



LEARNERS AT RISK DYSLEXIA AT INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING

KNOW, FIND, LEARN

INTRODUCTION

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is a registered charity with Institution of Public Character status established to help people with dyslexia achieve. Together with Singapore's Enabling Masterplan, many students with dyslexia who have received specialist support and intervention in primary and secondary schools have progressed to Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL).

However, as dyslexia is a life-long learning difference (Frith, 2013), continued support and the availability of resources are critical in enabling these students to cope with the academic rigour and expectations at the tertiary level (MacCullagh et al., 2017; Mortimore & Crozier, 2006; Olofsson et al., 2015; Pino & Mortari, 2014).

Further, there may be some students whose learning challenges only become apparent when they embark on their tertiary education. Therefore, identifying these students through dyslexia screenings (probability of dyslexia) and assessments (a formal diagnosis) is important in providing the necessary specialist support to help them better cope with their learning challenges. We hope to extend our support to IHL students who have yet to be identified with a specific learning difference (SpLD) or may be experiencing challenges in their learning.

Thus, DAS has collaborated with Lim Hoon Foundation to raise awareness and provide pivotal support for students with dyslexia and other co-occurring learning difficulties in IHLs. Lim Hoon Foundation is a charitable trust and one of their primary objectives is to promote academic achievement for all students. The Foundation also believes that everyone is entitled to a holistic education.

The 360 Degrees Pact Project is therefore launched by DAS in collaboration with Lim Hoon Foundation Limited with an objective to identify and maximise the potential of struggling IHL learners, with or at risk of dyslexia.



**“IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERCOME
DYSLEXIA THROUGH HARD WORK.”**

**FOUNDING PM LEE KUAN YEW,
WHO DISCOVERED HE WAS DYSLEXIC
WHEN HE WAS AN ADULT IN HIS MID-FIFTIES**

The project aims to provide extensive support for all struggling IHL learners with or at risk of dyslexia through:

- Free awareness talks
- Free dyslexia screening of Year 1 IHL students
- Free or subsidised dyslexia assessment for needy students who meet criteria
- Free or subsidised intervention through the iStudySmart™ programme for needy students who meet criteria

* The above are limited based to the funding available and utilised.

To achieve this, the Lim Hoon Foundation Limited has committed to fund the 360 Degrees Pact Project and provide financial support for IHL learners with or at risk of dyslexia from low income families.

All the activities carried out under this project will be monitored and carefully evaluated after 3 years.



OUR VISION

Our vision is to make a significant difference in the lives of struggling IHL learners with or at risk of dyslexia.

We hope to work hand in hand with IHLs actively to promote the understanding of struggling IHL learners with or at risk of dyslexia, by reaching out to help and develop a sustainable assistance.

The table below aims to provide clear directions indicating how each objective can be delivered in a coordinated manner.



OUTCOME	CAPABILITY BUILDING			INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF STRUGGLING IHL LEARNERS WITH OR AT RISK OF DYSLEXIA
4 KEY AREAS	RAISING AWARENESS	IDENTIFICATION: SCREENING & ASSESSMENT	INTERVENTION: iSTUDYSMART™ PROGRAMME (ISS)	JOINT RESEARCH WITH INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING
CURRENT GAPS	LACK OF AWARENESS/ INFORMATION/ ACCESSIBILITY	TIMELY IDENTIFICATION FOR IHL LEARNERS WITH OR AT RISK OF DYSLEXIA	LACK OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT FOR IHL LEARNERS WITH OR AT RISK OF DYSLEXIA	LACK OF LOCAL RESEARCH ON STRUGGLING IHL LEARNERS WITH OR AT RISK OF DYSLEXIA

THE CURRENT GAPS

In Singapore, there are four Enabling Masterplans, a series of recommended strategies by experts, to support the education of learners with SpLD who would need special educational provisions. The government has implemented many of the recommendations since 2007.

Singapore has continued to show its commitment to support inclusive education, by announcing the hiring of disability support officers. In 2014, a fund was also set up by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to support these students in mainstream schools and IHLs.

While Singapore is certainly on a trajectory in building an inclusive society to support an increased number of these struggling students entering IHLs, there are still gaps that need to be bridged and addressed in order to better support the students in completing their tertiary education successfully.

LACK OF AWARENESS / INFORMATION / ACCESSIBILITY

- Lack of awareness in dyslexia and the learning challenges students struggle with. Staff, teachers, and peers might not fully understand the needs of struggling students due to their invisible differences.
- Lack of information and visibility of support. Quality of information on websites is usually very general.
- Lack of training for the staff in IHLs who provide help as they have limited knowledge in the area of disability.
- Lack of awareness for students with dyslexia to access support and the necessary accommodations.

TIMELY IDENTIFICATION FOR STRUGGLING IHL LEARNERS WITH OR AT RISK OF DYSLEXIA

- Struggling IHL learners with or at risk of dyslexia can succeed in IHLs, with timely identification and support.
- Assessment establishes a learner profile of strengths and areas of improvement. It forms the basis of recommendation for learners.

LACK OF SPECIALIST PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FOR SUPPORT

- Many students with or at risk of dyslexia experience adverse impact when moving on to IHL, as different study skills are required.
- Lack of Institutional policies to support dyslexic learners (Griffin & Pollak, 2009).

LACK OF LOCAL RESEARCH ON IHL LEARNERS WITH OR AT RISK OF DYSLEXIA

- As of 2021, there is little research and data targeted at IHLs students with SpLD in Singapore. Therefore, it is difficult to tell if the current support rendered is relevant and effective.

4 KEY AREAS

1

RAISING AWARENESS

IDENTIFICATION:
SCREENING & ASSESSMENT

2

3

INTERVENTION:
iSTUDYSMART™ PROGRAMME (ISS)

JOINT RESEARCH WITH
INSTITUTES OF HIGHER
LEARNING

4

1. RAISING AWARENESS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR IHL EDUCATORS, STAFF

The Dyslexia Awareness Campaign targets IHLs and builds upon the ongoing 'Embrace Dyslexia' campaign, showcasing examples of the cause of dyslexia and what we can do to help our students.

DAS conducts awareness talks online via Zoom. We provide 1.5-hour talks for two different groups of audience:

1. 'Understanding Dyslexia' for IHL educators and staff; and/or
2. 'Understanding Dyslexia' for IHL students and/or their parents

*Collaterals to be placed on the school campus to raise awareness on dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

INTERNATIONAL
DYSLEXIA
ORGANISATION

Dyslexia may take many forms, but dyslexics have one characteristic in common, they can learn and they can 'make it' in the society if properly taught.

AUSTRALIA
DYSLEXIA
ASSOCIATION

There are many misconceptions about dyslexia which is perhaps why some people only discover they are dyslexic in adulthood. There is often the assumption that dyslexia just affects reading and writing skills whereas it's actually about information accessing and it can impact on the area such as memory and organisational skills.

BRITISH
DYSLEXIA
ASSOCIATION

**THE EMBRACE DYSLEXIA CAMPAIGN
SEEKS TO DEBUNK COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT DYSLEXIA, ENCOURAGE
PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA TO EMBRACE THEIR LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND
GALVANISE ORGANISATIONS TO WORK WITH THE DAS AND TAKE GREATER
ACTION IN HELPING PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA ACHIEVE.**

KNOWING DYSLEXIA

MYTH 1: DYSLEXIA IS RARE

FACT: The prevalence of dyslexia in the general population is approximately 10%, of that 4% will have dyslexia severe enough to warrant intervention (DAS, 2021).

MYTH 2: DYSLEXICS ARE "STUPID"

FACT: Repeated studies have shown that there is very little relationship between dyslexia and intelligence (e.g. Gus, & Samuelsson 1999).

People with dyslexia have a wide range of unique abilities, but sadly our schools aren't designed for students who think differently, and most teachers are not trained to teach them, meaning many students with dyslexia go through life believing that something is wrong with them or that they are just stupid.

MYTH 3: READING DIFFICULTIES DISAPPEAR WITH AGE

FACT: Individuals with dyslexia learn to read, but this can be a long and tedious process for them. Therefore, many require extra time to read. Dyslexia is a lifelong learning difference. If they are identified early and are given the necessary specialist support and intervention, people with dyslexia can learn to compensate for their learning difficulty.

MYTH 4: THERE IS NO WAY TO TRULY DIAGNOSE DYSLEXIA

FACT: There are highly sophisticated and well-recognised techniques to diagnose dyslexia. A qualified educational psychologist will be able to diagnose dyslexia through a series of assessments. Diagnosis can occur from age 6 all the way to adulthood.

MYTH 5: DYSLEXICS WILL NOT SUCCEED IN LIFE.

FACT: A great majority of people with dyslexia have succeeded in life in their own respect. Some of them include Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Mozart, Pablo Picasso, Founding PM Lee Kuan Yew, Richard Branson and Tom Cruise to name a few.

2. IDENTIFICATION

DO WE WAIT..... TILL THEY FAIL?

There are three ways we can identify struggling IHL learners with dyslexia.

CHECKLIST

The first way is through a checklist (self-administered or teacher-led) that will be provided during our free awareness talks

SCREENING

The second way is through computerised screening. DAS offers FREE dyslexia screening for Year 1 IHL students.

ASSESSMENT

The final identification is through an assessment. The assessment is conducted by a DAS psychologist. The psychologist will gather information from parents, teachers and the learner with or at risk of dyslexia. Other than the summary of findings and analysis, the assessment report will also conclude with a list of recommendations for the learners.

This assessment service has been proven to help students with dyslexia set the right path in getting support. It is important because it will give learners a comprehensive profile and an understanding of his/her strengths and weaknesses. It also answers their questions in mind, such as "Why am I struggling?", "What are my challenges?", "How can I help myself?" and "What are the available support I can access?"

The assessment is also a reliable profile during the school identification process.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL, DISCOVER THEIR STRENGTHS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH BROADER SUPPORT BECAUSE MANY LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA CAN EXCEL IN IHLs.

3. INTERVENTION

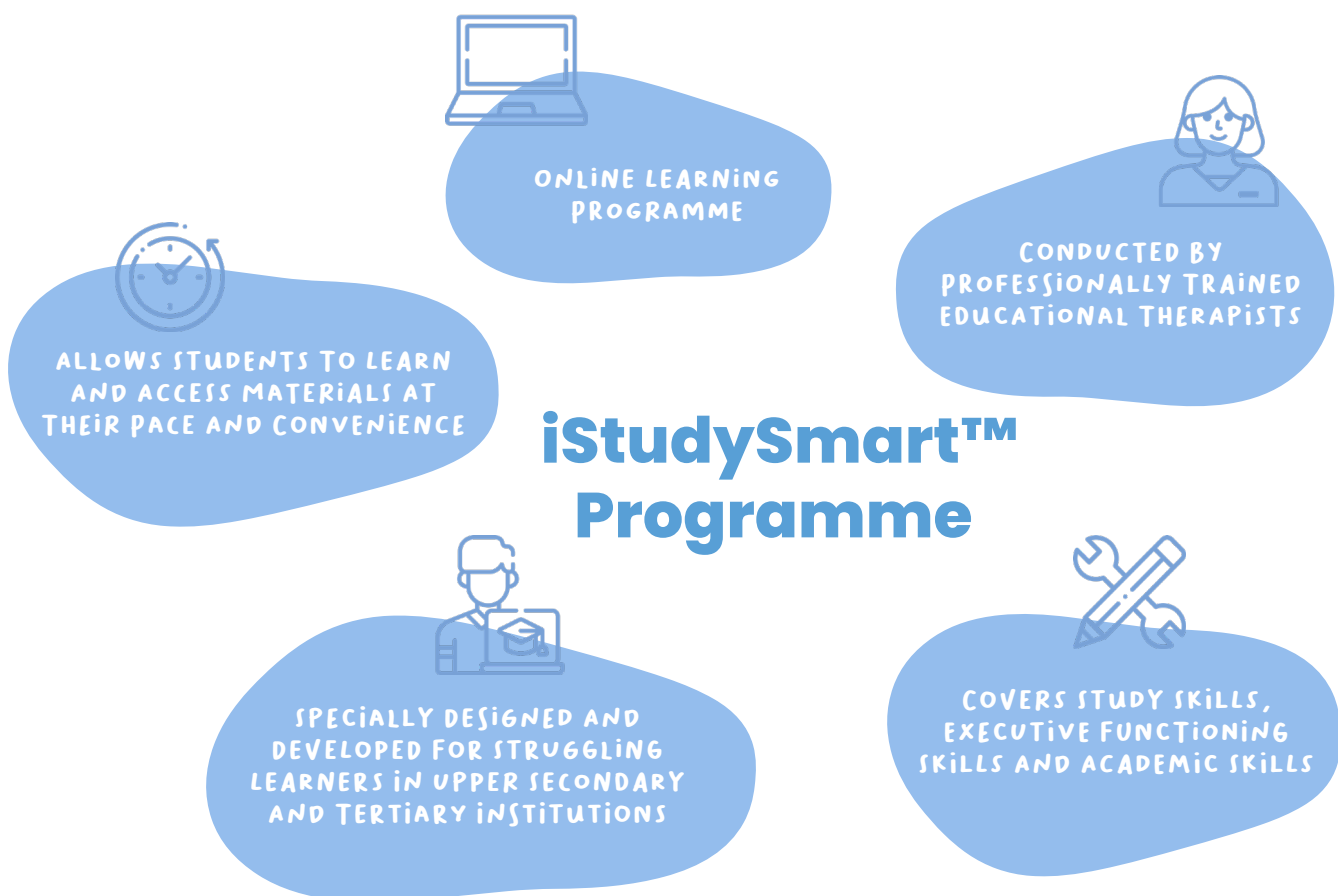
iSTUDYSMART™ PROGRAMME - THE RIGHT HELP

Lessons from the iStudySmart™ programme are delivered through a combination of e-learning where content is easily accessible online for students to learn and progress at their own pace, and scheduled online consultations to provide personalised feedback.

The objectives of the programme includes bridging the gap in intervention and resources for struggling students with or at risk of dyslexia and other SpLDs at the tertiary level, developing students to become self-directed, independent and responsible learners, and building a strong foundation in them to excel and fulfill their future goals and aspirations.

THE FOUR CORE MODULES OF THE PROGRAMME ARE:

- **TIME MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITISATION**
- **PLANNING AND ORGANISATION**
- **TERTIARY WRITING**
- **PRESENTATION**



4. JOINT RESEARCH WITH INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING

Dyslexia is the most prevalent of all the Specific Learning Differences (Shaywitz, 1998). According to a study conducted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency in the UK (HESA, n.d.), it is estimated that 4% of students have SpLDs in the academic year of 2011 to 2012. This means that approximately 4% of local students might have difficulties severe enough to warrant intervention in IHLs.

The number of students from low-income families has also increased in Singapore (Menon, 2021). This group of students require help in getting intervention support services.

The 360 Degrees Pact Project aims to conduct a local study looking into the prevalence rate of dyslexia in Singapore and whether the help received at IHLs is relevant and effective.

We welcome IHLs who are keen to join or participate in this research to contact us. Contact details can be found at the end of the pack.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

The contribution from the Lim Hoon Foundation Limited has greatly impacted the implementation of the 360 Degrees Pact Project, and whether or not our help has reached the sandwiched class and the low income families. We understand that help for struggling IHL learners with or at risk of dyslexia is not common in Singapore. Therefore, active participation at IHLs is crucial in enabling this project to succeed.

Hence, DAS would like to invite all IHLs to participate and be part of this endeavour to reach out and support IHL students with dyslexia, enabling them to overcome their learning challenges and work towards achieving their goals and aspirations.

A key objective of the 360 Degrees Pact Project is to ensure all information and services are accessible to IHLs.

Therefore, we look forward to your participation in the following activities:

- Free awareness talks
- Free dyslexia screening of Year 1 IHL students
- Free or subsidised dyslexia assessment for needy students who meet criteria
- Free or subsidised intervention through the iStudySmart™ programme for needy students who meet criteria
- Collaterals of the iStudySmart™ programme to be placed on school campus to raise awareness on dyslexia

* The above are limited based to the funding available and utilised.

Please contact **6444 5700** or email ora@das.org.sg for more enquiries. We look forward to hearing from you. Let's work together to enhance the learning experiences of our students in IHLs!



WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY ABOUT iSTUDYSMART™

“

INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION (ITE) STUDENT

I felt happy that I came this far, I thought I would struggle during the presentation but I did well than I expected. Thank you iStudySmart™ for helping me in my presentation!

“

POLYTECHNIC STUDENT

In iStudySmart™, I learnt many things that were helpful for poly, from presentation skills to time management. It's a great place for students graduating from secondary school. Time management modules have been eye opening and have helped me handle my heavy school workload..

“

POLYTECHNIC STUDENT

This journey has been beneficial to me in executing each task and further improving my reports. In order to ace the presentation, I also learned a new technique to do research and hence gathered all the necessarily information via an app. The programme is worth exploring and recommended for students to have better study plans.

“

UNIVERSITY STUDENT

While it is important to maintain consistency, the iStudySmart programme has been very helpful in improving my task management and research skills. The materials for lessons were also easy to access.

WHAT PARENTS AND TEACHERS SAY ABOUT ISTUDYSMART™

“

THE ISTUDYSMART™ PROGRAMME HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL

It helped my child learn more skills like helping her present and speak better. It also helped her express her thoughts better in writing. These are very skills that she can definitely use in the future. iStudySmart™ Programme is a specialized designed programme which will help your child with specific learning needs.

”

“

SURPRISED TO SEE THE QUALITY OF PRESENTATION

Seeing my students present during the iStudySmart™ Final Presentation genuinely surprised me. I was impressed by his ability to convey his points coherently, clearly, and with composure. I think the programme has given him valuable experience that will help him throughout his studies.

”

“

EQUIPPED WITH ESSENTIAL SKILLS

I am glad that my daughter enrolled in iStudySmart™ just in time before she started school at polytechnic. This programme has equipped her with essential skills such as, time management, planning, organisation of a project, and presenting in front of an audience. I would like to thank teachers who put in so much effort to coach and guide her through the journey.

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ABOUT LIM HOON FOUNDATION LIMITED

The Lim Hoon Foundation Limited is a private charitable trust created in August 2008 with the primary objective of promoting academic achievement for all students, at all levels, kindergarten through university with a focus on those from low income families. Their ultimate objective is to encourage the advancement of education through a wide range of philanthropic activities.



ABOUT DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

Registered in 1991, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) of today is a vibrant Social Service Agency with over 240 full-time staff who provide a wide array of services for dyslexics not only in Singapore but in the region. DAS Educational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Specialist Psychologists provide support for over 3,500 primary and secondary school students on our Main Literacy Programme (MLP) throughout 14 centres all over Singapore. Besides MLP, there are also 1,200 enrolments with our Specialised Educational Services (SES) which includes programmes such as Preschool, Mathematics, Chinese, PREP2PSLE, Speech and Language Therapy, Speech and Drama Arts, iStudySmart™ etc.