



Editorial Comment

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It is a very great pleasure to publish this issue of the Asian Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, now in its 8th year of publication, which is published by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. The response to the previous issues continues to be extremely gratifying, and we maintain these high standards in this issue and forthcoming issues. We are grateful for the support of the academics and professionals involved in resolving any issues arising, and ensuring our journal maintains high professional and ethical standards.

In this issue we highlight some of the issues arising from the COVID pandemic, which has impacted so severely world-wide, not just in terms of the mounting death toll, but also in terms of the many restrictions within our societies. This has meant that many children have been home schooled or have engaged in remote schooling. In the first article in this issue, a case study analysis of the impact of Home based learning on dyslexic children was undertaken, including children from primary and secondary schools in Singapore, by Tay Hui Yong and Siti Asjamiah bte Asmuri. The findings, on interviewing both children and their mothers, indicated that many dyslexic children struggled with the demands of typing for example, and with a system that necessarily had been set up at short notice without enough capacity to accommodate the needs of children with special needs. It is clear that key components here are the support of families in ensuring the ongoing emotional well-being of all children in these difficult circumstances. In the second article here, by Sui, with comprehensive analysis in a large-scale study examined the factors affecting parental efficacy, a key component of success for these children with a range of special needs. Although not addressed specifically to the pandemic, there are a number of clear lessons to be learnt. This article revealed that for this Hong Kong based study, the impact of ASD and ADHD was greater in terms of parental stress than other learning difficulties, with important factors including economic and environmental access to support. A need for more widespread social and community support was identified as a vital step forward to ensure more positive outcomes.

Turning to the academic issues associated with special needs of all types, the next set of articles addresses issues in reading, spelling, writing and maths. The first article here presents a longitudinal study by Sharyfah nur Fitriya of a large sample of 1343 children

attending the Dyslexia Association of Singapore in their Main Literacy Programme over a 2-year period, in the age range 7-17. The topics assessed included word reading, spelling and writing using curriculum-based assessment tests. The results indicated that the support they had received had made a significant impact in their skills. This is the first of a series of articles that will break down the performance of this group further, in order to ensure that children continue to make meaningful progress.

The next article from Lockiewicz and colleagues, in a research project in which I was fortunate enough to participate, comparisons were made of progress of Polish adolescents learning to spell in their native language in comparison with English. Two samples of children were included, with a group of children studied in Sheffield, UK, in comparison with Polish adolescents, including groups both with and without dyslexia. Comparing progress in phonology and orthography, English children made more phonological errors and Polish children more orthographic errors, suggesting the use of a sub-lexical strategy in Polish that led to more bizarre attempts. The Polish dyslexic children showed the greatest difficulty overall, with implications for children learning in more than one language outlined.

Interestingly, the next study by Mariko Maeda and colleagues, highlights issues identified for a group of Japanese children with Downs Syndrome, in reading and writing, expanding the areas of learning needs usually addressed by this journal. The Down Syndrome children's progress was compared with younger typically developing children matched for mental age from 4-6 years old. Differences in cognitive processing related to environmental issues were considered, with children completing a number of phonological tasks as well as visual spatial tasks. The results indicated that the Down Syndrome children were able to achieve more than the typically developing children of equivalent mental age, with implications for future practice in teaching this subgroup. The final article in this section, drawn from Rameeza and Mazarrat Khan from India, examines the usefulness of the Concrete-Representational-Abstract approach and multisensory strategies in an inclusive approach to teaching Maths. Examining the Piagetian basis of learning, as well as evidence from a wide range of studies of the efficacy of this approach, the authors highlight the importance of skilled teaching in linking teachers the three components effectively.

The final article in this issue builds on an article published in the previous issue from Lynn Holmes and colleagues, in her case study of a dyslexic pilot who struggled to read but had built up his own strategies to ensure he could achieve his ambition of learning to fly. Here, the model of processing highlighting the interactions between learning, strategies and the emotional impact of dyslexic difficulties on the overall outcomes are examined in full.

It is a pleasure to note the rich and varied material which is now submitted to the APJDD for our review, and we hope our readers will find this issue interesting. We look forward to the UNITE SpLD 2021 conference, and the opportunity to participate once again in this world-class international conference, which as well as emphasising the importance of an academic approach to dyslexia, once again highlights the importance of the whole child in building the strengths, as well as supporting the weaknesses, associated with dyslexia.