



## Editorial Comment

Angela J. Fawcett, Editor-in-Chief

---

It is a very great pleasure to publish this issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, now in its 8th year of publication, which is published by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS). 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.

The seven articles featured in the current issue represent material drawn largely from Singapore, with contributions from as far afield as India and South Africa. We are particularly grateful to those contributors who have managed to revise their contributions despite the constraints of the current lockdowns internationally in response to the pandemic. Topics for the current issue cover a broad range, from articles on positive psychology, to autism in twins, with the majority focusing on dyslexia across the age range, specifically in this issue addressing the voice of the participants.

The first article in this issue adopts a rigorous traditional experimental approach, with a study from the DAS team led here by Tuty Elfira Abdul Razak, evaluating the long-term impact of the Exam Skills programme on the achievement of the children involved, comparing outcomes for 96 children, who had participated from between 1 and 3 terms in this support. The results provided clear evidence that the most effective outcomes demand the longer period of registration and continuity of support with some exceptionally strong statistical findings for improvement in scores for English in line with those needed for Primary school leaving examination for mainstream schools in Singapore.

The next article adopts a questionnaire approach, here working with parents of children in Singapore from the team at Care Corner, KidsBright, who have undertaken a mixed modality intervention based on movement, mental exercise and diet. The parents are united in advocating the strengths of this approach in improving many aspects of behaviour including attention and learning, and the authors suggest that this could be useful adjunct to more traditional interventions in future studies.

An unusual approach is evident in the next article presented here, which emphasises the importance of mindfulness during this period of COVID-19 pandemic, with a contribution from Harsheeni Rajoo who has introduced these concepts throughout DAS. Here the author presents a qualitative research study in a thematic analysis on the impact of mindfulness training on the job crafting of eight of the educational advisors at DAS, in a series of questionnaires culminating most recently during the period of the coronavirus lockdown. It is a pleasure to report that the upheaval in teaching has been handled extraordinarily well over this period, not least with the support of this positive approach. It is particularly important to address research of this type during periods of additional stress and change for the world.

A very different topic is presented by Patricia Ng in the next article in this issue, a case study of non-identical twins aged 3 years 9 months, with hyperlexia. This means that their reading level is higher than both their chronological age and their understanding. Interestingly, one twin, the boy, presents with symptoms of autism, and a verbal functioning level of 1 year 6 months, suggesting savant abilities. A similar profile is not present in his twin sister, whose word recognition level is 8 years 11 months, 1.5 years higher than her level of understanding, indicating a more moderate form of hyperlexia. This is an interesting and unusual topic with a contribution to make to our understanding of the rich differences between individual children with learning differences.

The next two articles to some extent share a common theme, that of the student voice, but here they represent very different participants. The first article from Steven Sim examined the attributes mainstream adolescents found most helpful in their teachers, in terms of their outcomes. The technique used was based on pictorial cards and the Diamond 9 ranking approach. Interestingly respect, caring and patience were the top attributes in teachers that students highlighted as critical to their success. Self-concepts were more influential than teacher praise, which is in itself an important finding. The next article from Lynne Holmes and colleagues from South Africa presents an extraordinary study of the thoughts and dreams of a dyslexic adult, who was determined to become a pilot despite the difficulties he still experienced in reading. Paul, the pilot involved, developed a series of strategies to allow him to follow the instructions for pilots successfully. In this study, too, self-concepts proved to be one the most important limiting factors on the ambitions of the dyslexic adult. Taken together, these two studies have important implications for the role of self-confidence and strategy use in ensuring success for dyslexic adolescents and adults.

The final article in this issue, from Massarat and Razeema Khan from the Maharashtra Dyslexia Association, provides a solid and scholarly review of the importance of knowledge and phonological awareness in teaching children in India. This article has implications for other second language learners internationally, as well as students from low income families generally who may suffer from reduced opportunities to enhance their language skills.

In conclusion this is an exciting set of studies, which has something useful to contribute for readers from all backgrounds. We would also like to commend everyone involved for their efforts to ensure that this issue of the journal can be published on time, despite the limitations world-wide in the wake of the pandemic.