



ABOUT DAS

2014



About DAS

Lee Siang

Chief Executive Officer

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

The DAS Handbook Early Intervention reflects the specific growth DAS has made in the area of early intervention. I would like to congratulate the Specialised Educational Services (SES) team who have worked hard to bring this information together to make a difference to those who serve preschool learners.

The Preschool Programme was started to help preschoolers who are potentially at risk of dyslexia or has developmental delay in early literacy. The programme aims to help preschool learners develop skills and strategies to become confident achievers when they enter primary school. Besides the Preschool Programme, DAS also has other programmes supporting learners of primary and secondary school levels.

Presently, there are 3,000 students enrolled in the 13 DAS Learning Centres and more Ministry of Education schools with the School Dyslexia Remediation Programme. However, there could be as much as 20,000 students in preschools, primary and secondary schools with not just dyslexia, but dyslexia severe enough to warrant intervention. So, we are still just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the number of students the Ministry of Education and DAS should be helping.

Another area of need is expanding support to other age groups. Currently, DAS provides services to primary and secondary school students. We have only just begun our work with preschoolers and we still need to reach out to post-secondary and adult dyslexics.

DAS must continue to expand in scope and size to be able to cater for older children and higher order literacy skills, help our students in their academic subjects and well as in life skills. Additionally, we must provide support for dyslexics who have associated learning differences such as ADHD, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, etc.

“... we are still just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the number of students the Ministry of Education and DAS should be helping.”

Our region, as a whole, still lacks sufficient support for dyslexics. As we develop our programmes and services in Singapore they will be of interest to our colleagues in neighbouring countries and we must be responsive to their enquiries to further spread awareness about dyslexia and associated learning differences.

Building a pool of expertise in dyslexia and associated learning differences in Singapore is a main objective of DAS. DAS staff must not underestimate the experience and expertise we have already accumulated and we must continue to invest and give our colleagues, many of whom are below the age of 30, the opportunity to pursue professional development and gain exposure.

Most research into dyslexia is still originating in the UK and US. Our database of several thousand children with dyslexia has tremendous potential for research. This is especially true in our unique multi-lingual, multi-ethnic environment where there is tremendous emphasis on academic excellence.

Here are some highlights of some recent DAS expanded efforts:

- ◆ DAS Specialised Educational Services (SES) Preschool Programme doubled its enrolment in the past year to over 250 students.
- ◆ SES has also begun to conduct psychological assessments and specialist tutoring for young adults.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) has introduced an expanded integrated curriculum to provide for the literacy needs of a much wider range of students.
- ◆ To complement our Essential Maths Programme and Speech and Language Therapy, SES introduced a Chinese Programme, an English Exam Skills Programme and the Speech and Drama Arts Programme in 2013.
- ◆ From 2014, SES also introduced a series of school holiday programmes covering creative writing, presentation skills, social skills, goal setting and maths word skills workshops.
- ◆ We have responded to requests from Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines with DAS subsidiary DAS International staff making several visits to provide psychological assessments and speech and language therapy to our international clients.

- ◆ To further expand the academic pathway for professional development in our field in Singapore, DAS Academy, another DAS subsidiary, launched a new MA in Special Educational Needs in partnership with the University of South Wales in 2013.
- ◆ DAS Educational Therapists have also taken on the challenge to broaden their expertise and become “Dual Specialists” by training to teach both Literacy and Maths or both English and Chinese, for example
- ◆ DAS has compiled for the first time an Annual Programme Evaluation report for 2013 for all major programmes.
- ◆ The SES Chinese Programme Team prepared a research paper based on the findings of their programme which was subsequently published in the July 2014 issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences.
- ◆ The SES Chinese Team, SES Preschool Team and the MAP Team made presentations based on the results of their programmes at the International Dyslexia Association’s Conference in San Diego, USA in November 2014.

These efforts reflect the breath and complexity of the needs of our clients with dyslexia and associated learning differences. It also defines and demonstrates the vibrancy and energy of DAS staff which is critical as we continue to be in pioneering country in almost everything we do as we strive for benefit of our clients.

With all of this in mind, the DAS strategy for the next five years is clear – To build and deliver a comprehensive and holistic range of programmes and services for our dyslexic clients. I am more than confident that the research and articles in this first issue of the DAS Handbook of Early Intervention will encourage DAS staff, Preschool teachers, parents and all stakeholders to further explore dyslexia and support the young learners that need it,

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



LEE SIANG

Chief Executive Officer

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Mr Lee Siang assumed the post of Chief Executive Officer on 1st September 2014. He oversees the work of the DAS HQ Branches operations, supervises the management of the three DAS Divisions, namely the MOE aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP), Specialised Educational Services (SES) and the Learning Centres and Outreach Division. He also sits on the Board of DAS subsidiaries, DAS Academy and DAS International. Siang is a member of the US - based International Dyslexia Global Partners Committee. He has 25 years of experience in leadership and management of which 15 years is at senior level in non-profit organisations.

Siang observes that "unlike other industries, work in a non-profit organisation gives you immense satisfaction that your efforts are helping clients who need your support and who are likely to not receive it otherwise!"

Siang joined the DAS in December 2001 and has played a key role in the rapid growth of the DAS Family into a thriving social enterprise with a multi-disciplinary professional work force that provides a continuum of psychological, educational and training services. He emphasises that the DAS must view itself as a social enterprise and management "must strive to fulfil our social mission by combining entrepreneurial and business skills with the philanthropic characteristics of non-profit organisations".

Siang obtained his Bachelor's Degree from the National University of Singapore via the sponsorship of a Singapore Armed Forces Training Award. He also has a Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Management from the Singapore Institute of Management, a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Western Australia, a Certificate in Dyslexia Studies, a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from the London Metropolitan University and a Postgraduate Certificate in Specific Learning Differences, also from the London Metropolitan University. It is this unique balance of experiences and qualifications that has allowed Siang to oversee the diverse services and functions of the DAS Family.

Our Journey

In 1993, the DAS had one learning centre, one teacher and 12 dyslexic students. Today, the DAS employs over 240 staff, who jointly support over 3,000 school students in 13 centres through the MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP).

What's more, the enhanced MAP curriculum appreciates local requirements, bringing us closer than ever to achieving our mission. And all our MAP Educational Therapists are graduates with a Specialist Diploma in Special Education to ensure that learners with dyslexia receive quality assistance.

What seemed like an incredible task two decades ago has quickly become a reality as an appreciation of the dyslexic difficulties and their unique gifts is now prevalent in Singapore. There is much they can achieve, when given the right support which is our MAP to success.

With an estimated 23,000 dyslexic children in local preschools, primary and secondary schools, efforts to reach these children must and will continue. In the words of Camus "every achievement is a servitude. It compels us to a higher achievement." And so MAP will continue in its mission, with you by our side.

We reflected on our past, prepared for our future by looking at our profiling and placement of students as well student progress monitoring mechanisms. In recognition of the increasingly sophisticated needs of dyslexic learners, a MAP Curriculum Matrix was designed to assist in the identification of what components work best with each unique learner. The Matrix contains the full range of the MAP curriculum, is based on the student profile and banding, and assists educational therapists to define the needs of the learners by targeting specific knowledge and skills. And by doing so, it also encourages educational therapists to be mindful of the subsequent stages for the child and to be more aware of the progress (or the lack of) that the students make.

Enhanced & developed the MAP curriculum so that it now offers individualised group lessons modified in view of local requirements. In accordance to MOE's Professional Practice Guidelines, the Rose Report and the National Reading Panel, an appropriate literacy programme should include phonemic awareness,

phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. And so, the MAP integrated curriculum follows Singaporean, US and UK guidelines for good practice. Based on the Orton-Gillingham approach, the MAP integrated curriculum also makes reference to a range of programmes and strategies in order to support the development and improvement of each learner.

Increased awareness of the dyslexic needs and strengths through a variety of efforts such as awareness talks in schools, free mass computerised screening efforts as well as open house events. Through these means, we are confident of increased awareness resulting in an increase in support to dyslexics.

Upgraded facilities by increasing the number of learning centres as well as updating the classrooms by adding smart boards and projectors.

Increased use of technology can facilitate students with specific learning differences to learn and lead productive lives. MAP therefore invests in equipment and software to add to the learning experience in our classes and infuses assistive technology into the lessons as a complementary teaching approach to enhance students' academic success and independence as well as to personalise lessons and skills enhancement to each learner.

Specialised Educational Services (SES), a division DAS, was created with the aim to uncover the true strengths of individuals with learning differences and empowering them with the necessary skills and strategies to succeed. We are a team of professionals who are committed to delivering a quality service focusing on the needs of the individual, at a price which is competitive. All of our professionals are highly qualified and specially trained to help persons with learning differences who may be struggling in the different areas of their lives. We have a good understanding of the curriculum and the demands that today's education systems place on a person and strive to bring out the best in every individual that we see.

2014: A year of *firsts* and more...

- ◆ Admissions recommended over 1335 students for placement and all of the 426 referrals received from MOE were recommended for placement in MAP.
- ◆ 170 students graduated from the programme, a number that has grown incrementally year by year.
- ◆ Teams Teaching Teams, a 2-day collaborative learning carnival, was organised for the first time with 27 one hour sessions.
- ◆ To guarantee quality of instruction, an annual quality assurance audit of instruction in MAP has been initiated
- ◆ Successful launch of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, showcasing increased emphasis on local research



Learning
Centres



DAS Student Teacher Ratio

Teaching hours / month
6,870 hrs





Bursaries given
1,150



Awareness reached
7,000
people



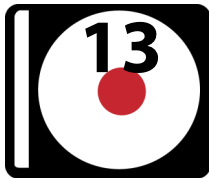
Awareness talks
70



FREE Computerised
screenings
1,275



DAS website
12,200 views



DAS resources

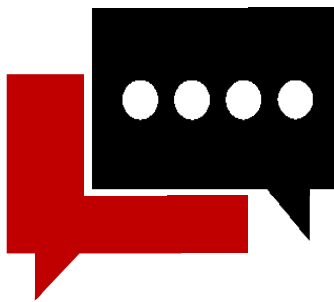


Facebook hits
1,228
for graduation



DAS
Alumni

455



805 Referrals made



170
DAS graduates

DAS Learning Centres



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|----------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Ang Mo Kio
Anderson Primary School
6 Ang Mo Kio Ave 2, Singapore 569948 | 6451 5582 |
| 2 | Bedok
Fengshan Primary School, Indoor Sports Hall
307 Bedok North Road, Singapore 469680 | 6444 6910 |
| 3 | Bishan
9 Bishan Place, #06-03
Bishan Junction 8, Singapore 579837 | 6250 0526 |
| 4 | DAS Assessment Services
133 New Bridge Road, #04-01
Chinatown Point, Singapore 059413 | 6538 1658 |

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| 4 | Chinatown Point
133 New Bridge Road, #04-01
Chinatown Point, Singapore 059413 | 6538 1658 |
| 5 | Chua Chu Kang
Blk 17 Teck Whye Lane, #01-167
Singapore 680017 | 6464 8609 |
| 6 | Jurong Point
1 Jurong West Central 2, #05-01
Jurong Point, Singapore 648886 | 6594 0331/2 |
| 7 | Parkway Parade
80 Marine Parade Road, #22-01/02
Parkway Parade, Singapore 449269 | 6440 0716 |
| 8 | Queenstown
Queenstown Primary School
310 Margaret Drive, Singapore 149303 | 6475 9535 |
| 9 | Rex House
73 Bukit Timah Road, #05-01
Rex House, Singapore 229832 | 6643 9600/1 |
| 10 | Sengkang
Blk 257C Compassvale Road, #01-545
Singapore 543257 | 6881 2072 |
| 11 | Tampines
Blk 163 Tampines St 12, #01-257
Singapore 521163 | 6786 0838 |
| 12 | Woodlands
Blk 165 Woodlands St 13, #01-567
Singapore 730165 | 6269 0730 |
| 13 | Yishun
Blk 932 Yishun Central 1, #01-101
Singapore 760932 | 6451 5582 |



EMBRACE DYSLEXIA

Commitment

1. Raise awareness for Embrace Dyslexia by:
 - Sharing information about dyslexia in the workplace
 - Inviting DAS to conduct Awareness Talks
 - Including information about dyslexia in the staff handbook
2. Explore opportunities to work with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore:
 - Workplace Giving or Volunteering initiatives
 - Mentoring DAS Alumni for internships or work experience
3. Champion dyslexic individuals:
 - Recognising their strengths and understand their weaknesses
 - Providing appropriate support and encouragement
4. Donate to DAS Programmes to help low-income families with bursaries
5. Advocate for Embrace Dyslexia by signing this commitment



Students with dyslexia struggle in the education system each and every day. DAS believes that each student is unique in their own way and have strengths that will see them through their education and into a successful career.

At the Dyslexia Association of Singapore we EMBRACE DYSLEXIA and know that every child will unlock their potential to succeed.