



Editorial Comment

Angela J. Fawcett, Editor-in-Chief

It is a very great pleasure to publish the 14th issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, now in its 7th 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 intend to maintain these high standards in this issue and forthcoming issues. We have now amassed an even stronger editorial board, including the most recent member to join, Helen Boden, CEO of the British Dyslexia Association who has been invited for her outstanding reputation internationally. We are delighted to welcome Helen who will undoubtedly enrich our editorial board further. 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 six articles featured in the current issue represent material drawn from a wide cultural background across Asia and beyond, with contributions from Singapore, UK, Japan, Thailand and China. 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. We look forward to publishing further contributions from India when libraries re-open, enabling further articles to be successfully revised. Topics for the current issue cover a broad range, from two articles on adult entrepreneurs with dyslexia, to screening diagnosis and intervention for school age dyslexics.

The first two articles here feature the heightened incidence of entrepreneurs in dyslexia, with contributions from editors of this journal. The first article from Deborah Hewes, Managing Editor of this journal, features a mixed measures study of the incidence, attributes and educational experience of 88 entrepreneurs in Singapore, recruited by means of an online survey providing a range of insightful comments. This article should be of particular interest for the unique perspective it delivers on this topical theme. It is accompanied by a qualitative research study on the educational experiences of dyslexic students who are completing their degrees and planning to become entrepreneurs. This article is contributed by a team of authors led by Dr Margaret Meehan in the UK, including Angela Fawcett, Editor-in-Chief of this journal. This rich source of material highlights how schools could facilitate entrepreneurial skills further. Taken together,

these two articles are a significant contribution to what has become a seminal field of study in dyslexia.

The next study from Japan, investigates one of the key findings in dyslexia, the issue of slow naming speed which has been highlighted in studies of rapid automatised naming. The authors, Takeshi Gotoh with Professor Akira Uno, recruit a group of dyslexic students, including a number who also show evidence of specific language impairment. Their study suggests that the major contribution to the speed deficit in spoken language retrieval comes from those with co-morbidity with Speech and Language Impairment (SLI), whereas those dyslexic children with stronger verbal language skills are comparable to matched non-dyslexic controls in a discrete naming task. This again is an interesting contribution and novel to research in the area.

The next study from Kong Yun Rui and colleagues from the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS), is a comparative study of the impact of intervention for Chinese on dyslexic children attending DAS for support with Chinese, and struggling learners who also participated in this support, by contrast with a control group of dyslexics who did not benefit from this structured approach. The results showed that both intervention groups show significant improvement in comparison with the controls. However, they also suggested that the problems for struggling learners were less entrenched, because they showed greater impact of multisensory support in character naming and word forming. This again provides an important insight into the effectiveness of structured support for learners of all types.

The final two articles represent a significant contribution in terms of moving forward the potential for greater awareness of dyslexia. The first study, by Chunsuwan and colleagues, evaluates the effectiveness and validity of a computerised program for screening early reading skills in Thailand, including a range of phonological skills and Rapid naming. Working with a large sample of children in 1st grade aged 6-8 the study examined aspects such as test retest reliability, and showed good correlations with reading ability, suggesting that this can provide a reliable tool for use in Thailand, where provision for dyslexia has been limited. The final article in this issue is drawn from mainland China, by Wang Lei and his colleague, and identifies the need for parental involvement in setting up a school-family-service organisation to identify and support children with dyslexia. This should begin to ensure that children with dyslexia in China can receive the support that they need in order to become successful. These approaches are particularly important for countries where dyslexia has traditionally been misunderstood and children may suffer as a consequence.

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 DAS for their efforts to ensure that the UNITE SpLD conference can continue online as a webinar, despite the limitations on international travel and the ongoing need for social distancing world-wide.

We look forward to a time when these restrictions may be eased and we can once again join together to celebrate the work we all contribute to supporting dyslexia across the life span.

The abstracts from this year's UNITE SpLD conference presented here illustrate the breadth, depth and complexity of ongoing work in the region, and we recommend that readers take the opportunity to join the online conference and sample some or all of these insightful presentations.