

UNITE 2026

UNITING IDEAS IN TEACHING EXCELLENCE

UNITING IDEAS IN TEACHING EXCELLENCE:

25 to 26 June 2026

The UNITE Conference brings together the village that supports those who learn differently. Educators, researchers, specialists, psychologists, allied health professionals, parents, and advocates come together to share ideas, research, and practical strategies that improve outcomes for individuals with Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) and other diverse learning needs.

UNITE 2026 showcases a diverse collection of presentations spanning identification and intervention, inclusive education, executive function, early childhood education, advocacy, educational technology, and current research in SpLD. The conference provides a platform for both established and emerging researchers to share evidence-based practice, innovative approaches, and real-world experiences that bridge research and classroom application.

This collection of abstracts represents the breadth of knowledge shared during the conference. Together, they reflect UNITE's commitment to fostering collaboration, encouraging professional dialogue, and advancing teaching excellence in support of those who learn differently.

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AI: Friend, Foe or Future

Geetha Shantha Ram¹ and Soofrina Binte Mubarak¹

1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping education, but for neurodiverse learners, its impact is neither straightforward nor neutral.

This keynote is framed as a dialogue, beginning with the very real concerns surrounding AI: over-reliance, ethical risks, and the potential to widen existing inequities if used without care or understanding. The conversation then shifts to possibility. When thoughtfully applied, AI can reduce cognitive load, support executive functioning, personalise learning, and provide judgement-free scaffolding, benefits that are particularly powerful for learners.

The keynote concludes with a clear imperative. AI is no longer a choice to debate or defer. It is a reality shaping how we learn, work, and participate in society. Our responsibility is not to shield neurodiverse learners from AI but to equip them to use it ethically, critically, and confidently. Preparing students for an AI-steeped world is not about convenience or efficiency; it is about access, agency, and ensuring that difference is not a disadvantage in a future being revolutionised right now.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Artificial Intelligence, Equity and Access, Learner Agency, Future-ready Education, Neurodiversity



The more we use artificial intelligence, the more we need good teachers

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Abstract

There is a lot of discussion about paradigm shifts in education with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI). In special needs education, the possibilities are immense as well. People are paying a lot of attention to the various AI tools to check out how these tools could do our work more efficiently and effectively. This is, of course, important. However, more fundamentally, since artificial intelligence is artificial intelligence, shouldn't we fix our focus firmly on real intelligence? Will artificial intelligence deprive learners of opportunities to develop real intelligence, or will we be able to use artificial intelligence to create platforms for human intelligence to be exercised and to flourish? Does the increasing presence of AI imply that teachers are no longer needed? Paradoxically, the more advancements in artificial intelligence, the more important human intelligence will become. The more technology we use in education, the more important the human teacher will become. The more we wish to cater to specific learning differences, the more judgement calls we need from the human teacher behind the tool. In an age of artificial intelligence, the human side of education should be enhanced, not diminished.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, real intelligence, specific learning differences, technology, teachers

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Beyond Barriers: Harnessing Generative AI to Transform Learning for Dyslexic Students

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Abstract

Dyslexia affects millions of students worldwide, often creating barriers to reading, writing, and academic confidence. Yet with the rise of Generative AI, educators now have powerful tools to transform these challenges into opportunities. This keynote explores how Gen AI tools can be used to personalise learning experiences for dyslexic students, from text-to-speech and speech-to-text capabilities to AI-driven content simplification, multisensory storytelling, and real-time adaptive feedback. Through practical strategies and real-world examples, educators will discover how Gen AI can help level the playing field for students who need it most.

Keywords: Generative AI, Dyslexia, Inclusive Education, Personalised Learning, Assistive Technology, AI in Education, Adaptive Learning, Multisensory Learning, EdTech Innovation

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The BRAIN EFFICIENCY SCREENING TEST: Re-Uniting the Developmental Disorders!

Angela Fawcett¹

1. *Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Abstract

It has long been recognised that, in addition to their defining differences, there are commonalities between developmental disorders, as evidenced by their 'comorbidities'. These commonalities have been partially explained by recent research on executive function, working memory and speed of processing in cognitive development. Applying this 'inclusive' framework to the understanding and support of all children with special educational needs (SEND), we upgraded our well-established 30-minute Dyslexia Screening Test to create an index of brain efficiency (BEI) as well as a literacy index (LI), renaming the test the Brain Efficiency Screening Test (BEST). The BEST, uniquely, meets all the requirements of the recent Delphi group recommendations for dyslexia screening while empowering teaching professionals to undertake the test. It was utilised in a recent UK intervention with highly disadvantaged 'Children with a Social Worker' aged 8-11 years to supplement existing measures. Data will be provided on comparison of BEST 'at risk' classifications with school diagnostic classification; of BEI with other assessments of executive function; and of BEST as a principled method of assessing the 'progressive' benefits of an intervention.

Keywords: Dyslexia, learning disorders, attention, executive function

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Coaching and Pairing for Impact: An Inclusive Literacy Framework Built on Assistive Technology and Orton-Gillingham Principles for Phonics Recovery.

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2. Global Head of Education, Empowering Tech & Scanning Pens

Abstract

This paper presents a scalable literacy intervention model tailored for learners aged 9–14 with persistent literacy difficulties linked to dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). It integrates Literacy Junction (LJ), a multi-sensory phonics programme built on Orton-Gillingham principles, with assistive technology (AT) coaching using Reading Pens. This pairing provides a fully scaffolded solution for students who have not progressed with traditional Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) approaches. Trialled in a Birmingham-based UK case study, learners supported via Wave 3 interventions demonstrated rapid gains in reading fluency, comprehension, and writing. Early results show learners achieving progress equivalent to a full academic year within ten weeks. The combined coaching and pairing model produced a 35% improvement in literacy outcomes—significantly outperforming either intervention in isolation. This dual-strategy approach empowers learners with SpLD to “learn to read” while simultaneously enabling them to “read to learn.” By aligning inclusive pedagogies, AT integration, and learner-led coaching, the framework fosters learner independence and sustained academic success. The submission proposes a replicable model for teaching excellence, grounded in multidisciplinary collaboration, real-world data insights, and equity-driven design, uniting transformative ideas to help close the literacy gap.

Keywords: Assistive Technology, Orton Gillingham, Literacy Intervention, Dyslexia Support, Coaching And Pairing, Reading Pens, Wave3Support, SEND Education, Inclusive Teaching, Teaching Excellence, Independent Learning, Multisensory Teaching, Education Equity, Birmingham Case Study, SEND Station.

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Accessible Online Counselling Facilitates Help-Seeking Behaviour of College Students: The Mediating Role of School Connectedness

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Abstract

The study aimed to know how the accessibility of online counselling facilitates help-seeking behaviour of college students through the mediating role of school connectedness. Through a series of regression analyses of the pathways and to analyse the mediation analysis in the process of the bootstrapping method in SPSS for the 300 college students who served as respondents, results revealed that accessibility of online counselling has a significant effect on help-seeking behaviour. Likewise, the accessibility of online counselling has a significant impact on school connectedness. School connectedness was also revealed to have a significant effect on help-seeking behaviour.

Considering all pathways to be significant in the results, school connectedness mediates the relationship between the accessibility of online counselling and help-seeking behaviour, at least, partially. Thus, school connectedness appeared to have a partial mediation on the relationship between the two variables. The findings of the study implied that it is important for schools to create a safe environment where students feel that they belong through the presence of accessible counselling services that enable college students to actively seek help when experiencing mental health concerns.

Keywords: Online counselling, School connectedness, Help-seeking

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Movement-Based Stimulation of Executive Functions to Enhance Math and Reading Skills in Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Across many education systems, basic literacy and numeracy have declined. In PISA 2022, the OECD reported average drops since 2018 of about 15 score points in mathematics and 10 in reading across OECD countries. (OECD,2023)

The paper aims to investigate whether the involvement of movement coordination and balance in the inclusive learning process contributes to reading and maths skills.

Method: The methodology used to measure skills: the multiplication test, Wechsler's attention subtest – Encryption, and reading skill test. To create a pedagogical intervention: a balance board with integrated multiplication tasks and letters, as well as movement coordination exercises.

Results: The first results of one study confirm the authors' hypothesis that students aged 9 –10 years old, after pedagogical intervention with the Smart Balance Board, show higher levels of concentration and multiplication in repeated tests. Increased dynamics were observed in the improvement of reading skills for 9 children.

Conclusions: The literature indicates a positive effect of motor coordination exercises on the development of pre-reading and maths skills. The case studies show a positive effect of motor coordination exercises on reading and multiplication skills. The article shows the importance of motor coordination and balance in the learning process through the development of attention and information processing speed.

Keywords: attention; maths skills; reading skills; motor coordination; inclusive education.

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To be language-specific, or not to be: An examination of the discriminative power of Nonword Repetition tasks for bilingual children at-risk for language difficulties

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Abstract

Research has emphasised the importance of early detection of children at-risk for language difficulties (Chiat, 2015). While primarily validated with monolinguals, NWR tasks are increasingly applied to bilingual children (Artem-Lotem, 2012; Gibson et al., 2015). However, a critical concern is whether these tasks can differentiate developmental disorder from weakness in bilingual language proficiency (Eikerling et al., 2022). The current study investigates the discriminability utility of language-specific and non-specific NWR for bilingual children considered at risk for atypical development compared to age-matched, typically developing peers. Three NWR subscales - Cross-linguistic, English and Mother Tongue (MT) - were administered to three age groups: Kindergarten 1, Primary 1 and Primary 3 students (N = 430). Participants were matched on characteristics of age, gender, nonverbal intelligence, home literacy, and household income. Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve analyses presented the sensitivity and specificity of the different NWR subscales, with six models run across grade and MT groups. Area under the curve (AUC) values revealed that the reliability of NWR tasks in screening at-risk children varies according to age and language background. Task effectiveness was less effective in Kindergarten 1 due to underdeveloped phonological memory, improved in Primary 1 and showed moderate MT-dependent discrimination at Primary 3. These findings offer novel insights into the utility of locally-developed NWR tasks with bilingual children, highlighting subscales that reliably index phonological processing differences, consistent with the results reported by Eikerling et al. (2022). The findings inform intervention practices in identifying children at risk for dyslexia and other language-related difficulties.

Keywords: bilingual children, nonword repetition, ROC curve, dyslexia, language assessment

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Profiling Chinese Developmental Dyslexia in English–Chinese Bilingual Learners: Developing an Assessment Battery in Singapore.

Catherine Ni Chunhong¹

1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

Purpose. Chinese developmental dyslexia (CD) presents distinct cognitive-linguistic challenges due to the morphosyllabic nature of the Chinese writing system. Beyond established cross-linguistic predictors such as rapid automatized naming (RAN) and phonological awareness (PA), Chinese literacy additionally depends on orthographic awareness (OA), morphological awareness (MA), and working memory (WM). This study aimed to: (1) develop and evaluate a comprehensive cognitive-linguistic assessment battery for English-Chinese bilingual children in Singapore; and (2) identify cognitive-linguistic subtypes of CD.

Method. Seventy Primary 1-4 students (53 CD; 17 typically developing) completed measures of OA, MA, RAN, PA, WM, oral language proficiency, and Chinese literacy outcomes (word reading, reading fluency, spelling). Reliability, exploratory factor analyses, group comparisons, hierarchical regression, and cluster analyses were conducted to evaluate psychometric properties and identify subtypes.

Results. The battery demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha = .61-.98$) and coherent factor structure, effectively differentiated CD and typically developing readers. Regression analyses showed that OA and WM consistently accounted for unique variance in reading and spelling, RAN was most strongly associated with reading fluency. Cluster analysis identified five distinct dyslexia subtypes.

Conclusion. Findings provide robust support for a multiple-deficit model of Chinese developmental dyslexia, highlighting both universal processes (e.g., naming speed) and script-specific demands (e.g., orthographic and morphological processing). The validated assessment battery offers a language-sensitive tool for profiling dyslexia in bilingual contexts of Singapore.

Keywords: Chinese developmental dyslexia, cognitive-linguistic profiling, assessment battery development, bilingual literacy, multiple-deficit model, dyslexia subtypes.

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Digital Inclusion in Higher Education: A 5-Minute Toolkit

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Abstract

This presentation introduces the outcomes of our project to create a practical toolkit for digital inclusion. The updated "5 Minutes of Digital Inclusion" course, hosted on the Open University UK's OpenLearn Create platform, comprises five weeks of concise, five-minute videos, with participants earning a digital badge for each week completed. The course content covers Universal Design for Learning (UDL), reasonable adjustments, alternative assessment strategies, and the use of technologies like Generative AI and other assistive technologies to support neurodiverse and disabled learners.

The course has been shared with staff and students at Goldsmiths, University of London and LASALLE College of the Arts, learning and teaching networks, as well as with schools and universities across Sri Lanka.

Our session will present the findings and impact of this initiative. We will share viewing data and a qualitative analysis of reflective feedback collected from knowledge checks and follow-up interviews with course participants. The presentation will focus on key learnings regarding the effectiveness of a bite-sized video format for professional development and the observed changes in attitudes and practices among participants. We will highlight how a scalable, open-access resource can foster significant progress towards more equitable and accessible digital learning environments. The aim is to provide practical evidence and a blueprint for others looking to implement similar initiatives.

Keywords: digital inclusion, neurodiversity, toolkit, universal design for learning

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A Comparative Study on The Academic Achievement of Students Without Special Education Needs (SEN) In Inclusive Classrooms Regarding the Type of Inclusion in Pekanbaru, Indonesia

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Abstract

Inclusive education has been a major priority for Indonesian education policy since 2003. Although often criticised for its potential negative impact on students without education needs (SEN), recent developments have shown various possible models of inclusivity implementation, one of which is co-teaching, where special education teachers or paraprofessionals provide additional support. This study, conducted in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, aimed to compare the academic achievement of 33 first-grade students without SEN in two inclusive educational settings: with and without co-teaching. Students were tested one month after the beginning of the second semester using the Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (CPM) to assess intellectual capacities, a phonological awareness test, and the Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) test to measure reading skills, and simple counting questions to evaluate math skills. Results showed a significant difference in academic achievement, with inclusive classes that had co-teachers producing better reading skills compared to those without co-teachers, though the number of students with disabilities in each class also influenced outcomes, as fewer were recorded in co-teaching classrooms. Ideally, each class in a co-teaching setting should only include six students with disabilities or a maximum of 25–30% of the total class size. Overall, co-teaching can be considered a promising method to implement inclusivity in education, offering the potential for improved learning experiences in a more naturalistic environment. Keywords: co-teaching, inclusive classroom, academic achievement, special education needs (SEN).

Keywords: co-teaching, inclusive classroom, academic achievement, special education needs (SEN).

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What We Can Learn from the Classroom Experiences of Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

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Abstract

Despite the prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in classrooms and the availability of pharmacological and behavioural interventions, students with ADHD often encounter systemic challenges that hinder academic performance, emotional stability, and social inclusion. It is, therefore, necessary to listen to the 'voice' of these students to understand their classroom experience. This phenomenological study of ten recently graduated (within the last seven years) secondary school students with ADHD in Australia explores, using semi-structured interviews, the educational experiences of students with ADHD through the lens of lived experience. The study identifies key themes from student narratives that negatively impact learning outcomes, including academic challenges due to executive function difficulties, poor teacher attitudes, strained peer relationships, and emotional distress. Findings suggest that effective supports include the key role of an 'executive assistant', inclusive classroom strategies, positive teacher-student relationships, and environments that recognise individual strengths. Educational implications include: the need for improved teacher training to increase teacher awareness of the challenges experienced by students with ADHD; career-oriented learning pathways; and system-wide adoption of inclusive classroom practices. The researchers propose strategic recommendations for fostering emotionally supportive, strength-based, and neurodiverse-affirming classroom environments.

Keywords: ADHD, executive function, inclusion, lived experience, emotional regulation, student voice

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Cognitive Motor Training for Students: music and cross system

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Abstract

Enhancing general executive functions and procedural/sequential motor skills, it can be used for autism, dyslexia and neurodevelopmental disorders. The target is to improve multitasking performance, stimulating cognitive and motor functions, as cross patterns (this means crossing legs and arms in a coordinated way) are the expression of the proper functioning and the neurophysiological interactions between a range of brain regions for overall interhemispheric exchange. During the intervention, the audience will learn an infinite variety of exercises with movements and music, rhythm. This training can be easily applied in a group activity or individually.

The participants will achieve knowledge of the Crispiani Method used and how improve cognition and motor learning through movement.

Keywords: Motor and cognition, executive functions, fluency, cross patterns

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From Play to Problem-Solving: Integrating Educational Technology Across Preschool, Grade-Level Classrooms, and Mathematics

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3. Edtech Subject Head Teacher, Ministry of Education

Abstract

The use of Educational Technology (EdTech) is reshaping learning across diverse contexts. This paper compares how technology functions in preschool, grade-level classrooms, and mathematics instruction, with emphasis on practical applications for teachers and insights from recent research on AI in teacher training. In preschool education, technology is most effective when it supports play-based exploration. Digital storybooks, touchscreen games, and creative apps help build literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills. The key challenge is ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces active play and peer interaction. In elementary and secondary classrooms, EdTech broadens opportunities for differentiated instruction, collaboration, and accessibility. Platforms such as gamified systems, learning management tools, and AI-powered assistants support lesson planning, assessments, and student engagement. Yet meaningful integration depends heavily on teacher readiness. A German study on AI literacy revealed that structured training significantly increased teachers' confidence, willingness, and preparedness to use AI tools, highlighting professional development as critical for successful adoption. In mathematics instruction, digital technologies provide unique advantages by making abstract concepts tangible. Virtual manipulatives, dynamic geometry software, and AI-driven tutoring systems enable students to visualise, test, and refine problem-solving strategies. However, teachers must balance technology use with critical thinking and guided practice to avoid oversimplification. This panel discussion will highlight how EdTech adoption varies across these learning contexts, comparing successes and challenges. Ultimately, the dialogue will emphasise that teacher preparation remains the cornerstone of meaningful technology integration for learners of all ages.

Keywords: Educational Technology, Preschool, Maths

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Moving to Think: The Impact of Movement Coding on Computational Thinking in Children Aged 4–6

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Abstract

With the rapid advancement and widespread adoption of artificial intelligence, cultivating children's computational thinking has become an increasingly important focus. Movement Coding is a novel teaching and learning approach that integrates movement activities into unplugged coding tasks, grounded in embodied cognition theory.

This study investigated the contribution of Movement Coding in enhancing the computational thinking of children aged 4–6, while also examining potential differences across gender and grade levels. An intervention study was conducted with 47 preschool children in China, who were randomly assigned to either an experimental group or a control group. The experimental group engaged in Movement Coding activities, while the control group continued with standard instruction. Both groups were assessed on their computational thinking levels before and after the intervention. After three months, the results showed that:

1. Movement Coding had a significant positive impact on the computational thinking of children aged 4–6 compared to the control group.
2. Grade level significantly influenced the effectiveness of Movement Coding on computational thinking.
3. Gender differences, however, were not significant in terms of the impact of Movement Coding.

Keywords: Computational thinking; Movement; Coding; Intervention; Early childhood education

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Every Child · Every Teacher: A Ground-Up Advocacy for Valuing All

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Abstract

Ground-up advocacy in education begins with the conviction that every child matters, and therefore every teacher matters too. Every teacher includes not only professional educators but also parents, as the child's first teachers. This session presents the Every Child · Every Teacher (ECET) framework as a ground-up advocacy movement to build inclusive, thriving communities in early childhood education.

At its heart, ECET emphasises that both children and teachers must be VALUED — validated, affirmed, loved, understood, enabled, and developed. For children, this means being acknowledged, encouraged, respected, listened to, offered choices, and nurtured for growth. For teachers, it means receiving the same dispositions and support so that they can pour into children from a place of wellness and strength.

The session highlights four advocacy thrusts:

- (1) meeting every child's diverse needs through inclusive practices,
- (2) supporting teacher well-being across mental, emotional, and professional domains,
- (3) strengthening parent partnerships in the learning journey, and
- (4) improving ecosystems through collaboration, job redesign, and communities of practice.

Drawing on practice experience and ground-up initiatives, this presentation shows that advocacy is not about adding tasks but shaping dispositions. Choosing kindness, connecting before correcting, and embedding advocacy into everyday practice transform not just children's experiences but also educator culture and systemic structures. Ultimately, ECET demonstrates that valuing every child and every teacher is the foundation for sustainable inclusion and empowerment in education.

Keywords: Advocacy, Every Child Every Teacher, Inclusive Practices, Teacher Wellbeing, Parent Engagement, Ecosystem Change

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From Belonging to Engagement: Executive Function as a Pathway to Inclusive Early Childhood Classrooms

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Abstract

Inclusion in early childhood education is more than physical presence—it begins with a deep sense of belonging. When children feel safe, valued, and connected, they are more likely to participate meaningfully in classroom life and, ultimately, engage deeply in learning. This paper proposes a progression for inclusive practice: Belonging → Participation → Engagement, with participation understood as a continuum rather than a single step. At its most basic level, participation may simply mean being physically present in the group—sitting in circle time or joining peers at the table, even without active involvement. For many children with additional needs, this is a significant and positive step. With support, participation develops further into active involvement, where children respond to routines or attempt activities with guidance, and eventually into interactive participation, where they initiate, collaborate, and engage independently with peers. Executive Function (EF) skills—working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility—form the bridge that allows children to move through these stages. Research highlights EF as critical for learning and behaviour regulation (Diamond, 2013), and programmes such as Tools of the Mind (Bodrova & Leong, 2007) illustrate how EF can be nurtured through everyday classroom practices. Drawing on practice-based experience, this paper shares strategies including structured routines, visual prompts, positive behaviour supports, and Universal Design for Learning adaptations. Case examples highlight how small, intentional shifts enable children with additional needs to move from belonging, through the levels of participation, into sustained and joyful engagement. When educators prioritise belonging as the foundation and layer EF-aligned practices, inclusion becomes both achievable and sustainable. This approach empowers educators, strengthens parent partnerships, and most importantly, ensures that children who learn differently can thrive in classrooms where they truly belong.

Keywords: Belonging, Participation, Engagement, Executive Function, Inclusive Practices, Early Childhood Education

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Supporting Diverse Learners in the Mainstream Primary Schools

Jiarou Ooi¹ and Julia Ong²

1. *Founder of Joyeux, Singapore*
2. *Early Interventionist, Educational Therapist, Fellow of the Register of Educational Therapists, Singapore*

Abstract

Many students with diverse needs tend to struggle in the mainstream primary schools, and it is critical that parents and educators must strive to work closely to support these learners. Drawing from their experiences supporting these students, Jiarou and Julia hope to share their case studies with the audience. Seeking to first understand our learners, they will also explore practical strategies to support them across the classroom and home environments. This session aims to equip parents and educators with methods to effectively support children in the mainstream primary schools.

Keywords: diverse learning needs, specific learning difficulty, learning differences, neurodiverse, social-emotional, behavioural issues, communication, environmental factors, empowering, learning, independence, responsibility, confidence, self-esteem, meta-cognitive, primary school, parents, educators, strategies, positive behaviour support, organisation, executive function and digital technology

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Supporting Diverse Learners in the Mainstream Primary Schools

Jolene Pang¹

1. DAS Academy

Abstract

Executive function (EF) skills – working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility – are essential for academic achievement and equally critical for managing daily responsibilities, building friendships, regulating emotions, and developing independence. Evidence shows that direct instruction in EF, combined with strategic classroom supports, produces measurable improvements across learning and life domains. These skills predict not only school success but long-term outcomes, including health, well-being and employment. Yet, executive functions are rarely taught explicitly.

What research confirms is that EF skills are not fixed; they can be taught, scaffolded and strengthened. This session will provide evidence-based, practical strategies for developing EF in school-age students in educational therapy or classroom settings: explicitly teaching EF concepts and embedding EF development within existing instruction. Participants will leave empowered by a new lens for understanding the children they support.

Keywords: Executive function, working memory, inhibitory control, cognitive flexibility, school success

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Exploring how *Philosophy for Children (P4C)* Shapes Thinking in Young Children

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Abstract

In an era where artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly generates answers, automates processes, and shapes decision-making, the need to intentionally cultivate independent thinking has never been more critical. In this information-saturated world, it is therefore essential to begin nurturing these skills from early childhood. This presentation introduces an upcoming research study that explores how simple, familiar stimuli can be used to cultivate rich thinking in preschool classrooms through the Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach. Philosophy for Children (Lipman, 2003) is a pedagogical approach that encourages children (age 6 to 16 years) to engage in critical, creative, collaborative and caring thinking through open-ended and teacher-facilitated discussions using a shared stimulus (e.g. story, picture or object). The study explores the role of P4C in fostering early thinking skills and its potential benefits for preschool children, including those at risk of language learning challenges, such as dyslexia. Children who are at-risk of these challenges may not have the necessary verbal expressive abilities to sustain engagement in dialogues that are characteristic of P4C sessions. Eventually, this study seeks to contribute to early childhood pedagogy by examining if P4C is an inclusive and developmentally accessible approach to learning in the early years. The presentation also invites participants into the research itself, offering a first-hand experience of P4C as adult learners. Participants will engage in guided inquiry using everyday stimuli to deepen children's thinking. The presentation aims to spark interest among preschools to partner in this research and consider how P4C sessions can be meaningfully integrated into existing curricula.

Keywords: philosophy for children, inclusive practices, critical thinking, early childhood education

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iWorkSmart: Building confidence and lifelong skills through practical strategies and digital tools

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Abstract

The iWorkSmart course was developed to help learners better understand and strengthen their executive functioning skills, which play a critical role in everyday life. Targeted at participants aged 15 and above with or at risk of dyslexia, the course combined theory, practical strategies and hands-on use of digital tools to support organisation, self-regulation and productivity. The learning experience was highly interactive, featuring peer collaboration and practical exercises that encouraged active participation and reflection. Feedback from participants was positive, with many highlighting the usefulness of the tools and strategies for managing their tasks. Learners also valued being able to customise digital approaches to suit their personal needs. These findings suggest that technology-enhanced executive function learning experiences not only increase learner engagement and satisfaction but also provide sustainable strategies for lifelong organisation and self-management.

Keywords: Executive functioning, dyslexia, self-regulation, organisation skills, productivity, Digital tools, Technology-enhanced learning, Interactive learning, Peer collaboration, Lifelong learning, Learner engagement, Self-management

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Adolescents with SpLD in Singapore mainstream schools: What helps them to thrive?

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1. Centre for Research in Child Development, National Institute of Education,
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Abstract

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD), including dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia, represent the largest group of students with special educational needs (SEN) in Singapore's mainstream schools. International research indicates that they often experience academic difficulties and, despite their efforts, may not achieve their full potential (e.g., Zhao et al., 2019). This presentation draws from Singapore's first-ever comprehensive longitudinal study of adolescents in Singapore, known as DREAMS: DRivers, Enablers, and pathways of Adolescent development in Singapore. From a sample of 5928 students, 154 students self-identified as having SpLD, and we focus on their lived experiences. A multi-year, mixed-method approach is used to understand their experience in a mainstream secondary school, including their academic struggles and overall well-being. By taking a deeper look into students who report more positive well-being, we are able to distil potential mediating factors that support them in their holistic development during the critical developmental period of adolescence, where they begin their journey from being a child to a young adult. The findings suggest that while many students with SpLD seem to cope, a substantial number continue to struggle and may require targeted interventions to improve their academic performance and socio-emotional health. We emphasise the importance of understanding the unique challenges faced by these students and use research findings to facilitate an understanding of their needs and suggest strategies to foster a supportive educational environment. By adopting a proactive approach, educators can significantly impact the lives of students with SpLD, facilitating their academic success and positive well-being.

Keywords: Adolescent Development, Inclusive Education, Lived-Experience, Well-Being

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Word reading and spelling error analysis in poor readers of Chinese: A comparison to typical developing readers

Lui Hai Feng¹ and Ong Yun Mei¹

1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

Poor readers of Chinese make more frequent and persistent errors in word recognition and spelling tasks. However, the specific patterns, the developmental progression of these errors, and the relationship between these errors and literacy outcome remain under-explored, particularly in bilingual contexts such as Singapore. This study aimed to examine the developmental trajectory of word recognition and spelling errors in poor readers of Chinese, and to investigate how these errors relate to literacy proficiency. It also aims to compare the error patterns of poor readers with those of typically developing (TD) peers within the English-Chinese bilingual context of Singapore to better understand group differences and inform appropriate intervention. Participants were 113 poor readers from Primary 1 to 5. Single-character reading and two-character spelling errors were coded using a revised taxonomy, categorizing errors as visual-orthographic-, phonological-, or semantic-based. Analyses included grade-level comparisons, cluster analysis, and correlation/regression analyses to explore developmental trends and associations with literacy outcomes. Results were compared with a previous dataset of 109 TD readers from Primary 3 to 5. Poor readers' reading errors were predominantly visual-orthographic-based, with elevated semantic-based errors; spelling errors were primarily phonological-based, followed by visual-orthographic-based errors. Error rate showed flat or irregular developmental patterns, with key error types persisting across grades. Notably, error rates were not significantly correlated with reading or spelling scores, and cluster analysis revealed four distinct error profiles with similar overall literacy levels. In contrast, TD readers showed a steady decline in error rates and stronger associations between error rate and literacy proficiency. Findings underscore the heterogeneity of poor readers and their persistent reliance on incomplete or inefficient integration of orthographic, phonological, and semantic processing. Unlike TD peers who exhibit integrated literacy development, poor readers show limited progress, pointing to the deficits in visual-orthographic awareness, phonological radical knowledge, morphological awareness, and orthographic-semantic mapping. These insights highlight the need for a differentiated, profile-informed intervention targeting specific error patterns.

Keywords: poor readers of Chinese; error analysis; reading; spelling; triangle model of Chinese reading.

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The Importance of Understanding the Developmental Pillars in Treatment Planning for Dyslexia, ADHD, and Autism

Lynne Kenney¹

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Abstract

Before implementing learning or behavioural interventions and before referring a child for medication, clinicians must first examine the subskills and subterranean skills that form the developmental pillars that precede and support learning and behaviour. Too often, treatment planning for dyslexia, ADHD, and autism targets surface-level symptoms, such as reading fluency, attention, behaviour, or social communication, without first assessing the sensory, motor, language, and neurocognitive substrates upon which these higher-order skills depend. Dr Kenney classifies the developmental pillars as: Sensory-Motor, Language, Cognitive, and Social-Relational. Key skills within these areas include vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile processing; bilateral coordination; rhythmic timing; postural control; and core strength and foundational executive function capacities that provide the scaffolding for academic achievement and adaptive functioning. When these pillars are underdeveloped or dysregulated, even the most evidence-based programs yield limited or inconsistent gains. Dr Kenney acknowledges contributions from conversations over 20 years with Ann Alexander, MD; Raun Melmed, MD; Stacy Fretheim, SLP-CCC; Mary Mounstephen, MA; Deb Lund, OTR/L, and Joann McFee, OTR/L, in developing her Pillars conceptualisation. A pillar-informed evaluation reframes how we determine what a child actually needs. In dyslexia, rhythmic movement and timing-based subskills support the phonological, attentional, and procedural learning systems implicated in reading acquisition. In ADHD, assessing motor regulation, rhythmic sequencing, and executive function subskills often reveals developmental gaps that can be addressed through movement and coaching before or alongside pharmacological intervention. In autism, mapping sensory regulation, motor planning, and interoceptive awareness identifies the physiological readiness required for social and communicative learning. Only after these subskills and subterranean skills are evaluated can clinicians determine with precision the kind of treatment, educational, therapeutic, pharmacological, or combined, that a child will truly benefit from. This session provides a practical framework for integrating the developmental pillars into intake, case conceptualisation, and cross-disciplinary treatment planning across psychology, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, pediatrics, neuropsychology, and education. Attendees will leave with concrete tools to translate pillar-based assessment findings into individualised, neurodevelopmentally sound intervention plans, ensuring that children with dyslexia, ADHD, and autism receive the right treatment, in the right sequence, and at the right time.

Keywords: dyslexia, brain stem, cerebellum, co-existing diagnoses, developmental pillars, ADHD, ASD

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Do Androids Dream of Dyslexic Sheep?

Martin Bloomfield¹

1. Founder, Dyslexia Bytes

Abstract

In an increasingly AI-driven world, the promise of personalised learning and assistive technologies for individuals with dyslexia is immense. However, a critical challenge exists: the potential for algorithmic bias to perpetuate ethical injustices against neurodiverse populations. This keynote explores the complex interplay between artificial intelligence, social stigma, the cognitive profiles of dyslexic individuals, and the moral imperative for equitable access to knowledge. Original research reveals that AI, in addition to exhibiting ethnic and gender bias, is saturated with neuronormative bias, measurably disadvantaging dyslexic children and adults. This bias leads AI to perceive dyslexic individuals as less competent and motivated, a crucial issue given AI's ubiquitous use in education, the economy, and social services. Such bias can demonstrably disadvantage dyslexic students, teachers, and professionals, creating a profound ethical injustice that reflects and amplifies social inequality. This injustice comprises two aspects. One, where dyslexics' knowledge and competence are devalued; and the other, where the ability to address these issues is hampered by a lack of awareness and ethical vocabulary. These injustices contribute to diminished academic outcomes, poorer mental health, increased social stigma, and increased homelessness, substance abuse, and criminality within the dyslexic population. This talk, grounded in original research and real-world examples, examines these biases and their consequences, offering alternatives and solutions. It challenges AI developers, policymakers, and users to critically examine their ethical responsibilities. Ultimately, it asks: how can we ensure that all children are catered for equally and ethically in a world rapidly adopting AI in education and beyond?

Keywords: AI, Artificial Intelligence, Epistemic Injustice, Dyslexia

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The Successful Dyslexic: How We Help Young People Achieve Success

Neil Alexander-Passe¹

1. Capital City College-Angel; Department of Education; SEND Researcher & Author; UK

Abstract

Based on his book 'The Successful Dyslexic: Identify the keys for success to achieve your potential', this presentation looks at the origins of success in dyslexic adults, using both an online survey to locate successful and less successful dyslexic adults (N=101), and a sub-group of interview participants (N=20) to understand the nature and motivation of success in adults with dyslexia.

School trauma was a focus of the study, using the theory of 'Post-Traumatic Growth' as a means to understand how individuals can have a traumatic and humiliating schooling, but still gain post-school success through positive use of trauma.

The interview study also proposed that school trauma could become a positive force in creating successful and resilient dyslexics, with interesting responses as participants coped with the concept of 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1888).

The presentation concludes by offering the 'keys for success' as found by the study.

Keywords: Dyslexia, success, school, post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, post-traumatic growth

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An exploration of the perspectives of students with dyslexia regarding the factors that affect their learning

Nur Ashabiena¹

1. *Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Abstract

The Main Literacy Programme (MLP) at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) offers a comprehensive curriculum for dyslexic students (Dyslexia Association of Singapore, 2022). However, some students may show better progress in the DAS than in schools. The present study explored the different contributing factors that affect learning in dyslexic students and their perceptions of the impact that these factors have on their learning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 participants (aged 14 -15) who are currently receiving intervention from the DAS. Thematic analysis of the results generated three themes: factors that are helpful to learning, factors that are barriers to learning, and factors that do not affect learning. Recommendations are made to encourage service providers to review and improve their interventions, as well as encourage educators, parents and students to talk about these factors openly at the end of each term to help these students reach their truest potential. The findings have implications for dyslexia worldwide, to achieve more dialogue around effective outcomes for learning.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Children's Perspectives, Challenges, Dyslexia and Learning, Dyslexic Students, Factors Influencing Learning

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Blended Synchronous Learning Environment: Perceptions and Experiences of Educational Therapists at Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Praba Siva¹

1. *Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Abstract

The emergence of the Blended Synchronous Learning Environment (BSLE), also known as 'dual-mode teaching' in Singapore, as an innovative teaching method has gained traction during the COVID-19 pandemic. BSLE refers to a mode of instruction where teachers engage both in-person and remote learners simultaneously through technology. While it is mostly used in higher education, its potential to help students with dyslexia hasn't been explored much. This study delves into the views of educational therapists from the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) who integrated BSLE during the pandemic.

Using interviews and thematic analysis, the research uncovers key themes like BSLEs' benefits, challenges, and its impact on therapists. It sheds light on issues like effective teaching, student engagement, and inclusivity. Despite not being ideal for dyslexic students, BSLE offers advantages like ongoing support and flexibility. The study suggests strategies for improvement, such as tailored implementation for older students and better technology support. Future research could explore students' experiences, evaluate training programs, and assess the impact during BSLE for remote learners.

Keywords: blended synchronous learning environment, dual mode teaching, COVID-19, dyslexia, remote learning, face-to-face students, hybrid, educational therapy

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Predicting Chinese Children's Reading Development and difficulties: A longitudinal Study

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Abstract

Predicting later reading achievement in Chinese has become an important area of inquiry, given the unique nature of the Chinese writing system. Unlike alphabetic scripts such as English, which rely heavily on phonemic awareness, Chinese employs a morphosyllabic script in which each character (汉字, *hanzi*) simultaneously represents a morpheme and a syllable. Consequently, Chinese literacy development depends less on phonemic skills and more on mapping oral syllables to their written forms. This study investigated which kindergarten-level constructs best predict later reading outcomes among Chinese-speaking children. A cohort of 87 children was assessed at age five on phonological processing, distinctness of phonological representations, morphological awareness, and related pre-literacy skills, and then reassessed two years later at the end of first grade. Findings indicate that second-grade literacy achievement can be reliably predicted from measures collected in kindergarten. Specifically, the ability to reverse syllables in two- to four-syllable words and the speed of picture naming emerged as the strongest predictors of subsequent literacy growth. Moreover, syllable reversal and distinctness of phonological representations were the best predictors of phonological processing skills. A significant outcome of this study is the identification of children at risk: those exhibiting poor-quality phonological representations in kindergarten—such as indistinct speech or distortions of inner syllables in compound words—were more likely to struggle in learning to read Chinese. These results underscore the importance of early assessment of phonological and morphological skills for identifying and supporting children vulnerable to reading difficulties in Chinese.

Keywords: at-risk children, Chinese reading, phonological processing, morphological awareness, phonological representation, early childhood assessment

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From Play to Problem-Solving: Integrating Educational Technology Across Preschool, Grade-Level Classrooms, and Mathematics

Raihana Binte Mohamed Hashim¹

1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

Preschoolers with literacy challenges benefit significantly from early support, as early childhood is a critical period for developing foundational literacy skills. Addressing these difficulties promptly can prevent long-term academic struggles and lay the groundwork for a more confident start to learning.

The SES Preschool Programme at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) supports preschoolers who may be at risk of developmental delays in early literacy, helping them build essential skills and strategies to become confident learners. This presentation highlights the importance of early intervention, identifies signs of early literacy difficulties, explores diverse student profiles, and offers insights into communication with parents while understanding their perspectives.

Keywords: bilingual children, nonword repetition, ROC curve, dyslexia, language assessment

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Supporting Without Labels: A Tech-Enabled Ecosystem for Empowering Those Who Learn Differently

Ramalakshmi Kannan¹ and Malini Ramu¹

1. Elina Services, Chennai, India

Abstract

Children who learn differently - whether diagnosed or not- often remain underserved due to rigid systems, fragmented communication, and delayed support. At Elina Services, we have developed a three-layered, tech-enabled ecosystem that empowers parents, educators, and therapists to support learners with neurodivergent conditions through timely, personalised, and collaborative interventions. Our approach begins with SAIL (Setting up Access for Independence and Learning), a strengths-based assessment methodology that identifies 3–5 actionable entry points through real-world observations, developmental cues, and parent insights. SAIL complements standard diagnostic tools like the NIMHANS battery by foregrounding context and collaboration over classification. CoMPASS (Continuous Mapping of Progress, Abilities, Strengths, and Skills) extends the intervention through a six-month collaborative roadmap. CoMPASS tracks a child's growth across environments - home, school, and therapy, while encouraging real-time course correction through continuous dialogue and reflection. These programs are powered by ISMS (Intervention Service Management System)- Elina's AI-integrated digital platform that enables secure, role-based communication, milestone tracking, and personalised intervention dashboards. ISMS is not a replacement for people, but a tool that enhances communication, accountability, and action across stakeholders. Together, SAIL, CoMPASS, and ISMS form a scalable, replicable model for empowering those who learn differently, within and beyond traditional labels. This paper shares field insights, tools, and outcomes from ongoing implementations, inviting educators, specialists, and system leaders to adopt a design-for-difference approach, where every child's pathway to learning is visible, supported, and celebrated.

Keywords: Empowerment, Elina, Identification, Intervention, AI, Technology, SAIL, CoMPASS

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Online interventions in reading for dyslexia: opportunities and challenges in digital learning Mathematics

Rickard Erwinson¹

1. Founder, Waibloz Learning, Sweden

Abstract

Online reading interventions are becoming an important part of support for learners with dyslexia. Digital platforms can strengthen decoding, fluency and comprehension by combining structured activities with interactive features. At Waibloz, we observe that key elements such as graded text levels, multisensory presentation and immediate feedback help to tackle difficulties commonly linked to dyslexia while also encouraging continued practice. The flexibility of online delivery allows learners to progress at their own pace and extends access to support across different settings, which reduces barriers related to time and place in reading. Design considerations remain critical to effectiveness. Tools must prioritise accessibility, clear interfaces and responsiveness to the varied needs of learners to identify fair use. Attention is also needed to the balance between independent engagement and guided instruction, as well as the integration of online tools within established teaching approaches. Our findings indicate that digital interventions can contribute positively to literacy outcomes, but questions remain regarding their long-term impact, sustainability and cultural applicability. Further study is required to understand how these resources can best complement traditional methods and how they may be adapted for diverse populations. By drawing on principles of reading research and educational practice, online reading interventions hold potential to expand the range of effective strategies available for individuals with dyslexia and to support more inclusive approaches to literacy instruction.

Keywords: dyslexia, online intervention, reading tools, digital learning, adaptive support, literacy development

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Empowering Students with Dyslexia: Global Practices to Champion Student Voice and Self-Advocacy

Sophie Evans¹

1. Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction (APC&I), Sydney, Australia

Abstract

Inclusive educational practices for students with dyslexia in mainstream settings involve more than just explicit, teacher-led instruction. While high-quality, structured teaching remains critical, it must be complemented by approaches that actively involve students in understanding and communicating their own learning needs. Given the heterogeneous nature of dyslexia, it is imperative that students are supported to articulate and advocate for adjustments tailored to their individual needs, rather than relying solely on supports predetermined by educators. Equipping neurodivergent learners to clearly express their educational requirements and request reasonable adjustments is essential in promoting academic success, self-confidence, and independence. There is also a broader cultural impact that extends beyond the individual student. When students are empowered to communicate their needs, stigma is reduced and a more inclusive, accepting school environment is cultivated. Such empowerment promotes a shift from passive support to active engagement, positioning students as key stakeholders in their own education. Drawing on qualitative data and observational insights collected during a five-week international study tour across Belgium, the UK, Singapore, and Australia, this research highlights a range of evidence-informed practices that place student agency at the forefront. These include pedagogical strategies, frameworks, and classroom tools such as assistive technology and self-advocacy instruction that enable students to access curriculum content and demonstrate their understanding through accessible assessment. Embedding these approaches into everyday classroom practice ensures that student voice becomes a consistent and integral component of inclusive education. The findings have direct implications for the development of teaching strategies and school-wide systems designed to support students with dyslexia effectively and sustainably.

Keywords: Dyslexia, inclusive education, self-advocacy, student voice, empowerment, global perspectives, assistive technology

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I still learn differently: Aging with dyslexia

Sudha Mary George¹

1. Singapore University of Social Sciences

Abstract

Life-long learning is upheld as a necessity for adapting and thriving in an ever-changing world. For teens and adults who learn differently from the majority, this can be challenging. Formal adult education, be it full-fledged programmes or ad hoc courses, still relies primarily on participants all learning in somewhat the same way. Adult educators and their pedagogies are seldom tuned in to those who learn differently. This is a stark contrast to the increasing involvement of skilled professionals working with children with developmental differences.

This presentation will examine what it means to be an adult who learns differently in a world of lifelong learning. The focus will be on those with dyslexia (or experiencing its signs) from a quasi-insider standpoint of a dyslexic older adult.

While recent research tells us about age-induced dyslexia, less attention has focused on those who grew up with it. There are also adults who had dyslexia all along, but unbeknownst to themselves. This third group is not surprising, given that current older adults were post-war children at a time when screening for learning differences was rare. For that matter, even many millennials may not have had adequate childhood access to assessments.

Hence, we will explore ways of planning with and supporting adults with dyslexia and other learning differences. What we now know about the human brain may enable us to perceive some of these differences as developmental delays even in adulthood. This lifespan perspective enables us to exercise creativity and make more informed programming decisions when working with dyslexic teens and adults.

Keywords: dyslexia, learning differently, adults, aging.

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The Value of Understanding Dyslexia: Dyslexic Strengths, the Text Norm, and Reading Today

Susanna Cederquist¹

1. *Lecturer, Author and Teacher, Sweden*

Abstract

I will be giving a lecture on the full picture of dyslexia and the importance of understanding that we all process information in different ways. The talk explores how dyslexia can affect individuals in both education and working life, highlighting the diverse ways people approach tasks, as well as the challenges and strengths associated with dyslexia. Also, considering how our society and the prevailing norms today affect people with dyslexia.

I will also introduce what I call the “text norm” — our assumptions about what reading is and what it means to be a reader today. A key focus will be on everyone’s right to become an efficient reader, and how we can adapt text so that more people can access it effectively. This includes practical examples and tips, such as using audio support (“ear-reading”) and other strategies that make reading more inclusive.

Keywords: Dyslexia, dyslexic strengths, the whole picture of dyslexia, understanding dyslexia, dyslexia in school, dyslexia and adults, reading today, text norm, ear read, accessible text, a picture of dyslexia

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When Machines Read and Humans Imagine: Dyslexia as a Strategic Advantage in the AI Era

Susanna Cederquist¹, Dean Bragonier¹, Martin Bloomfield¹, Thomas G West¹, Maggie Jiang¹ and Andrey Domagalski²

1. WHOLE—Dyslexic Strengths Network
2. Prime Dot Group—Canada

Abstract

AI is rapidly reshaping education and work, and this panel explored what that means for people with dyslexia.

One of the biggest themes throughout the discussion was that traditional systems still heavily favour reading, writing, memorisation, and speed. But AI is beginning to shift that balance. Skills often linked to dyslexia, such as visual thinking, creativity, pattern recognition, big-picture thinking, and problem-solving, could become major advantages in an AI-driven world.

At the same time, barriers remain. Schools, hiring practices, and many digital systems are adapting far more slowly than the technology itself. Without intentional change, AI could just as easily reinforce existing biases, from neuronormative recruitment tools to growing pressure around productivity and standardised ways of thinking.

The message felt difficult to ignore: AI has the potential to unlock dyslexic talent at scale, but only if education systems and workplaces evolve quickly enough to recognise and support it.

Keywords: AI, Dyslexia, Neurodiversity, Dyslexic Strengths, Visual Thinking, Creativity, Inclusive Education, Future of Work

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What's Possible: A Playbook for Dyslexic Strengths

Teo Heng Soon¹

1. Co-Founder, Lumina Mind, Singapore

Abstract

Parents often see their child's spark but may not be able to picture the path. As a DAS alumnus turned HR consultant and coach, I'll share how dyslexia can be a life and career advantage when we pair self-knowledge with smart design. Framed by wēijī 危机, seeing challenge as either risk or opportunity, the speech gives a simple playbook for students, parents, and educators:

Know Your Edge: identify strengths (visual thinking, pattern spotting, empathy)

Manage the Friction: use mind-maps, learning styles, and collaboration with other people who have different strengths,

Design the Runway: build your own portfolios, target internships, find mentors, and research on different pathways beyond the traditional ladder using technology

Keywords: self-advocacy, confidence, resilience, growth mindset, future of work

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Support Needs of Adolescents with ADHD - Perspectives from Adolescents and Parents and Implications for Practitioners

Tina Tan¹

1. *Director of Shed Training, Singapore*

Abstract

Most research and discussion on ADHD support has centred on children in elementary years. Support during the teenage years is less researched and discussed, such that parents often find themselves with less direction and continuing to use approaches that may no longer apply to their children in their teenage years. This dissertation seeks to explore the differences between how parents and teens perceive the support needs of the teenager. Key interviews were conducted with parents of teenagers with ADHD and their teenagers to capture their perspectives on the support needs of the teenagers. The differences and overlaps in the perceptions of parents and teenagers would be analysed and discussed to provide parents and practitioners with insight into this topic. This dissertation hopes to improve the understanding of practitioners and parents of teenagers with ADHD with the goal of positively impacting parent and teenager relationships and guiding the allocation of resources within families during the teenage phase.

Keywords: ADHD, Teenagers, Parents of ADHD Teenagers, Support Needs

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Executive Functioning, Study Skills, Dyslexia, Teens - Examining an Online Programme's Effectiveness

Geetha Shantha Ram¹ and Serena Abdullah Tan¹

1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

Students with dyslexia and other learning differences often experience challenges with executive functioning, study skills, organisation, and independent learning, particularly as they transition into post-secondary and tertiary education. To address this need, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore developed iStudySmart™, a two-term online intervention programme designed to strengthen executive functioning, study skills, tertiary writing, presentation skills, and learner independence through explicit, systematic, and multisensory instruction. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the programme in improving executive functioning, tertiary learning skills, motivation, self-confidence, and independence among learners with learning differences. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, incorporating pre- and post-intervention surveys and qualitative parent feedback. Survey measures examined areas including time management, planning and organisation, presentation skills, learning difficulties, and self-efficacy. Findings indicated positive outcomes across several domains. Participants reported improvements in time management, planning and organisation, tertiary writing, presentation skills, confidence, and independent learning behaviours. Parent feedback further supported these findings, highlighting increased confidence, improved organisation, and greater engagement in learning tasks. The results suggest that an online, structured, and differentiated intervention can effectively support the development of executive functioning and study skills among adolescents and young adults with learning differences. The study contributes to the growing evidence supporting online interventions for learners with dyslexia and highlights the importance of providing targeted support beyond compulsory education to facilitate successful transitions into higher education and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Executive Functioning, Study Skills, Online Learning, Tertiary Education, Learning Differences, Self-Efficacy, Time Management, Planning and Organisation, Educational Technology, Transition to Higher Education, Intervention Programme

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From shame to empowerment: A qualitative exploration of the clinical placement experiences of speech pathology students with dyslexia

Grace James¹, Jacqueline Lim¹ and Joanne Martin²

1. James Cook University, Australia
2. Education Queensland, Australia

Abstract

As part of their professional training, speech-language pathology (SLP) students must undertake several periods of clinical practice or placement in order to not only learn practical skills associated with their profession but also to practice applying their theoretical knowledge in the clinical context. Executive functioning skills such as working memory, information processing, organisation and time management are all skills that are needed during the clinical practice experience. However, many SLP students with dyslexia may need reasonable adjustments in order to successfully manage their clinical placements. This study outlines the results of a qualitative research study where newly graduated and current 4th-year speech-language pathology (SLP) students with dyslexia were interviewed about their clinical placement experiences while on their 4th-year placement. The aim of this research is to better understand the challenges faced and strategies used by SLP students with dyslexia. Three participants were recruited via social media and interviewed either in person or via Microsoft Teams using a semi-structured interview format. Thematic analysis identified four core themes - the continuous journey that SLP students with dyslexia go on that culminates in their clinical placement, the strategies that they use to help them learn and get through placement and finally the deep feelings of inadequacy that they experience. As the SLP profession continues to value diversity amongst clinicians, it is imperative that the experiences of neurodiverse students are better understood so that practice educators are well equipped with ways to support such students.

Keywords: dyslexia, clinical placement, speech-language pathology

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The moderation effect of Self-regulation on the relationship between Fine motor and Handwriting of Chinese children with and without Dyslexia

Wang Li-Chih Angus¹ and Lin Xiaoxiao²

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2. Department of Special Education, National Tsing Hua University

Abstract

Learning to write can be a challenging and complex process for Chinese children, particularly for those with dyslexia. Based on its underlying mechanism, self-regulation has the potential to impact writing performance. However, this issue has received very little attention in past research. A correlational design was employed, with 100 third-grade students (50 with dyslexia, 50 typically developing) in Taiwan. Standardised assessments measured fine motor skills (VMI), self-regulation (HTKS-R), and handwriting performance across tasks of varying complexity (dictation, near-point copying, far-point copying, and basic writing ability). Results indicated that children with dyslexia exhibited significantly poorer fine motor skills than their peers ($p < .001$), even after controlling for age, non-verbal IQ, and character recognition. Self-regulation significantly moderated the relationship between fine motor skills and handwriting performance in near-point copying ($\beta = 0.088, p = .011$) and basic writing tasks ($\beta = 0.056, p = .025$), but only when self-regulation scores exceeded a threshold (≥ 34 points). This compensatory effect was more pronounced in low-complexity tasks, while high-complexity tasks (e.g., dictation) were constrained by orthographic knowledge deficits. The findings support a dynamic cognitive resource allocation model, emphasising the need for integrated interventions combining motor training and self-regulation strategies to enhance handwriting proficiency in children with dyslexia.

Keywords: self-regulation, fine motor skills, Chinese dyslexia, handwriting skills, moderation effect

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I Learn Differently: Understanding and Supporting Struggling Learners

Hani Zohra Bte Muhamad¹

1. *Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Abstract

As part of their professional training, speech-language pathology (SLP) students must undertake several periods of clinical practice or placement in order to not only learn practical skills associated with their profession but also to practice applying their theoretical knowledge in the clinical context. Executive functioning skills such as working memory, information processing, organisation and time management are all skills that are needed during the clinical practice experience. However, many SLP students with dyslexia may need reasonable adjustments in order to successfully manage their clinical placements. This study outlines the results of a qualitative research study where newly graduated and current 4th-year speech-language pathology (SLP) students with dyslexia were interviewed about their clinical placement experiences while on their 4th-year placement. The aim of this research is to better understand the challenges faced and strategies used by SLP students with dyslexia. Three participants were recruited via social media and interviewed either in person or via Microsoft Teams using a semi-structured interview format. Thematic analysis identified four core themes - the continuous journey that SLP students with dyslexia go on that culminates in their clinical placement, the strategies that they use to help them learn and get through placement and finally the deep feelings of inadequacy that they experience. As the SLP profession continues to value diversity amongst clinicians, it is imperative that the experiences of neurodiverse students are better understood so that practice educators are well equipped with ways to support such students.

Keywords: dyslexia, clinical placement, speech-language pathology

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The moderation effect of Self-regulation on the relationship between Fine motor and Handwriting of Chinese children with and without Dyslexia

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Abstract

Learning to write can be a challenging and complex process for Chinese children, particularly for those with dyslexia. Based on its underlying mechanism, self-regulation has the potential to impact writing performance. However, this issue has received very little attention in past research. A correlational design was employed, with 100 third-grade students (50 with dyslexia, 50 typically developing) in Taiwan. Standardised assessments measured fine motor skills (VMI), self-regulation (HTKS-R), and handwriting performance across tasks of varying complexity (dictation, near-point copying, far-point copying, and basic writing ability). Results indicated that children with dyslexia exhibited significantly poorer fine motor skills than their peers ($p < .001$), even after controlling for age, non-verbal IQ, and character recognition. Self-regulation significantly moderated the relationship between fine motor skills and handwriting performance in near-point copying ($\beta = 0.088, p = .011$) and basic writing tasks ($\beta = 0.056, p = .025$), but only when self-regulation scores exceeded a threshold (≥ 34 points). This compensatory effect was more pronounced in low-complexity tasks, while high-complexity tasks (e.g., dictation) were constrained by orthographic knowledge deficits. The findings support a dynamic cognitive resource allocation model, emphasising the need for integrated interventions combining motor training and self-regulation strategies to enhance handwriting proficiency in children with dyslexia.

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Examining the Effectiveness of Metacognitive Strategies on Problem-Solving and Math Learning in Students with Dyslexia

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1. *Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Abstract

This study explores the metacognitive processes and emotional factors influencing the mathematical problem-solving experiences of secondary school students with dyslexia within the context of the Secondary 1 Normal Technical (Sec 1NT) Maths Curriculum. Utilising a purposive sampling method, two students who completed structured math intervention programs at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) were selected. Through thematic analysis of their problem-solving approaches, guided by Schraw's (2001) metacognitive model and Stanton's (2012) framework for self-regulated learning, the study reveals critical insights into students' comprehension, strategy use and emotional regulation. Key findings include students' use of visual strategies, their familiarity with problem types and their difficulty adapting strategies in the face of challenges. Low self-confidence and limited emotional regulation were found to hinder their problem-solving effectiveness. The results underscore the need for targeted instructional practices that emphasise both metacognitive and emotional regulation strategies. Recommendations for integrating Polya's problem-solving framework and metacognitive assessments into existing curricula are proposed to improve students' mathematical outcomes. Limitations of the study and avenues for future research, including expanding sample sizes and exploring different mathematical contexts, are also discussed.

Keywords: Metacognition, mathematical problem-solving, dyslexia, POLYA framework, metacognitive strategies, secondary education, Dyslexia Association of Singapore, problem-solving skills

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Enhancing Engagement and Literacy Skills in Dyslexic Learners

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1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

Dyslexia is characterised by difficulties in accurate and fluent word recognition, spelling, reading comprehension, and written expression, often accompanied by challenges in phonological awareness, verbal memory, processing speed, attention, and organisation. This study examined the effectiveness of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore's (DAS) Main Literacy Programme (MLP) and explored the use of a preference-based teaching approach to enhance engagement among learners with dyslexia. A total of 1,280 students aged 7–17 years who had been formally diagnosed with dyslexia participated in the study. Students attended the DAS MLP over two academic terms, receiving two hours of instruction per week in small-group settings. Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) data were analysed using the Central Limit Theorem and hypothesis testing to determine whether statistically significant improvements in literacy outcomes occurred over time. In addition, a smaller intervention involving preference-based teaching strategies was implemented with learners who demonstrated low motivation, disengagement, and off-task behaviours. Results demonstrated significant improvements in reading and spelling performance across the student cohort, supporting the effectiveness of the DAS MLP and its evidence-based literacy curriculum. These gains were observed despite the educational disruptions associated with the COVID-19 period and the transition to online learning. Findings from the preference-based teaching intervention further indicated improvements in student engagement, on-task behaviour, participation, and progress-monitoring outcomes. The findings support the effectiveness of structured, multisensory literacy intervention for learners with dyslexia and suggest that combining Orton-Gillingham-based instruction with preference-based teaching strategies may further enhance engagement and learning outcomes. The study highlights the importance of individualised and responsive teaching approaches in supporting both literacy development and learner participation.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Literacy Intervention, Main Literacy Programme (MLP), Reading Development, Spelling, Curriculum-Based Assessment, Orton-Gillingham, Student Engagement, Preference-Based Teaching, Evidence-Based Practice, Learning Differences, Special Educational Needs, Educational Intervention, Progress Monitoring

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The Role of Morphological Instruction in Improving Reading Comprehension among Secondary Students with Dyslexia

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1. *Dyslexia Association of Singapore*

Abstract

Students with dyslexia may face difficulties with reading comprehension besides having phonological deficits (Lyon et al., 2003; Wagner et al., 2022). These difficulties are further compounded as texts get more challenging as they progress in their education. Morphological instruction has thus been identified as an intervention strategy to support students' reading comprehension. Morphology, a subskill within the Simple View of Reading and the Reading Systems Framework provides an important bridge between word recognition and language comprehension as it not only facilitates word decoding, but also allows access to meaning of vocabulary words, which in turn could lead to improved text comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the role of morphological instruction in improving reading comprehension among secondary students with dyslexia, through a case study of 4 Secondary 1 G1 students. The findings from this study reveal mixed performance for the different question types through the pre- and post-reading comprehension scores. Following the intervention, literal questions recorded the highest overall score, followed by inferential questions and then vocabulary questions. Also, three themes have been identified through qualitative analysis of the classroom observations, researcher's reflective journal and student questionnaire, and they are applying morphological decoding, vocabulary building and improved comprehension. These findings have implications for practitioners' implementation of evidence-based instructional approaches to teaching morphology to support students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: dyslexia, morphological instruction, morphological decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension

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