



# PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS





# The Importance of Bursaries at DAS

## Quek Gek San

*Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services*

*Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

### INTRODUCTION

There is clear evidence from our evaluations that support from the DAS MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (known as MAP thereafter) can improve the quality of life of children with dyslexia, improving their learning skills and their self esteem. DAS believes that no child should be left behind because he or she cannot afford the cost of a DAS education.

The provision of bursaries is critical as it levels the playing field for children with dyslexia from lower income families. DAS and the Ministry of Education (known as MOE thereafter) provide financial assistance (known as bursary thereafter) to Singaporean students, or who have at least one parent who is a Singaporean. The student must also be attending MOE mainstream school between Primary One and Secondary Five.

DAS provides bursary to students for:

- ◆ Psychological assessments
- ◆ MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) remediation
- ◆ Specialised Educational Services (SES) programmes. This bursary is only to students who are currently on our MAP programme.

"DAS believes that no child should be left behind because he or she cannot afford the cost of a DAS education."

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (BURSARY) FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Table 1 shows an increasing percentage of students receiving bursary for psychological assessment over the years. DAS through donations received provide bursaries for psychological assessments.

Table 1 : Number of students receiving bursary for psychological assessment

Year	No. of Students Assessed	No. of Bursary Applications Received	No. of Students Receiving Bursary	% of Students Receiving Bursary
2008	665	64	60	9.0
2009	667	64	62	9.3
2010	656	74	67	10.2
2011	793	128	120	15.1
2012	684	174	169	24.7
2013	905	290	277	30.6
2014	1,110	308	293	26.4
2015	820	242 *	234	28.5

\* as at end October 2015

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (BURSARY) FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED INTERVENTION

Table 2 shows an increasing percentage of students receiving bursary for literacy intervention over the years. DAS is grateful to MOE for providing financial assistance to eligible students based on certain eligibility criteria including gross household income. Table 2 shows the increasing percentage of students receiving bursary over the years.

Table 2 : Number of students receiving bursary for literacy remediation

Year	Student Enrolment **	No. of Bursary Applications Received	No. of Students Receiving Bursary	% of Students Receiving Bursary
2007	1,032	255	236	22.9
2008	1,085	314	298	27.5
2009	1,233	379	378	30.7
2010	1,633	589	575	35.2
2011	1,936	738	720	37.2
2012	2,211	928	900	40.7
2013	2,465	1,178	1,151	46.7
2014	2,723	1,380	1,336	49.1
2015	2,497	1,486	1,450	48.3 ***

\*\* Student Enrolment is based on the enrolment statistics as at end October of the year. This is the steady state number for the last term of the year.

\*\*\* as of October 2015

In addition to bursary, MOE also gives an MOE grant to students attending DAS for literacy intervention. This has helped DAS to maintain MAP fees payable by parents at the same level since 2007.

Table 3 shows the increasing amount of MOE grant over the years due to the steady increase in student enrolment at DAS.

Table 3: MOE Grant

Year	Student Enrolment	MOE Grant S\$
2008	1,085	2,055,244.20
2009	1,233	2,823,534.10
2010	1,633	2,741,683.00
2011	1,936	4,317,745.30
2012	2,211	6,567,846.30
2013	2,465	7,363,938.50
2014	2,723	7,811,929.00
2015	2,497	8,599,581.70

### PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY THE SPECIALISED EDUCATION SERVICES (SES) DIVISION

The Specialised Educational Services (SES) Division was established in 2013 to support students with dyslexia with a wider repertoire of programmes.

SES offers programmes in:

- ◆ Preschool
- ◆ Mathematics
- ◆ English Examination Skills
- ◆ Chinese
- ◆ Speech Drama Arts
- ◆ Speech and Language Therapy

DAS provides bursaries for these programmes through donations received. DAS relies heavily on the generosity of corporate and private donors, who are found through the tireless effort of our small Fundraising Team comprising only two staff.

Table 4 shows the amounts raised in the recent years, arranged in alphabetical order, of the donating organisations.

Table 4: Donations from corporate donors to fund our SES programmes

Organisation	Amount donated (SGD)	Specific Purpose (if any)
Bengawan Solo Pte Ltd	10,0000	
British Dyslexia Association	20,852	
CapitaLand Limited	10,000	
Flag Day 2014	50,820	Preschool K1
Goofy Golf 2014	43,338	Speech and Drama Arts
Issaac Manasseh Meyer Trust Fund	10,000	
Jacob Ballas Charitable Trust 2013/14/15	40,000	
Keppel Charity Golf 2013/14/15	268,078	
Marina Bay Sands Pte Ltd	60,000	English Exam Skills and Mathematics
NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Limited 2012/13/14/15	728,026	
OCBC (2013 Gala Dinner)	131,000	OCBC GTIB Scholarship
PB Tankers Limited	10,000	
President's Challenge 2012/13/14/15	590,000	
SICC May Day Charity Golf 2014	19,000	
Singapore Cruise Centre Pte Ltd	50,000	Speech and Drama Arts
StarHub	160,500	Mathematics
The Community Foundation of Singapore	50,000	English Exam Skills and Speech and Drama Arts
The Rotary Club	34,175	
Tote Board 2014/15	225,029	Speech & Language Therapy
Citi-YMCA Youth for Causes 2013/14/15	117,006	

## CARE & SHARE

The Care & Share Movement was mooted in January 2014. Care & Share is a national fund-raising and volunteerism movement for the social service sector. The objectives are to mobilise Singaporeans to contribute to worthwhile causes and to give a big push to social services for the needy, as Singapore approaches our 50th year of independence in 2015.

Eligible donations raised by Community Chest and participating voluntary welfare organisations will be matched by the government, dollar for dollar. DAS is grateful to have benefited from this government initiative. Through the endeavours of our Fundraising Team, DAS is optimistic that it can request for a dollar matching grant of \$2.25 million from the Government.

## CONCLUSION

The support we are able to provide at DAS through our bursary system can make a real difference to the lives of children with dyslexia. In running our evaluations, we take care to ensure that the support we provide is effective for as many children as possible, with particular emphasis on those children who are benefitting from our bursaries, in order to check on the effectiveness of our system.

It is a pleasure to report continued success and increasing support over the years, and we at DAS are very proud of the flourishing bursary schemes. This would not be possible without the hard work of our fundraisers and all the support we receive reported here. DAS is very grateful!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### QUEK GEK SAN

*Director of Human Resource & Corporate Services*

*Gek San has a Diploma in Business Studies from Ngee Ann Polytechnic and a degree in Management Studies from University of London. She has passed Levels 1 and 2 of Chartered Financial Analyst examination (USA). She has obtained a Teaching Award for Foundation Modules from British Council Singapore Teaching Award for Young Learners. Gek San has six years of working experience in IBM Singapore in Finance and Corporate Communications. She has worked 10 years in Reuters as Team Leader for Pacific market and Company Financial Reports.*



# Community Outreach Programmes at DAS

## Fanny Foo

*Director of Learning Centres and Outreach  
Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

DAS Outreach objectives is to raise awareness about dyslexia and learning differences within the community of Singapore. It aims to equip educators and others working with children about the signs and symptoms of dyslexia, as well as the accompanying co-morbidities of learning differences, for the main purpose of early identification and intervention.

The primary goals of the outreach programme is to:

- ◆ provide advocacy
- ◆ support children's physical development
- ◆ provide children and their families and caregivers with the support and care they need
- ◆ aim for early diagnosis and intervention.

The framework for this programme is based on the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) model outlined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

*"Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) focuses on enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families; meeting basic needs; and ensuring inclusion and participation. It is a multi-sectoral strategy that empowers persons with disabilities to access and benefit from education, employment, health and social services. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities, their families and communities, and relevant government and non-government health, education, vocational, social and other services. (WHO, 2010)."*

*"It aims to equip educators and others working with children on the signs and symptoms of dyslexia, as well as the accompanying co-morbidities of learning differences, for the main purpose of early identification and intervention."*

The programme is divided into three elements, each with specific objectives which are explained below:

**1. Individual outreach and support which provides direct and indirect benefits in the following areas:**

- ◆ Provide a needs assessment and evaluation of children through free computerised screening.
- ◆ Early diagnosis that can provide psychological assessments with additional support for exams accommodations for the child.
- ◆ Bursaries for assessments and remediation.
- ◆ Support through speech therapy and remediation programmes.
- ◆ Mentorship or internship for employment opportunities through the DAS Student alumni.
- ◆ Post secondary support through workshops and networking.

**2. Children's Activity and Inclusion Group**

- ◆ Provide a community activity and support group for children with special needs and their families through organised outings throughout the year.
- ◆ Provide heavily subsidised or free activities to students to network and meet other like students through learning journey and fun activities.
- ◆ Provide recreational and education activities for example Speech and Drama, Cat in the Hat, rock climbing, Dance performances for Graduation, art therapy.
- ◆ Provide support and education to parents/caregivers through a "Carers Support Group" such as Parent's Support Group through FaceBook and Focus Group meetings.
- ◆ Provide ad-hoc services and training on therapy and support techniques through parents/caregiver's talks by inviting various expert speakers such as OTs, counsellors.

- ◆ Provide siblings and family activities during school holidays, for example, Student Bake activity.
- ◆ Exploring the strengths and talents of children with disabilities through various activities such as art, rock climbing, speech & drama, presentation skills, baking and many more.
- ◆ Provide person-centred care and support for the child and their families/ caregivers through workshops and courses through the DAS Academy utilising government grants.

### **3. Community Outreach**

- ◆ Provides free awareness talks on signs and symptoms of dyslexia to schools, educators, organisations and corporate entities.
- ◆ Promotes community inclusion for children with dyslexia through talks in school focussing on inclusion.
- ◆ Conducts Open House at each Learning Centres to promote community awareness of the programs and on signs and symptoms of dyslexia.
- ◆ Collaboration with schools and students on organised activities allowing interaction and awareness building to the next generation.
- ◆ Collaboration with other voluntary welfare organisation for support such as counselling services, youths at risk groups, other special needs and support groups.
- ◆ Providing volunteering and collaboration opportunities to corporate companies through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.
- ◆ Provides internships to Higher Tertiary institutions for project evaluation and attachments.
- ◆ Participation in road shows, exhibitions and networking sessions organised by the various VWOs, schools or government organisation.
- ◆ Designed an outreach booklet for free distribution to the schools and organisation.

To-date, the outreach team has conducted:

### **DYSLEXIA SCREENING**

<b>SCREENING FOR DYSLEXIA</b>	<b>2013 to 2015</b>
	<b>No. of Students Screened</b>
Screenings in schools	1185
Screenings open to the public	1247
Screening in various organisations *	419
<b>Total</b>	<b>2916</b>
<b>Total number of Screenings</b>	<b>96</b>

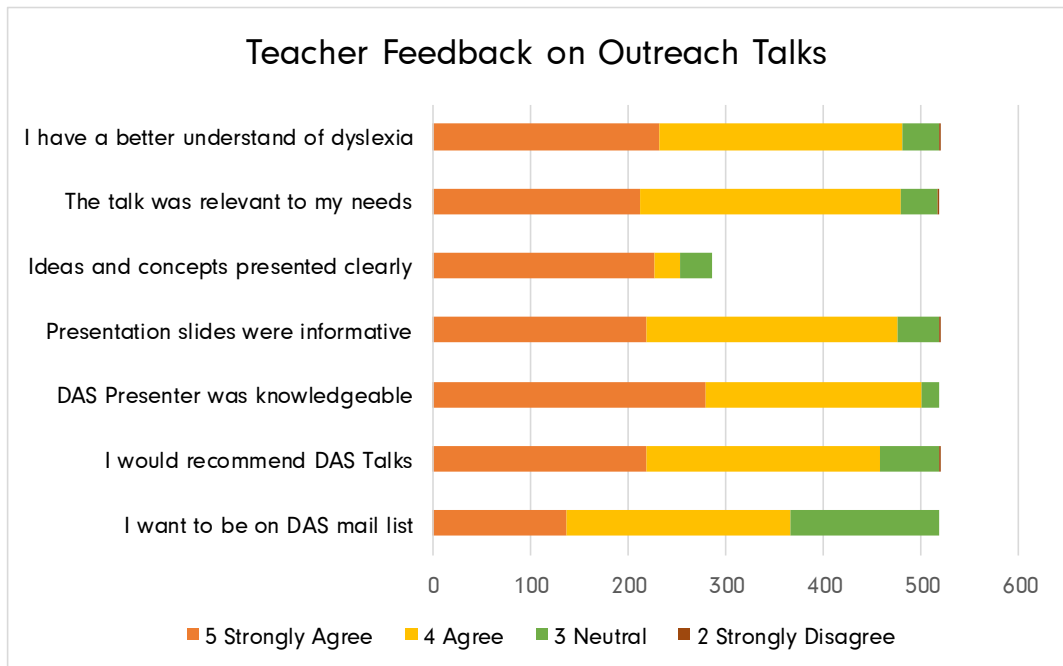
\* Orphanages and Homes, Student Care, Voluntary Welfare Organisations, Prison Inmates Welfare Organisation

### **AWARENESS TALKS**

<b>AWARENESS TALKS AND ATTENDEES</b>	
	<b>2013 to 2015</b>
Primary & Secondary Schools	117
Preschools	36
Talks at Organisations and Mass Screenings	85
<b>Total Attendees</b>	<b>14,413</b>

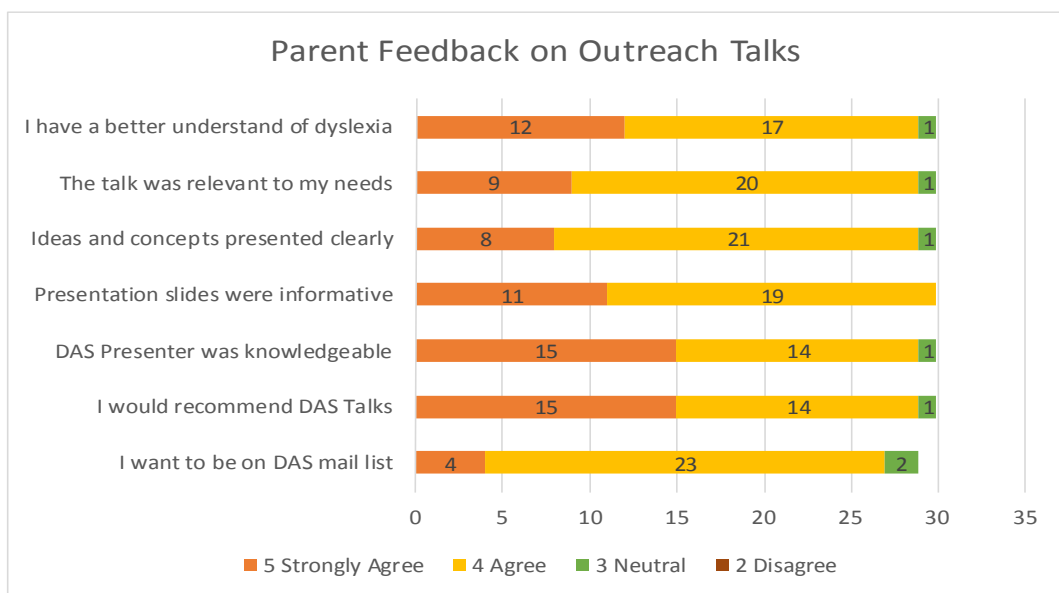
**TEACHER FEEDBACK FROM OUTREACH AWARENESS TALKS—2015**

TEACHER FEEDBACK ON OUTREACH TALKS (520 RESPONDENTS)	5—Strongly Agree to 1 Strongly Disagree				
	5	4	3	2	1
I have gained a greater understanding of dyslexia and DAS after this presentation.	232	250	37	1	
The content of this presentation was relevant and useful to my needs.	213	267	38	1	1
Ideas and concepts were presented clearly to me.	227	26	33		
The slides and materials given are helpful and informative.	219	257	43	1	
The presenter(s) was knowledgeable about dyslexia.	280	222	18		
I would recommend DAS Awareness Talks to others.	220	238	62	1	
I am interested in receiving more information on DAS and its services by email.	138	229	153		



**PARENT FEEDBACK FROM OUTREACH AWARENESS TALKS—2015**

PARENT FEEDBACK ON OUTREACH TALKS (30 RESPONDENTS)	5—Strongly Agree to 1 Strongly Disagree				
	5	4	3	2	1
I have gained a greater understanding of dyslexia and DAS after this presentation.	12	17	1		
The content of this presentation was relevant and useful to my needs.	9	20	1		
Ideas and concepts were presented clearly to me.	8	21	1		
The slides and materials given are helpful and informative.	11	19			
The presenter(s) was knowledgeable about dyslexia.	15	14	1		
I would recommend DAS Awareness Talks to others.	15	14	1		
I am interested in receiving more information on DAS and its services by email.	4	23	2		1



The model used for screening and intervention has proven to be very successful in the early identification of students with dyslexia. With the continued model, DAS will build on increasing its presence and outreach within the community and extending beyond its shores.

DAS hopes to be a leader in South East Asia in terms of raising the profile of dyslexia through Outreach and Awareness in the coming years. DAS Awareness talks have helped many educators and parents to be more aware of the signs and symptoms and co-morbidities of dyslexia and have facilitated the early identification of their children with learning difficulties. With the early identification, these children would be able to seek help so that they can realise their fullest potential.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### FANNY FOO

*Director of Learning Centres & Outreach*

*Fanny Foo completed her A Levels at Temasek JC and Higher Diploma by Shatec jointly with Ecole Hoteliere de la SSH Lausanne (Switzerland) and National Productivity Board. It was sponsored by Westin Hotels under Starwood Properties.*

*Fanny started her career in Food & Beverage. She worked as a waitress to a management trainee in 2 years. She was promoted to a Tour Co-ordinator, handling majority Japanese tour groups for 2 years. She was one of the 2 pioneers to be sent to Kyoto, Japan, for a 3 months exchange programme. From tours, she moved onto Conventions Services Executive and to a Manager within a year. She was handling the MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) market where she planned and handled incentive groups of up to 3,000 people. Some of the high profile groups she was involved in were: Visit of US President George Bush's and Queen Elizabeth's visit.*

*Fanny was then headhunted to head the PICO office based in Kuala Lumpur. There she brought in musicals and spearheaded from ticket sales to operations single-handedly. After leaving PICO Malaysia, she headed a trading office under All Beijing (M) Sdn Bhd to do business development and sale of raw materials from China in Malaysia. She had to oversee shipment of raw materials from China and sales to end users while ensuring quality of raw materials being brought in. When she returned to Singapore in 1998, she worked as a Sales and Marketing Manager for Great World Serviced Apartments in 1998 and Swissotel Stamford in 2000. Due to family commitments she left her full time job in 2002 and embarked on volunteer work at various organisations.*

*In 2010, Fanny joined DAS as the Centre Manager for Queenstown and Bishan Learning Centres. Her youngest child has been with DAS for the last 6 years. In 2012, she became the Assistant Director of Learning Centres and Outreach and presently the Director of Learning Centre and Outreach.*

Screen your child for dyslexia

**FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Does your child  
have difficulty with



**FREE!**

**READING, SPELLING OR WRITING?**



Is your child **frustrated** about school and studying  
or has **difficulty** understanding text passages?

*teh or the?  
saw or was?*

## Come for our **FREE** Computerised Screening

We understand your concerns and would like to invite you to meet our multi-disciplinary team of professionals. We will explain the results of your child's computerised screening test thoroughly and advise you on the suitable support available.



### SCREENING DETAILS:

**Thursday, 17 March 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Tampines Learning Centre**  
Blk 163 Tampines Street 12, #01-257  
Singapore 521163

**Thursday, 2 June 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Rex House Learning Centre**  
73 Bukit Timah Road  
#05-01, Rex House  
Singapore 229832

**Friday, 9 September 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Jurong Point Learning Centre**  
1 Jurong West Central 2  
#05-01, Jurong Point  
Singapore 648886

**Tuesday, 22 November 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Chua Chu Kang Learning Centre**  
Blk 17 Teck Whye Lane, #01-167  
Singapore 680017



**DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION  
OF SINGAPORE**  
HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

**TO REGISTER: 6444 5700**

(Office hours: Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 5:30pm)

Limited slots available! Registration is required.



# You don't remember this? The importance of working memory and what can we do to help children remember.

Adam Oei, PhD

*Postdoctoral Research Fellow*

*Singapore University of Technology and Design*

Genie was reading a book when she felt hungry and walked to the kitchen to fetch a snack. On the way, she spotted Jony, her son, still watching television and she asked him to get ready for bed. She then stepped into the kitchen, but paused and stood there, wondering why she came into the kitchen in the first place. She then went back into her room without getting the snack.

I'm sure something similar to the above scenario resonates with some of us. It represents a failure of working memory maintenance and illustrates the limited bandwidth us humans have with mental processing.

Working memory is defined as a mental workspace where information is stored for a short moment for further processing. The capacity of working memory determines how well we store information for use in an ongoing task. Working memory is fundamental to our interactions with the world on a daily basis. It is highly crucial for many of the tasks that we undertake, including arithmetic, planning, learning, speech and comprehension. Imagine the embarrassment if you were to have a conversation with someone and fail to follow the line of conversation because you forgotten what was said 30 seconds ago.

Individual differences in working memory capacity are highly predictive of academic and occupational success. Specifically, children's performances on

"Working memory is defined as a mental workspace where information is stored for a short moment for further processing."

working memory tests is highly correlated with reading achievement independent of their phonological skills. Furthermore, low working memory capacity is also predictive of poor performance on math achievement. Accordingly, working memory capacity, more so than IQ, measured at the start of formal education is highly predictive of subsequent literacy and numeracy attainments.

A popular model of working memory is a tripartite one that posits that working memory as made up of a Central executive (the 'CEO' of our cognitive system that is responsible for allocation of attentional resources, among others) plus two storage systems– a phonological loop (for verbal and sound based information) and a visuo-spatial sketchpad (for visual and spatial information). Children with different specific learning differences have been shown to have working memory difficulties in these different domains. For instance, children with reading difficulties tend to have difficulties with deficits in the phonological loop, which in turns impact learning of early phonics skills. This in turn affects reading development. Conversely, children with ADHD, given their problems with impulse control have been characterised as having weakness in the Central Executive.

Given the importance of working memory in our daily lives, wouldn't it be great if we can train and enhance it? Unfortunately, there is currently no consensus whether commercialised working memory training programmes are effective in improving working memory. However, there is a number of empirically proven strategies that could aid children in their learning, regardless of whether they have working memory deficits or not. The common thread among these strategies is to reduce cognitive or working memory load. I outline two here.

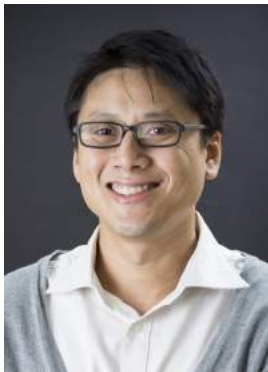
First, is to stop multitasking. Our brains are not built to undertake several mentally demanding activities simultaneously. Studies show that people who multitask frequently have poorer focus and are less effective in ignoring irrelevant information. Worse, when one does two or more things at once, none of the tasks are done well. Albert Einstein is no psychologist, but he had an opinion on multitasking that is particularly enlightening: "Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves". What's the moral of the story here? Do one thing at a time.

Second, is to reduce classroom clutter. Many classrooms are often cluttered with decorations, information and pictures that are not relevant to the current lesson. Studies show that students in these highly decorated classrooms spend a larger portion of their time off task (instead of paying attention to the teacher). Consequently, students in these classrooms learn less compared to children in classrooms that have undecorated walls. In other words, instead of attending to the teacher, they are attending to the wall decorations instead, which in turn reduced

the amount of learning. While a sparse classroom may not be aesthetically pleasing compared to a well-decorated one, surely no teacher would want wall decorations to be competing with him or her for their students' attention.

Our working memory is a scarce resource. Given its importance to many activities that children undertake in school, it is important to be mindful that we, as educators do not overwhelm their capacity limits and impede their learning.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### **ADAM OEI**

*Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Singapore University of Technology and Design*

*Adam is formerly a lecturer at the DAS academy. He is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at Singapore University of Technology and Design. His research interest revolves around cognitive and neuroplasticity. In particular, he is interested in how the environment and the things we do affect our cognitive abilities. His PhD research completed in 2014 at Nanyang Technological University, focused on video game play and its impact on attention, memory and executive functioning.*

**PRESCHOOL LITERACY PROFILING TEST  
FOR K1 - K2 STUDENTS IN 2016**

**Does your child  
have difficulty with**

**READING, SPELLING OR WRITING?**

**FREE!**



teh or the?  
saw or was?



Is your child having problems with letter formation or sequencing, or learning of sight words? Does he/she have poor handwriting or have trouble following multi-step directions or routines?

**Come for our FREE  
Literacy Profiling Test\*!**

The screening will be conducted by our preschool early literacy intervention team. Our professionals will address your concerns about your child's literacy development and share with you help that is available.



SCREENING DETAILS:

**Wednesday, 16 March 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Tampines Learning Centre**  
Blk 163 Tampines Street 12, #01-257  
Singapore 521163

**Wednesday, 1 June 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Rex House Learning Centre**  
73 Bukit Timah Road  
#05-01, Rex House  
Singapore 229832

**Wednesday, 23 November 2016**  
**9:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Chua Chu Kang Learning Centre**  
Blk 17 Teck Whye Lane, #01-167  
Singapore 680017

*\*This screening test is not meant to serve as a diagnosis for dyslexia but it will give you a picture on the learning needs of your child.*



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