

FACETS

A Publication of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore — October to December 2012

21
years &
not won mistake

because at



no one ever is

Issue 4, 2012 MICA (P) 190/02/2012



Special 21st Anniversary Edition 2012

21 years of helping you achieve

FACETS

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

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21 Years of Success

DAS Learning Centres

Ang Mo Kio AMK	Anderson Primary School T: 6451 5582
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Chinatown Point CTP	Chinatown Point Shopping Centre (opening 2013)
Jurong Point JPT	Jurong Point, #05-01 T: 6444 5700
Parkway Parade PWP	Parkway Parade, #22-01/02 T: 6440 0716
Queenstown QTN	Queenstown Primary School T: 6475 9535
Sengkang SKG	Blk 257C Compassvale Rd, #01-545 T: 6881 2072
Tampines TPN	Blk 162,163, Tampines St 12, #01-257 T: 6786 0838
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Editor's Note

It is a privilege to produce this special edition of FACETS showcasing the events over the last few months. Our cover story highlights the success of the Gala Charity Dinner that has been a year in the planning. Being part of the dinner planning committee has been highly rewarding especially when the event raised over \$1.3million. This would not have been possible without the support and generous donations of our sponsors.

The theme developed for the Gala Charity Dinner was *"21 years of Success and not one mistake.... because at DAS no-one ever is"*. This allowed for a poignant reflection of many "mistake" quotes as well as the DAS philosophy in teaching that we learn from our mistakes. One of my favourite quotes by Albert Einstein is "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

DAS empowers its students to look differently at their mistakes and believe that learning is about understanding mistakes and their causes. Mistakes provide an opportunity for students to understand the mechanics of their learning difference and it gives us a teaching opportunity to provide answers and guidance to cope with each student's learning difference.

No one has ever learned without making mistakes, and unfortunately, our students make more of them than the average student. However, we know that our students are talented and amazing individuals often with untapped creative strengths.

One of the many things that our students learn is perseverance in the face of adversity. We encourage them to keep trying and through continued practice, they will have the opportunity to become experts in whatever field they decide to pursue in life.

We hope that future educators and employers adopt the same philosophy as we do when it comes to learning differences. Everyone deserves a fair chance to be educated and the opportunity

to be employed in their desired profession. As mentors and individuals we need to actively support those who truly wish to succeed. Of all the famous quotes the one that we wish our students to follow with heart is the advice from Winston Churchill, also a fellow dyslexic, where he advises us to "Never give up, never, never, never give up!"

This year's 4th Annual International DAS conference on Maths Learning Differences and Dyscalculia brought together three international speakers as well as four local Maths experts. There were over 300 participants from Singapore and around the region who attended the conference and another 300 participants also attended the workshops and seminars that provided practical solutions to support children with Maths learning differences.

Our DAS celebrity *Dr Jiajia* has continued to live a high profile life and you will soon be able to see him on the big screen with Mark Lee and Gurmit Singh in *"Taxi, Taxi!"* released on 3 January 2013.

"Education Exchange" contains valuable advice on verbal communication and parenting. This section also includes an introduction to the DAS Chinese Remedial Programme to be launched in January 2013 as well as a write up on the Maths Learning Difference and Dyscalculia conference.

The talents of our students are a source of pride to us, so we have a rather large student gallery for this issue. Our students artwork and writings are also showcased in our first book – *"My Inner World: A Celebration of Dyslexic Minds"* which is on sale at \$20.

I hope you enjoy the special edition of FACETS. It was a pleasure to put it together.

Best wishes

Deborah Hewes

FACETS

CONTENTS

Page



Fun Fairs and Features

Ben and Jerry's CHUNKFEST	6
Kite Flying with RBS	8
Respecting Differences	10
DA provides support to ITE West Students' Documentary Video	11
Ramadhan on Wheels—2012	12
NTUC Income's OrangeAid Supports our Preschool Service	13
Visit by Nanyang Institute of Management to Tampines	14
First Aid for DAS Staff	15
More than Words	16
A visit from our Hong Kong Neighbour	17
Guts and Glory at the DAS Student Alumni Inaugural Event	18
Taiwanese Singer Jam Hsiao meets DAS Students	20
Western Dining and Social Etiquette	21
DAS kids record at HOT FM 91.3	23
RETA Launch	24
Kate Sanders at the RETA Launch	26
Dr Jiajia Tshirts	28



Applause

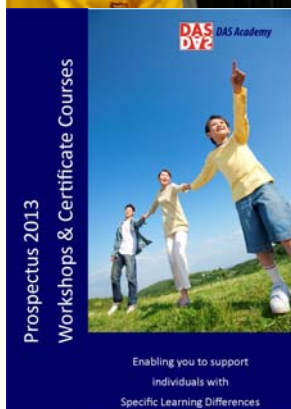
Patrick Siah Yang Zhi—Aspiring Architect	30
Straight A's DAS Success Story—Jamie Kok	32
Melissa shares her Dyslexia Story	35
The C Student—Dr Jiajia	36
Lisa—Future Fashion Designer	40
Magical Moments at DAS	42



Cover Story

Gala Charity Dinner	46
Thank you to our Donors	53
DAS Employer of Choice	56





Education Exchange

Let's talk about talking	58
Bring back those cursives	64
Pilot Chinese Programme	67
Classrooms of the Future	70
How Parents can Invest in themselves	71
Maths Learning Difference and Dyscalculia Conference	72
Maths Excellence	74
Life as a new Learning Supporting Officer	75
Caregiver Training Grant	76

Tips, Talks and Training

DAS Academy Courses and Workshops Survey	78
Certificate in Dyslexia Studies	80
Certificate in Dyslexia Literacy Teaching	81
Certificate in Educational Psychology	82
Workshops for Parents and Caregivers	83
Support Your Child with Assistive Technology: Nessy Learning Programme & Nessy Fingers	84
Support Your Child with Assistive Technology: Clicker 6	84
Developing your Child's Vocabulary	85
iRaise Digital Kids: Literacy Apps for iPad	86
Developing Self Esteem in your Child	87
Developing Writing Skills	88
Understanding Phonics Instructions	89
Information about DAS Academy courses and workshops	90
Workshop and Courses Calendar 2013	92

Student Gallery

DAS Writers' Corner	91
My Inner World: A Celebration of Dyslexic Minds	104

"We aim to motivate the young mind to develop a love of learning to become happy, successful and independent learners."



We assess for:

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dysgraphia
- ADHD
- Non Verbal Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Non-verbal Difficulties
- Auditory and Sensory Issues
- Articulation Difficulties
- Stammering
- Social Communication Difficulties



DAS International
Empowering Successful Learning

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We have a total solution for your child's educational needs 6336 2555

✓ **Psychological Assessments**

Our multi-disciplinary team have extensive experience assessing individuals with behavioural, developmental & psychological issues that lead to learning differences. Our reports are recognised world-wide.

✓ **Occupational Therapy**

Our Occupational Therapist will assess children who have motor coordination, balance, posture and sensory processing difficulties, and can focus especially on handwriting concerns at all stages of development. Direct therapy as well as advice about programmes of activities for parents and teachers can be provided.

✓ **Speech and Language Therapy**

Our Speech & Language Therapists provide speech assessment and therapy to help children develop their communication skills. Assessments can be completed on children from 2 ½ to 18 years.

✓ **Specialist Tuition Services**

Specialist tutoring is offered on a one-to-one basis tailored on the individual profile of the child. Our tuition takes a problem solving approach that targets individual needs. Your child need not have learning differences to enjoy the benefit of our tuition services.

Empowering Successful Learning



Fun , Fairs & Features



Ben and Jerry's CHUNKFEST

By Deborah Hewes



Through Chunkfest, Ben and Jerry's gave DAS the opportunity to raise awareness about our organisation. The activities organised on the day included two reading awareness games, one for children, the other for adults. With the support of students from River Valley Secondary School, who completed an internship with DAS for the event, (pictured left) they helped us to paint faces and nails, stick on tattoos and play the awareness games with the kids who visited us at the stand.

Many adults were intrigued by our "reading fluently" game which allowed us to simulate what children with dyslexia face with reading. The game was a huge success in gathering crowds to our stall.

At 6:00pm our booth was inundated with Dr Jiajia fans that were eagerly waiting for their hero to turn up and have their chance to rub shoulders with the famous pint sized dynamo!!



When he arrived, it caused a huge stir at Chunkfest and patrons as well as fans were swept with the excitement of his arrival. Dr Jiajia and BigBro spent over an hour having their photos taken and they also did a live radio interview with the Power 98FM DJ's at the event.



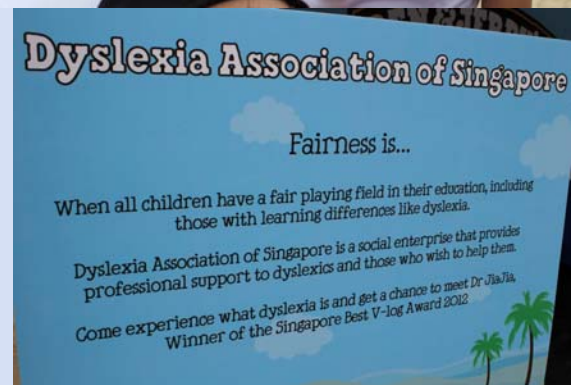
Our booth happened to be positioned next to an ice cream station, so this made for a busy day with customers visiting us on their way out after purchasing ice cream.



By the end of the night we had sold a number of Dr Jiajia t-shirts and our new book "My Inner World - A celebration of dyslexic minds" and Argus, a DAS Publicity Officer (pictured above) had managed to sample nine of the 25 Ben and Jerry's ice creams on offer for the day. He now says that he will remain a Ben and Jerry's fan after the good work they do for the community which involves fairness partners such as the DAS!



A big thank you to Sean Lau, Argus Tong, Katrina Hewes and the River Valley Secondary School students Lee Yi Xin , Amanda Ng, Chew Ying Ying , Zhang Yi Ling , Ho Foong Hui , Seah Wan Zen and Pang Kun, who worked tirelessly on the day to raise awareness and funds for the DAS!



Fairness at Siloso Beach

Kite Flying with RBS



The bright and sunny morning of August 18 paved the way for 35 DAS kids to participate in one of Singapore's fast growing hobby - kite flying. Initiated by corporate partners, The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), children gathered at Marina Bay MRT as early as 9.30am before being chartered to the iconic Marina Barrage where each child was partnered to a pre-assigned RBS volunteer.

Sporting their signature white iVolunteer tees, volunteers quickly engaged a buddy role and assisted the kids in designing their kites after a brief introduction. Many creative ones were done in a matter of minutes and were further assisted by their volunteers to fly their creations. Enthralled by the height of which their kites sailed at, a good hour and a half went by before the kids had a break for lunch.

Right before the break, many participants started looking up at the sun to witness a solar halo - a phenomenon where a rainbow ring circles the sun. The sight, however, did not deter the kids from crowding the volunteers to get their McDonald's meal which was consumed in a relatively quick fashion.

The event ended with an educational guided tour of the Marina Barrage and its facilities. Each child was also given a gift box of snacks and goodies to take home. The farewell was bittersweet for the kids as they parted ways with their volunteer buddies but went away sharing a common thought - when is the next event?

By Sean Lau
Senior Fundraising and Events Officer





Thank you RBS for your support in 2012!



Respecting Differences



Friends play an important factor in the lives of most, especially in your teens and when you are trying to fit in. In school, a student is often exposed to various culture and social differences. An individual may stand out due to his learning and/or social abilities.

In May 2012, representatives from DAS, DAS International and DAS Academy conducted awareness talks at ITE West for over 1200 students. The theme of these awareness talks was to encourage respect and inclusiveness within the student body by addressing learning and social differences.

Interactive games and activities were played periodically during the talk to engage the students and give them a better understanding of learning and social differences. These heightened the students' interest and also ensured that the talk was fun and interactive.

The learning journey was not just limited to the students, but also extended to our DAS staff who had to adapt to their various audience and tweak their presentation to ensure that they talk held the students' attention.

Students who attended the talk were given a chance to win an iPad if they completed a survey created by DAS. The survey was conducted in two parts; one prior to attending the talk to garner their current understanding and the second survey was after to evaluate the opinion of what they had learned. To be eligible to win the iPad, both surveys had to be completed.

The names of qualifying students were placed in a dip and a winner was drawn. The lucky winner, Raymond Tan accepted his prize at the awards ceremony at ITE West at the end of October. Raymond was very grateful for his prize and was very happy to have won it. The prize was awarded by Anaberta Oehlers, Head of DAS International. It was also evident that the students learnt a great deal from our team from the positive feedback that we received.

By Deborah Hewes





DAS provides support to ITE West Students' Documentary Video

By Argus Tong—Publicity Officer

The goal of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is to build a world class organisation dedicated to helping dyslexic people in Singapore and reaching out to the region. It was a great opportunity for DAS to create more awareness by working with ITE West Students who chose to work with the DAS for the production of a 10 minute documentary video as part of their final year project.

The seven final year students from the School of Electronics and Info-Comm Technology, Aisyah Matsuni, Muhd Faruq, Muhd Shukor, Ili Nadhirah, Ong Wan Jing, Sahlatul Fariyah and Pavithra Uthaman, guided by their lecturer and advisor Ramanzo Ninsawi had contacted the DAS in July to request for assistance.

The synopsis of the documentary is based on the journey of a child named 'Aldric' who was diagnosed with dyslexia and how he not only overcame obstacles to persevere in his studies

but also his struggles socially. In the end, no matter how tough life is, determination and perseverance can overcome all.

Part of the filming was done at the Jurong Point Learning Centre where Ms Cara Tan, an Educational Therapist from DAS was able to utilise her experience and expertise to execute her role in the production as an educational therapist to child actor "Aldric". Cara expressed "I had an enjoyable afternoon filming with the ITE West Digital and Video Production students! It was my privilege to be part of this exciting video production and hopefully this will help raise awareness about dyslexia."

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore is open to future collaborations with various tertiary education institutions. For more information, please contact Deborah Hewes at

deborah.hewes@das.org.sg.

Ramadhan On Wheels (ROW) 2012

by Nor Ashraf Samsudin and Nur Farhana Muliadi



Are you M.A.D?
Yes we are, and yes we did.

"Making A Difference" was the theme for 2012's Ramadhan On

Wheels event, an annual multi-racial initiative to reach out to the low-income families as well as elderly recipients of different ethnicities and religion. The event was to help beneficiaries meet their immediate basic needs through the distribution of provisions, food hampers and vouchers. Organized by Malay Youth Literary Association (4PM) and working in close collaboration with the five Community Development Councils (CDCs) around Singapore, the project has reached out to between 150 - 170 beneficiaries with the assistance of volunteers.

On the 11 August 2012, The Dyslexia Association of Singapore was invited to participate in this event at ITE College East in Simei. With our mission in mind, the Outreach team came down to give an awareness talk to reach out to the beneficiaries, especially those who may have children that have difficulties in their academic learning.



Speakers from the Outreach Team, Nor Ashraf Samsudin and Nur Farhana Muliadi, (pictured left) entertained the 1,500 audience present in the auditorium through live examples, inspirational success stories and hands on activities. Audience were also given prizes through the games they participated with some lucky members winning big vouchers. Young and old, everybody was excited to be a part of this big and happy event! Such an enthusiastic crowd for a happy day!

Minister Khaw Boon Wan, the Guest of Honour for the event, also gave a short speech. In his speech, Mr Khaw reminded us that the event was a good opportunity to reflect, share and bond both the beneficiaries and the volunteers. He also said that this was a journey that they are "empowered to make meaningful changes towards the goal of moving out from poverty" and some of them have successfully come out from poverty and has since volunteered to help others as well.

After the talks were over, the families and the volunteers were then given time to make use of the shopping voucher at the Giant Hypermarket in Tampines nearby. Parents, volunteers and participants from other organizations also took this opportunity to visit the DAS booth. Manned by Surjati and Rohaya, visitors came to ask more about dyslexia. It was an encouraging response, seeing that there are concerned parents who signed their children up for the Computerized Screening Programme.

The event ended off with the breaking fast with all participants, where they were served with Nasi Briyani, kuehs and delicious thirst quenching drinks. The event was definitely a great opportunity for DAS to reach out to the low-income families as well as networking with the counsellors at 4PM to support them with their future beneficiaries.

NTUC Income's OrangeAid

Continues to support DAS Preschool Programme

"Levelling Playfields, Equalising Opportunities"

By Deborah Hewes

Financial Support for Families

Through the support of NTUC Income's OrangeAid, DAS has been providing preschool bursaries to families in need of financial assistance since 2011. Unlike bursaries for other programmes, the OrangeAid bursary ensures that your child receives all of the necessary at the preschool level in preparation of Primary One.

Every bursary application is considered carefully. It will take into account a family's household income level and their financial constraints in five tiers: 100%, 90%, 75%, 50% & 33%. Beneficiaries of the funding will receive:

- ◆ A subsidised rate on the Preschool Screening Assessment, the initial screening procedure to determine a child's strengths and learning differences.
- ◆ A subsidised rate on the Preschool Intervention Programme for up to 80 hours a year.
- ◆ A subsidised rate on the Full Psychological Assessment at the end of the programme to determine a child's dyslexia severity and best recommended course of action.



Bursary applications for 2013 are now open and can be applied for at DAS Learning Centres.

DAS Preschool Service

The DAS preschool service is staffed by qualified Educational Therapists who are trained in Early Childhood Education and are aware of the early childhood developmental stages.

DAS preschool classes are tailored to provide individual attention to the young students' needs, no child is left behind in our programme.

Our preschool classes have:

- ◆ Small class number of 4 students or less
- ◆ Lessons that are developed specifically for your child's abilities
- ◆ A structured, cumulative and sequential education programme that is multi-sensory
- ◆ An individualised educational plan for the child with progress reports given to parents at mid-term and at the end of the year
- ◆ A focus on promoting the child's educational experience and love of learning

To find out more about the DAS Preschool programme, please approach one of our DAS Learning Centres or e-mail: info@das.org.sg

ntuc
Income
made different

Visit to Tampines Learning Centre by student educators from Nanyang Institute of Management

By Siti Asjamiah
Educational Therapist—Tampines



(From left) Pearlyn, Pei Wen, Evelyn, Mdm Surjati Soekraman, Maibel, Nandhini, Avleen & Ms Murali

DAS Tampines Learning Centre opened its doors to ten Early Childhood Education students from Nanyang Institute of Management on September 27, 2012. The students accompanied by their lecturer, Ms Vikneswari Kathirgamu, were currently working on a module "Special Needs" as part of their Diploma in Early Childhood Education and were interested in focusing on dyslexia.

The main aim of their visit was to further understand the needs of students with dyslexia and learning differences and the importance of having a conducive environment that meets these students learning needs.

The students were given a brief history on DAS and the centre which included in-depth information on the services and remediation programmes offered by the DAS. Part of their learning experience was the opportunity to observe the on-going classes and witness the teachers applying research-proven approaches and strategies to help students of

different age groups cope with the demands of the local education system.

The Nanyang students realised as they entered the various classrooms that each room has many similarities in terms of layout however, still possess some form of uniqueness that caters to the student's demands and needs. The students also felt that the pedagogical approach used in the Essential Literacy Approach (ELA) was similar to other literacy programmes implemented in preschool centres. They were also impressed with the active use of assistive technological devices and computer resources to promote and enhance literacy learning and development.

The visit to DAS Tampines Learning Centre had truly been a rewarding and memorable experience. They were deeply appreciative of Mdm Surjati and her team's warm hospitality and definitely look forward to more opportunities in the near future.

Ms Pearlyn and Pei Wen who were given the privilege of observing Ms Alia's and Ms Hani's classes had this to say:

"We had the opportunity to observe the various multi-sensory teaching and learning materials and ICT used by the educators and children. The outstanding visual effect of these classrooms is the display of children's work.

This is clear evidence that the educators show respect and recognise every child's unique potential."

Ms Vikneswari Kathirgamu, lecturer, at Nanyang Institute of Management, had this to say about her visit to Tampines Learning Centre...

"We must admit our learning journey to DAS Tampines was one of the best I've embarked thus far. During our brief meeting, Mdm Surjati had exhibited qualities of a highly charismatic leader and a strong advocate of children's rights."

First Aid for DAS Staff

By Sarizan Ahmad
Fundraising and Events Officer



In line with DAS' commitment towards the safety of our students, 112 of our staff from all our headquarters and ten centres attended a training session on first aid at the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) at Central.

Participants were introduced to basic first aid principles as well as the signs & symptoms and treatment of common injuries. Mr Junardi, the trainer from Singapore First Aid Training Centre also gave a demonstration of Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and an introduction to the use of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

He was very engaging and attendees were enthusiastic in asking questions and learning more about first aid.





Final year Child Psychology and Early Education students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic share their thoughts and experiences during their 10-week work attachment at DAS. They received comprehensive training through the ELA Preschool course conducted by the DAS Academy and intensive mentoring sessions with the Preschool team.

Words are more than just words to a child who has difficulties with literacy.

We recall our initial week co-teaching children with dyslexia and were disheartened to see them struggling with reading, writing and spelling. Our after work conversations would comprise of brainstorming activities for these children as we were driven in our efforts to stretch their potential further. However, we realised the foundation of learning does not only comprise of alphabet knowledge and phonics but emphasis must also be placed towards raising children's self-esteem.

MORE THAN WORDS

By Esther Teo, Samantha Ng & Shee Mei Ling
Students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic

"What is a teacher? I'll tell you: it isn't someone who teaches something, but someone who inspires the student to give of her best in order to discover what she already knows"

-Paulo Coelho

Our teaching paradigm began to shift and we were focused on encouraging children to do their best and complimenting them for their efforts. Through this experience, we realized the importance of helping children develop their own self-confidence for their learning developments. We unanimously agreed that this shift in paradigm was our key take-away.

All in all, the 10-week internship have been a wonderful and enriching experience which opened our eyes to the field of early intervention. We gained invaluable experiences that will affirm and fuel our passion for early intervention and early childhood education as a whole!

We thank DAS for providing us with such a valuable opportunity.



A Visit from our Hong Kong Neighbour

By Argus Tong—Publicity Officer

Ten delegates from the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (Hong Kong) who were in Singapore for the Maths Learning Differences & Dyscalculia Conference had the opportunity to visit one of our Learning Centres in Tampines. After a warm welcome from our Chief Operating Officer Lee Siang, our Centre Manager Surjati Soekraman conducted a tour of the centre and showcased the services of DAS.

Secretary & Educational Psychologist, Mr Ho Ivan, Principal of C.Y. Ma Memorial College, Mr Leung Paul, Principal of Lee Ching Dea Memorial College, Mr Chan Ho Man, Teacher of Lee Ching Dea Memorial College, Ms Yiu Kwai Ying, Teacher of C.Y. Ma Memorial College, Ms Fung Esther, Clinical Psychologist, and three Educational Psychologists Mr Poon Wai Kei, Ms Ho Sin Ting and Ms Leung Nga Ki.



The representatives of the delegate included team leader Ms Eva Chan, Assistant Education Services

It was also a treat for some of our DAS staff who were able to meet and interact with the delegate especially June Siew, Lecturer for DAS Academy who had been to Hong Kong in the past years to conduct training for the Tung Wah group. Other staff included Assistant Director for Learning Centres and Outreach, Fanny Foo, Sengkang Centre Manager Andrew Ho and Publicity Officer Argus Tong.

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore is very appreciative of our relationship with the Tung Wah group especially with the opportunity to be able to conduct training to their teachers in recent years. We hope to continue to strengthen our partnerships with overseas organisations looking ahead.



Guts and Glory at the DAS Student Alumni Inaugural Event

By Argus Tong—Publicity Officer



DAS Student Alumni group kicked off their inaugural event by participating in the Singapore's Lion Dash at the Tampines Bike Park on Saturday, 3 November 2012. Alumni and staff sweated it out by not only completing an extreme 5km mud trail but also jumped, climbed, crawled and ran through various obstacles along the way. Not only were the participants' stamina tested, they also had their strength, agility and determination challenged. While the alumni toughed out in this event, it also brought the alumni closer as the DAS team emerged victorious in the corporate team category.

DAS alumnus Teo Heng Soon commented "It was a fun day for me and was nothing that I expected. I experienced an endless 5km run and obstacle course and enjoyed interacting with many people I didn't know. If there is another DAS alumni event, I will be first to sign up!"

DAS alumnus Elvin Siew added "It was an unexpected day and didn't realise it was so much fun. I made a lot of new friends. Along the way, friendships were tightened as we encouraged each other to persevere. It was a wonderful event to kick off the DAS alumni group. Had a great





experience and look forward to future events."

After the trail, alumni and staff enjoyed interacting over pizza. Centre Manager for Queenstown, Kenny Goh who also oversaw the efforts for the DAS Alumni Group shared his thoughts "It looks like everyone enjoyed themselves. The feedback from the alumni were that they would like to participate in future events. It was a successful inaugural event and we look forward to future events."

Centre Manager for Ang Mo Kio, Carine Wong who also assisted with the coordination efforts of the DAS Alumni Group echoed "It is inspiring to watch each participant overcome the mud obstacles as they have 'overcome' their learning differences. The alumni were very enthusiastic and offered suggestions for future events. This first inaugural event has been a success!"

Upon reflection from his participation in the Lion Dash, alumnus Sebastian Tan had these final

words "Being weak is not an excuse to be lazy, determination is the only path to success."

The DAS Alumni Student Group thanks Manhattan Pizza for providing the food at the event and the organisers of the Lions Dash for providing our team with a special registration rate.

To become involved or for more information on the DAS Alumni Group, please contact:

Carine Wong

Ang Mo Kio Centre Manager at 6451-5582

Kenny Goh

Queenstown Centre Manager at 6475-9535

or visit

www.facebook.com/DasStudentAlumni.





Taiwanese Singer Jam Hsiao meets DAS Students

By Deborah Hewes

Famous Taiwanese singer Jam Hsiao has shocked many by revealing that he cannot read or write because he is dyslexic.

Jam Hsiao has been keeping his secret from the world for his entire life. Jam only stayed in school until his second year of junior college, quitting school early due to his dyslexia which he deeply regrets.

Jam is successful in his singing career due to the support of those around him. Someone reads lyrics to him so that he can memorize and sing them. During autograph sessions, staff members write down fans' names so he can copy them.

Although Jam has let his disability get in the way of his literacy, he has worked hard to not let this get in the way of his singing. His record company has not made a big deal about his dyslexia and so he will continue to sing and show that he can

still be a successful artist.

Jam is pictured above with DAS students. He gives the thumbs up at the meet and greet session at his concert at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Jam is a great inspiration for fellow dyslexics, and we would like to thank the sponsors, 93.3FM and UnUsUal Productions who made the event a success and for giving our kids the opportunity to meet a superstar!



WESTERN DINING AND SOCIAL ETIQUETTE A BREAKTHROUGH EXPERIENCE

By Gopal Givanandam—Centre Manager—Bedok



The first Western and Social Etiquette workshop had an ideal group size of 13 students from various DAS centres. The two days workshop was held at DAS, Bishan and Amber Restaurant at ITE College West on 21 and 22 November 2012.

The workshop was very informative, engaging and equipped students with knowledge and practical experience of western dining and social skills. This exclusive workshop also enabled students to build their vocabulary by introducing many culinary French terms such as, "aperitif and consommé".

Etiquette coach, Gopal Givanandam saw the etiquette workshop as a breakthrough experience for most students and they will only be able to perfect what they have learnt with persistent practice in broad social settings.

The workshop which was clearly a success will be featured regularly during the long school holidays. The next run would be in June 2013.



Lim Mei Jun Renee (above) from DAS, Bedok. applying techniques taught.



Luo Junyang (pictured above) from DAS, Bishan receiving his certificate from COO Lee Siang, remarked, "I am now able to differentiate cutlery setting on a formal dining table and use them appropriately; I am also aware of social skills required when dining in a group and attending a buffet."

About the Presenter—Gopal Givanandam

Mr Gopal Givanandam holds a Bachelor degree in Business (Hospitality) from LaTrobe University in Australia and a Higher Diploma in Hotel Management from SHATEC. In addition, he has also attained a Full ACTA certification awarded by WDA and a professional certification in conducting training and assessment by ITE. He has gained 10 to 15 years of professional working experience in the hospitality sector.

In his last working experience with SHATEC, as a Food and Beverage subject mentor, he has developed and has taught various Food and Beverage related modules.

In SHATEC, with his vast hospitality experience, he was also instrumental in conducting Western and Social etiquette workshops for the public that includes both teens and professionals.



Help the
Married Men
to raise funds
for the DAS!



Start

A new movement

Discover

Interesting movements

Running for The Dyslexia Association, The Married Men is..

by Shaun Anthonio Tupaz

Wall



The Married Men, Singapore's Hottest Morning Crew will be pushing their limits for a great cause - They will run for The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS).

The Crew:

Rod Monteiro - Had a stroke earlier this year

Andre - Is a post heart operation patient

Jill - Will be running the furthest she has ever ran in her entire life

APJ - Will carry 100kg for the entire race

Producer Shaun - Will be filming, recording, writing and probably publishing

a new book while running (*joking about the book)

Julius - Also will be running the furthest distance he's ever ran

We have been very blessed to entertain Singapore daily. We don't just want to be a team that talks and doesn't walk. So we will - RUN.

www.giveasia.org/s/felew



DAS kids record at HOT FM 91.3

By Deborah Hewes

DAS students, Jennifer, Ariel and Kieran, (pictured below left to right) recorded messages about DAS to be played on HOT FM 91.3 to help the Married Men to raise awareness about the DAS and raise money for when they run the Standard Chartered Marathon on the 2nd December 2012.

Their Mum's, Fanny, Trisha and Shamini, pictured with Producer Shaun and Ariel's nana (above) also had a chance to record their messages. Over the last month

we have been hearing them all on radio and it is wonderful to hear their voices, especially when Jennifer calls out "**DAS is AWESOME!**"

So far they have raised was more than \$6,000, which I am sure it will increase from there.

DAS is very appreciative of all that Rod Monteiro and the married men have done for us and we hope to work together again in 2013!





DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE SETS UP ASIA'S FIRST REGISTER FOR EDUCATIONAL THERAPISTS

By Argus Tong—Publicity Officer

The Register of Educational Therapists (Asia) or RETA was officially launched at Traders Hotel on 29 October 2012 with our CEO Robin Moseley welcoming the 80 guests along with a message of congratulations from our guest speaker Dr Kate Saunders, the Chief Executive Officer of the British Dyslexia Association in attendance.

The attendees enjoyed refreshments and the networking opportunities as well as a short presentation on RETA and how to be a part of the register.

learning difficulties can rely on RETA to find practitioners with a verified track record.



RETA is an initiative of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) and aims to be a central and vital hub for qualified practitioners to endorse their professional status in the field of Specific Learning Differences. Parents with children with

RETA members are classified according to their professional experiences and qualifications in the field of educational therapy, and practitioners are required to furnish extensive documentation before being admitted. The continuous monitoring of members keeps the Register up to date. DAS Parent and student of the Master of Arts in Specific Learning Differences Teo Siaw Shien is pleased to see the launch of RETA. "It is great to see that a register has been set up to recognise the educators and practitioners in this field especially for those in the private sector. There hasn't been anything like that until now."

RETA's tiered membership structure encourages practitioners to participate in continuing professional development for greater professional recognition. In the meantime, the Register platform is a network and opportunity for

members to learn from peers, obtain support and share ideas and insights on managing learning differences such as dyslexia. DAS Educational Therapist Sha Lan from Bishan Learning Centre expressed "RETA serves as a platform for me to network with other professionals in the field." Educational Therapist See Lay Yen added "By joining RETA, it encourages continuous professional development for professionals in our industry."



Dr. Thomas Sim, Executive Director of the DAS Academy and a member of the RETA panel of advisors summarised "RETA aims to be the pioneering body in endorsing the professional status of qualified practitioners in the field of specific learning differences so parents with children in need of assistance will have a ready resource and more importantly, a trusted one."

Dr Sim added "RETA will not only raise the awareness and reputation of educational therapists in the region, and the community will benefit. We hope to see a steady growth of members in RETA, as we believe that the bringing together of practitioners, experts and professionals in the field and connecting them in a peer support system, it will meet the needs of all the children with learning differences in Singapore and the region."

If you are interested in being a part of RETA, please visit www.reta.sg.



Are you an Educational Therapist
who would like to have
professional recognition?

Register with RETA and join other
Educators who make a
Difference

RETA MEMBERSHIP

Benefits of being a RETA member:

- A \$100 welcome gift voucher for DAS workshops
- 10% Member discount for purchase of AT resources (see inside back page)
- Access to DAS Academy library
- Opportunity to be listed on the RETA website for public consultation
- Receive the bi-annual members exclusive newsletter

6336 2555

RETA

73 Bukit Timah Road
#05-01 Rex House
Singapore 229832

www.reta.sg
info@reta.sg



Kate Saunders, the CEO of the British Dyslexia Association share her views on the launch of RETA by DAS

By Argus Tong and Kate Saunders

At the official launch of RETA guest speaker, Dr Kate Saunders, Chief Executive Officer of the British Dyslexia Association with over twenty years of experience in the field of dyslexia and special educational said "This is an exciting development. It is vital that parents and schools can have confidence in the professional skills of practitioners within this field. This initiative will provide a means by which appropriately trained and qualified teachers and other professionals can be registered".

Indeed the Singapore government has been a staunch support of the work of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. This is one of the best examples globally of governmental support for charitable sector work in this field. I believe that this has sent an important message about the value of assessment and dyslexia specialist teaching.

The financial support by the Singapore government of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore enabled hundreds of children to benefit from specialist assessment and tutoring services. It has been also been crucial in raising awareness of dyslexia.

There is a large body of research evidence that clearly shows that dyslexia specialist teaching works and identifying the challenges as early as possible is crucial in order to provide intervention.

There are clear benefits for society, as international research has shown that there are a disproportionate number of dyslexic individuals among successful entrepreneurs. There is a line of thought within the field that suggests that dyslexic individuals can sometimes show strengths in areas such as problem solving, creativity, "thinking out of the box", visualisation, 3D thinking, verbal skills and design. There can, therefore be very real advantage for society in ensuring that dyslexic individuals receive the help they need to develop functional literacy skills so that they are able to fulfill their potential and success in their chosen field.

The British Dyslexia Association sets and maintains high standards in training for dyslexia specialist teachers and teaching assistants in the UK and internationally. 10% of the population is believed to experience some degree of dyslexia. About 4% experience severe dyslexia. This can make it

difficult to learn reading, writing and spelling.

Dyslexic individuals can also experience difficulty with aspects of “working memory”. For example, they may tend to forget a series of instructions (if given more than about 2 instructions at one time). Learning of time tables, study and revision skills, organisational skills and time management may also be difficult. Children who experience dyslexic difficulties can become very frustrated and anxious.

It is important that teachers and parents are aware of the signs of dyslexia. Typically, a dyslexic child will seem puzzling, as their verbal skills may be good but they show unexpected difficulty learning literacy skills. A diagnostic assessment will identify whether there is a dyslexic difficulty and will also advise on how much specialist dyslexia tuition is required. This can be a real turning point for a family who have been deeply worried about the child's apparent difficulty learning.

Dyslexia specialist teaching generally involves a well structured, multi sensory, phonics based approach. Spelling and reading rules and patterns and common irregular spelling words are taught in ways that help dyslexics to learn.



Robin Mosley, Chief Executive of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore has shown a long standing commitment to fostering and developing high standards for professionals working within this field. This commitment has been backed by the Singapore government.

Dr Kate Saunders also presented at a DAS event about “Dyslexia friendly education”. This is a whole school approach, where every teacher in every classroom adopts dyslexia friendly teaching methods. UK Schools that have adopted this approach report that it fosters good teaching

practice that benefits not only dyslexic pupils but also other pupils. The challenge for teachers is “if they can't learn the way you teach, can you teach the way they learn”.



Much is known now about teaching approaches and delivery styles that work well for dyslexic learners. There are also some relatively minor adjustments that can be made within classroom environments and processes which can greatly assist students with dyslexia.

In the second workshop “Coping with Dyslexia” at the DAS Academy in Rex House, Kate explained how dyslexics learn and therefore what parents can do to help and support children with dyslexia. She also illustrated practical examples of strategies that can make a positive difference.

A DAS parent Rachel Gwee remarked “The workshop and talk was so inspiring. When Dr Saunders speaks, she speaks as one who has experienced the struggles and difficulties of learning despite dyslexia first hand. The insights she gives to parents are eye opening! And the most encouraging point that I learnt that night was that dyslexia can actually be a gift that allows our children to view things from a different angle and equip them with the strength and perseverance to overcome their difficulties.”

Dr Kate Saunders is co-author of “How Dyslexics Learn” published by PATOS the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties, in the UK. She is also co-editor of the new “Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide”, published by the British Dyslexia Association (www.bdadyslexia.org.uk).



Dr Jiajia “Kee Chiew” Tshirts

www.das.org.sg/tshirt

by Weng Foo Chua (Dr Jiajia's Father or "Big Dad")

The Dr Jiajia T-shirt project is our way of helping to raise awareness of dyslexia in Singapore. Today Dr.Jiajia and BigBro have more than 30,000 friends (likes) in their Facebook and many are connected to our Facebook because they have had a good laugh watching the boys' YouTube videos. As a result, many also have came forward to support the T-shirt project.

We have made a one-time donation to DAS to cover part of the cost of printing the T-shirts. We have also bought four T-shirts for our family. Dr Jiajia and BigBro proudly wore them to the NDP preview and took some pictures with friends who recognised him at the location.

We're very happy to see friends sharing their pictures with us in Facebook when they received the T-shirt they ordered online. Everyone in the pictures with the T-shirt is always smiling brightly.

We hope the T-shirt project will be a success. We hope more people will support the project.

To purchase a T-shirt visit the DAS website at:

www.das.org.sg/tshirt

DAS would like to also thank Kaltech Engineering & Refrigeration Pte Ltd for sponsoring the T-shirts.



Applause!

Patrick Siah Yang Zhi

Aspiring Architect

By Deborah Hewes



Patrick Siah, a DAS Alumni student of 2000, recently visited DAS to interview DAS Educational Therapists, DAS Lecturers, DAS Psychologists and DAS Management to gather information for his final design thesis to complete his masters degree in Architecture at the University of Melbourne.

Patrick's thesis was titled "An Architectural Exploration into Dyslexia". The project, a School for Dyslexics as well as the Headquarters for the Australian Dyslexia Association, explores the social paradigms of dyslexic youths, the educational and political issues that have arisen as well as an alternate relationship of space and dyslexic pedagogy.

The information that DAS provided him helped to enhance his current design research. Patrick has been working closely with the Australian Dyslexia Association and SPELD, (Specific Learning Difficulties, Victoria) and was also running interviews and workshops with them in Melbourne.

During his visit to DAS he explored the DAS approach to learning and multisensory teaching through classroom observations. He was lucky to observe both of his nephews, William and Marcus, in class who also attend DAS at Jurong Point Learning Centre.

Patrick ran visioning workshops with DAS educators to determine the spaces needed to teach children with learning differences taking into account lesson delivery, methods of teaching and resources required while in class.

DAS students also completed a drawing exercise for Patrick by telling him what an ideal or dream learning centre would look like. These drawings were also to show what they did and didn't like about their learning space and also what makes learning fun.

While Patrick was at DAS he took the time to talk about how he had achieved with his studies. He also reflected on his time spent learning at DAS.

What are your fondest memories at DAS?

One of the things that I remembered while I was at DAS, was a show and tell exercise with Tanya Kort. I had to bring to class five items that I really treasured, but because I came from school, I didn't get much time to prepare. I used 5 items that were on my body, such as my watch, my favourite pencil and items in my wallet. Although it was a little impromptu, we spent the whole lesson talking about them. The lesson was full of fun and laughter and I remembered I laughed so

much, my cheeks ached.

How did DAS help me as a person?

I have always wanted to be an architect ever since I was young. I grew up watching Pierre Png's character, architect Phua Chu Beng on the local sitcom, Phua Chu Kang. His quirky portrayal of an architect holding rolled up pieces of paper, together with his white helmet made me want to be like him. DAS had helped me realise my dreams by making me understand how to cope in life. To understand my own strengths and weaknesses helped me to manage my studies so much better. After DAS, I had understood my qualities as a learner and had the ability to path a way for myself through school to get to where I am today, working on my design thesis for a Dyslexia Primary School for my Master of Architecture at the University of Melbourne.

Patrick will graduate from his degree on the 17 December 2012 at the University of Melbourne his Master of Architecture, with high distinction.

Patrick completed his Bachelor of Environments, Major in Architecture at the University of Melbourne in 2010 as well as a Diploma in Architecture at Singapore Polytechnic in 2007.

He is currently contemplating further research into Dyslexic Pedagogy, Multisensory learning and space in the coming months.

We congratulate Patrick on his success!!



DAS International
Empowering Successful Learning

BRIDGING PROGRAMME

We have created the **Bridging Programme**, aimed at supporting children who are unable to secure a place in an international school, or are struggling in a mainstream school.

Aims of the Bridging Programme:

- ◆ Provide an intensive remediation programme to bridge the learning gap between the child and his or her peers
- ◆ Support the development of essential literacy and numeracy skills
- ◆ Enable the child to enter a mainstream school at a later date, with greater confidence, self-esteem and academic competence

Unique features of the Bridging Programme:

- ◆ Maximum teacher to child ratio of 1:4
- ◆ Conducted by specialist teachers with high level qualifications and specialist training to support students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)
- ◆ Access to evidence based assistive technology programmes to support literacy and numeracy development e.g. Nessy Learning®, WordShark® NumberShark®
- ◆ Review of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and cross curriculum targets every 10 weeks
- ◆ Integrated curriculum – consultation and support from a Speech and Language Therapist, Chartered Educational Psychologist and Occupational Therapist integrated into their IEP
- ◆ Support from Educational Psychologists in terms of ongoing assessment, IEP planning, teacher mentoring and a report to support your application for exam access arrangements in school
- ◆ Specialist support from a Speech and Language Therapist and/or Occupational Therapist on site where required



“Straight ‘A’s”

A DAS Success Story

Jamie Kok

By Ms Shenmee Lau
Senior Educational Therapist
Bedok Learning Centre

As a teacher of dyslexic students, it is extremely rewarding and encouraging to witness your students doing well academically and blooming into someone of character and value. Today, we would like to celebrate the success of one such student - Jamie Kok.

Academic Excellence

Jamie strongly reminds us being dyslexic need not be a barrier to success. We are delightfully proud to announce that Jamie swept away A's in all her 'A' level subjects last year, including the General Paper! Our heartfelt congratulations to Jamie!

Compassion

Jamie is a promising young lady of value who has compassion and love for the sick and the weak. This is evidently shown in her chosen field of academic pursuit. Armed with a scholarship by Ministry of Health (Holdings), she will be pursuing a Bachelor in Health Science and Master in Podiatric Practice in Australia for four years. Thumbs up, Jamie!

Attitude

Jamie has cemented her image as a highly-motivated young lady with steely determination who does not allow a scintilla of challenge to defeat her. Success does not come easy for Jamie. Her outstanding 'A' level is indeed a testimony to her sheer hard work and great perseverance in trying to overcome her learning difficulties.

Jamie's attitude in learning stands out a mile. She would vigorously take down every single word I said in class. When in doubt, she would not hesitate to ask and would faithfully apply what was being taught to her.

Gratitude

What impresses me most about Jamie is her magnitude of gratefulness. Upon receiving her 'A' level certificate from school, she immediately came to Bedok Learning Centre (DAS) to share her joy and express her heartfelt thanks to all the teachers.

Words of Encouragement

Jamie, continue to widen your horizons and may you always feel the exhilaration of victory in every challenge!

We would like to wish Jamie sweet success in all her future endeavours and we believe she will shine like a star in her own unique way.



My Successes and my Challenges

By Kok Jian Min Jamie



Congratulations to Kok Jian Min Jamie, a former DAS student, for her outstanding 'A' levels results with straight 'A's' in her subjects. Due to her wonderful results she has earned a scholarship to pursue her studies at an Australian university. Jamie shares with us some of her thoughts on her success as well as some encouragement to others like her.

I would like to share some of the solutions to the problems that I faced at school and hope that this will be beneficial for dyslexic kids just like me.

Firstly, there is a need for a good balance in your school life between academic studies and co-curricular activities (CCA). One must remember that academics must come first, CCA's are still important to maintain a good balance in your life. Therefore, do not let your CCA override your studies but have a good sense of balance to learn how to manage your time effectively. Remember to complete your studies every day and revise often. You must be hardworking even if you don't feel like it.

Secondly, it took longer for me to learn concepts than my peers. I overcame this by asking lots of questions in class, and to my friends, who were most helpful indeed. It is most important to ask the teacher for help in class or immediately after while the lesson is still fresh in your mind. If you leave these questions to later you will most probably have forgotten the concepts you needed to ask about. I also found it beneficial to read up

on lessons beforehand. I came to class prepared to identify certain areas of weakness so that I could focus my attention in lectures when these areas were covered.

Thirdly, I can get confused when having to speak in public or reading aloud. It was a major challenge for me in Junior College as we had a lot of project work to do. My pronunciation was marked down in presentations. To be frank, this is an area I am still practicing on and I do not have a perfect solution for this at the moment. Yet, through constant hard work and practicing my scripts, repeatedly, to people around me and then listening to their feedback, has helped me to remember what I have to say in presentations and this has improved my pronunciation. There is always a need for constant practice, so never give up!

DAS has helped me to be what I am today, for which I will be always grateful for! It has instilled in me the confidence for the English Language, pronunciation and writing.

Ms. Shenmee was always so encouraging of my ability and helped me to pursue excellence in my studies. Through her lessons, she has helped me to build up my character too. Thank you, Ms. Shenmee!

Ms. Michelle, another DAS teacher at formerly at Bedok, also set high yet achievable standards for

me to pursue with my studies, and for that I will always be grateful to her.

The overall friendliness and helpfulness of DAS Bedok helped me to feel comfortable and at home in DAS.

In the past, I really struggled with my primary school subjects. My mum would tell you that I was simply bad in these areas:

- ◆ Difficulty learning the alphabet, numbers
- ◆ May have difficulty telling and/or retelling a story in the correct sequence
- ◆ Often has difficulty separating sounds in words and blending sounds to make words
- ◆ Unable to recall the right word
- ◆ No idea of punctuation when reading or writing a story.
- ◆ Attention problems – child appear to have a short attention span.
- ◆ Daydreaming and switching off in class and at home.
- ◆ Difficulty transferring ideas in their head into a written form in a clear and well organised way.
- ◆ Confuses mathematical signs & symbols.
- ◆ Difficulty in counting, playing sequencing and matching games.
- ◆ Difficulty understanding the concept of time. They may forget their date of birth, their home address etc.
- ◆ Short-term memory is poor. Difficulty remembering telephone numbers, lists of instructions and taking notes in lessons.

Yet, with a spirit that never gives up, healthy competition to do well, studying super hard (needed much more time to digest concepts), DAS lessons, teachers, fellow peers, I improved to be what I am today.

I remember that even simple encouragements like “If you do 10 correct sums, mummy will play a UNO game with you” This was a great incentive to me as UNO was something I love to play and it was a good way to bond as a family too. Incentives like these can be the driving motivation for a child to study hard for simple short term goals, (being a child then, I was more interested in the present and not the future, which I think is true for most children today as well)

The present need to be with the child in all ways as a family whether it be physically, mentally and spiritually can help, especially in the primary to secondary school days. That is not to say that I advocate that there must be stay at home parents for both my parents work but rather, parents who can find balance in life and still take good care of us.

“I know that I will always will have dyslexia, and I know that I will encounter new problems along the way. Yet, I will never give up and I will strive on in life, taking whatever life throws in my path! To all other people out there with dyslexia, never give up! To all educators and parents, well done and keep up the good work with more and greater love for children like us”

Watch the new short clip about the DAS!



Dyslexia affects millions of people worldwide.

Help them fulfill their full potential!

<http://youtu.be/SaQfuxODpog>



Melissa shares her Dyslexia Story

By Melissa Goh

My results continued to slide in school. Luckily, at DAS, they taught me fun way to learn how to remember words which helps me a lot. Soon enough my English improved and I learnt to read better. Usually, reading is hard for me as I see words differently and that I can't really pronounce them that well. But my DAS teacher Miss Siti, friends and family have encouraged me not to give up, so I'm still trying to do my best.

Hello, my name is Melissa. Today, I want to share with you my struggle with dyslexia. Having dyslexia is quite tough because it affects my reading and writing. It makes me feel that I am not as smart as the rest of my friends.

Having dyslexia mixed up my words and affect how I spell things. It started when my grades in Primary 4 and Primary 5 started to drop as the lessons got tougher. My tutor, Aunty Tricia, was the one who suspected that I had dyslexia and told my parents about it.

As my PSLE was just next year, my worried parents quickly contacted the school for advice and help. Somehow, my parents later decided to send me to DAS for assessment. At the end of the session, the counsellor confirmed that I had dyslexia.

Before the PSLE, I was nervous because I failed Science & barely passed the other three subjects in my school exams. My parents encouraged me to pray and not to give up. One of the sunshine aunties, Aunty Hui Li even made encouragement cards for me. Thank you, Aunty Hui Li!

Being dyslexic, I can be exempted from taking Chinese but I did not want to give it up as I know that someday in the future I will need to use it. During my preliminary exam, I scored 50 marks, which to me was an improvement. Thus, I am very happy when I scored an A for Chinese in PSLE and passed my other subjects.

I like to end by saying never give up, no matter what problems you have and keep chanting daimuku :)

School Readiness Awareness Presentations



DAS International will conduct school readiness talks and screenings to help parents and teachers understand the necessary skills a child needs to be school ready. DAS International's multi-disciplinary team of Psychologists, an Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapists and Senior Educational Therapists, can identify any issues early and support the children to close the gaps in their learning before they enter school. If you would like to have a talk at your school please contact us:

info@dasint.org.sg 6336 2555



THE 'C' STUDENT

By Mr Chua (Dr Jiajia's Father or "Big Dad")

One day of early November, Jiajia (Chua Jin Sen's nickname) came home with his school report book.

"How was your result?" I asked Jiajia when he handed me his report book.

"Good," he answered without hesitation.

"Really? In what way?"

"I got improvement."

"Well done," I smiled.

Jiajia had a cumulative score of 152/300 for his 3 school subjects: Math, English and Chinese.

To some Kiasu Singaporean parents, 252 points might not even be good enough, let alone 152.

However, Jiajia wasn't worried when he came home. He was his usual self, chirpy and chatty. After all, he'd improved from a cumulative total of 132.6 marks in his mid-year results to 152 marks in his finals.

He was praised for his improvement.

Nonchalantly, Jiajia dashed off to play Lego with his two sisters, leaving his old man in the living room to admire the results showing in his report book.

As parents of four marvellous kids, my wife and I are tired of being Kiasu parents. So we don't expect a dyslexic child in Primary 1 to perform outstandingly in his studies.

Being dyslexic, Jiajia is a slow starter when it comes to his school works; he has to spend a lot more time than his peers, maybe 200% more, in order to achieve 70% of their results. So you can imagine he could easily become frustrated and lose his confidence if we were to raise the bar too high for him to reach.

Life is like a Marathon. Pushing our child too hard at the start of the race will most likely wear him out and make him lose interest in his studies. Nothing could be worse than killing a child's interest in learning. We would rather see him



making baby steps and consistently showing improvements.

Lately Jiajia has a rather busy schedule.

Since August this year, his brother (Chua Jin Chou, better known as BigBro) and him have been invited twice to the Istana. Once by our Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, for a tea session in August and the second time by our President, Mr Tony Tan, for the President's Challenge Thank You Reception 2012 in October. Such recognitions from our country leaders have certainly help boost his confidence.



Jiajia is not at all shy when it comes to meeting the big shots, shaking their hands and conversing casually with them.

Not many 7 year old get the opportunity to speak on stage to a cheering crowd of two hundreds. But Jiajia did just that in November when he and his brother were invited by the Halogen Foundation to present a 15 minutes speech at the Events for Youths: National Primary Young Leaders' Day.

As their parents, we were anxious and weren't sure if the boys could handle the crowd, especially for Jiajia. Although he has not been assessed, we have always suspected him to be an ADHD boy. He cannot concentrate well for a long period of time (long being 5 minutes). So trying to get him stay focused on stage for 15 minutes without us around, the result could be pretty dicey.

However, Jiajia showed no fear to take the stage with his brother, even though BigBro was a little nervous. Perhaps Jiajia knows too little to worry.

The two brothers eventually took up the challenge and broke the ice with the familiar Singlish greeting: "Hosehbo?!"

They nailed it beautifully and the day ended with them busy signing autograph for a long line of kids.



Performing on stage wasn't new to Jiajia. He was one of the children who performed in the DAS Gala Dinner 2012 in August. He also went around from table to table to raise money for DAS. Every table he went, Jiajia would ask the well-dressed guests to buy the charity tickets (\$50 each) from him. He would smile and pose for the cameras. A generous Caucasian man bought 19 tickets from him.

A few months ago, there was a cancer patient who stumbled upon the Dr Jiajia and BigBro's YouTube channel. She told us she laughed till her eyes started to tear. She also mentioned the Singlish videos had helped her fight depression



and reduced the pain she experienced in her chemotherapy.

Then something more amazing happened.

SingHealth approached us and wanted the kids' videos to be made available at the waiting areas of all their hospitals. The annual visitor is estimated to be 3 million patients. Now more patients get to laugh till they tear. If you happen to visit one of the hospitals or clinics stated below, chances are you will catch Jiajia and BigBro in the TV.

- 1) Singapore General Hospital
- 2) KK Women & Children's Hospital
- 3) National Cancer Centre
- 4) National Neuroscience Institute
- 5) National Dental Centre of Singapore
- 6) National Heart Centre
- 7) Singapore National Eye Centre
- 8) all the 9 SingHealth Polyclinics

Jiajia acted in a movie alongside Mark Lee and Gurmit Singh. The movie, *Taxi! Taxi!*, will be shown in Singapore cinemas on 3 January 2013 and in Malaysia's on 31 January 2013.

Jiajia sang the movie's theme song with the casts and participated in the music video. Although he had a hard time remembering the lyrics, never once did he back down. If you watch the *Taxi! Taxi!* music video in their YouTube channel, you will notice Jiajia was having a great time

laughing. To Jiajia, he was just having fun; and that's the beauty of it all. Having fun.

Popularity could potentially be short-lived. So while Jiajia is still popular with his supporters, we hope he gets to act in a heart-rending movie about a dyslexic child facing all sort of pressures coming from his school, family and society. We hope this opportunity will miraculously open up to him and he can play his part to help to raise the awareness of dyslexia to the public.

We would love to see Jiajia grow up to be a happy "C" student with the five "C" values deeply entrenched in him; **curiosity, creativity, courage, commitment** to his goals and **compassion**.

We hope the flame of curiosity and hunger for knowledge will stay strong in him. He will embrace creativity in his works and come out with innovative answers to the complex problems surrounding us. We hope he will find the courage to stay committed to his goals under the discouraging stares of the skeptics. Lastly, we hope Jiajia will always be compassionate, ready to lend his ear, to empathize with others and to help the people around him.

In our views, these five "C" will benefit him and our society more in a long run than him being an A student per se.

"Do I get any reward?" Jiajia asked, looking at me with his eager eyes. Not many Singaporean kids would make such a bold request given that he only marginally crossed 150 points.

"Of cos', dad will get you a present," I answered, stealing another look at his report book.

Last week, Jiajia received his present, a remote control helicopter, and all for a good reason: Jiajia has shown improvement in his schoolwork.

"Good job my son. Dad is so proud of you."



塔德士去 Look See Look See Steady Bom Di Di!

李国煌
MARK LEE

颜薇恩
GAN MEI YAN

黎明
LAI MENG

王俊雄
ROYSTON ONG

刘琦
JAZREEL LOW

葛米星
GURMIT SINGH



特别介绍 Introducing
蔡景森
CHUA JIN SEN
(DR JIAJIA)

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ON CALL
3 JAN 2013

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Lisa—future Fashion Designer

By Salina Samsu

I have been a preschool teacher for about 13 years now and I have always believed that every child is unique. But as a mother, I woke up to reality when Ellisa was in Primary One.

My biggest concern was not only was she doing badly for her English, Math and Malay test, her learning methods were also troubling.

Each time I had to prepare her for her spelling tests, I would end up scolding her and blowing my top! How could I not? For every word I taught her, even if I test the same word repeatedly, she would not get it right! The words would have missing letters, letters would be written in a reverse manner and worse still, the words would just be totally misspelt!



I still remember when she was in Primary One, she had to learn the spelling of number 'eight'. No matter how many times she practiced that day, she still got it wrong when I asked her the next day! Then I came up with another idea. I told her, "Ellisa, remember this.

E is for Ellisa, I is for Ibu, G is for Gayah (grandma's name), H is for Helmi (her dad's name) and T is for Tuk (grandpa). Immediately after that suggestion, she could remember the spelling of the number 'eight! Then, I realised that she remembers and learns better when I use pictures and things to represent a concept! But I still did not suspect that she had any learning difficulties.

Until one day, I watched a Hindi show on Vasantham entitled 'Taare Zameen Par'. I didn't know that the movie was about a dyslexic child until one of the dialogues said by the mother made a huge impact on me. The mother character was teaching her child how to spell when she shouted at the child, "I thought we just learnt it yesterday? How many times do we have to do this? Why do you still get it wrong even after practicing it so many times?"

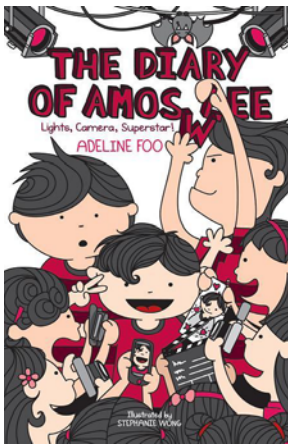
That dialogue had a very big impact on me as I



always say the same thing to my daughter while teaching her at home. So I decided to bring her for a full assessment at DAS and that was when things became better for me and Ellisa. She was diagnosed with dyslexia and she is really weak in comprehending words especially comprehension and problem sums. Her form teachers in primary school advised me to read more books to her to enhance her weak vocabulary. But, reading and buying books were not a solution for Ellisa and myself. No matter how many times I introduced and reinforced the vocabulary words, Ellisa seldom uses it in conversations and compositions in school.

Then I remembered that Ellisa learns better when she has a picture or story to relate to, so I decided to introduce idioms to her! She enjoyed it so much and often use idioms in her daily conversations and compositions! Her favourite idioms are 'a dog with two tails', 'a whale of a time' and 'as good as gold' ! For example, she wished that





her father would be a better father, so she imagined her father being 'gold', therefore she said to me, "Ibu, I wished Ayah will be as good as gold."

Now, Ellisa is able to read more words and enjoy buying and reading books especially diaries and books that include pictures such as 'Amos Lee'

storybooks.

Her self-esteem is increasing especially when she is at school as she now understands her own learning condition. But I can't deny that there are times when she starts to feel a little disappointed with herself when she compares her low marks to other classmates who score higher marks than her.

To be honest, even I feel depressed and disappointed whenever she comes home with poor results in tests and exams. This is when I try my best to think of the strengths that she has creativity!

One day, I bought her a scrap book and she drew a picture of a dress, I was surprised with her creativity and remarked that her dress was really nice and it was something that I would want to wear in the future! She was pleased with herself



and then continued to draw and design more clothes on her own!



The best thing was when she came up with a price tag for her designs! I was so, so surprised and impressed her ideas and designs to the point where I want to share her talent with others! I may be an adult, but I know that I, myself could not come up with the ideas and designs that she had come up with! As a mother, I feel really inspired to take up a sewing class create the outfits, and eventually make her ideas into a reality!



I hope by sharing this story, children with dyslexia and their parents will focus on their strengths and make the best out of them. Value them even if they have not attained big achievements academically ..because you never know... their talents will make them big one day... and this will make a big difference in their lives.



Magical Moments at DAS

By Amrit Kaur Gill, Educational Therapist

While most magic shows rely on big scale props, flashy lights and pounding music, Jeffri's show is built on character. With his showmanship and dazzling technicalities, Jeffri does it all with his unique talent in magic.

On November 7 2012, Jeffri Piperdy wowed the students at Bedok Centre with his stand-alone mini acts. At a tender age of just 12, Jeffri has already performed many shows for the public. Jeffri commented, "I enjoy performing for kids as I get satisfaction seeing the smiles on the kids' faces."



He kicked off the performance with a balloon sculpting act. Students watched in awe as Jeffri swiftly sculpted various animal characters for them. Shalyn Ng, 9 "Wow that is so beautiful!" He kept the students in suspense as they tried their best to predict what he was sculpting. The children were very much engrossed in his interactive play.

Both teachers and students were astounded with Jeffri's creativity as he created various elaborate balloons, such as a Frog, Caterpillar, Rabbit Elephant, Teddy Bear, Tortoise and even a Machine Gun. Kelvin Lim, 10, said, "I like the balloon sculpting the best. My favourite balloon was the frog as I find it very cute and colourful."





Jeffri picked up the art of balloon sculpting at a very young age of 7. He commented, "When I was young, I saw a balloon sculptor named Lighting Fingers, I was very much amazed with him. I then asked him to teach me balloon sculpting. After awhile, I decided to learn the art of sculpting on my own, I bought books to help me learn better. Before, I used to take 30 minutes to sculpt a balloon. Now I can do it in less than 30 seconds."

After a short interval, Jeffri paraded back in style with his glistening silver jacket. Alongside the catchy music playing in the background, Jeffri the magician opened up the second part of the show with an umbrella display of confetti. The students watched in amazement as confetti flew all around



them. Alastair, 11, said, "Wow it's snowing!"

Jeffri performed several magic tricks such as the Linking Ring, Bag Trick, Rope Magic, Snow Storm and Coke Bottle Trick. Kaelyn Ng, 10 remarked, "I like the rope magic trick the best because it looks so interesting. I really wonder how he does it."

When interacting with the kids during the various magic tricks, Jeffri's gee whiz persona is indeed engaging and affable. In class, Jeffri seems like a humble kid displaying all of the cool things he can do but yet when he's performing stunning illusions, he is indeed dynamic and dramatic.

Throughout the performance, Jeffri remains in character with his brilliant and deceptive magic, alluring the friendly and innocent attitudes of the students. YY, 13 "Jeffri was very good! This is the first time that I am watching a magic show."



For more information on Jeffri, do check out his website:

www.simplesite.com/jeffri-balloonandmagic

"Jeffri you rock, you are awesome!"

Arhairul, 13

"Jeffri your future will be bright with magic!"

Chris, 13

turning 21:



a milestone



Cover Story

DAS Gala Charity Dinner raises \$1.3M



I am very pleased to report that we had a very successful 21st Anniversary Gala Dinner on Saturday, 8 September at Singapore Island Country Club, which DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam kindly graced as our Guest of Honour. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my greatest appreciation to our Executive Committee members Cynthia Tan and Eric Lee and their team of DAS staff for organising and executing a very impressive Gala Dinner and raising over \$1.3 million!

Let's also not forget all the other Executive Committee members and DAS staff who have generously made personal contributions and encouraged their students, the parents and friends to donate and support DAS. Without these contributions the success of the dinner and meeting the fund raising target would not have been possible. The funds raised are definitely essential for our work and will go a long way to help DAS build new centres, run our services and new programmes to meet the increasing needs and demands of our students.

The spirit of teamwork and dedication displayed was most heartening and I sincerely thank all of you. I look forward to all of us working together to further our mission of helping dyslexic people achieve!

Robin Moseley





Celebrating 21 Years of Achievement
8th September 2012

Guest of Honour
Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam
Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Finance



I would like to thank our Guest of Honour, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, our beloved patron Mrs Goh Chok Tong, and all our wonderful supporters and donors for supporting the Charity Gala Dinner.

The DAS has been most grateful for the staunch support of the government who has provided funding to primary and secondary students on our main literacy programme since 1995 and three of our centres are housed in MOE primary schools. There is an increasing need for the DAS to raise funds as we have expanded the scope of our services to include, amongst others, diagnostic assessments, preventive intervention for preschool children, helping our students cope with Mathematics and support for dyslexic children with

associated learning difficulties such as ADHD and dyspraxia. In the coming year, we will launch a new programme to support dyslexic children who are struggling to acquire the Chinese language. Almost 40% of children enrolled in DAS centres come from low income families and need financial assistance. The generous support of donors is therefore critical to facilitate access to our expanded programmes for these children.

The first 21 years is only the beginning and I look forward to your continued support of the DAS. Once again, my deepest thanks.

Dr Jimmy Daruwalla
President



I am delighted that social and charitable movements have increased tremendously in Singapore and that more and more Singaporeans are making contributions both financially and in kind. At the same time, there are also many more worthy missions that require funding support. I thank the wonderful donors who have responded to my special appeal to support the DAS. With Singapore's limited human resources, every child counts. We must ensure that all dyslexic children are supported to reach their full potential in life and maximize their contributions as adults to Singapore. I urge everyone to continue to donate generously to this excellent cause.

I would like to thank Dr Jimmy Daruwalla and his DAS Team for their remarkable work over the years. I would also like to acknowledge the Fundraising Dinner Organising Chairperson, DAS Executive Committee member Cynthia Tan as well as DAS Vice-President Eric Lee for their outstanding efforts in making the event such a success.

Mrs Goh Chok Tong



Guest of Honour



For over two decades, DAS has been at the forefront of efforts to support individuals with dyslexia or specific learning difficulties, ensuring that they are identified and assisted early so as to ensure that they can achieve their full potential.

DAS has been working with the Ministry of Education since 1995, and the relationship has been stepped up significantly over the last decade. MOE has introduced Allied Educators (Learning and Behavioural Support) and teachers trained in Special Needs, all of which contribute to helping children with dyslexia in mainstream schools.

DAS has been successful in its programmes in no small part because of its dedicated DAS professionals. Their commitment has enabled DAS to expand its services, public education and outreach to the dyslexic community in Singapore and the region. I hope you build on what you have achieved as we work together in Singapore for a strong and inclusive society.

Happy 21st Anniversary!

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance



“Break Free”

by Pushpaa Arumugam, DAS Centre Manager—Bishan

The highlight of the Gala dinner was a performance by our DAS students from various centres. They had gone through eight intensive rehearsals of 3 hours each; a total of 24 hours. They came for practices every Saturday from 2.30pm to 5.30pm. It is said that dyslexics have difficulties in reading and remembering but amazingly, our young performers managed to memorise their script by the third rehearsal and thereafter, rehearsed without the script. It ascertains that they are indeed talented in their own ways. This was evident on the final night when they shone like beacons and won everyone's hearts.

The play depicted the lives of many dyslexics who have many dreams about their future but suffer from not being able to perform well academically in school; low self-esteem; fear of being yelled at by the teachers and seeking acceptance and understanding in the society. They are no different from those of other children. Yet the challenge for them is getting to the finish line.

At the end of the play, we portrayed through the main character that dyslexics are very much talented and unique in their own ways as we also know that many geniuses were and are dyslexics. The play advocates for dyslexia being a different learning ability rather than a disability as it is commonly misunderstood.

The musical drama had a variety of movements

and dance sequences. We added experimental touches to the play where subtle; thought provoking messages were woven in and delivered to the audience symbolically. Theatre technicalities such as light and sound effects, visuals on screen, costumes and props were used to enhance the stage art.

We would like to thank the parents who have dutifully ferried them to each rehearsal and turning up on the actual night to assist in make-up and chaperoning.



The young performers from left to right are Janell Fong (Tampines), Alexia Arriola (Parkway), Ariel Lim (Parkway), Trisha Cheok (Bishan), Elan Teo (Ang Mo Kio), Thandayutham (Parkway) , Chua Jin Sen (Tampines) and Kieran Lee (Bishan), Thank you kids, you were all superb!

Student Reflections on their Performance

Ariel

It has been a very memorable experience for me to perform for the DAS gala dinner. I felt very happy when I heard that I was selected for the performance. I was looking forward to the first day of rehearsal I was able to meet and work together with my friends and teachers again. Although I was the eldest in the group, I got along very well with everyone and had a lot of fun during rehearsals. Sometimes, the girls might fight with the boys, but at the end of the day we are all still good friends.

When it came to the performance day, I could tell that everyone was nervous. Despite our nervousness, we managed to do our very best when we were performing. I enjoyed every moment when I was on stage due to my passion for acting. Throughout this whole journey, I had a great time with everyone. I even enjoyed the punishments we had. I would like to thank my teachers, friends, family and everyone else who was there to make the performance possible.

Kieran

I am happy to be participating in the DAS Gala Dinner. Firstly, I had a lot of fun with my new friends during the rehearsal. I also learnt how to act, dance and played the drum under the coaching of the kind teachers. Most important thing is that I have helped DAS to raise money to help the poor students.

Through this experience, I learnt an important lesson. When we face difficulties, do not fear. If we work hard and do not give up, we will be able to do well.

I would like to thank my teachers, Aunty Cynthia and Uncle Eric for giving me the chance to take part.

Alexia

My experience for the Gala Dinner was wonderful! When my mummy told me I was selected to perform, I was very excited to be a part of this event.

The rehearsal was great. We had a lot of fun, ate pizza, and I made a lot of friends. The teachers were very nice, and they worked hard putting the concert together. We worked hard as well, remembering our lines and dance moves.

On the night of the Gala Dinner I was feeling a little shy, but as we started performing I felt comfortable. Once the performance was over, the teachers told us that we did a great job, and rewarded us with some cakes. I had a great time performing at the Gala. It was wonderful to meet the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, and I received a stuffed toy and a pencil! I had the best time ever! I love DAS.

I want to thank the committee members for choosing me to perform at the Gala Dinner. This was a great chance for me to show people what I can do and it also tells people what goes on in the life of a dyslexic, like me. It also tells people what dyslexia is about and how difficult it can be for us. I hope everyone enjoyed the performance, I know I did. I love to dance and perform and the feeling is great when everyone claps at the end of it. I also made new friends.



A DAS Learning Centre to be named in memory of Mrs Ratna Malkani

Today I am honored to have the opportunity to make a humble contribution to a very noble cause. Unfortunately, duty calls and I am unable to be with you tonight.

I came from what one would call a lower middle class family. Sadly, my father had a stroke and was mostly bedridden at the young age of 50. My mother was thrown into the deep end with having to look after three almost teenage sons, an unwell husband, and a family business in debt. My mother took the challenge and with her hard work and dedication put us all on our feet for which I am eternally grateful. I am very proud to be her son. She also did something else that had a very large and lasting impact on me.

One day I was sitting outside her one-room office when a Police Inspector entered and walked straight into her room. You can imagine the fright on my 13-year-old face (you imagine the worst when you see cops!), so I quietly peeped through the glass door of her office, only to see the police inspector bowing and touching her feet. I asked her later what that was about and she brushed it aside only saying "I took care of his schooling because his parents couldn't afford to - he was promoted to Inspector of Police today so he came to get my blessing."

The seed to "giving back" was firmly planted in my young mind that day! Today, I am most indebted to my parents for their blessing, and dedicate this contribution in the memory of my late mother Mrs Ratna Malkani.

In closing, I truly believe: "We are, what Society makes of us. Society, is what We make of it."

My best wishes to the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, to all the supporters, teachers, and to all of you. Thank you and humbly,

Rajesh Malkani



Mrs Malkani reading her husband's tribute at the
Charity Gala Dinner

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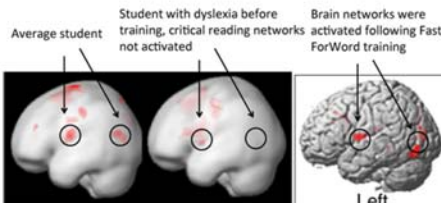
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Stanford University Brain Study



Stanford University researchers found brain networks critical for reading were activated for students with dyslexia following Fast ForWord training. Temple et al., PNAS 2003

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DAS as an Employer of Choice

By Cheryl Denis—HR Officer

Why join the DAS?

Potential for organisational growth: While the DAS presently provides support for 2400 students, it is estimated that there are 23,000 students from preschool to secondary school with dyslexia severe enough to warrant intervention. The DAS is therefore at the tip of the iceberg in terms of our potential client base. Additionally, there is increasing demand for our services from the region.

We are not just about Dyslexia: The DAS continues to increase its range of services for children with learning difficulties, including assessment services, pre-school programmes and educational therapy. Therefore there are ample opportunities for DAS staff to grow with the organisation and develop and specialise in their areas of interest.

Career Development: DAS believes in helping our staff succeed and grow, through educational sponsorships, mentoring, and training.

Meaningful Career: There are many opportunities for staff to make a difference to our clients and community.

We are looking for dedicated and committed individuals; write to us if you are keen to be part of the team. A rewarding career awaits you at the DAS! Career opportunities are available for the following :

- ◆ Educational / School Psychologist
- ◆ Educational Therapists
- ◆ Preschool Teachers
- ◆ Administrative Officer
- ◆ Learning Centre Administration Assistants

And

- ◆ Educational Therapist / Specialist Teacher for DAS INTERNATIONAL SERVICES



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Education Exchange



Let's talk about talking....



Understanding and managing conversational skills of children with language disorders.

By Roslan Saad
Senior Education Advisor

Language is a powerful tool of communication and increasingly a vital social tool for a child as he grows up. When a child has difficulties or deficiencies in his language development i.e. the ability to speak and listen, he will certainly have some difficulties with his social adjustment and acceptance. For most children, language develops quite naturally

and in a predictable sequence at age appropriate stages. However, children with verbal communication problems; either receptive (auditory processing of information received) or expressive (dysnomia, the inability to recall words and name objects) or both, may experience significant difficulties fitting in socially.

Children with language disorders do not come from just a specific diagnosis but a range of co-existing learning difficulties; attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), nonverbal learning disorder (NLD), dyspraxia and Asperger syndrome as well.

Language is a complex system that requires the coordinated action of four interacting subsystems. *Phonology* is the system that maps speech sounds on to meanings, and meanings are part of the *semantic system*. *Grammar* is concerned with *syntax and morphology* (the way in which words and word parts are combined to convey different meanings), and *pragmatics* is concerned with language use. *Pragmatics* is an important area of language development that has a significant and lasting impact upon social competencies. These are the crucial social skills of language that requires the child to take turns in conversations, maintain appropriate eye contact, adjusting speech patterns and asking relevant questions to the audience. Children having difficulties with these pragmatic skills are unable to use language as a social tool. These children with difficulties in the areas of expressive and receptive language will have significant difficulty participating in day-to-day conversations and discussions. The ability to engage in the daily language-based exchanges is fundamental to a child's acceptance and participation in social settings at home, in school, and in the community. A child who is unable to do so will decide to withdraw and be drawn further into social isolation.

Conversational skills are often taken for granted as it appears uncomplicated and seems so basic to our daily functioning that they seem quite natural and simple. After all, even babies have conversations among themselves with their 'baby talk'.



However, for children with language disorders, a conversation is a complex, challenging activity that requires a myriad of skills and competencies. A good conversation requires one to display good skills in both speaking and listening; when to speak and when to pause and listen, when to pick up the line and move ahead with the conversation. In fact, one must use a wide variety of language skills.

Imagine a child must first screen out all of the irrelevant stimuli competing with the message (e.g. background noise, other conversations). He needs to pay attention to the content and mood of the conversation in which he is participating. It gets even harder as now in order to determine the mood and intent of the person he is speaking to, he must be able to "read" his body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. These tasks require complex perceptual and memory skills.



Conversational speech is so natural for most adults that parents and teachers very often fail to realise how truly complex this skill is, especially so for children with language disorders. An effective and enjoyable conversation requires a degree of flexibility and responsiveness that many children with learning problems generally lack.

Failure to accurately and appropriately tailor one's conversation using these skills will result in a difficult, inappropriate, and ineffective conversation. For children with language problems, group conversations such as classroom discussion or dinner table conversation are particularly difficult because these settings require them to evaluate and respond to several

conversation partners simultaneously. Teachers and parents should be mindful of this in group settings. A child who may be quite conversant in a one-to-one discussion may have significant difficulty when involved in a group conversation.



Interrupting

Some children with dyslexia are reasonably eloquent and able to engage in a conversation but may still demonstrate deficits in the social skills or the pragmatics mentioned earlier. These children tend to inappropriately interrupt conversations.

Although this behaviour is not desirable, the reasons for the behaviour are quite understandable when one considers the variety of challenges and difficulties that these children face in the areas of language, memory, and emotional needs. The child may interrupt an ongoing conversation, for example, because he feels that he has an important message to deliver and he knows through past experience that he is likely to forget the message if he does not deliver it immediately. Many children with social deficiencies also have great difficulty delaying gratification because of their impulsivity related to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and this may result in a tendency to interrupt conversations.



Other reasons for this behaviour may be due to the child with learning issues such as dyslexia and low self-esteem feeling threatened and left out when a parent or teacher is attentive to another person for a considerable part of the conversation at his expense.

Whatever reason for these interruptions, the parent or teacher should not be too quick to pick on the child. It should be dealt with by introducing a strategy. For instance, the mum can firmly warn the child beforehand that she will be involved in an activity or conversation that is not to be interrupted: *"Joshua, I am going to be talking to your grandma on the phone about something important, and I do not want you to interrupt me during the call. If you need help with your homework, I will help you as soon as I get off the phone".*



If the child is able to behave as told and not interrupt the call, be certain to reinforce the behaviour by thanking and praising him. From my observation, adults often fail to compliment the child for complying with instructions but are pretty quick to chide him for failing to do so. Remember, it is important to note, behaviour that is reinforced positively is more likely to be replicated. You may also want to give him something to do prevent interruption: *"Our neighbour is going to come over to our house in ten minutes to talk with me about some recipes. We can't be interrupted. Here is some glue and paper. Why don't you make a birthday card for grandma?"*

Parents can also work on a gesture that the child understands as a signal that a conversation should not be interrupted (e.g. open hand with palm facing out, crossed fingers). If you are engaged in a conversation and the child interrupts, give him



the prearranged signal and continue your conversation. I remember very well as a young boy the 'look' that I got from my mum when I interrupted her conversation especially in the presence of her guest. If the child waits patiently, respond to him when opportunity presents for instance when a lull occurs in your discussion.

If the child's interrupting behaviour is caused by faulty memory and his anxiety that he will forget his message, modify this technique by allowing him and encouraging him to provide you with a keyword that you can use later to trigger his memory of his message. For example, if he remembers that he needs you to sign his permission slip for the school's field trip, he would approach you during your conversations with another and merely say "field trip". A simple acknowledging nod from you is all that he needs and he walks away assured. At the end of your conversation, you can give him the keyword: *"Well Josh, what about field trip?"*, and he will most certainly deliver his message.

If the child has the habit of interrupting too often, an effective strategy to reduce his behaviour is to reinforce and recognise the child when he does not interrupt: *"Joshua, thank you for not interrupting my conversation with your aunt a while ago. You were so sweet and I really appreciate it."* This strategy builds on the positive reinforcement [for not interrupting] instead of the numerous reminders for the negative things that he does.



Failure to follow conversations

Memory deficits can have a significantly negative impact upon a child's ability to participate in routine conversations. The child may lose her place in the discussion or forget the topic at hand, unable to find the right word, or not knowingly repeat same comments or asking same questions during the conversation.

The child also may fear that she will forget a comment that she wishes to make and so interjects the comment inappropriately. Encourage the child to jot down key words related to comments she wishes to add to the discussion. This can be easily and unobtrusively done during informal conversations. Also encourage the child to carefully concentrate during conversations.

A role-play on attending a press conference with a small group of friends, siblings will be fun. Get her to observe the convention of a press conference without turning it into a regimented task.



Monopolising the Conversation

For the child who has tendency to monopolise conversations, he can be taught to slow down a little. Teach the child to ask questions often during informal discussions. By asking questions – and listening attentively to the responses – the child will become a more attractive conversation partner. The child will realise that one does not need to monopolize or dominate the conversation in order to participate actively in it.

Asking questions, listening and giving appropriate responses and observing are appropriate ways to participate in a conversation. Again, reinforce the child when he does not interrupt or monopolise.

First Impressions

It is true that most people form a lasting impression of someone within minutes of their first meeting. These initial interactions cause each person to evaluate whether their new acquaintance is interesting, fun, and sincere. At the same time, it will also take several subsequent positive interactions in order to offset an initial negative impression.

Encourage your child to be entertaining, attentive, and interested when she meets someone for the first time. Urge her to use the person's name during conversation and to disclose something memorable and somewhat personal during the

initial meeting: *"I shook hands with our Prime Minister once,"* or *"We live in the oldest house in town".* This disclosure can help to move the relationship along and also serve to make the first exchange a noteworthy one: *"Oh, I remember you! You shook hands with our Prime Minister once, right?"*

I am sure that there are two things that you want to achieve in any initial meeting. First is to make the new acquaintance feel good about themselves. Next is to demonstrate that you are an interesting person to have conversation with.

However, if a child becomes unduly concerned if a first impression does not go well, remind the child that it can be attributed to simple incompatibility. There is no need to make the child feel that he has presented himself poorly.



Adjusting Your Own Language

Parents of children with learning difficulties often report that they have difficulty conversing with their children. Be mindful of the fact that oral language is difficult for the youngster, and his lack of language fluency can hinder his comprehension and production of the spoken word. Adults should adjust their own language to accommodate the child's language deficits.

If you ask a typical adult a broad, global question,



you generally receive a broad, general response, quite naturally. For example, the question "What did you think of last week's election?" results in a fairly lengthy response. "Well, I feel that the ruling party...and the oppositions ...and the young voters thought ... and the results demonstrated ... Conversely, if you ask a specific, focused question - *"Who did you vote for in last week's election?"* - you will receive a brief, specific response ("John Tan") and that is about it.



Interestingly, this dynamic works in just the opposite way when conversing with children with limited language skills. When asked with a general, broad question, the response likely to receive from the child is likely to be specific. For example; *"So, how was school for you today, Joshua?"* The response probably be: *"OK. It was good".* But if asked with a specific question: *"How was your Science class today, Joshua?"* He might unleash a detailed and lengthy response: *"Oh, it was neat! We hooked up a magnet to an electric motor and it made all the iron filings go into a straight line, and the teacher said that magnets have two poles ..."* So by asking more specific questions, you are enabling the child to focus his language skills on a narrow topic, which enables him to generate a more detailed and factual response.

Conclusion

It is a given fact that to hold a good conversation, one will require some skills and awareness on the conventions and rules that must be adhered to and followed. Appropriate and appealing conversational skills are significant factors in a child's ability to make and maintain friendships. However, parents and teachers can certainly play their part too in getting the best out of a child when engaging them in a conversation. This is more so when we know that our young conversation partner has some language disorders. I strongly feel that it is our duty to make children feel more confident in talking to us. We

need to guide them with strategies, lead them with assurances, accommodate their deficiencies, and most importantly give them the simple pleasure of just talking.

Generally, children will send discernible nonverbal signals when they are ready to end a conversation with an adult. They often begin to stare off into space or become silly. Let's not prolong their agony. Compliment them and it is time to end the exchange. Gracefully take the lead and end it. This is the art of conversation.



This article is adapted from and inspired by the following readings;

Lavoie, R. (2005). *It's So Much Work To be Your Friend*. Helping the child with learning disabilities find social success. Simon & Schuster. New York. US

Snowling, M.J, Stackhouse, J (Ed)(2006). *Dyslexia. Speech and Language*. Whurr Publishers Ltd. London. UK.

Whitney, R.V. (2008). *Nonverbal Learning Disorder*. Understanding and Coping with NLD and Asperger's - What Parents and Teachers Need to Know. Penguin Group (USA) Inc. New York



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Bring Back Those Cursives

By Titus Lim
DAS Occupational Therapist



Looking Back.....

As a lower primary student in the Henry Park Primary School in the early 1980s, my peers and I were taught to write in cursive by our English teachers. The school's principal then took pride in informing all the students that the style of penmanship taught was 'Marion Richardson Cursive Handwriting'. The late Ms Marion Richardson (9 Oct 1892 - 12 Nov 1946) was a British artist, educator, and author who published workbooks on penmanship and handwriting (Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, 2012).

In primary school, we had cursive handwriting



practice during English language lessons and were tasked to copy some repetitive patterns from the blackboard into our Jotter books. It was hard for me to understand the purpose of meaningless copying of repetitive patterns at the bottom of the page after cursive handwriting practice. However, I arrived at an intelligent conclusion then, and thought that the repetitive patterns were meant to beautify the page of the cursive handwriting work. However, looking back, I believe that repeated patterns served more than just to beautify the piece of cursive handwriting work. As an occupational therapist, I would think that the patterns were for a more pertinent reason of enabling students to learn and remember the undercurve, overcurve, up, and down movements better in cursive handwriting (Blumenfeld, 1994).

Landscapes of Handwriting Instruction in Singapore and the United States of America

Cursive handwriting instruction seems to be a thing of the past in the Singapore educational system. It appears that primary one and two school students here hardly learn to write in cursive anymore. Neither do they receive adequate handwriting instruction for manuscript handwriting, as it is a skill presumably addressed and taught in the kindergartens.

In the United States of America, handwriting instruction has taken a back seat too, as the society values technology above all else (Saperstein Associates, 2012). Statistics have shown that an estimate of 25% - 33% of the students in many elementary schools in the country struggled to complete assignments by hand. Yet, little attention has been given to address this foundational skill in the schools. In the USA, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) stated that handwriting instruction is no longer mandatory when students progress beyond Grade 1. Following this Grade, the different states may have the liberty to teach manuscript handwriting, cursive handwriting, combination of both, or eliminate handwriting instruction totally. Despite research studies demonstrating how handwriting skills supported students' cognitive development and overall academic achievement, the inconsistent handwriting practices prevail within the schools in the different states.

The White Paper also reported that some educators in the USA have shifted their focus from handwriting instruction to teaching keyboarding skills (Saperstein Associates, 2012). Although keyboarding is an important skill to learn, it is felt

that the skill should not replace handwriting instruction. According to the White Paper, recent research studies have shown that handwriting can increase brain activation, affect performance across all academic subjects, and provide a foundation for higher-order skills such as critical thinking, analysing, memory, and reasoning skills. In one study conducted by Ms Karin Harman-James from the Indiana University in Bloomington, she took Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans of children as they wrote and typed (Spencer, 2012).



The brain scans of children who did writing tasks revealed adult-like neural processing in the visual system, while those who did keyboarding tasks did not reveal neural processing. Her research showed that writing by hand activated parts of the brain associated with language development whereas keyboarding did not. Ms Karin Harman-James hypothesised that handwriting could have a particular role in preparing children for reading acquisition.

Manuscript Camp versus Cursive Camp

Blumenfeld (1994) described the disadvantages and advantages of manuscript and cursive handwriting styles. According to Blumenfeld (1994), the older generations had better penmanship skills as compared to the recent generations, in view that penmanship was a core subject and cursive handwriting style was then introduced to first graders. However, since 1941, schools in the United States of America started to use the "ball and stick" manuscript or print, which resulted in words written too close together, common letters reversal, and letters confusion (e.g. 'b' & 'd'; 'm' & 'w').

Supporters of manuscript style argued that teaching print first would be beneficial, as the skill would facilitate reading skills, since most of the books are printed script. They also claimed that teaching cursive would involve more complex strokes, whereas, manuscript prints only had 'balls and sticks'. Manuscript supporters also suggested that the poor handwriting skills can be addressed by technology through the use of computer devices. That was how cursive handwriting became a lost art which has been replaced by new technologies (Blumenfeld, 1994).

Despite the criticisms of cursive handwriting, this penmanship style also has its advantages. Blumenfeld (1994) described 10 benefits of cursive handwriting that include:-

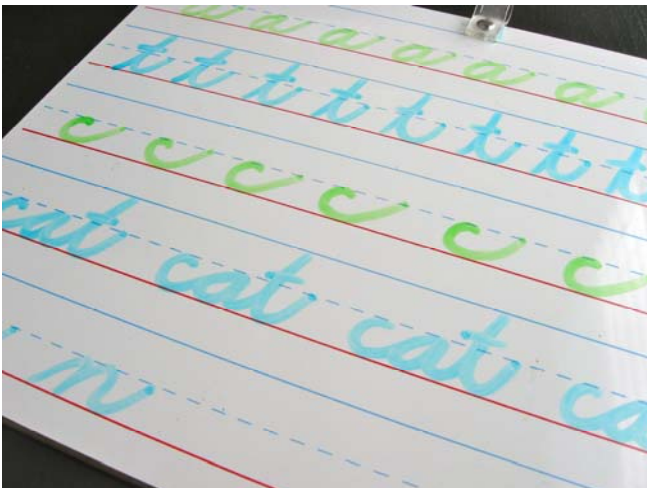
1. Introduction of cursive handwriting to preschoolers can be easy
2. Prevention of letters reversal and confusion as letters and words flow from left to right
3. Enhancement of spelling ability because of the continuous flow of writing
4. Development of internal control systems such as 'physical memory' of muscles of the hand
5. Diminishing potential for errors
6. Enhancement of reading skills
7. Enforcing the skills for patterns in reading and writing
8. Eliminating inconsistent spaces between letters and words
9. Providing assistance for left-handed persons
10. Enabling thoughts to be placed on paper quickly and easily



Olsen & Knapton (2008), both occupational therapists and authors of the Handwriting Without Tears® curriculum, recommended that cursive handwriting should be introduced to 3rd Graders, those who never learned proper printing skills, and those who experience printing troubles.

Developmentally, third grade would be the perfect time for continuous cursive style training, as eye-hand coordination would be fully developed by then.

Cursive handwriting can help students to write faster since the writing implement is always on the paper (Olsen & Knapton, 2008). The handwriting style allows the students to get ideas across quickly, and perform better academically. Cursive style is considered to be a more advanced form of writing that has a grown-up appeal. Therefore, students are likely to be more motivated to learn the handwriting style. On the other hand, Olsen and Knapton (2008) cautioned that cursive training should not commence, if the students could not perform pre-cursive activities. These activities may include under and over, up and straight down, up and loop down, and descending loop.



In view of the discussed advantages of cursive handwriting which outweigh those of manuscript style, it is highly recommended that students with or without learning differences should receive cursive handwriting instruction. Students with dyslexia and other specific learning differences are likely to reap the benefits of the cursive style.

Demise of the Cursives?

A review of the related literature seemed to point at the many benefits of cursive handwriting, in particular for persons with dyslexia and learning differences. Manuscript handwriting, using the 'ball and stick', might seemingly appear to be less complicated than the cursives, but the style of handwriting could cause letters confusion, left-right confusion, letters reversal, and spacing difficulty. Recent research studies have also shown that manuscript and cursive penmanship are better for students' cognitive development and overall



academic performance as compared to solely keyboarding skills. However, keyboarding still has a place in the classroom, in view of the current technological advances and greater usage in colleges and the universities (Spencer, 2012).

In the light of the recent cursive handwriting evidence, should this penmanship style be resuscitated and brought back into the classrooms then? The landscape in the United States of America is slowly changing with the re-introduction of cursive handwriting instruction into the classrooms. I believe that it is just a matter of time that the Ministry of Education in Singapore would realise the advantages of cursive handwriting instruction and re-introduce them into the lower primary classrooms, giving them a greater emphasis in the primary educational curriculum."

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Pilot Chinese Remediation Programme

By Priscillia Shen—Lecturer, DAS Academy and
Liu Yimei—Psychologist, Specialist Services Division

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is soft-launching its pilot Chinese remediation programme in January 2013. Our target students are the DAS students diagnosed with dyslexia. The Chinese Project Team has recently conducted publicity talks to parents who were interested in finding out more about the programme on 3 & 10 November 2012, and the sessions have been fruitful. For those who had missed our talks and would like to find out more, please read on!

Who are we?

The Chinese Project Team was first set up in 2009 with the mission to provide resources to support our dyslexic students in achieving their potential in reading and writing the Chinese language. This objective was targeted to be met through three means:-

1. To adapt and/or create Chinese literacy tests to supplement our current psycho-educational assessments in the DAS
2. To develop a remediation programme that caters to the needs of our dyslexic students in the DAS
3. To contribute to, and research on, ongoing development in the regions to ensure currency in our knowledge of dyslexia and the Chinese language.

What have we been doing since 2009?

Preliminary survey

In 2009, the team conducted a preliminary survey with over 400 parents of our dyslexic students. The survey aimed to find out more about the struggles of our students as well as the kind of support they are receiving. A random sample of the surveys showed that almost half of our students had no support or remediation in Chinese, about 85% of them did not speak Mandarin as their Home

Language and about 75% of the parents were interested in Chinese classes if the DAS were to offer this support. At the same time, the survey showed that our students had difficulties across most aspects of the language, including basic reading and spelling of Chinese characters, as well as comprehension of Chinese passages and oral skills. Some parents also provided feedback that their children lacked interest and/or motivation in learning Chinese.

Pilot research study

With the survey results in mind, the team conducted a pilot research study in 2010 and 2011 with the hope to better understand the difficulties our dyslexic students face in learning Chinese and whether visual perceptual ability affected the learning of Chinese characters.

The study was conducted with 95 Primary Four students at the DAS, as well as students from Fengshan Primary School and Queenstown Primary School who were not assessed to have dyslexia. The first stage of the pilot study consisted of a screening of the students using the LUCID Rapid Dyslexia Screening Test and the Test of Visual Perceptual Skills (3rd Edition).

This first stage of the pilot study was necessary in order to split the shortlisted students into two groups - at risk for dyslexia and not at risk for dyslexia - so as to accurately assess the difficulties faced by students when learning the language.

Selected students (45 in total) were then invited to participate in the second stage of the research, where they were assessed using a battery of informal Chinese literacy tests that the team had created and adapted.

The pilot study yielded the following findings:

- ◆ Language processing impairment persists across different languages (namely English and Chinese).
- ◆ Literacy skills such as visual-orthographic skills, morphological awareness and visual-motor integration skills, were the observed differences with regards to "risk of dyslexia" in Chinese language acquisition.
- ◆ Some aspects of the processing of the Chinese language require visual memory, which was found to be relatively weaker in the dyslexic students of the current study.

Visual-orthographic skills are skills needed to recognise shapes and structure of a Chinese character and understand radical positional rules (e.g. where is 讠?). It allows for the strategic attempt of "splitting into parts" when reading Chinese as accurately as possible (e.g. 也、他、地). It is important because the majority of Chinese characters consist of radicals that are semantic-phonetic in nature.

Morphological awareness is also important in processing Chinese language because another salient feature of the language is the large number of homophones (e.g. /jǐu/ how many Chinese characters with the pronunciation /jǐu/ can you think of?). It also helps to clarify rules and expand knowledge. For example, when a character is read (e.g. "大" /dà/ [big]), two words of different meanings can be formed when it is paired with another character (e.g. "大象" /dà xiàng/ [big elephant] and "伟大" /wěi dà/ [great or mighty]). Having such awareness allows an individual to use visual chunking skills to process Chinese characters efficiently and accurately, especially in reading fluency and writing (i.e. copying, spelling, and even learning and

retrieval). Visual-motor integration skills are basically copying and writing skills, such as producing a Chinese character with strokes that are in correct direction, sequence and proportion as well as in the learning and retrieval of Chinese characters.

What are the next steps?

Pilot Chinese remediation programme

Following some initial findings from the survey and pilot study, the team hopes to introduce a pilot remediation programme that focuses on the oracy and word recognition components, as well as to build interest in the Chinese language. This pilot remediation programme focuses on three aspects:-

- ◆ Common vocabulary and sentence structure to enhance the student's expressiveness in Chinese / Mandarin.
- ◆ Character structures, radicals and stroke patterns to enhance the student's word recognition skills.
- ◆ Morphological awareness to help expand the child's vocabulary network.

The delivery of these aspects would be done through themes that surround the student and his/her everyday life. Some examples of these themes are:

1. Myself (我)
2. My Family (我的家)
3. My School (我的学校)
4. My Neighbourhood (我的邻里)
5. Outdoors (到户外去)

Students will be taught through hands-on activities, educational games, storytelling, as well as tracing and tracking of words. The focus of these methods of teaching is to enhance the relevance of the language to the students as they relate what they are taught in class to themselves and their

surroundings, and hence gain interest in using the language. While the programme does not follow the school's curriculum, the coverage of the vocabulary used is based on the Ministry of Education (MOE) Primary school syllabus. This programme is also designed to suit the profile of the students.

As this remediation programme is in its initial stages, it is targeted at primary school students who are diagnosed with dyslexia and the main focus will be on oracy components. We hope to be able to deliver the literacy components (such as writing and comprehension) in the second half of 2013. In addition, priority would be given to students who have not been exempted from taking Chinese as an examinable subject.

Continued Research



As our pilot research study was only conducted with Primary Four students, we hope to continue to conduct research to find out about the difficulties of our dyslexic students in the Chinese language as well as to study the effectiveness of our programme. In addition, the pilot Chinese remediation programme is considered the first intervention programme available to students with special needs. Thus, we will be conducting pre- and post-tests with all the students who are coming onboard with us on the Chinese pilot remediation programme. These tests would also help to profile the students according to their strengths and weaknesses so that intervention can be better targeted.

If you would like to enrol your primary school child in the pilot Chinese remediation programme, please obtain the application form and research consent form from the Centre Managers. We will contact you shortly to arrange for a pre-test to be conducted with your child. The first phase of pre-test will start in the beginning of January 2013 and the first lesson of the pilot Chinese remediation

programme will start at the end of January 2013.

For more information, please contact:

Priscillia priscillia@das.org.sg or
Yimei yimei@das.org.sg.

The Chinese Project Team would like to express their heartfelt thanks to:

- ◆ The principals of Fengshan Primary School and Queenstown Primary School for allowing some of their students to take part in the research project. Special thanks also go to the teachers in the two schools who helped to coordinate the testing dates. We would also like to thank the parents and students of the two schools for taking time to participate in the research.
- ◆ Parents and DAS students who participated in the research.
- ◆ Centre Managers who helped to coordinate assessment timings and for helping us source for rooms!
- ◆ Taiwan Psychological Publishing Co. Ltd. for their interest and authors' permission to adapt and utilise their existing assessment materials.
- ◆ Hong Kong Research Team, for their interest and provision of their assessment materials as reference.

谢谢



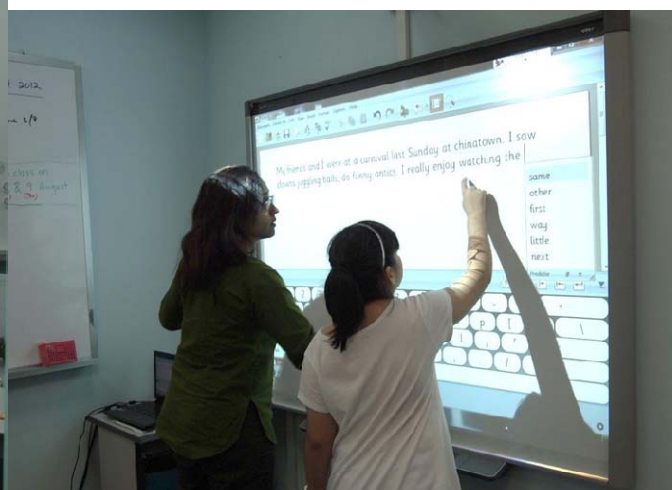
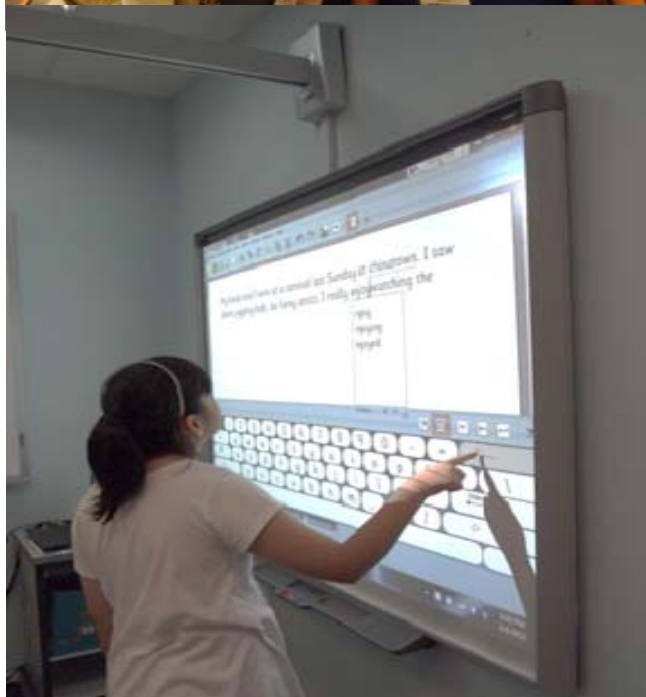
Classrooms of the Future

By Jeanne Tan and Nicole Chua

At the DAS, we believe in using technology to assist and enhance our students' learning. In line with MOE's ICT Masterplan, we have infused modern technology into our remediation efforts.

Since the beginning of Term 3 this year, all classrooms in Queenstown, together with three classrooms in Ang Mo Kio have been fully equipped with SMART Boards and student laptops. 10 Educational Therapists from both Queenstown and Ang Mo Kio were trained over 4 weeks in the various softwares that were going to be used in class.

As part of this initiative, DAS has also started a pilot research project headed by Jeanne Tan and Nicole Chua to investigate the relationship between assistive technology and motivation among DAS students. The pilot study starts from Term 3 2012 and will run till 2013. The findings are expected to be instrumental in identifying the best software that would benefit our students.



HOW PARENTS CAN 'INVEST' IN THEMSELVES TO IMPROVE THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

By Deepam Ganeswaran
Manager—Jurong Point Learning Centre



As parents, we all understand that kids have many unique learning needs. The influence of a family on their behaviour is so vital and considerable. Each dyslexic child has different needs and at most times, it is important that parents must go that extra mile to assist their kids where possible.

Recently, I had the privilege of speaking with few parents who gladly shared some of their insights on how they managed to invest in themselves so as to equip themselves and keep updated on what was happening around them.

Here are some useful ways to invest.....

KEEPING ABREAST AND UPDATED BY ATTENDING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

One of the most effective ways for parents to be updated of new learning and coping strategies is by attending Courses and Workshops. Besides getting free education, parents can master new ways of improving their children's day to day challenges. Most of the courses demonstrate useful and innovative strategies and provide practical solutions.

At DAS, we have very comprehensive and relevant Courses and Workshops. Parents should make it point to keep abreast of the latest developments so as to better understand and assist their children. Many parents have definitely benefitted by attending these workshops and courses. Please see page 92 for all the latest DAS courses.

USEFULNESS OF NETWORKING AND SUPPORT GROUPS

Having spoken to one of our parents, Mrs Angeline Alfred, whose child is currently attending

DAS in Bishan, stressed that it is beneficial for parents to join parent support groups and school support networks where possible. By joining the DAS Parents Support Group, she has gained so much knowledge and useful tips which she felt she would not have gained by reading a book.

Besides sharing tips, the support group also stands as a platform for many parents to share their day to day challenges and how they cope with the situation. Not only are parents able to make new friends, they encourage each other to join many student activities, creating a long term bond. Thus we earnestly encourage parents to join our DAS Parents Support Group.

www.facebook.com/groups/409240729113140

CELEBRATING YOUR CHILD IN EVERY WAY

Mrs Irene Ng (pictured above) has three children enrolled in DAS, Jurong Point. Besides being a dedicated parent, she also works as a fulltime florist. Despite her hectic schedule, Irene and her husband strongly believe in spending special quality time with each of their children. She tries to understand each child's growing needs and the difficulties they face. Irene also emphasises on spending quality time with her husband and children together as a family. She admits it can be tough, but, it is all about discipline and quality time.

Like many parents, both Mrs Angeline Alfred and Mrs Irene Ng believe in celebrating their child's effort no matter how small they are. Even when their kids have not measured up to mark, they make it a point to celebrate the effort put in rather than the outcome. In the end, isn't that what truly matters and counts in the end!

DAS 4th International Conference 2012

Maths Learning Differences and Dyscalculia Conference



Since our first Conference in 2009, we have come a long way in introducing and discussing issues and topics relevant to dyslexia and its associated learning differences. This year, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore was proud to present our first Maths Conference in Singapore. We had a wonderful ensemble of three international speakers and four local speakers who gave both local and international perspectives and context.

In Singapore, maths has always been regarded as a very important subject in schools. Singaporean students have often been ranked amongst the top performers in international surveys. The strong focus on problem-solving skills of Singapore maths has been replicated in other countries such as the United States. With such emphasis in Singapore schools, we believe that discussing the difficulties students face with maths as a result of their dyslexia, the Maths Learning Differences and Dyscalculia Conference would be the most essential.

According to the British Dyslexia Association, research suggests that 50-60% of dyslexics have difficulties with maths. The “difficulty in decoding written words can transfer across into a difficulty in decoding mathematical notation and symbols (BDA, 2012).” This means that difficulties in maths is a significant aspect of the challenges a dyslexic faces. It is also important to highlight that students who face difficulties with maths because of their dyslexia do not necessarily have dyscalculia and maths learning differences. Literacy plays a

significant factor in the language of maths and is becoming increasingly demanding in the examination environment.

At the DAS, we continue to work closely with the Ministry of Education. DAS was delighted to have hosted our Guest of Honour Ms Sim Ann when she visited the DAS on 10 November last year. We have also hosted Ms Chan Lai Fung who is the Permanent Secretary (Education Policy) of the Ministry of Education at one of our centres on the 12th October to share a little on our ongoing efforts. This continuous relationship with the Ministry is paramount in the work we do.

Outside of direct intervention to children, the DAS also trains Allied Educators (AEDs) to help our children overcome dyslexia. DAS is delighted to know that each Primary School in Singapore is equipped with at least one AED while Secondary Schools are not too far behind. At the moment, we are not training AEDs in helping children with maths learning differences. However, we would be delighted to conduct training in this area should the Ministry of Education grant us the approval to do so.

DAS would like to like to thank Ms Sim Ann, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Communications and Information for being our Guest of Honour for the Maths Conference and to thank her for her presence and for MOE’s support over the years.



Benedict Lo, from Bishan Learning Centre (pictured above) presented Ms Sim Ann with his art work as a token of appreciation for being at the DAS Maths conference.

(Pictures on the left from top to bottom.)

DAS Registration Staff busily registering over 300 participants to the Maths Conference on Saturday.

Ms Sim Ann and Robin Moseley talk with the DAS Speech and Language Therapists about the language of Maths.

Educational Therapist, Samunn Abdul Caffoor showing a conference participant software that DAS uses within its Computer Literacy programme.

Interested participants at the DAS Academy booth "liking" their Facebook to receive a free yellow stress dice.

Participants at the Maths Conference listening to Professor Brian Butterworth the first presenter of the day.

Pictured on page 74 from left to right. Paul Tan, Robin Moseley, Angela Fawcett, Benedict Lo, Sim Ann, Professor Brian Butterworth, Anne Henderson, Assistant Professor Lee Ngan Hoe, Chang Suo Hui, Clair Yeo, Priscillia Shen and Professor Steve Chinn.



Maths Excellence

Bouquets for Albel (Abdullah, Aishah),
our Maths Educational Therapist at Bishan

We realised Kelly had serious problem with Maths when she refused to go back to school after June Holidays during Primary 1. She was afraid of going back because she could not understand Maths

Kelly could memorise her numbers and reading them out in sequence like she was singing a song. However, the numbers 1,2,3 held no meaning and could have been just like Tom, Dick and Harry just names to her. Hence, for number $3-1$ it was like for Harry to minus Tom. No meaning and no sense at all.

Kelly has come a long, long way since then. Now, in Primary Three, she passed her Maths assessments and if she were to be assessed based on understanding and ability to do her Maths assessment, i.e., disregard true carelessness, Kelly would be able to complete about 80 percent of the paper. She definitely feels more confident of her Maths ability and willing to try out the sums.

I am really glad DAS started Maths classes to help children like Kelly. These children face obstacles that they do not understand and in the worst case scenario the schools may not realise the existence of their learning problems. With dedicated DAS teachers like Ms Albel, I am confident that more kids will benefit just like Kelly

Thank you, Mrs Chen

I just wanted to send you this email to update you on the progress that Ethan is making at school.

Earlier this year, he was failing Maths dismally. He struggled with both the concepts and the computations. In particular, the problem sums, typically found under Section C of the test papers, were especially daunting. For his mid year exams, he scored only a paltry 33/100.

Faced with the prospect of being offered Maths at the Foundational level in P5, we were hopeful when we applied & Ethan was accepted into the DAS Maths programme.

The techniques and systems learnt while at your classes, has slowly re-established his understanding of the mathematical concepts and built confidence back into Ethan as he slowly started seeing that this was a mountain that he could easily conquer.

I am proud to inform you that he has passed his year end Math exams. He scored 66/100 for his paper.

Thank you for your diligence!

James Tan

Yanee finds Maths confusing, involving many steps. She could not understand the concept of division. Yanee says getting to know Maths is difficult. She hates the subject most and is always a "U" grader. At Primary 5, Yanee switched to Foundation Maths. I find she copes better and showing increasing tolerance for the subject. Teachers in DAS make her believe she can do it, i.e that mistakes makes perfect. She was told to act like a "smart student", i.e to adopt this attitude to Maths also. Teacher in DAS encouraged her not to give up, motivated her by giving more time to solve problems. The personal guidance and patience gradually showed positive results. Yanee's marks improved and somehow she sees herself differently now than before. I have to thank DAS for making this transition. My daughter now has more self confidence.

Warmest regards, Maryani (Yanee's mom)

Life as a new Learning Support Officer

By Vijayamohan, Sreedharan
Learning Support Officer—Ang Mo Kio



Ten weeks as a Learning Support Officer has been an exciting and real experience builder for me. Experiences are varied in the classroom (computer errors and system failures), students and their reactions were unpredictable features of every session. More importantly all sessions were enjoyable and the feedback from students and some parents were motivating. Some students improved in their weekly class spelling after weeks on Nessy Learning and some students enhanced in their focus (as in house Anderson teachers related the improvements in informal meetings) with the aid of Attengo. Self, peer and seniors' evaluation and valuable feedback of the classroom setting, lesson plans, students feedback and reactions and the Core Team's support were the foundation to an enjoyable term and the reason to look forward to upcoming terms.

Class Setting

Classes needed to accommodate the Oracy and CLP students, as such effective and efficient use of space were necessary. The computers had to be arranged in a way that I could always observe my CLP students when they were at work. Also, there had to be a work station for both CLP and mainly the Oracy classes. With a limited space, meeting the requirements were a challenge. I changed the seating arrangements of my work stations every fortnightly to give students a 'new' feel to the class room. I rearranged the computers till I felt I had used the least space for the most effective results. With the extra space, I placed a floor mat and created a mini library for leisure reading during 5 to 7 minute breaks. A conducive environment is key to holistic education.

Students

When I first started my term at DAS Ang Mo Kio Learning Centre, I was faced with an astounding number of forty plus students. This made me learn quickly and accurately. Also, to spice the experience, I had my students whose learning difficulties were extreme. Such was one boy who ran out of class and was not in favor of any 'carrots' that were dangled to bring him back. Thanks to Senior Education Therapist Bhavani, with her years of experience and skills she personally mentored me on the classroom management approach I should undertake. This turned fruitful as it was practical learning at its best. Similarly, the mentoring sessions were great help as my Oracy pupils were from the upper primary. They had basic knowledge of vocabulary and could converse but were weak.

Classroom Management is a daily challenge as students who are well behaved on one lesson can differed in another. This led to the creation of behaviour charts and class monitors. It was well learnt that one strategy could never be used for all my pupils.

Organisation as a whole

I am very pleased to be working for the DAS as many pathways are drawn for me to upgrade and excel. I look forward to more responsibilities in the field of Information Technology, so as to contribute to the technological aid we can adapt and make use to better our pupils' classroom learning. Also, after the completion of my degree in two years time, I look forward to advancing to become an Educational Therapist to serve the students.



CAREGIVER TRAINING GRANT (CTG)

Caregiver Training Grant (CTG) is a subsidy / grant provided by Centre for Enabled Living (CEL).

A \$200 training subsidy per year can be received by a caregiver of each PNC (Person Needing Care). This is only available for pre-approved CTG training programmes.

All CTG applications approval is determined by CEL and not by DAS Academy Ltd.

Eligibility for the CTG:

- Have a PNC (Person Needing Care) in care who is a Singapore Citizen or Singapore Permanent Resident.
- Be the main caregiver of the PNC; he/she could be a family member or foreign domestic worker
- Attend a training course that is pre-approved for the purpose of the grant.
- A 90% and above attendance is required in order to complete the workshop and receive the Certificate of Attendance.
- The \$200 grant has to be utilised within the financial year (April – March). Any unutilised grant will not be carried forward.
- A maximum amount of \$200 per year will be funded towards the training workshop. This is subjected to a co-payment of \$10 by each caregiver.
- All application forms must be submitted to DAS Academy at least 2 weeks prior to the commencement of the course. You will be notified by a training provider before the start of the course should you be selected.

For more information about the CTG, please contact DAS Academy

www.dasacademy.edu.sg 6336 2555



Tips, Talks & Training

DAS Academy Courses and Workshops “We are Listening!”

By Argus Tong—Publicity Officer

DAS Parent Survey

We want our DAS parents to be able to continue to support their children so that they can reach their full potential. In late August, an online survey soliciting feedback for our DAS Academy courses and workshops was sent out through our learning centres and through facebook to DAS Parents.

Fees and Caregivers Training Grant

According to the survey, parents who have never attended a course or workshop mentioned that fees were one of the top factors that will influence their decision to attend. Also, 66% of these parents were not aware that the Caregivers Training Grant (CTG) provides them with subsidies to attend our workshops.

Our parents can utilise the Caregivers Training Grant (CTG) offered by the Centre for Enabled Living (CEL) where only a co-payment of **\$10** is required to attend workshops. For our courses, we do offer a special rate for our current DAS parents. Please visit the DAS Academy website www.dasacademy.edu.sg for more information.

Courses and Workshops Contents

86.8% of our parents who have attended our courses and workshops rate content as the most important issue that influence their decision to attend. When asked for suggestions of future topics, the majority of the parents are interested in managing the behavioural issues that a child with dyslexia faces and Chinese related classes.

For 2013, we will be offering Strategies for Behaviour Management workshop.

Website Updates

Parents are finding out about our courses and workshops through our DAS website (www.das.org.sg), FACETS magazine, emails and Learning Centres. Through your feedback, we plan to give a face-lift to the DAS Academy website by early 2013. In the meantime, please stay connected with us by signing up for our mailing list at

www.dasacademy.edu.sg

And LIKE our facebook pages,

www.facebook.com/DysSG

&

www.facebook.com/dasacademy

We thank you for your feedback as information will help us to improve our courses and workshops and future service to you. The 2013 Certificate Course and Workshop prospectus is available at a learning centre near you.

**DAS Academy
Prospectus
for 2013
is now
available**

CPE Registration No.:
201003689Z
Validity 29 January to
29 December 2012





Laura Yong receiving her iPad from Lee Siang, COO of DAS

And the Pad winner is...

Survey participants who provided us with their contact details were placed into a draw to have a chance to win an iPad. We are pleased to announce that the winner is ... DAS parent and teacher Laura Yong.

Laura had decided to fill out the survey as she wanted to provide her input to help with structuring our outreach and tailoring courses and workshops so that attendees can continue to support children with learning differences reach their full potential. She had previously attended the Essential Literacy Approach (ELA) and provided the following feedback,

"The ELA course has been a useful, insightful and practical course that equips me to help my dyslexia son and enhances my teaching skills to help my students who are struggling with the English language. I really like the hands-on approach taught at lectures and the comprehensive course materials and teaching aids provided (The ELA Manual, the phonic cards and the VCD). The ELA course has been a rewarding experience and I would certainly recommend the course to parents who want to be actively involved in helping their dyslexia child and to educators who are interested and passionate in helping children who are struggling with the English Language."

CERTIFICATE IN DYSLEXIA STUDIES

The DAS Academy has developed courses that will assist you in supporting your child, or student that you work with, in their learning endeavours.

In our recent course "Certificate in Dyslexia Studies" conducted over five Saturday mornings in September and October, participants gained a basic introduction to the issues that affect children with dyslexia. At the end of the course, participants gained a basic understanding on the wide spectrum of specific learning difficulties, understand the approach taken by DAS psychologists when they conduct assessments and provide a diagnosis of dyslexia, learn about the Orton-Gillingham (OG) principles and the elements of an OG-based lesson and understand how to nurture the self-esteem of children with dyslexia.

Deepam Ganeswaran, (pictured below 3rd from left), the Centre Manager for Jurong Point Learning Centre was one of the recent participants. She shared with us about her experiences on the course.

"The course gave us an in-depth meaning of what dyslexia is and how it came about. How to recognize children with symptoms of dyslexia and how to manage children with these symptoms. Furthermore, we understood that there was more to learning difference than just having dyslexia."

"I found this a very interesting course especially if you are a parent of a child with dyslexia. The course is definitely informative and insightful."



DAS Academy—Certificate Courses

Certificate in Dyslexia Studies

Dates:

First Run

Saturdays
23 February,
2, 9, 16 & 23 March
9:30am to 12:30pm

Second Run

Saturdays
28 September,
5, 12, 19 & 26 October
9:30am to 12:30pm

Duration:

Total of 15 hours

Fee:

\$642

\$535 for DAS Parents

Learning Objective

The Certificate in Dyslexia Studies aims to give a basic introduction to the issues that affect children with dyslexia. At the end of the course, participants would better understand a dyslexic child and his specific needs.

Course Breakdown

Session 1: Introduction to Specific Learning Difficulties

- ◆ The spectrum of specific learning difficulties—Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, Non-verbal Learning Difficulty and Asperger's Syndrome - will be discussed
- ◆ Understanding co-morbidity and its implications

Session 2: Understanding the Assessment and Diagnosis of Dyslexia

- ◆ The approach taken by DAS psychologists in the assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia
- ◆ Understanding an assessment report by a psychologist

Session 3: Supporting Dyslexic Learners I

- ◆ Purpose of specialist intervention
- ◆ Overview of approaches
- ◆ History of Orton-Gillingham (OG)
- ◆ Principles of OG
- ◆ Elements of OG-based lesson

Session 4: Supporting Dyslexic Learners II

- ◆ Elements of dyslexia-friendly teaching in mainstream school
- ◆ Learning Styles
- ◆ Metacognition
- ◆ Marking for Success

Session 5: Supporting Dyslexic Learners III

- ◆ The relationship between dyslexia and self-esteem
- ◆ How to nurture the self-esteem of dyslexia learners
- ◆ Parenting issues
- ◆ The importance of resilience building

Qualification Awarded

A certificate of completion will be awarded by the DAS Academy at the end of the course.

Recommended for

Parents, teachers or professionals in a related field who wish to understand the problems their dyslexic child, student or client faces in trying to learn.

DAS Academy—Certificate Courses

Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching

Dates:

First Run

4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 March
9:30am to 4:30pm

Second Run

15, 19, 22, 26 & 29 August
2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23,
26 & 30 September
6:30pm to 9:30pm

Duration:

Total of 42 hours

Fee:

\$1,819

\$1,712 for DAS Parents

Learning Objective

The Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching is a phonics-based approach that equips educators/parents with knowledge and skills to provide intervention to struggling learners.

ELA is based on the internationally recognised Orton-Gillingham Approach and it assists learners to read and spell by simultaneously using visual, auditory and tactile channels.

Key Topics

- ◆ Dyslexia and language acquisition deficiencies
- ◆ Understanding the structure of the English language
- ◆ Phonics knowledge and its application in reading & spelling
- ◆ Oral support and reading for reading fluency
- ◆ Conceptual teaching and planning and carrying out a lesson

Method of Assessment

Written Test (Final Day), Oral test on Phonics knowledge and 2 lessons formally observed (either through video tapes or Evidence Teaching Skills-Practice Certificate)

Qualification Awarded

A Certificate of Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching will be awarded to participants who pass the assessment. A Certificate of Attendance will be award to participants who fail the assessment or do not wish to be assessed.

Recommended For

Parents, teachers or professionals in a related field who wish to understand the problems their dyslexic child, student or client faces in trying to learn.



DAS Academy—Certificate Courses

Certificate in Educational Psychology

Dates:

First Run

11, 14, 18, 21 & 25 March
6:30pm to 9:30pm

Second Run

7, 10, 17, 21 & 24
October
6:30pm to 9:30pm

Duration:

Total of 15 hours

Fee:

\$642
\$535 for DAS Parents

Learning Objective

The Certificate in Educational Psychology aims to equip participants with an understanding of educational psychology and its impact on parenting, teaching, and learning styles.

Key Topics

- ◆ Parenting Styles and the impact on development of a child
- ◆ Teaching Styles and the influence on learning of a student
- ◆ Learning Styles and the effect on how a student learns
- ◆ Cognitive Development Theory
- ◆ Social Cognitive Theory
- ◆ Constructivism

Method of Assessment

A take-home assignment due 2 weeks after the last session of the course (optional).

Qualification Awarded

A Certificate of Educational Psychology will be awarded to participants who pass the assessment. A Certificate of Attendance will be awarded to participants who fail the assessment or do not wish to be assessed.

Recommended For

Parents, teachers, or professionals in a related field interested in the psychology of teaching and learning.



Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

Enabling you to help your child

DAS Academy has developed workshops that will assist you in supporting your child and students that you work with in their learning endeavours.

Our workshops will provide a continuance of support that children with learning differences receive from our Learning Centres at their schools and homes. The DAS Academy transfers its specialist knowledge and skills to parents and caregivers, educators and professionals by conducting various courses focusing on practical training and techniques in the field of Specific Learning Differences.

Although these workshops have been designed for parents and caregivers we welcome anyone who is supporting a child with learning differences to join.

Funding schemes such as the Caregivers Training Grant (CTG) is available for some workshops. For more information, please visit www.dasacademy.edu.sg.

The workshops are run in three hour sessions on Saturdays mornings from 9:30am to 12:30pm unless specified otherwise.

All the workshops are conducted at:

DAS Academy

73 Bukit Timah Road
#05-01 Rex House
Singapore 229832

CPE Registration No.: 201003689Z
Validity 29 January to 29 December 2012

Phone: 6336 2555
Email: info@dasacademy.edu.sg
Website: www.dasacademy.edu.sg
Facebook: www.facebook.com/dasacademy



Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

Support Your Child with Assistive Technology: Nessy Learning Programme & Nessy Fingers

Date:

Saturday,
26 January 2013

Duration:

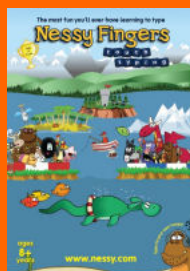
Total of 3 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

Fee:

\$85.60



Learning Objective

Computer-assisted learning has been shown to motivate a student with dyslexia to succeed in tasks. The software programme encourages the use of computers to aid the child's learning.



Nessy Learning Programme, winner of the Education Resources Award 2010 in the special educational needs ICT category, is a phonics-based software that teaches and reinforces phonograms and spelling rules through animated fun activities. Writing and high-frequency words are also included. Within the software, it also provides an extensive library of worksheets, flash cards and printable card games that can be used as reinforcement activities after the children have completed the games on the computer. This program is suitable for both home and school use. Nessy also comes with a teaching manual so parents who may not be familiar with the phonics components can still help their children at home.

Nessy Fingers teaches touch typing and follows a structured sequence like Nessy Learning Programme. This is a good introduction to phonics as children learn the basic sounds while familiarising the placement of fingers on the keyboard. This workshop includes several hands-on activities on laptops provided and is recommended for parents and caregivers who wish to support their children's learning at home.

Support Your Child with Assistive Technology: Clicker 6

Dates

Saturday, 9 March 2013

Duration:

Total of 3 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

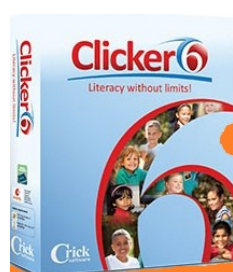
Fee:

\$85.60

Learning Objectives

Computer-assisted learning has been shown to motivate a student with dyslexia to succeed in tasks. The software programme encourages the use of computers to aid the child's learning.

About Clicker 6



As its name suggests, Clicker 6 is a program that encourages reading and writing with a click of the mouse. This program is suitable for reluctant writers or children with language difficulties. A highly customizable teaching tool, Clicker 6 allows teachers to scaffold the writing process for the children. Educators who lack the time to do so will be glad to know that they can tap on Clicker's library of teaching materials and ready-made templates online.

Recommended For

This workshop includes several hands-on activities on laptops provided and is recommended for parents and caregivers of students with specific learning differences; teachers; allied educators; school counsellors; therapists who help students with specific learning differences.

Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

Developing your Child's Vocabulary

Date:

First Run
Saturday,
16 February 2013

Second Run

Saturday, 6 July 2013

Duration:

3 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

Fee:

\$85.60

Learning Objective

To expand acquisition of new words, while also learning new meanings of words already in your child's vocabulary.

Key Topics

- ◆ The theory behind the importance of vocabulary
- ◆ How to present vocabulary to learners and involve them in their own learning process
- ◆ Making words work - activities & games to aid in the development of vocabulary
- ◆ How to measure (test) word knowledge

Additional Requirements

Participants are required to bring along:

1. Materials that they would use to support their child
2. Two different colored highlighters
3. A dictionary (electronic or physical)

Recommended For

Parents and caregivers with children between the ages of 9 to 14 (Primary 3 to Secondary 2).

Enabling Excellence

"We enable you through our courses and workshops to support children with learning differences so that they can have success in learning."



Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

iRaise Digital Kids: Literacy Apps for iPad (For Upper Primary/Secondary)

Date:

Saturday,
23 February 2013

Duration:

Total of 3 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

Fee:

\$85.60

Learning Objective

Students today grow up immersed in a world of fast-paced technology. The iPad has changed the way our children access knowledge and undertake learning. This workshop will provide an overview of how the iPad and the available range of apps can support and compensate for the literacy needs of students from upper primary to secondary school.

Key Topics

A range of apps for literacy support will be demonstrated in the areas of:

- ◆ Reading
- ◆ Spelling
- ◆ Mindmapping
- ◆ Organisation
- ◆ Writing and Note Taking
- ◆ References

A comprehensive list of these apps will be shared at the end of the workshop, to help parents and caregivers in making informed decisions about these technologies and strategies to support their implementation in schools will also be examined.

Recommended For

Parents and caregivers with children aged 11 and above (P5 to S4). This is not an introductory session to the iPad. Participants should have basic technical competence of operating or already own an iPad.

Additional Requirements

Participants are strongly encouraged to bring their own iPads. For participants who do not have an iPad to bring to the workshop, limited iPads will be available for sharing with other participants during the workshop.



Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

Developing Self Esteem in your Child

Dates:

First Run

Parents Session:
Saturday, 2 March 2013

Children Session:
Saturday, 9 March 2013

Second Run

Parents Session:
Saturday, 19 October
2013

Children Session:
Saturday, 26 October
2013

Duration:

Two 3-hour sessions
For a total of 6 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

Fee:

\$128.40

There will be two
separate sessions
conducted for
parents and children.

Learning Objective

Session for Parents: To understand the key processes involved in the development of self-esteem of children with dyslexia and other learning differences and how it affects them.

Session for Children: Learning is growth - intellectual, physical, psychological, social and a combination of those. Healthy self-esteem is an essential component for learning. Regardless of age, the self-esteem of a learner facilitates or inhibits learning.

Key Topics

Session for Parents

- ◆ Understanding your own parenting style
- ◆ Getting to know your child
- ◆ Building self-esteem and resilience in children
- ◆ Becoming the charismatic adult to your child

Session for Children

- ◆ Learn about self-esteem and self-awareness
- ◆ Using games, craft and group work, the workshop aims to show children how to develop self-awareness through self-discovery, honor their inner feelings, cultivate courage and self-respect, and more

Recommended For

Parents and caregivers with children between 10 to 12 years old (P4 to P6). There will be two separate sessions conducted for parents and children.



Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

Developing Writing Skills

Dates:

First Run

Saturday, 16 March 2013

Second Run

Saturday, 17 August 2013

Duration:

Total of 3 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

Fee:

\$85.60

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Gain an awareness of the development of writing skills in children
- ◆ Gain an awareness of difficulties and strengths of dyslexic/struggling children with regards to learning
- ◆ Understand how to use direct, explicit and multi-sensory activities to help children become more motivated, organized and fluent writers

Key Topics

- ◆ Overview of writing development in students
- ◆ Overview of writing development in students
- ◆ Writing planners and writing strategies to help with organisation, content and fluency in writing
- ◆ Playful writing – Several games to motivate reluctant writers

Recommended For

This workshop includes several hands-on activities and is recommended for parents and caregivers who seek to improve their child's or student's writing skills.



Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

Understanding Phonics Instructions

Dates:

First Run

Saturday, 16 March 2013
&
Saturday, 23 March 2013

Second Run

Saturday, 27 July 2013 &
Saturday, 3 August 2013

Duration:

Two 3-hour sessions
For a total of 6 hours

Time:

9:30am to 12:30pm

Fee:

\$128.40

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Understand the terms related to phonics instruction
- ◆ Understand the importance of phonics instruction for dyslexic learners
- ◆ Become aware of the components of good phonics instruction
- ◆ Become familiar with tools for multi-sensory phonics instruction
- ◆ Understand the nature of phonological awareness
- ◆ Gain skills in carrying out phonics instruction in school and at home
- ◆ Be aware of some letter-sounds of English

Key Topics

Session 1: Theory

- ◆ Terms related to phonics instruction
- ◆ How phonics instruction helps dyslexic learners to read and spell
- ◆ Components of good phonic instruction
- ◆ Tools for multi-sensory phonics instruction
- ◆ Nature of phonological awareness
- ◆ Seven main areas involved in building phonological awareness

Session 2: Practical

- ◆ Strategies for developing letter recognition
- ◆ Strategies for developing the seven main areas of phonological awareness
- ◆ Strategies for teaching letter-sound correspondence
- ◆ Strategies for reinforcing letter-sound correspondence
- ◆ Learning some letter-sounds of English

Recommended For

Parents and caregivers with children between the ages of 7 to 12 (P1 to P6).

Participants must attend both sessions as content covered in session 1 will not be repeated in session 2, and both sessions are linked together.

Participants will be better equipped to attend the Coping with Spelling Workshop after attending this workshop.

Information about our certificate courses and workshops

Are your education programs only for professionals?	Our education programmes are tailored to suit everyone. We have education programmes ranging from academic courses for individuals who want to pursue a career in teaching children with dyslexia, to workshops catered to parents and caregivers to help them support their child at home. Regardless of whether you are a pre-school educator, mainstream school teacher, private tutor, educational professional or a parent, we are confident you will be able to find an education programme that meets your requirements.								
Are DAS Academy Courses and Workshops value for money?	As a fully owned subsidiary of a non-profit organisation, our training programmes are in fact, reasonably priced. As an added value, we offer teaching practicum and practical hands-on exercises with students which exemplify our dedication and efforts to meet our mission. Teaching practicum and practical hands-on exercises are vital in equipping you with the right skills and experience to effectively support the dyslexics. We also provide the most up-to-date, scientifically proven, evidence-based learning strategies which have been successfully used to support the caregivers.								
Do I need to be a parent to attend one of your workshops?	We welcome everyone to our workshops as we feel that anyone who supports a child with learning differences would benefit from this information. However, you should note that these workshops were designed for parents and caregivers who support their child at home.								
GST?	Yes, our fees are inclusive of the 7% GST.								
Registration	<p>Registration for DAS Academy certificate courses and workshops can be made: Online at www.dasacademy.edu.sg or Sending the completed registration form with your payment to:</p> <table> <tr> <td>DAS Academy Ltd</td><td>Phone: 6336 2555</td></tr> <tr> <td>73 Bukit Timah Road</td><td>Fax: 6643 9643</td></tr> <tr> <td>Rex House #05-01</td><td>Email: info@dasacademy.edu.sg</td></tr> <tr> <td>Singapore 229832</td><td></td></tr> </table>	DAS Academy Ltd	Phone: 6336 2555	73 Bukit Timah Road	Fax: 6643 9643	Rex House #05-01	Email: info@dasacademy.edu.sg	Singapore 229832	
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Rex House #05-01	Email: info@dasacademy.edu.sg								
Singapore 229832									
Payment	<p>Payment can be made by cash, NETS, cheque or credit card. Payment can be made at any DAS Learning Centre. For your protection please do not send cash through the mail.</p> <p>Cheque Payments: Cheques should be made payable to "DAS Academy Ltd" with clear indication of name and phone number of participants, course date and title on the reverse side of the cheque.</p> <p>Credit Card Payments: Credit card payments are only available for amounts of \$600 or more. For courses about \$1,000, interest-free installment plans of 6 and 12 months are available for OCBC credit card holders only.</p>								
Cancellation Policy	Cancellation fees will not be imposed if notice to withdraw is given 14 days before the commencement of the course or workshop. Cancellations after this date will be charged at 25% of the course fee. For no-show or withdrawal from the course/workshop on the commencement date no refunds will be made.								

Psychological Assessments

Our multi-disciplinary team have extensive experience assessing individuals with behavioural, developmental and psychological issues that lead to learning differences. Our reports are recognised

- ◇ Dyslexia
- ◇ Dyspraxia
- ◇ Dyscalculia
- ◇ Dysgraphia
- ◇ ADHD
- ◇ Non Verbal Disabilities
- ◇ Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ◇ Non-verbal Difficulties
- ◇ Auditory and Sensory Issues
- ◇ Articulation Difficulties
- ◇ Stammering
- ◇ Social Communication Difficulties



DAS International
Empowering Successful Learning

DAS International Services Ltd

73 Bukit Timah Road, #05-01 Rex House
Singapore 229832

info@dasint.org.sg | www.dasint.org.sg
www.facebook.com/dasinternational



What Makes the DAS Academy Unique

- An Asian Perspective
 - ◇ Academic programmes are developed with an Asian perspective relevant to the Asian educational environment
- Wide Expertise
 - ◇ Lecturers have a wide range of expertise in the fields of Specific Learning Differences, Psychology and Special Education
- Theory in Practice Approach
 - ◇ Academic programmes provide both theoretical and practical approaches



Our Services

- Workshops for Parents & Educators
- Certificate Courses
- Academic Programmes
- Consultancy Services for Training
- Customised Training (Local and Overseas)
- Teaching Resources

DAS Academy Ltd

73 Bukit Timah Road
#05-01 Rex House
Singapore 229832



DAS Academy
Enabling Excellence

CPE Registration No.: 201003689Z Validity 29 January to 29 December 2012

☎ 6336 2555

✉ info@dasacademy.edu.sg

🌐 www.dasacademy.edu.sg

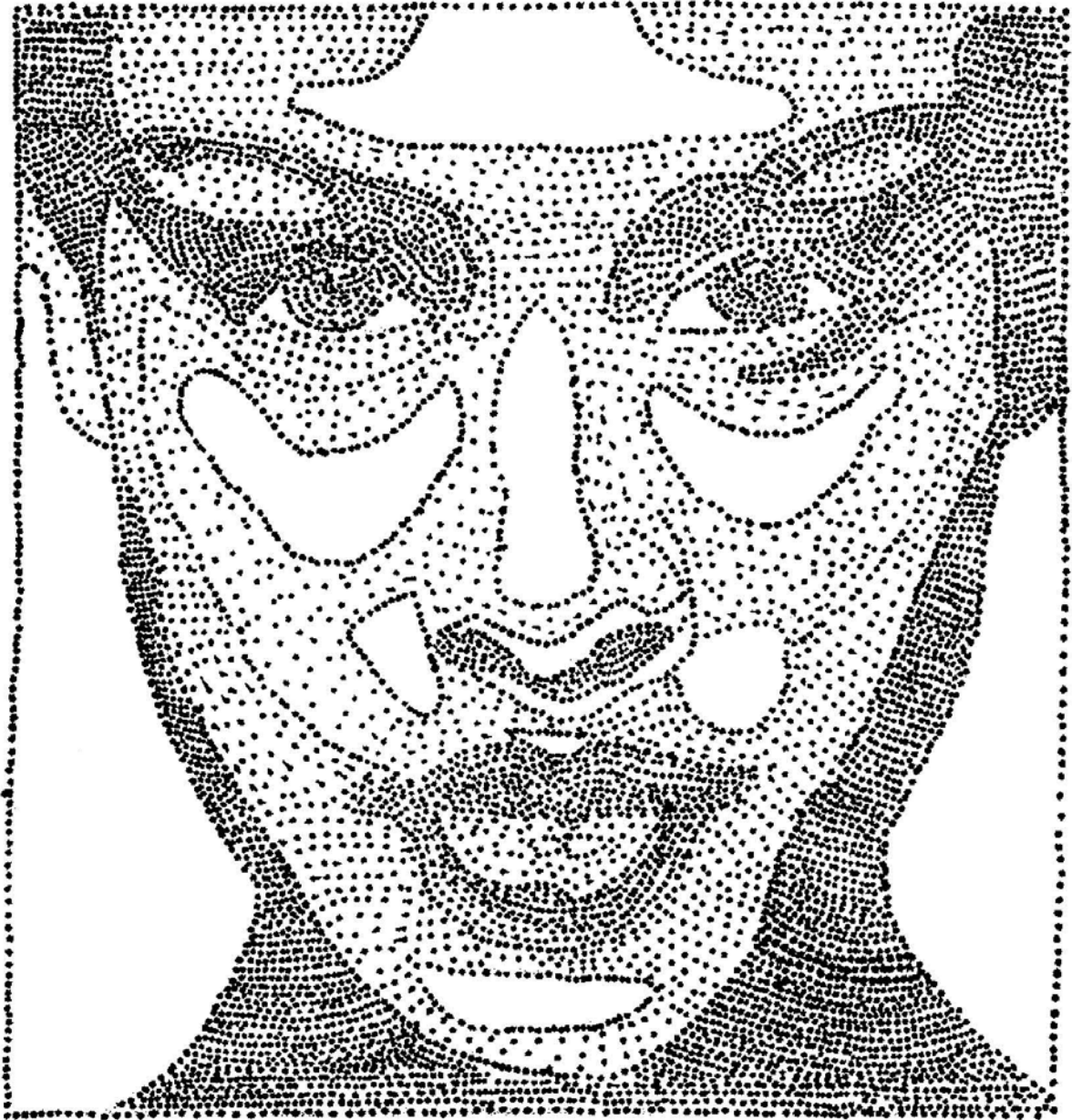
f www.facebook.com/dasacademy

Certificate Courses & Workshops Calendar

Certificate Courses	Hours	Fees		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		Public	DAS Parents												
Certificate in Dyslexia Studies	15	\$642	\$535		23	2,9,16,23						28	5,12,19,26		
Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching (Pre-School)	18	\$856	\$749											25 to 27	
Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching	42	\$1,819	\$1,712			4 to 9					15,19,22,26,29	2,5,9,12,16,19,23,26,30			
Certificate in Educational Psychology	15	\$642	\$535			11,14,18,21,25							7,10,17,21,24		
Advanced Certificate in Dyslexia and Literacy Teaching	21	\$963	\$856				4,8,11,15,18,22,25							25 to 28	
Certificate in Dyscalculia and Numeracy Teaching	15	\$642	\$535					6,9,13,16,20							2 to 4
Certificate in Understanding Speech and Language Impairment	12	\$535	\$428					25	1,8,15						
Workshops		Fees		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Support Your Child with Assistive Technology (Various Software)	3	\$85.60		26		9	27			27	31		26		
Developing Your Child's Vocabulary	3	\$85.60			16					6					
iRaise Digital Kids: Literacy Apps for iPad	3	\$85.60			23					13					
Understanding Phonics Instructions	6	\$128.40				16,23				27	3				
Developing Self Esteem in your Child	6	\$128.40				2,9							19,26		
Developing Writing Skills	3	\$85.60				16					17				
Mind Your Grammar	3	\$85.60					6				24				
Study Smart: Effective Study Skills for Your Child	3	\$85.60					13				31				
Supporting Your Child in Mathematics	3	\$85.60					20					7			
Developing Your Child's Comprehension Skills	3	\$85.60					27					14			
Coping with Spelling	6	\$128.40						4,11				21,28			
Strategies for Sensorimotor Challenges	3	\$85.60						18						16	
Strategies for Behaviour Management	3	\$85.60							29					23	
Preparing Your Child for English Language Paper 2 (Primary)	3	\$85.60								20					

☆☆☆
Excellent

well - done!



Student Gallery

Name : Ho Songrui
Age : Sec 1
Centre : Bedok Learning Centre



DAS Writer's Corner

We are proud to share these short stories with you and hope you enjoy reading them as much as we did!

An apology given too late

By Tan Jian Hao S4NA

"I'm now giving you a week of detention. Report to the discipline master's room immediately after class," said Miss Quek sternly. Feeling annoyed, I turned and walked away. Miss Quek was my English teacher since Secondary 1. All along I was trusted by her and she would assign me to do some really important works. However, ever since I started skipping my co-curricular activity (CCA), we fell out and kept arguing.

This happened when I was in Secondary Two. As usual, I was having my CCA training every Friday. Unusually, this time was completely different. Out of the blue, Miss Quek came and started to scold me and my group mates for something we did not do. I stepped out and argued with her for a while and got pissed off. I then picked up my bag and walked away.

The following week, Miss Quek came to me and told me that I was given detention. At that moment, I found her very unreasonable. I glared at her with a murderous look and walked away without saying a word. During my detention, she came and gave me tough physical trainings as punishment. I refused to do them and would often be referred to the discipline master. This went on for two years without stopping. It was just the same routine everyday.

Now, upon looking back, I realised that the way I handled this issue was not appropriate at all. All that while, sitting in the detention room for hours was absolutely not worthwhile just because of a little misunderstanding. I then picked up the courage to apologise to her for what I did. Unfortunately, it was all too late as I was unable to go for training anymore.

My views on Capital punishment

By Tan Jian Hao S4NA

Capital Punishments are harsh punishments such as caning, death sentences and life imprisonments. Some semi-major crimes are rioting, outrage of modesty, theft and vandalism. Major offences would be drug trafficking, burglary, drug abuse, drug possession, rape, terrorism, murder and assault. All these crimes considered major, could lead to caning or worse still the death sentence.

Caning is a brutal punishment which gives extreme pain to the offender. The cane marks would be left on the buttocks forever and would be a humiliating thing to go through. As the marks would be left on the offender's buttocks forever, it would definitely be difficult to hide them from family members when the offender is released. The offender would have to explain to the family about the marks. However, caning could be good also as it makes the offender regret doing crimes and enable him to turn over a new leaf. In my opinion, caning is good. However, it should be moderated.

The Death sentence is the worst punishment of all. There are two types of death sentences mainly death by hanging and death by the electric chair. Death by hanging includes crimes like murder, terrorism, massacres, drug trafficking with 50 gm and above and drug possession with 50 gm and above. Death by the electric chair will only be practised if the offender is a terrorist who is a threat to the safety of Singaporeans. In my opinion such punishments should be abolished as the offender is not given the chance to show remorse and change for the better.

Long term imprisonment would be the best punishment and should not be abolished. It may waste the offenders' youths but however, it gives the offenders time to think through their mistakes



and feel guilty about the things they did or the people they harmed by their actions. It could be time consuming but a good way to make one reflect on one's mistakes. I think capital punishments should not be abolished but moderated according to the seriousness of one's crimes.

A Story

By Chan Yew Long Chandra Ansley
Primary 4 student, Jurong Point

Once there was a boy eating in a fast food restaurant and found a 3 year old talking chicken nugget in his chicken nugget meal.

One day something silly happened. The talking chicken nugget went to the toilet at the foot of a hill and the boy could not find the talking chicken nugget.

The boy found out that the fingerprints in the toilet was from a spy and the spy had taken the talking chicken nugget.

So he did something dangerous to find the talking chicken nugget like swimming in lava.

After one minute, he gave up and asked: "Hey! Police!"

The police replied, "What are you looking for?"

The boy said, "I am looking for a 3 year old talking chicken nugget. Have you seen him?"

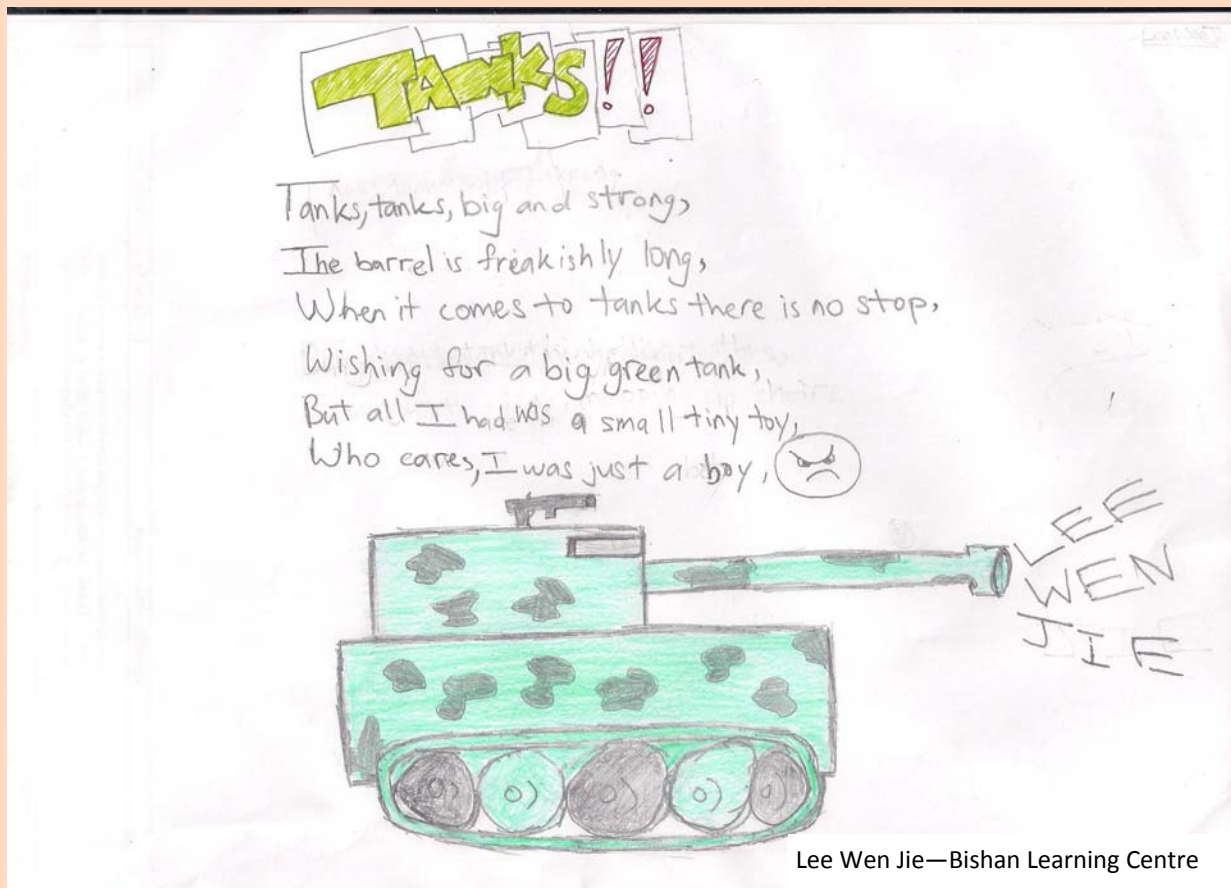
The police said, "There is no such thing as a talking chicken nugget."

Once the boy heard it, he walked away sadly.

Suddenly, he saw a satellite on sale and it was at a very low price so he bought it.

A few days later, he found the talking chicken nugget in an old warehouse and he asked a 1,000,000,000 person army to come with him.

In the end the boy found the talking chicken nugget and went home.



2nd draft

Sherman

2i

The Draco Lizard: The Glider of the Rainforest

While a photographer is filming the Rain Forest, the photographer points at a Draco Lizard and stays calm. Draco Lizards rarely stay in a tree. The photographer moves closer to the Draco Lizard. When the Draco Lizard sees many people, it slides away.

The Draco Lizard is a mysterious creature. Many people think that it can fly. Experts, however, believe that it has wings. Grasshoppers are Draco Lizards' usually food. Millions of people go to the Rain Forest but they hardly see Draco Lizards.

A closer inspection of a Draco Lizard ~~traced~~ will explain why it is so mysterious. The Draco's instinct is not effective around bigger animals or people. An adult Draco Lizard weighs close to 1kg. The largest recorded is 2 feet long and weighed 2kg!

The Draco Lizard can move very fast to a tree. When the Draco Lizard starts to jump, it spreads out its wings like a fan and the wind pushes the wings but the Draco still falls. The Draco can control its wings by using its muscles to glide to the side that it wants.

Fantastic work, Sherman!
This is the best article
you've done so far!
It's really interesting!
Now I know what a
Draco Lizard is...
Keep it up!



me me and myself

I am a girl - a member of ^{the} female species


Music to my ears is like food for my body.
Without it my brain will be like a piece of blank paper.

I wear Spectacles - the studious type ^{to} make me look smart.

I like pink colour - Hot pink is my favourite

I am friendly, friendly as can be

Come and sit beside ^{me}, I would be your friend.
Come and talk to me and you will hear my story
I will share with you in whatever way I can.

That's me! Yi Feng 

Yi Feng



Tang Zhao Weai — Bishan Learning Centre

School, I hate School
I have to wake up
early to reach school.
School is so boring
when it is lesson
time. But when the
teacher is not in
class, the class
goes wild. And the
worst of all is
Homework!

HOMEWORK
Pg 100-120

Ernest Choo

Ernest Choo — Bishan Learning Centre

MOON

I stare at it all night long,
It give off a romantic dim light
until dawn. It changes its shape
every hour. Every month it will
surely reveal
its
true
Shape....

-Rain-

Rain, while people praise it
I curse and swear at it.
Brings sadness and causes
trouble from wetting laundry
to making the dry and
clean field to muddy
and dirty field. Causing
trouble everywhere from
Wedding to birthdays
celebrations
by Elijah Siow Li



Elijah Sieo Yi — Bishan Learning Centre



Dear Miss



Laurentia,

I'm Nusaidah Iman from
Tampines Primary School.

I love to go horse riding
like you. I wish to ride
horse more often as I
have only rode horse
five times. I am writing
to you because you have
done Singapore proud.



I feel happy



for you because your life
journey is very hard but
you never ever give up. You
are an inspiring person. Thank
you for trying again and
again. You are a huge role-
model. I have dyslexia. You
taught me a life lesson to never
give up and practice again and
again. I have lots of happiness for you.



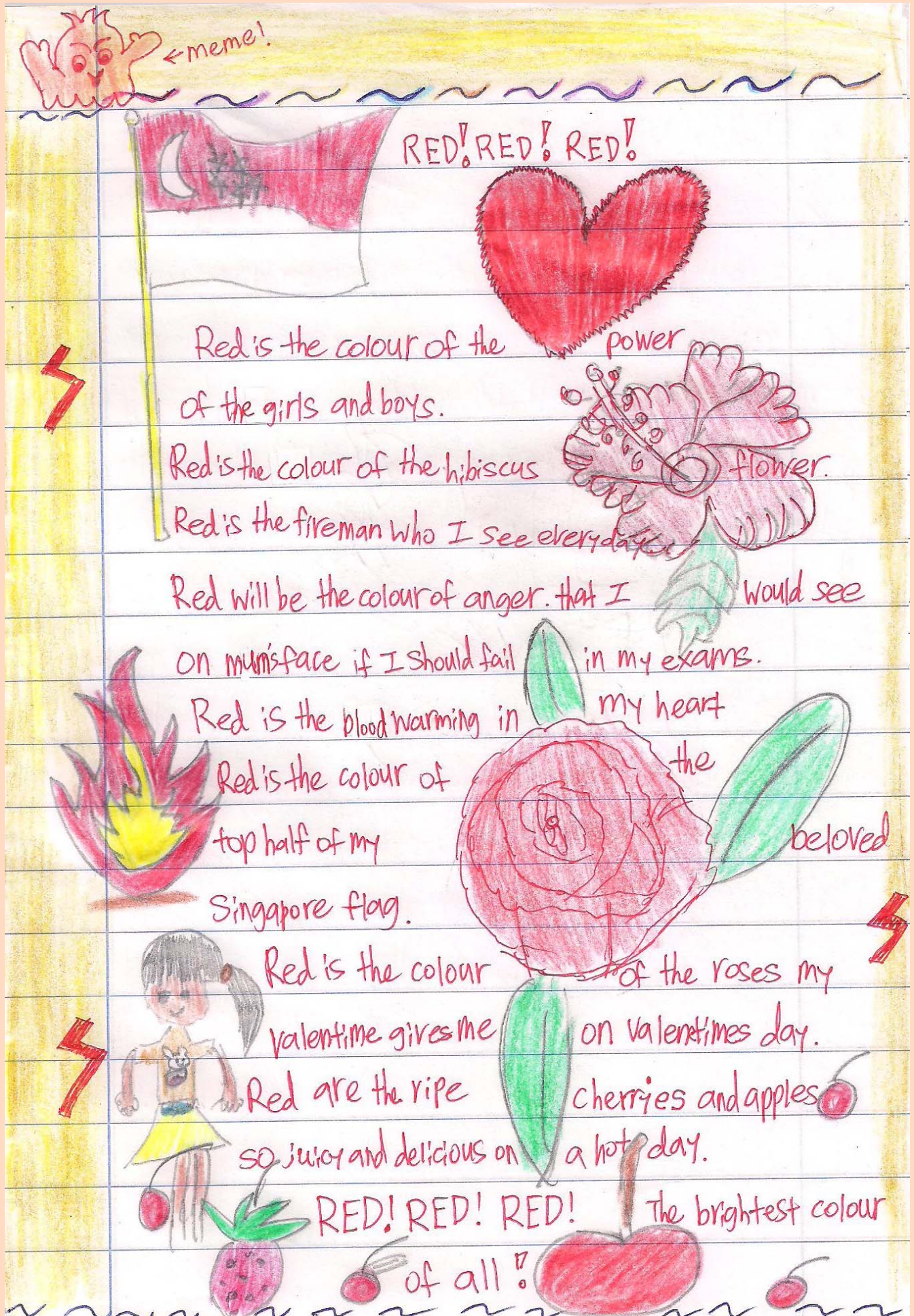
Thank you for bringing
glory to Singapore. You are an inspiration
to all. Your achievements are
happiness to Singapore.



-Yours Sincerely

Nusaidah Iman Ipoh / Mohammad Ikbal

Nusaidah Iman Ipoh
Mohammad Ikbal - P2
Tampines Learning
Centre



Lim Shi Yun Emily – Age:14, Bishan Learning Centre

Verena Teo

18/10/12

How I feel coming to DAS.

I felt  as I have more help in my study.

The first time I came to DAS I was ^{scared} as I did not know what to do.

After a few lesson I begin to enjoy the activity the teacher gave.

Reflections from DAS
students in Rachael
Tan's Class at Jurong
Point Learning Centre

How I feel coming

by Shafey

I Like to go to DAS.

How I feel coming to DAS

by Aidan Lo Jiah Hao



How I feel coming to DAS

by Winston

I feel that DAS has helped me
With my studies. The teachers are
Kind and fun. I'm happy to be in DAS
and I enjoy playing games.

How I feel coming to DAS

by Daniel Pravin

I
FEEL
Happy
to
come
DAS.

How I feel coming to DAS

by Aisley



How I feel coming to DAS

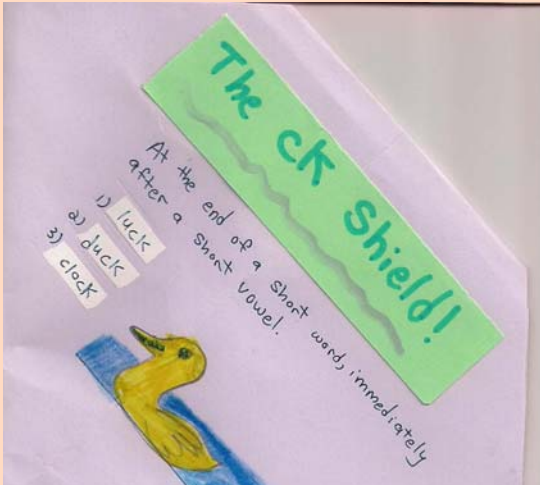
by Jolene Leon Wen Qi

Today, I feel excited.

Athena Lee—Parkway Parade



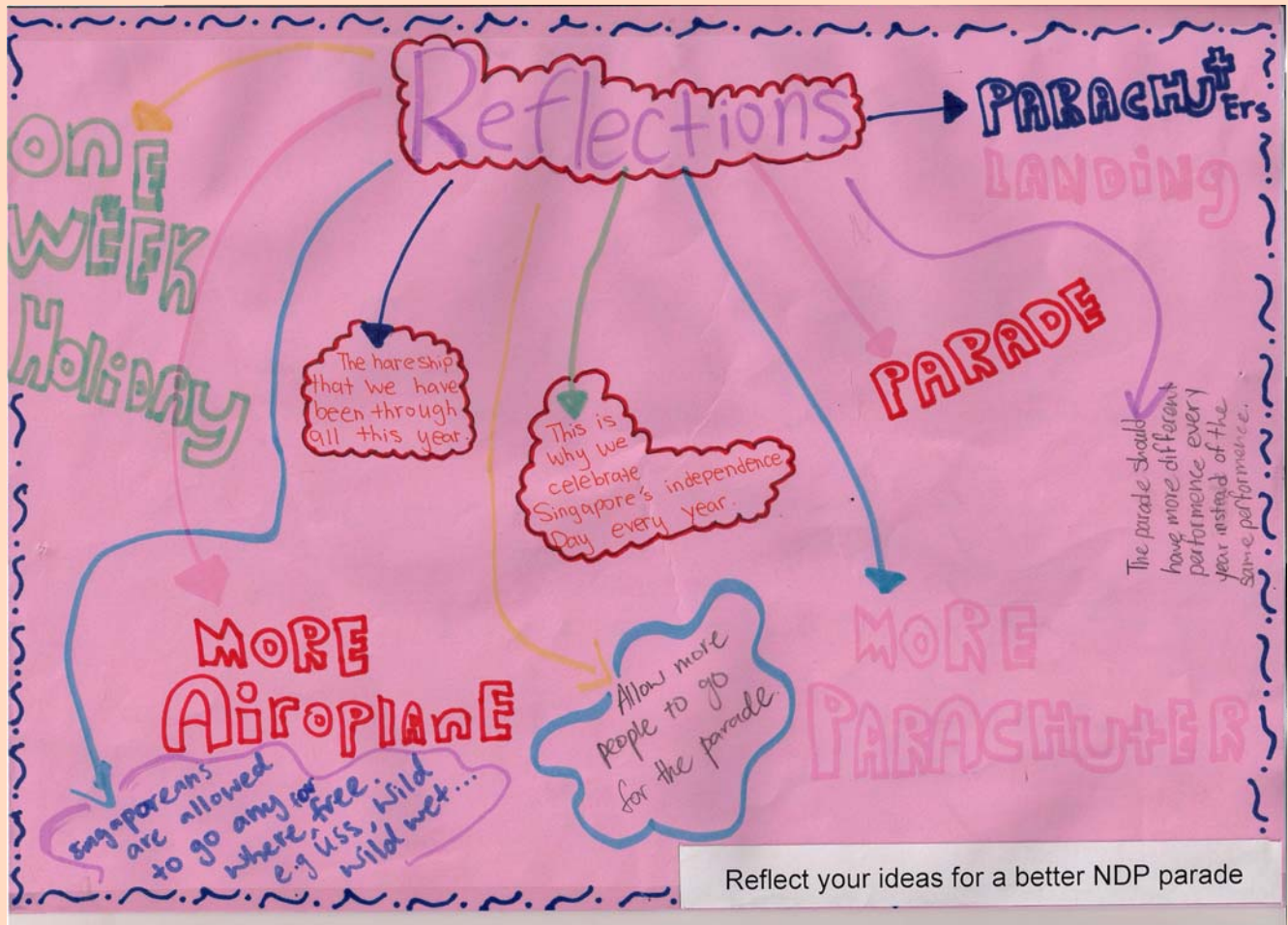
Phonics books by students at Queenstown



Phonics books by students at Queenstown



Athena Lee—Parkway Parade



Poem (Create a poem "Singapore")

I LOVE Singapore because it is safe and sound.

The environment is Clean and Green.

Everyone **works** as one nation one Singapore.

Let's get up and build a **STRONGER** Nation.

1 **ONE** **1** **one**

Nation, ONE SINGAPORE!

By Kyo, Abirami, Mun Yee & Lucia Maria

MY INNER WORLD

A CELEBRATION OF DYSLEXIC MINDS

On Sale Now

\$20

Available at all
DAS Learning
Centres

My Inner World: A Celebration of Dyslexic Minds is a 70-page collection of creativity, wit and brilliance of the children we work with. This special 21st anniversary publication celebrates the capacity that dyslexics are capable of and invites the reader to journey into their world. Four chapters in the book feature a myriad of artwork, writing, expressions plus activities to keep the reader constantly engaged. My Inner World: A Celebration of Dyslexic Minds is available for purchase at \$20 at all DAS learning centres and online at www.das.org.sg/book.

100% of the proceeds go towards DAS to help dyslexic children.



Nessy Fingers is a powerful way to improve spelling by developing your memory for movement.

Age: 8+ years

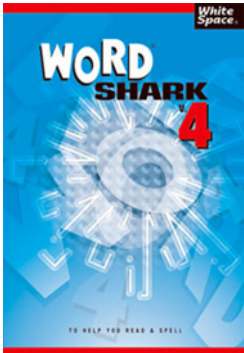
\$45.00 for single user license



Nessy Learning Programme enables all abilities to read, write and spell with confidence.

Age: 5 – 14 years

\$225.00 for single user license



Word Shark 4 combines the excitement of computer games with the serious task of learning to read and spell.

Age: 5 – 15 years

\$128.00 for single user license



Number Shark 4 teaches and reinforces numeracy using forty-five carefully designed games, with over five hundred topics to choose from.

Age: 5 – 16 years

\$108.00 for single user license



MindGenius 4 is ideal for students of all ages in planning essays, projects and reports as well as organizing study notes and revising for exams.

Age: Above 12 years

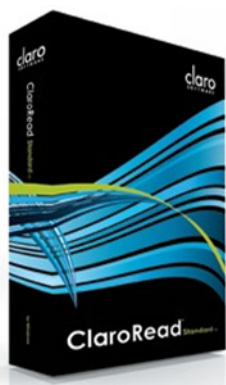
\$135.00 for single user license



Clicker 5 is an award winning tool for students with learning difficulties, which integrates text to speech.

Age: 4 – 14 years

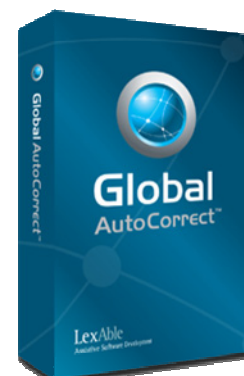
\$250.00 for single user license



ClaroRead is a text to speech software integrated closely with Microsoft Word, supports individual struggling with reading and writing.

Age: 5 – 15 years

\$326.00 for single user license



Global AutoCorrect is a discreet software tool that assists people with literacy difficulties.

Age: All Ages

\$119.00 for single user license

Grab a copy now!
www.dasint.org.sg/services/at-resources.html

All DAS Parents will receive a 5% discount (All prices are subject to change)

turning 21:  a milestone