transit between childhood and adulthood. It is a period of multiple transitions which involve changes in physical, psychological, education, social interaction, interpersonal relationship and vocational aspects of human development. It can be made worse if the teenager is diagnosed with a learning disorder such as dyslexia , and a disruptive behavioural disorder such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Therefore, identifying the problems faced by the teenager is crucial so that intervention strategies can be put in place in order for him/her to learn optimally, regulate his/her behaviour and emotions as well as act appropriately in any social context. Only then will the teenager be accepted by peers and society at large. This session shares strategies that help identify and manage adolescents with learning and behavioural issues



1 July 2019 - The Elements of Emotional Well-Being

by Harsheeni Hanna Rajoo and Madinah Begum Binte Rahmansha

Well-being emerges from our thoughts, actions and experiences, most of which we have control over. To develop emotional well-being, we need to build emotional skills like positive thinking, emotion regulation, and mindfulness. Developing emotional well-being among teachers will benefit not only the teachers themselves but also their students and parents, enriching the overall educational experience.

This session is about finding out more about the journey of Educators' emotional well-being and how threading the elements that contribute to its quality creates a meaningful connection between educators, students and parents.

2 October 2019 – Clever but Cluttered

by June Siew Hui Lin

This session raises awareness of the implications of executive function deficits on academic tasks, and as a result, gain insight into student behaviour that is often referred to as lazy or unmotivated. The session culminates with practical strategies and principles that parents and educators can adopt to enhance learning at home or in the classroom.



11 March 2020 – Behaviour Management Webinar (1st RETA Webinar)

by Hani Zohra Muhamad

What is 'behaviour'? The American Psychological Association defined 'behaviour' as "An organism's activities in response to external or internal stimuli, including objectively observable activities, introspectively observable activities, and nonconscious processes." Hence, there must be a reason why our students behave the way they do? Is (mis)behaviour always a bad thing?

This webinar shared brief insights into why certain behaviours occur and the various strategies that can be employed in the classroom to minimise disruption

At the end of FY19/20, we had 191 RETA members, amongst them are 5 non-Singaporean members who are from Pakistan, 2 from the Philippines and 2 from Indonesia.



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



GEETHA SHANTHA RAM

Director of SpLD Assessment Services, English Language and Literacy Division, & Staff Professional Development and Head of Research

Geetha Shantha Ram joined DAS on 16 August 2004 and assumed the post of Director of the English Language and Literacy (ELL) Division on 1 December 2014, which includes the Main Literacy Programme (MLP) and has led curriculum enhancements for the DAS through the Essential Literacy Approach and the current integrated MLP curriculum.

Besides ELL, Geetha oversees the SpLD Assessment Service and Staff Professional Development division, where she led the development of professional pathways and quality assurance of all educational efforts. She also heads the DAS Research Committee and is an advisor in the Register of Educational therapists (Asia) (RETA). Formerly, the Assistant Director of the DAS Academy, Geetha trained Allied educators, parents and other professionals and continues to present at conferences, most recently at the 2019 Dyslexia Speld Foundation Conference in Perth.

Geetha has a Masters in English (NUS) and a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (Distinction) (LMU) and is currently pursuing her doctorate in the area of twice-exceptionality. With over 14 years of experience supporting children and adults in the area of dyslexia, Geetha aims to provide a quality service to dyslexics that searches for and realises their true potential and provides them with a view to appreciate their own unique abilities.



MANMEET KAUR

Staff Professional Development Executive and RETA Administrator

Manmeet Kaur joined DAS in 2013 as an Administration Officer for the Staff Professional Development (SPD) Division and was promoted to an Executive in 2015. Throughout her time, she has supported the SPD Division on staff training needs and assisting the Educational Advisors with administrative support. She organises the yearly DAS Teams Teaching Teams event since 2014. In 2015, she took on two other portfolios Administrator for RETA (Register of Educational Therapists Asia) and Research Coordinator. She has been on the UNITE SpLD Committee, assisting with the conference administrative needs since 2016 and always looks forward to assisting DAS colleagues to find the best professional development options so that they can provide quality services to DAS clients.



FONG PEI YI

*Manager & Registered Psychologist
SpLD Assessment Services*

Pei Yi started out at the DAS as a Specialist Psychologist in 2012. Since then, she has completed the Master of Arts in Applied Psychology programme at the NIE and is a Registered Psychologist with the Singapore Psychological Society. Pei Yi is currently the Manager of the SpLD Assessment Services at the DAS, a team that provides a one-stop psycho-educational assessment service and facilitates the placement of students in learning programmes at the DAS. She also conducts psycho-educational assessments for individuals who experience difficulties with learning.



SUJATHA NAIR

*Assistant Director, Quality Assurance
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Sujatha Nair joined the DAS as an Educational Therapist in June 2006. She is currently the Assistant Director (Educational Advisory) of the English Language and Literacy Division. She is also a Lead Educational Therapist and a Fellow with the Register of Educational Therapists (RETA Asia). She has previously held the positions of Centre Manager and Resources Manager. Sujatha holds a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Adelaide, a Bachelor of Business in Accountancy from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), a Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers (Dyslexia) and a Diploma in Management Studies from Singapore Institute of Management (SIM). She oversees a team of Educational Advisors who provide training, guidance and support to all Educational Therapists. Her team also serves as the Advisory Body in all matters relating to students and educators learning and development. Sujatha believes that a harmonious and conducive environment will help learners with dyslexia and everyone involved in supporting them thrive.



HANI ZOHRA MUHAMAD

*Educational Advisor and Lead Educational Therapist
DAS English Language and Literacy Division*

Hani Zohra Muhamad is a Lead Educational Therapist and an Educational Advisor (EA). Hani joined the Dyslexia Association of Singapore in 2006 and has over the years been teaching and working with students with dyslexia and other co-morbidities. Hani also contributes to the mentoring and training of new educational therapists, as well as support colleagues with challenging students. Hani holds a Masters Degree in Education (Special Education) from Nanyang Technological University (NIE-NTU), a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Management from University of London (UOL) and a Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers (Dyslexia). Hani is a Fellow member of the Register of Educational Therapist Asia (RETA).