



## Editorial Comment

Angela J. Fawcett, Editor-in-Chief

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It is a very great pleasure to publish the 11th issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, now in its sixth year of publication, which is published by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. The response to the previous issues continue to be extremely gratifying, and we intend to maintain these high standards in this issue and forthcoming issues. We have now amassed an even stronger editorial board, and I am grateful for the support of the academics and professionals involved in resolving any issues arising. In this edition, we will enter the ongoing debate on standards in academic publishing, including here our editorial policies, which is also published on the DAS website.

### **EDITORIAL POLICY**

#### **RETRACTIONS**

The APJDD takes the issue of retractions very seriously, and the editor has conferred with the full editorial board in producing this statement. In line with requirements of major academic journals the APJDD will continue to monitor publications for retractions. No future citation will be permitted for articles that have been retracted and a correction will be issued if any such article is published in error. In the case of citations prior to retraction no such correction will be issued, in line with the policy for other journals of this type. Please contact the editor in the first instance if there are any concerns. COPE guidelines have been accessed in preparing this guidance.

Articles published in the APJDD should be original work that has not been published in this form elsewhere. In rare instances where previous publication has been made, this will be fully acknowledged.

#### **SCIENTIFIC REVIEW COMMITTEE**

In common with a number of other academic journals, we are now setting up a scientific committee of reviewers to assist the editor and editorial board in the review process. In forthcoming issues, a list of members recruited internationally will be presented, with a short bio for selected members published in each issue.

In this issue, we again present 7 articles representing international research on a number of important issues addressing theory and practice. The first article presented here, by Bruce Knight, Susan Galletly and Pamela S Gargett from Queensland University addresses an important theoretical issue, that of orthographic advantages and disadvantages. The authors argue that learners in English are uniquely disadvantaged by the complexity of the English orthography, comparing their task with bilingual studies that indicate the greater ease of acquisition in more regular languages.

An interesting article from Geetha Shantha Ram and Ashraf Samsudin from DAS highlights the importance of values within a successful organisation, in a study that links the values and needs of Educational Therapists with the climate within the organisation itself. Drawing on a questionnaire study of 111 Educational Therapists at DAS, the authors identify achievement and support as the key factors in staff retention, interpret this in terms of the experience and length of employment, and present recommendations for enhancing commitment and avoiding burnout for this group.

Innovations in teaching are discussed in New Zealand in an interesting and insightful article from Prof. John Everatt and Jo Fletcher from the University of Canterbury. Here they address the issues of flexible learning in situations where classes are combined to include up to 150 children. In a questionnaire study of 283 teachers, including principals, the authors found significant support for the approach, but less so for children making low progress in literacy and Maths. This is a particularly important issue, given the likely impact for dyslexic learners of these environmental changes, which might be predicted based on the literature to be particularly deleterious for children who are struggling to achieve.

Another important article that addresses the viewpoint of teachers on mental health in students in Kuwait is presented by Dr Dalal Alradaan and colleagues. In a major study of teachers in secondary schools in Kuwait, 500 teachers completed a questionnaire examining barriers to support for mental health in Kuwait. The results indicated the perceptions were highly influenced by socio-cultural and religious norms. An in-depth interview of 30 teachers provided a range of qualitative data to illustrate the issues arising, that could undermine moves to promote mental health well-being in Kuwait.

Edmen Leong from DAS, in collaboration with Hu Gwangwei from Hong Kong Polytechnic University present an article on the construction and evaluation of an English Exam Skills (EES) test for primary school children with dyslexia. The DAS English Exam Skills Programme has been very successfully implemented at DAS over the years, with highly significant improvements noted (Leong, 2015; Leong et al., 2017; Elfira et al., 2018). Here the test paper itself is evaluated for reliability in identifying high and low achievers, leading to a new EES test, performance was significantly higher after the programme and the results correlate with school based tests. This evaluation and refinement is a

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major step forward for a test that has already demonstrated high levels of academic performance.

Another paper from Eleanora Palmieri, Piero Crispiani and Mary Mountstephen focuses on the role of executive function in young Italian children, with motor activation seen as a marker for later success or failure in literacy. A programme of intensive support designed to improve the speed of activation and fluency of patterning is evaluated here in terms of the emerging importance of executive function skills, and the improvements that can be made towards normalising the speed of dyslexic children with severe difficulties.

Social-emotional development is targeted in an interesting study by Muzdalifah Hamza from DAS, based on the use of drama as a tool in young children. Working with children aged 7-11, an emotional literacy scale was administered pre-and-post participation in the Speech and Drama Arts Programme from DAS. Furthermore, questionnaires were collected at both stages from students, parents and teachers, and semi structured interviews provided an in-depth focus on changes in socio-emotional status which could be related to the support received. Significant improvements were found, with a strong effect size, endorsing the use of these techniques in changing patterns of thought.

## References

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