



INTRODUCTION



Welcome Message

Lee Siang

Chief Executive Officer

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

This is the third issue of the annual DAS Handbook and I am delighted by another outstanding effort by Professor Emeritus Angela Fawcett and the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) Team for putting together this excellent collection of reports and articles. Once again, the breadth and scope of this Handbook reflects the many areas the DAS and the community as a whole must continue to look into in support of people with dyslexia. Indeed, as DAS celebrates our 25th Anniversary in 2016, in the next 25 years, DAS must “go beyond” five areas!

First of all, we must go beyond support in basic reading and spelling. Children with dyslexia also need support in higher order skills such as reading comprehension and essay writing. DAS has now added a new writing component and additional reading comprehension content is on its way. This is a natural progression for the DAS main literacy programme as we expand and improve our curriculum to support dyslexic children in the full range of literacy skills.

Secondly, DAS must go beyond Literacy and the English Language. Dyslexics need support in a range of language and academic subjects. We have already initiated a Maths, Chinese and Exam Skills programmes designed for dyslexic children. Creating and delivering a wider range of programmes must therefore be a continuing effort of DAS in the coming years.

Thirdly, our support must go beyond academic subjects. We must help our dyslexic clients build on their strengths and talents. Our Speech and Drama Arts programme designed for dyslexic children to boost their confidence and speaking

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skills is a good example of such a programme. Results have been most encouraging. We are examining how best to provide other non-academic and talent programmes to help dyslexic children develop into productive adults and find employment in industries where they can excel.

Fourthly, we must go beyond the current age group we serve. We have always been working with primary and secondary school students. We have started with preschoolers fairly recently. We are in the process of providing a support programme for post-secondary students and students in Institutes of Higher Learning. It will be a logical next step for us to also provide for those in tertiary education and in the workforce.

Last but not least, we must go beyond just dyslexia. That many dyslexic children have accompanying Specific Learning Differences such as ADHD, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Speech and Language Impairment, etc is well recognised. DAS must therefore also help our children overcome these issues over and above their dyslexia.

And to help us “go beyond” these five areas, DAS must continue to do two things: We must continue to invest in and develop the professional capability of our staff to deliver high quality programmes and services. It is also the objective of DAS to build a pool of expertise in dyslexia here in Singapore! The training arm of DAS, DAS Academy, which now delivers programmes up to Masters level, will help us achieve this.

We must also continue to invest in programme evaluation and publish research to ensure that our programmes and services are effective and reliable.

So as you can see, DAS will continue to be very busy in the next 25 years. We look to the continuing support of Ministry of Education and all stakeholders to help us achieve our goal of providing a truly comprehensive and holistic range of programmes for our dyslexic clients and bring DAS to a new level.

**LEE SIANG**

CEO—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 sits on the Board of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) which is based in the United States and chairs the IDA's Global Partner's Committee. He has 30 years of experience in leadership and management of which 17 years is at a 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.

Editors Message

Emeritus Professor Angela Fawcett

Research Consultant

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

It is a very great pleasure to share with you the third of our annual Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) Handbooks, edited by myself with Managing editor, Deborah Hewes. It is now several years since I started working with DAS, and I have been truly impressed by the progress I have seen over this time period in terms of research output. As Research Consultant to DAS, I have been able to work with staff to help them with formal evaluation of their work, and we have now started to work with local universities to obtain independent evaluations. We have now published 7th issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD), and our editorial board is becoming stronger with every issue. This year we have focused on UNITE SpLD, which has now become a major international conference. For the first time, we have invited members of our editorial board to join us in Singapore to present their research, as well as some of the authors who have contributed to APJDD. It may be seen that we have made substantial progress on the publishing front, and I am proud of what we have been able to achieve working together.

In this DAS Handbook 2016, we return to the format adopted last year, with the first sections an in depth report on the DAS programmes including those funded by the Ministry of Education (MOE). It is good to note that the MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) is going from strength to strength, with an increasing emphasis on evaluation, including the development of curriculum based evaluation and quality assurance and control. The introduction of a system identifying different levels of need within the children participating has considerably enriched the programmes provided, and is an example of outstanding practice in matching children

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effectively within their small group support. The Specialised Educational Services (SES) division programmes cover a broad range of topics associated with dyslexia, including Maths, English Exam Skills, Chinese, Preschool, Speech and Language Therapy and Speech and Drama Arts programmes, as well as specialised support for children with severe difficulties who need one to one support. It may be seen from these reports that DAS continues to grow and expand, with an ever-increasing number of children benefitting from the support we are able to provide. I am proud to note that we are now able to provide bursaries for some children to help them with Maths, a topic that many dyslexic children struggle to master. Once again this year I have been impressed by the standards we achieve and maintain in providing support for children with difficulties and the readiness of DAS to continually evaluate and improve their provision.

This year we include articles on RETA – the Register of Education of Therapists Asia, initiated by DAS to ensure the maintenance of professional standards in educational Therapy in Singapore and the region. We also present an article on the role of the DAS Academy, by June Siew and Priscillia Shen, on the training arm of DAS that is able to provide a range of courses that address the needs of educators, professionals, our therapists and parents in terms of further training at all levels from workshops and certificates to Master’s level. This makes a unique combination of theory and practice available to the region through DAS with their database of over 3,000 children. It is interesting to note the increasing collaboration with universities and polytechnics in the region to address some of the issues in dyslexia support. This includes an increasing awareness of the wider implications of dyslexia, in terms of self-concepts and how these impact on performance.

As in last year’s handbook, we present a section on Embrace Dyslexia, in this section Professor Rod Nicolson, my colleague at Sheffield University, contributes two ongoing projects examining strengths in dyslexia, by completing an online questionnaire study, originally published in the British Dyslexia Association’s (BDA) Contact magazine. We are also grateful to Brock and Fernet Eide at Dyslexic Advantage for giving us permission to reprint a selection of material from their blogs. In the same section, we introduce an article from Margaret Malpas of the BDA on mentoring dyslexic adults, which fits in well with a current initiative led by Ashraf Samsudin in mentoring our DAS Student Alumni. In 2015, we were able to invite Dr Kate Saunders, CEO of the BDA to Singapore to lead a series of seminars and workshops on this topic, which is proving a fruitful new initiative for DAS.

In the next section we move on to consider international perspectives. Here we start with a summary of the abstracts from the recent UnITE SpLD conference held by DAS in Singapore in June 2016. This was the first academic conference of this type to be organised by DAS, following on from increasing interest in previous UnITE SpLD

conferences over the years. This year, we invited members of the editorial boards of APJDD to present, as well as authors who had contributed published articles to the journal. The conference attracted record numbers of presenters and participants, was extremely well received and concluded with a meeting of international partners dedicated to ongoing collaboration. In addition to the abstracts, we present here a summary of the final discussion, moderated by Geetha Shantha Ram, Director of MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme and Staff Professional Development, with a panel of experts drawn from the conference presenters. This should give our readers a flavour of the topics addressed and encourage them to submit and attend the 2017 UNITE SpLD conference, with the call for papers now available online.

A series of articles are also included in the international perspectives section. The first of these, from Dr James Smith-Spark, addresses an important topic for adult dyslexics, focusing on problems in memory. Dr Smith-Spark was formerly my PhD student in Sheffield and his work presents a unique perspective on the continuing impact of dyslexia in everyday life, for adults with dyslexia and their families. The next article, from Anne Margaret Smith addresses the needs of multilingual learners, such as those in Singapore, and presents a new screening test designed for this population. Finally, Mary Mountstephen presents her perspective on the usefulness of motor skills training for children with difficulties, based on her successful international practice in the area.

A series of case studies follows. The majority of these are drawn from DAS experience, and present a more in-depth analysis of specific children with difficulties. Firstly, we present an article from Wong Kah Lai on a bright pre-schooler with strong evidence of difficulties. This case study shows how with gentle encouragement and structured support, this child moves from an inability to write his name to achieving success. The next two case studies are drawn from an exciting new initiative from RETA, a series of discussion meetings on specific cases, which are open to therapists, parents, psychologists, speech therapists and anyone with an interest in education to pool their expertise in order to consider alternative approaches for children who are difficult to remediate. As moderator of these sessions, in which a therapist presents case studies, this approach is in my experience quite unique and an example of the very best practice.

I have been deeply impressed by the care and consideration shown throughout for the wellbeing of the children and families. Here we also reprint a revision of an article originally published in our 2014 DAS Handbook by Hani Zohra Muhamad that has been updated for presentation again, drawing on more recent references in the field. Finally, in this section, we present a personal perspective from Dr Margaret Meehan, who is a dyslexic academic and support worker, on the impact that the Alexander technique has had on her organisation and capacity for work. As a

friend and colleague of Margaret, I can testify to the positive impact that this approach has had, allowing Margaret to fully express her strengths and deal effectively with stress. It is an example of the broader approach to supporting dyslexia that is increasingly recognised as so important.

In the last section on practical applications, we present articles from Fanny Foo, Director of DAS Learning Centres and Outreach, on another year of exceptional outreach to raise awareness of dyslexia, and from Jacqueline Song, Head of Fundraising, on the outstanding fundraising efforts undertaken by DAS and their supporters. Information on the impact of bursaries for families who would not be able to access support, is provided in an article from Betty Lee, Senior Bursary Administration Officer, illustrated with an interesting series of case studies on appeals for higher levels of support than those recommended by the system.

We again present a series of book reviews. This time from Mary Mountstephen, who presents two reviews of recent publications as well as one from Kevin Smith on study skills all of which may be of interest to our readers.

Finally, I cannot finish without acknowledging the importance of the 25th Anniversary of DAS, and congratulating all those who work with DAS on what they have achieved and will continue to achieve over the coming years, going from success to success and expanding their provision as world leaders in the field of dyslexia.



EMERITUS PROFESSOR ANGELA FAWCETT

Research Consultant

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Emeritus Professor Angela Fawcett is a leading international researcher into dyslexia and other developmental disabilities, encompassing a range of theoretical and applied contributions to this field. Angela is also an Honorary Professor at the University of Sheffield. Her approach is broad and interdisciplinary ranging from child and cognitive development to educational screening and intervention, as well as developmental cognitive neuroscience. She is the Vice President of the British Dyslexia Association and also the Former Chair and Director of the Centre for Child Research at the Swansea University, UK.

Angela has worked with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore for a number of years and is currently a Research Consultant to DAS. She is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences.

Remembering Dr Daruwalla

Deborah Hewes

Head of Publicity and Publications

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Dr Daruwalla was the founding President of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) when it was first registered in 1991 and continued in this role for 25 years until his untimely death in July 2016. The success of DAS would not have been possible without his dynamic leadership and contribution over the years. Dr Daruwalla's passion to provide the best possible support for students with dyslexia has resulted in the growth of DAS into the organisation it is today that supports thousands of children with dyslexia.

In the last 25 years, Dr Daruwalla's dedication has contributed greatly to the growth of DAS. The success of the organisation has been instrumental in helping many students in Singapore cope with dyslexia. Under his guidance, DAS has taken huge strides towards his goal of removing the social stigma surrounding dyslexia by embracing the strengths and talents of people with dyslexia while providing the support they need to succeed.

"The board, management and staff of DAS are deeply saddened by the loss of Dr Jimmy Daruwalla. The success of DAS would not have been possible without his leadership, which has enabled us to progress in our mission. His selfless dedication has inspired many individuals with dyslexia to embrace their gifts and talents. We will strive to continue his legacy," said Mr Lee Siang, Chief Executive Officer of DAS.

As of 2016 and under his leadership, more than 9,500 children have been identified as dyslexic, around 6,500 received intervention, at least 30,000 people were reached through awareness talks and up to 10 programmes to support the varying needs of our students with dyslexia are now available.

In memory of our late President, Dr Jimmy Daruwalla, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, together with Dr Daruwalla's family, will be setting up the "Jimmy Daruwalla Fund". DAS aims to raise S\$500,000 to further the cause for dyslexia that

he so passionately championed. This fund will be used for two main purposes:

- ♦ Scholarship for students with dyslexia to pursue tertiary education
- ♦ Building capabilities for DAS through selective scholarships for staff to pursue post-graduate studies in specialised areas in dyslexic education

Dr Daruwalla saw dyslexia as an asset. He wanted to ensure that the stigma surrounding the difficulties that children with dyslexia have in education is removed and that by embracing support that they need to succeed, they will make a greater difference in the fabric of Singapore's progress.

Embrace Dyslexia and may Dr Daruwalla's legacy continue to grow.



Dr Jimmy Daruwalla pictured above: Top left at the Singapore Cruise Centre making a donation in 2016, top right, in 2007 with Sir Jackie Stewart, Former F1 driver and President of the Scottish Dyslexia Association, bottom Left, with Ho Peng from MOE at the 2010 DAS Specific Learning Differences Conference and bottom right with President Tony Tan at the 2015 Capitaland Fundraising event



Dr Daruwalla pictured above with fellow Rotary Club of Raffles City members , (l to r) Vincent Chan, George Abrahams, Jimmy, Corina Lai and Mr Kevasapany. Above left, giving the welcome speech at the 2015 DAS Student Graduation, above right with President SR Nathan on his visit to DAS in 2005 and left with Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam at the 21st Anniversary Gala Dinner in 2012



DEBORAH HEWES

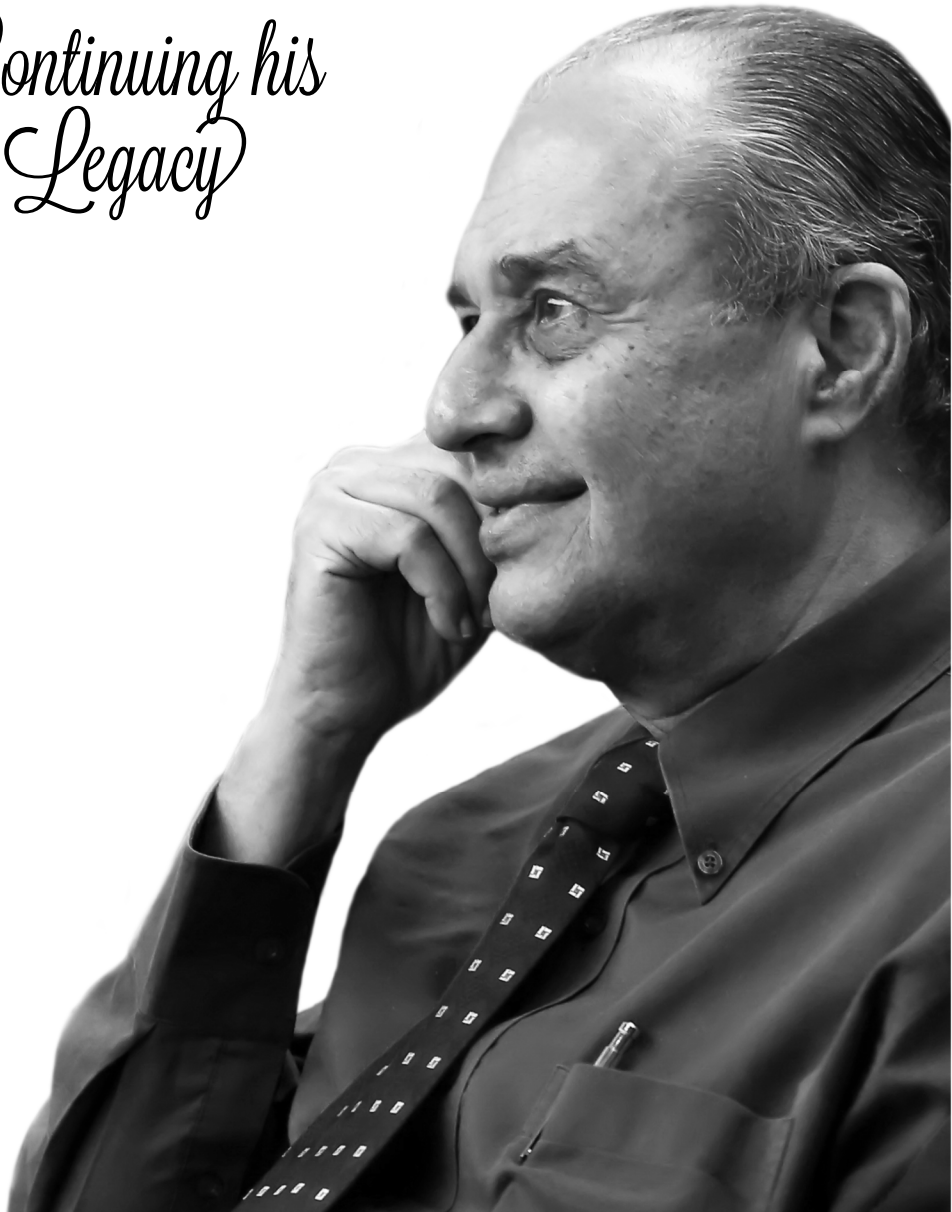
*Head of Publicity and Publications
Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Deborah has been with DAS since May 2011. Deborah is a dyslexic and passionate about raising awareness about learning differences. All three of her children have learning differences and as a result she has spent the majority of the last 18 years supporting her children's academic careers as well as helping other families with children who have learning differences. Deborah has lived in Singapore for 15 years and she has devoted the first 10 years working in an International School as a Learning Support Assistant and parent volunteer supporting students who learn differently with math, reading and literacy. She has also worked as a shadow assistant for students with behavioural issues and Asperger's Syndrome.

Deborah completed her Psychology honours degree at UNISIM in Singapore and her thesis was titled "Adolescents with learning disabilities: an investigation of academic self-concept, self-esteem and depression in International school students." Deborah is currently studying for her Masters Degree in Special Education Needs in 2016 with the University of South Wales.

Deborah is the Managing Editor of the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences, the DAS Handbook and more recently has edited the first book of its kind in Singapore, "Embracing a Different Kind of Mind—Personal Stories of Dyslexia". www.das.org.sg/embrace-dyslexia

Continuing his Legacy



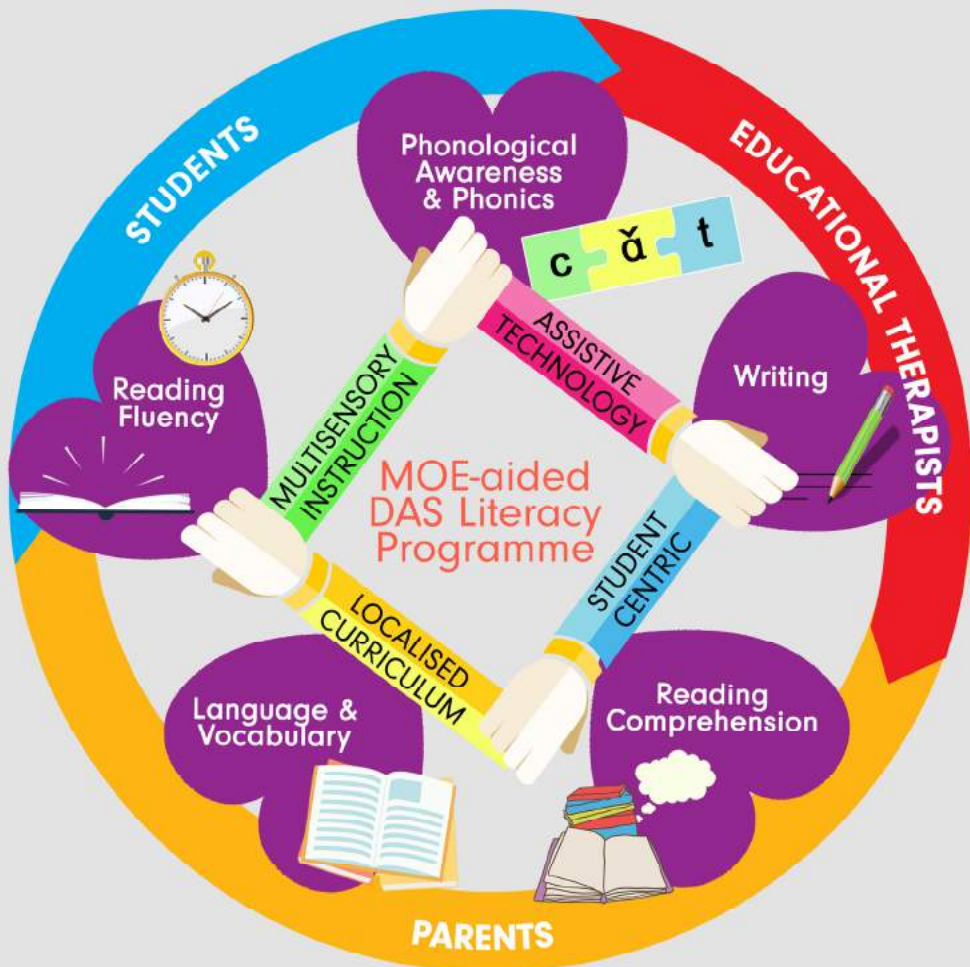
DONATIONS TO THE JIMMY DARUWALLA FUND

Cheques to be made payable to "Dyslexia Association of Singapore"

Please indicate at the back of the cheque "For Jimmy Daruwalla Fund". The proceeds will go toward a fund in memory of our founding President. The funds will be used to support individuals with dyslexia.

MAP INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme



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

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