

FACETS

A publication of DAS
Sep-Dec 2011

**Achieve Success with
Technology**

Hard Work Pays Off

**Cover Story: Never Give In,
Never Give Up!**

**Helping Myself Helped
My Son**



Helping Dyslexic People Achieve



20th Anniversary

Issue 3, 2011 MICA (P) 119/04/2011

FACETS

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

#05-01, Jurong Point
1 Jurong West Central 2
Singapore 648886
Tel: 6444 5700
Fax: 6444 7900
Website: www.das.org.sg

DAS Patron: Mrs Goh Chok Tong

DAS Advisor: Dr Lee Wei Ling

DAS Executive Committee 2010 – 2011

President: Dr Jimmy Daruwalla

Vice-President: Mr Eric Lee

Honorary Treasurer: Mr Vincent Chen

Honorary Assistant Treasurer: Mr Kaka Singh

Honorary Secretary: Mr Paul Lim

Executive Committee Members:

Mr K Kesavapany

Mr Rajaram

Mrs Cynthia Tan

Mr Lawrance Da Silva

Editor

Sakuntala G K

Sub-Editor

Sharon Francis

Contributors

Teo Heng Hao, Siew Jin Er, Karen Wong Tsing
Tsing, Fanny Foo, Sean Lau, Sujatha Nair,
Deborah Hewes

Published by

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

If you have any comments or feedback on this issue, email us at info@das.org.sg

FACETS is published every 4 months by the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission of the publisher.

Table of Contents

Features

- 1 Success with Technology
- 2 OUR Champion
Sengkang Learning Centre Open House
- 3 DAS Flag Day
- 4 SICC Donates to DAS
Early Detection, Early Intervention Seminar
- 5 MOE Visits DAS
DAS Shares Knowledge
- 6 Dyslexia Beyond Singapore
Parents Learn to Use the Literacy Checklist
- 7 Breakfast & Movie at Jurong Point
- 8 Coffee Evening @ Bishan Learning Centre
Strategies for Next Year
- 9 Bake&Go at TOTT
- 10 RBS 'Art Day'
- 11 'Camp Unleash'

Applause

- 12 Hard Work Pays Off
- 13 Strive on, Wei Xiang!

Cover Story

- 14 Never Give In, Never Give Up!

Exclusive

- 16 Helping Myself Helped My Son
- 17 Hobby Leads to Business
- 18 Does the WORD make SENSE

Trivia

- 19 2012 Courses and Workshops

Student Gallery

- 20 Students' Works

Our Centres

DAS Academy

73 Bukit Timah Road #05-01 Rex House
Tel : 6336 2555, Fax : 6643 9643

DAS Learning Centre (Ang Mo Kio)

@ Anderson Primary School
Tel : 6451 5582, Fax : 6556 0549

DAS Learning Centre (Bedok)

@Fengshan Primary School
Tel : 6444 6910, Fax : 6448 6018

DAS Learning Centre (Bishan)

@9 Bishan Place, #06-03
Tel : 6250 0526, Fax : 6250 0654

DAS Learning Centre (Jurong)

@Jurong Point, #05-01
Tel : 6444 5700, Fax : 6444 7900

DAS Learning Centre (Marine Parade)

@Parkway Parade #22-01/02
Tel : 6440 0716, Fax : 6440 0816

DAS Learning Centre (Queenstown)

@Queenstown Primary School
Tel : 6475 9535, Fax : 6476 2597

DAS Learning Centre (Sengkang)

@Blk 257C Compassvale Road, #01-545
Tel : 6881 2072, Fax : 6881 8426

DAS Learning Centre (Tampines)

@Blk 424, Tampines St 41, #01-188
Tel : 6786 0838, Fax : 6786 0868

DAS Learning Centre (Woodlands)

@Blk 165, Woodlands St 13, #01-567
Tel : 6269 0730, Fax : 6269 0738

Success with Technology

DAS organised its third annual conference on 26 Nov 2011 at the Singapore Management University. Themed "Success with Technology", the event introduced technology solutions for students and adults with specific learning differences – a first in Asia.

The focus was on Assistive Technology (AT) - how it benefits and facilitates children's learning. International specialists E.A. Draffan and Neil Cottrell and Assistant Professor Dr Wong Meng Ee from the National Institute of Education, explained how AT can be of assistance to help one alleviate their deficits and maximise their potential. Apps downloadable on iPads and iPhones to help people with specific learning differences in reading and creativity was also introduced. DAS Educational Therapists also shared with the audience the various AT that DAS uses in its classrooms to enable our students to increase their skills and demonstrate their ability.

DAS also launched the sale of AT products at the conference to encourage both parents and teachers to purchase these products to help children improve their work. Software like text-to-speech and mind-mapping programmes, as well as phonetics and teaching tools, were on display for participants to experience.

"Embarking on the sales of these AT resources is a natural progression for DAS. We are probably the only organisation who is both a retailer and an active user of these technologies in our classrooms," said Mr Robin Moseley, Chief Executive Officer of DAS. To make these AT products easily available to everyone with special needs, the DAS has made it available online on the DAS International website, www.dasint.org.sg.

The seminar turned out to be not only an excellent opportunity for participants to network and establish new contacts, but also try hands-on the AT products and purchase them at huge introductory discounts.



OUR CHAMPION

Dr Jimmy Daruwalla, President of Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) was presented the inaugural Community Champion Award by the *tabla!* newspaper during its third anniversary celebrations on 3 October 2011 at the SPH News Centre Auditorium. This award included a \$10,000 donation from the State Bank of India which Dr Daruwalla pledged towards subsidising students' fees at DAS. Said Dr Daruwalla, "... there were many people who contributed to the success of DAS – it was not a solo effort."



Photo by *tabla!*

Dr Daruwalla was part of a team from the Rotary Club of Raffles City who initiated the formation of DAS in 1991. His tireless commitment and remarkable work with the less fortunate in Singapore earned him this award which was presented to him by Tanjong Pagar GRC MP, Indranee Rajah, who was also the Guest-of-Honour at the event.

Sengkang Learning Centre Open House

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) officially opened its 9th Learning Centre in Sengkang. Residents of the North East District now have convenient access to services offered by DAS. The Sengkang Learning Centre was officially unveiled on 6 September 2011 by Mr Teo Ser Luck, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Mayor, North East District. "We thank the DAS for lending a helping hand in opening this Learning Centre. We look forward to walking this journey with you", said Mr Teo Ser Luck in his opening ceremony speech.

The centre opened its doors to parents, educators and curious residents who toured the premises and chatted with the helpful DAS staff on duty that day. Both kids and adults also discovered a range of multi-sensory teaching methods employed by DAS in its classes.

Free computerised dyslexia screening tests were also conducted for children from Primary 1 to Primary 6 to check on the probability of them having dyslexia. While the children did the screening test, their parents attended informative awareness talks on dyslexia.

We thank our sponsors, The Royals and Defu Foods Industry Pte Ltd for their generous gifts for the goodie bags that were given to visitors.

The Sengkang Learning Centre is situated at Block 257C Compassvale Road and is conveniently located opposite Compass Point shopping mall and Sengkang MRT station.



DAS Flag Day

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore held its first Flag Day in six years on 1 October 2011. The event was co-ordinated by DAS with the primary purpose of aiding students from lower-income families so that they may receive specialised education. More than 200 employees and their families from financial giant Royal Bank of Scotland were among the hundreds of volunteers who went to the streets to collect donations to raise funds.

To garner even more support and spread the word of Flag Day, popular deejays from Mediacorp radio station Y.E.S. 93.3 FM such as Cruz Teng, Xiao Jia Hui and Lin Pei Fen also came out to the heart of Orchard Road to join in the appeal for donations. Braving the sudden morning downpour and the heat of the day, scores of volunteers mobilised at appointed venues island-wide persevered in their efforts to encourage donations from the public.

Generosity and the human spirit prevailed and a grand total of \$33,892.22 was collected to help dyslexic students receive appropriate support. DAS would like to thank all volunteers for their dedication, time and tireless efforts in making Flag Day a resounding success.



The Singapore Island Country Club Donates to DAS

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore, this year, has once again been selected to benefit from a generous donation of \$10,000.00 from The Singapore Island Country Club. The club has been an annual donor to DAS and, this year, funds were raised in a commendable effort to aid non-profit organisations like DAS. Last year's donation of the same amount went towards the funding of the Bishan Learning Centre.

EARLY DETECTION, EARLY INTERVENTION SEMINAR

The DAS organised a talk for pre-school educators on 29 October 2011 from 10am to 12pm at the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre. This talk aimed to spread the word on the necessity and importance of early detection and intervention for children with signs of learning difficulties. Our psychologists Veronica Ng and Hina Dadbhoy not only explained to the keen group of educators about dyslexia, but conducted an exercise to help educators pick up children who may probably be at risk of dyslexia. A literacy checklist was introduced to the educators and they were taught how to complete it and tabulate the results that could confirm their doubts of the child.

Our guest speaker, Felicia Ayling who is a Pre-school teacher and also a member of the DAS Parent Support Group, shared tips on little things educators can do in their classes to help these children with learning differences. Whereas DAS Pre-school Manager, Anaberta Oehlers explained how DAS complements the pre-schools in teaching the child to cope in school.

Melanie Tan, a pre-school educator who attended this session said, "The talk helped me to be more aware of the risks of learning difficulties. I am aware of dyslexia but now I also know the signs as well as ways we can intervene in class."

MOE visits DAS

A keen group of psychologists and reading officers of the Ministry of Education's Psychological Services Branch (MOE-PSB) visited the Dyslexia Association of Singapore's Jurong Point Learning Centre on 13 October 2011. Mr Roslan Saad, DAS Director of Education, greeted the astute group while explaining the importance of adapting teaching strategies according to the changing needs of children today.

The group of 18 was given an insight into dyslexia as well as an overview of the DAS' curriculum and its main educational components. Ms Joanne Tan, the Deputy Manager of the DAS Pre-school service elaborated on how the DAS helps pre-schoolers who are at risk of dyslexia, preparing them to be able to cope in Primary 1. This was followed by a description of our Maths programme and a demonstration of our most recently introduced Computer Literacy Programme. A video of our classroom scenes was also shown to further illustrate how our lessons are different from the schools.

The MOE-PSB staff also had the opportunity to try their hands at using the manipulatives DAS uses as part of our teaching tools in our classes. The DAS is proud to have psychologists from the MOE-PSB visit us and find out more in depth how the DAS helps children with dyslexia.



DAS shares knowledge on dyslexia assessment tools

DAS Specialist Psychologists recently shared their knowledge and expertise on psychological assessments with MCYS psychologists from the Clinical and Forensic Psychology Branch of the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS). The sessions included topics on cognitive and literacy assessment tools as well as report writing.

Dyslexia Beyond Singapore

'Dyslexia in Mind: Beyond Boundaries' was the theme of a dyslexia conference in the populous city-state of Hong Kong which was organised with the aim of actively promoting public awareness of dyslexia in society. Amongst the distinguished panel of speakers at the conference, and representing the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS), was Ms Anaberta Oehlers, Head of DAS International and Senior Educational Therapist.

Anaberta shared with the participants on the types of services offered by DAS in Singapore to cope with dyslexia and metaphors written by students of DAS on their thoughts and emotions towards dyslexia.

This conference was jointly organised by The Centre for Special Needs and Studies in Inclusive Education with the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (Education Services), The Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities, Division of Educational Psychology of The Hong Kong Psychological Society and The Hong Kong Association of Speech Therapists.

Parents Learn to Use the Literacy Checklist

Thirty parents attended a session organised by the DAS to understand more about dyslexia and also learn to use a literacy checklist to confirm their doubts of their child. This talk was organised at the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre on 29 Oct from 2.30pm to 4pm.

The parents were grateful that DAS had a simple method which parents can use at home to check if their child could have a learning difficulty. DAS also offers free computerised screening tests occasionally for children so that parents who are still unsure of taking up a formal assessment for their child could get better advice from our psychologist with a report from the test.

DAS Parent Support Group member Felicia Ayling was present to share with fellow parents her journey with her daughter who's dyslexic and how parents can support their children emotionally. Educational Therapist Shobana Nair demonstrated many different ways on how these children learn and how teaching can be adapted. Said one parent, "This talk opened my eyes to the different teaching methods that may help a dyslexic child succeed. I certainly found it beneficial and would recommend it to other parents."

Breakfast & Movie at Jurong Point

As part of the Jurong Point Centre Management Office (CMO) of Starmall Property Management Pte Ltd's community outreach programme, a breakfast and movie day was organised for DAS students from the Jurong Point Learning Centre on 17 September 2011. Staff of CMO wanted to spend a day with the students of DAS to make it a more memorable and meaningful corporate event.

The morning began with Mr Robin Moseley, DAS Chief Executive Officer addressing employees and their families of Starmall Property Management Pte Ltd. Mr Moseley explained the nature of dyslexia and the importance of spreading awareness of this common learning difficulty to the community at large.

Thereafter, the 79 children from DAS in attendance were treated to a sumptuous breakfast buffet generously provided by Starmall Property Management Pte Ltd. This breakfast session provided the Starmall employees with an opportunity to interact with our students, and at the same time understand more about this learning difficulty. The excited children were then ushered to the Jurong Point Golden Village Cinema for the free screening of the action-adventure movie 'Spy Kids 4'.



COFFEE EVENING @ BISHAN LEARNING CENTRE

A little get-together for parents of students of the DAS Bishan Learning Centre was organised on 21 September 2011. 15 parents turned up for this evening bonding over coffee. This get-together aimed to reinforce the kinship of the association through the sharing of experiences of caring for and supporting dyslexic children. Our Centre Manager, Ms Fanny Foo hosted this event together with our Educational Therapists. This event acted as a platform for the parents to network and discuss important matters in a casual and relaxed environment. Parents got the opportunity to get to know our Educational Therapists better. "We thought it was interesting and useful. It is good to know we are not alone in our struggles with helping our dyslexic child", said parents Vivien and Timothy Kow.



Strategies for Next Year

The DAS organised a talk for parents on 5 November at its Jurong Point Learning Center to share on topics such as the 'Year in review' and 'Useful strategies to help children stay in school the next year'. This session was led by Kevin Smith, Director of DAS Academy and Deborah Hewes, Business Development Manager for DAS Academy and DAS International.

Over 40 parents who attended this session were encouraged to give more importance to their child's self-esteem through realistic target setting and the use of constructive language when communicating with them. Ways to promote reading and instill an interest in the activity was also explained to the attendees.

With the exams over and the school holidays just round the corner, our DAS speakers also focused on relevant and engaging ideas for parents to try with their children in the coming weeks. Some of those ideas included volunteering for a meaningful cause, visiting museums and art galleries, and even preparing a simple dinner together. Handy pointers on effective time management and organisation were also provided by the speakers which had many parents listening in rapt attention.

Parents, here are some pointers for you to keep in mind as you help your child along his or her academic journey:

Parents, remember to:

- Be supportive
- Be a good listener
- Communicate effectively
- Work in partnership with teachers
- Be happy and fun loving

Support your child by:

- Accepting your child for who they are
- Giving due praise
- Giving them your time
- Loving them unconditionally
- Staying calm and focused

Bake & Go at TOTT

24 students of DAS together with their siblings turned up bright and early on 12 November 2011 at Tools of The Trade (ToTT) located at the Sime Darby Centre for a morning of whisking, kneading and designing. This 'Bake&Go session at ToTT allows children to explore and enjoy the process of baking without worrying about the mess.

We saw Mums and Dads pitching in to help the eager bunch use their cookie cutters to shape and decorate the cookie dough. Interesting cookie designs were created shaping a briefcase and necktie onto a gingerbread man - the 'businessman gingerbread man'.

The children waited excitedly while their cookies were baking in the oven and proudly showed their work of perfection to the waiting parents when they were baked. With their precious cookies nicely packed into tins, the children left ToTT happy with the sweet success of the morning.



RBS 'Art Day'

On the morning of 3 September 2011, 39 students of Dyslexia Association of Singapore trickled excitedly into the plush premises of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) located at One Raffles Quay for 'Art Day'. Organised by RBS for students of DAS, 'Art Day' aimed to engage the students and develop their artistic abilities.

30 RBS volunteers coupled with five student volunteers from Raffles Girls Secondary conducted various activities for the energetic group of DAS students. "I really enjoyed myself and the students were very fun-loving, bright and intelligent", exclaimed Linda, an RBS volunteer.

With instructions from the volunteers, the students eagerly tried their hands at activities such as the wildly popular crafting of soft toys, mobile phone chain and badge making as well as the moulding of clay donuts that drew a sweet response from the volunteers and parents. Said student participant Foon Wai Kiat, "I liked the toy dog and keychain making because it is fun. I got to use tools that I have never used before." Besides nurturing their artistic abilities, the students also learned to work in teams and share the materials.

'Art Day' concluded on a high note with the inspired students proudly showcasing their art pieces to their delighted parents.

Here is more on what some parents and students had to say about the event.

"I liked the donut making activity. It was fun."

Student, Timothy Lee

"Sean loved it and enjoyed himself. He made me a mobile phone chain using angel wings to express that I'm an angel to him!"

Parent, Wendy Lim

"I liked making the key chain and I am going to give it to my mum."

Student, Siti Mariyam

"Thank you for the event. My son enjoyed it so much that he said to me "Mummy, can you bring me here everyday?"

Parent, Joyce Tan

'Camp Unleash'

Students of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore were treated to an enriching day-camp on 8 September during the week-long September school holidays. Organised by eight students from the Community Problem Solving (CMPS) team of Raffles Girls Secondary (RGS), this educational yet highly entertaining camp aimed to reach out to the dyslexic community by empowering them through art inspired activities.

Tag Wan Yi, team leader of the RGS-CMPS 'Camp Unleash' organising committee said, "We hoped to bring out the artistic skills of the children and let them express themselves through art." Held at Bishan Learning Centre, the camp, attended by 12 DAS students, began with a round of introductory ice-breaking games led by the RGS-CMPS team.

At the camp, our students learnt to create unique paper masks besides joining in a sing-a-long- session and learning an energetic dance routine.

The final activity, a costume making competition, unleashed the vivid imagination of the students. Each group fashioned eye-catching costumes such as Batman, a Fairy Princess and even Superman. The students used innovative materials such as trash bags, ribbons, art paper, streamers and magic markers to create their unique costumes.

'Camp Unleash' encouraged DAS students to explore their artistic abilities and find strength and confidence through expressing themselves in a fun and creative manner. "I thoroughly enjoyed the dancing and fashion show segments and it was fun because it involved lots of teamwork" said camp participant Sybillina Tan.



Hard Work Pays Off

Illegible handwriting, writing 'b' and 'd' in reverse, an essay full of spelling mistakes - sounds familiar? Yes, these are some of the most common signs of a child with dyslexia. And these too were the symptoms Raden Afiq bin Raden Amran had before joining the DAS Bedok Learning Centre in 2006 when he was in lower primary.

Despite trying very hard, Afiq was not able to correct the mistakes he was making. Even after trying very hard to learn the spelling words, he would forget it when it came to spelling time in school. He was also having much difficulty understanding what his teachers were teaching, and even their explanations, due to dyslexia. All of these made Afiq feel demoralised. He did not enjoy going to school as he felt school was a source of undue stress and was too academic. Afiq had also wished that school could have placed more emphasis and recognition in nurturing other skills and talents he had, to compensate for his learning issues.

Since joining DAS, Afiq developed a new found hope in overcoming his challenges. He feels more adjusted and more equipped to face new situations than before. His parents and two elder sisters continue to be his main source of support and encouragement. His Educational Therapists - Mdm Salbiah and Ms Karen Wong at Bedok Learning Centre also believe Afiq has the potential for success which drives them to give their best for the students.

An avid music lover, Afiq plays the Ang Klong in school. Music is a stress reliever to this unassuming boy, who aspires to be a musician one day. By nature, Afiq loves to make others happy and I'm positive he will make many happy with his music.

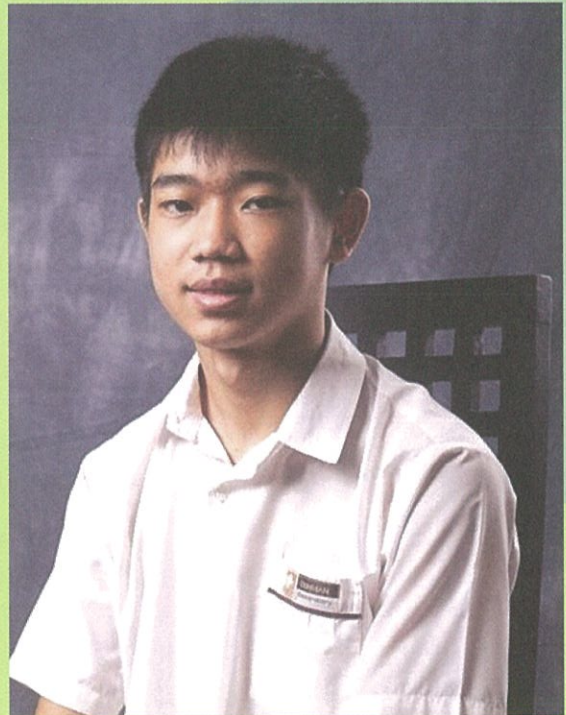
Afiq is a well-behaved and hardworking student. His determination to do better can be seen in his eagerness to clarify when he is unsure. His perseverance showed when he scored an A for Malay language, a 3 for English and a 2 for Math and Science (Foundation) in his PSLE. Today Afiq is in Secondary 1 – moving on to Secondary 2 in Ping Yi Secondary School. He is now an epitome of success to his peers and an inspiration to them that hard work and the will to succeed does pay off!



Strive on, Wei Xiang!

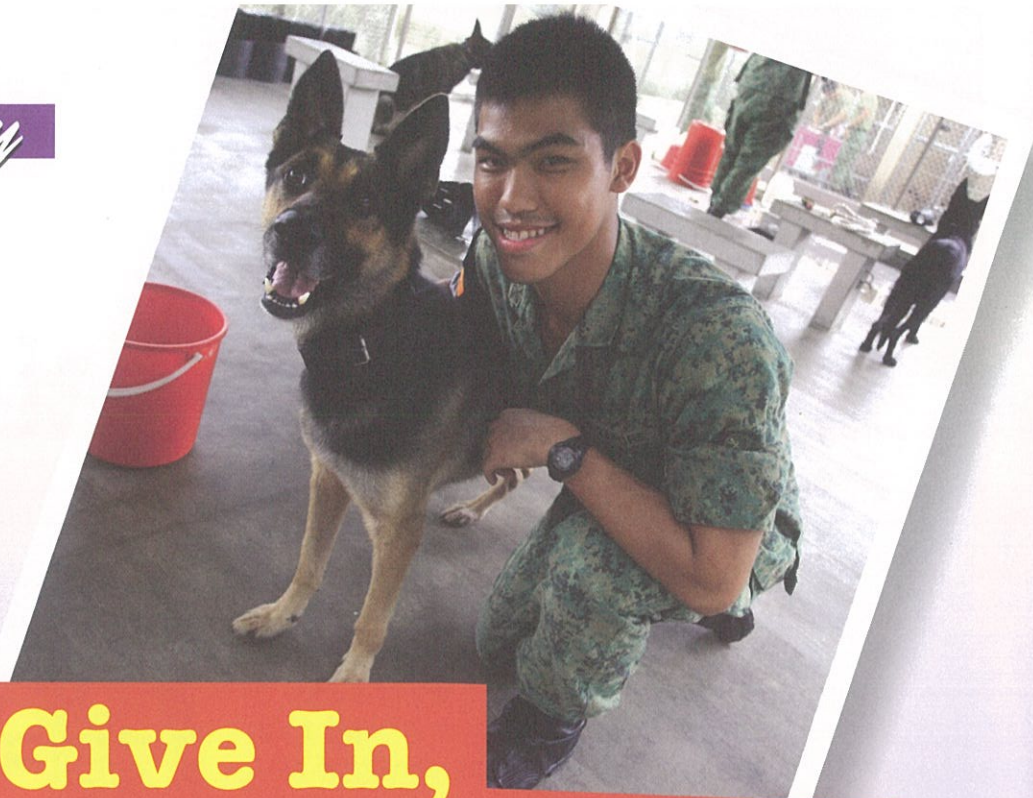
Chia Wei Xiang passed well in all the subjects in his GCE 'N' Levels. He even scored a 3 for his English Paper. This is the same boy who joined DAS in Primary 5 after he was diagnosed to have dyslexia. Wei Xiang used to have some difficulties with reading as he would usually skip words. He also had trouble with spelling. His mother thought there should be a reason why he was constantly failing his English paper and enquired around about the reasons. Wei Xiang was finally referred for a psychological assessment for dyslexia and commenced his remediation lessons at DAS.

"I was not used to the teaching method and environment as it was different from normal classes. But Teacher Karen made it much more interesting for me. I always looked forward to the lessons by my dedicated teacher." "I am glad I joined DAS in Primary 5 as it helped me perform much better at my PSLE. From initially failing the English paper, I actually passed it in PSLE."



Wei Xiang's favourite subjects are maths and science, as he feels he is able to pick up new topics easier and am able to perform better in these subjects. Wei Xiang has been coping well in secondary school despite the additional subjects. He graduated from DAS in June this year. Wei Xiang's efforts and the determination to succeed exemplifies that no hurdle is impossible to overcome.

"Wei Xiang has evolved into an independent learner since he joined DAS in Primary 5. Over the years, he has reaped the fruits of his labour and he knows with resolution, anything is achievable!" comments his Educational Therapist, Ms Karen Wong. He is now working for his GCE 'O' levels. Strive on, Wei Xiang!



Never Give In, Never Give Up!

21-year-old Teo Heng Hao is a former Dyslexia Association of Singapore graduate and one of three recipients of the inaugural DAS Young Achiever's Award 2011. This bright and motivated young man graduated from Ngee Ann Polytechnic with a Diploma in Banking and Financial Services, scoring a commendable grade point average of 3.7. FACETS chats with Heng Hao about his inspirations in life and what keeps him in pursuit of his goals.

The DAS Young Achiever's award has inspired me very much. In the past, my fellow DAS mates and I have at times been subjected to criticisms and negativity from people who have little understanding about learning difficulties like dyslexia. Being told that you are not good enough can be very frustrating. This inaugural Young Achiever Award has proven that, like me, other people too who are struggling with a learning difficulty like dyslexia can do well in life. We may not be as strong as others in our studies but that does not mean people with learning difficulties are unable to achieve their potential.

Knowing that I have dyslexia, my teachers offered me additional time to complete my papers during exams, but I would not take it because I wanted to prove to myself that I could do what my peers were capable of. Reading is quite difficult for me but I would take the time to make sure I get it right.

I would like to highlight that having dyslexia does not mean that we do not have any skills and or talents we can be proud of. In fact, my fellow DAS graduates, Lucas Chia and Rini Tan, who share this award with me, are immensely talented in the performing arts—Rini is a member of the Singapore Ballet Academy while Lucas is actively involved in theatre and television productions. As for me, my strength lies in the combative sport of karate. My passion for this form of martial arts has also led me to the national karate team.

After completing national service I intend to pursue my first love – banking. It is my ambition to join the financial sector in the near future. I must say that my Dad is responsible for my keen interest in banking. He is a private fund manager, and growing up, I used to, and still marvel at how wonderfully he raised my siblings and I. Scoring good grades in modules like Investment during

my Polytechnic days also further proved to me that I chose the right path to pursue.

Discipline and determination have been the key driving forces in all my undertakings thus far. But it has not always been a smooth ride; there has been many incidences when I was tempted to drop what I was working on. For example, my exams used to be scheduled around the festive period of Chinese New Year and my friends would persuade me to join them for a session of 'mahjong' but knowing that I need more time to study, I would decline the invitation and focus on my work instead. For me, it is a matter of prioritising your life and deciding on the best route to venture on.



Another example of having to apply a great deal of discipline is my heavy involvement in the national karate team. I used to attend classes in the morning which was promptly followed by tuition, and when most were unwinding for the day, I would be heading for sessions of karate training at night. My day would finally end only when my homework has been completed right after training. Because I am required to practice karate six out of seven days a week, I really had to adhere to a strict regime and be committed to what I was doing if I wanted to experience success inspite of my learning difficulty.

Throughout my journey, I have been greatly moved by and anchored to Sir Winston

Churchill's famous words, "Never give in, never give in, never; never; never; never..." I firmly believe that no matter how great an obstacle may seem to be, with the right frame of mind, anything can be accomplished. I also live by my personal mantra to 'accept, overcome, and excel'. When you know you have a certain weakness, it is important to first accept it. Then try to find ways to overcome the challenge and soon you too can excel in life. I accepted dyslexia as a part of who I am but I did not let that limit my goals. I always make an effort to break down barriers and try my best to create success for myself.

Heng Hao has certainly proved that having a learning difficulty like dyslexia is merely a small setback in the grander scheme of things. His determination to overcome the odds through hardwork and discipline is praiseworthy and we wish him the best in his future undertakings.



HELPING MYSELF HELPED MY SON

Siew Jin Er is one amazing example of a model parent who has gone the extra mile to help her son, Kevin with his dyslexia. Jin Er did not just stop at sending Kevin to DAS; she attended various workshops conducted by DAS Academy to equip herself with the skills and understanding to help her son at home.

My son Kevin learns differently than I do and his unique learning needs inspired me to find ways to address this issue. I noticed that the study strategies that work well for me did not work for Kevin. Puzzled and distraught, I decided to attend workshops conducted by the DAS Academy for parents to find out how I can help my son learn effectively. To date, I have attended five workshops: 'Coping with Grammar', 'Comprehension Skills', 'Coping with Spelling', 'Developing Effective Study Skills' and 'Developing Writing Skills'.

These workshops have given me a solid foundation on which I can tap on to help my son, Kevin, cope with his dyslexia. Kevin's spelling abilities are very poor so most of our revision time is spent correcting his spelling mistakes in his schoolwork. He hates to be corrected and doing so was not easy, but it was necessary so he could learn from his mistakes.

The 'Coping with Spelling' workshop really helped with this challenge. Together, Kevin and I would underline all the mistakes and analyse them to ensure the correction is well understood. The workshop gave me the essential knowledge to teach Kevin how to break up words into syllables using the various rules we learnt. My son and I now have fun identifying open and close syllables. Our revision time is also more enjoyable since attending the workshops by DAS Academy.

My grammar usage improved through countless rounds of worksheet practices, however, Kevin did not respond well to this method. After attending the 'Coping with Grammar' workshop, I am thrilled to discover that there is a sequence and method to teaching grammar. It is a good guide to introducing parts of speech to children in a clear and systematic way.



Kevin now has a better understanding of how the different parts of speech function in a sentence. He is also able to use the dictionary to correctly verify the meaning of the word based on the given context. These are just some examples of how I have applied knowledge gained from the workshops I attended.

Parents should attend these workshops by DAS Academy because the content is rich and relevant. I was amazed at how interestingly English lessons can be delivered. My knowledge of the language has also widened considerably. The trainers demonstrated a variety of useful teaching strategies. Parents who attend the workshops are encouraged to participate in the learning activities which are fairly easy to follow. During the workshop, fellow parents also share their experiences teaching their own children and I found some of their suggestions to be insightful and helpful. The patient trainers at these workshops also shared their own teaching experiences. They demonstrate useful teaching strategies and highlight common mistakes made by dyslexic children, providing practical solutions. I find the teaching strategies and practical solutions to common mistakes very helpful when I guide Kevin with his studies.

When attending these workshops, parents can expect to be surprised by the innovative methods used to deliver lessons. Most of them are usually concerned about not having prior knowledge before attending these workshops; but anyone with a basic understanding of the English language can attend and benefit from it. All that is really needed is an open mind and an open heart.

Personally, I have benefitted most from the 'Coping with Spelling' course. The workshops conducted by DAS Academy are interactive and there are many hands-on exercises to apply what has been taught.

Would you like to attend the workshops mentioned in this article? Here's the schedule for Year 2012. Sign up today!

Apr 14	Helping Upper Primary and Secondary Schools Develop Effective Study Skills
May 12	Developing Writing Skills
Aug 18	Coping with Grammar
Sep 22 & 29	Coping With Spelling
Oct 20	Developing Comprehension Skills

For more details of the DAS Academy workshops, you may visit us at www.dasacademy.edu.sg or email us at register@das.org.sg

DAS Academy

73 Bukit Timah Road #05-01 Rex House Singapore 229832
Tel: 6336 2555 Fax: 6643 9643

Hobby Leads to Business

Hi! I am Keshvinn Naidu from DAS Bedok Learning Centre. I would like to share about my lifestyle hobby fingerboarding & longboarding.

It all started when my best friend, Jarett showed me some videos of longboarding and I got interested in it. Fingerboarding is a scaled down version of a skateboard. You don't have the risks of getting injured.

I make custom ramps and finger board prototypes. I've made 10 prototype models of fingerboards and ramps so far. It is very simple. I actually bought the mould from a website and use a wood called veneer to make these prototypes. Veneer can be found at your local hardware store. I use a drill press to cut the shape and drill the holes and there you have it! A perfect finger board! I have named them the Blueface Fingerboards. This is the name of my brand of the fingerboards. It's actually a name that I developed. I heard that the start of a company name should begin with your favourite colour and end with a favourite part of your body. To me it is the face – it has most of our senses. And there you have it! That's how the name 'Blueface' was inspired. To inspire my friends on my hobby, I decided to document it. Watch my channel on youtube to learn more about fingerboarding at <http://www.youtube.com/user/bluefacefingerboards>

Besides the thrill of making fingerboards, I also love the sense of speeding. And you get that from longboarding. Longboarding is like a skate board yet larger and more aerodynamic. This is a sport for people who want to experience speed. Personally I have gone 40km per hour on a longboard. That is what I call the thrill of speed! I also have Blueface longboards which is currently out of use, but by 2013, I hope to launch it. Yes, I hope to put together a team to represent Singapore in longboarding by 2013. By then I would have understood longboarding more than I do now. My friends are supportive of my hobby. But I believe more will be when my business takes off.



Does the WORD make SENSE?

Imagine a computer program that could help you learn English at your own pace in a more interactive and fun way! Now you can with WORDSENSE – a computer program that is designed for dyslexic learners between the ages of 13 and 17.

This assistive technology program was created by three Singapore Polytechnic (SP) students who presented it at the annual Singapore Polytechnic Innovations Exhibition (SPINNOVEX), a showcase of projects by graduating students from the various schools of Engineering and Infocomm Technology.

The project, spearheaded by the SP Centre for the Application in Rehabilitation Engineering (SP CARE) in collaboration with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, aimed to help dyslexic students learn words through morphology. WORDSENSE will be further developed and enhanced by future SP students who take on the project as part of their final year graduation requirements.

Isaac Lim, Norlin Mohtar and Yew Min Li share with us their thoughts on designing the program.

Isaac: When we were first introduced to dyslexia and the DAS through SP CARE, we felt that this is a good way to make a relevant contribution.

Norlin: Yes, we have definitely learnt more on dyslexia through this project and we're more aware of the help that dyslexic students need.

Min Li: The project also taught us the importance of time management. With the knowledge that I've gained from this project, I will certainly do my best to help people in need.

DAS volunteer, Miss Kwok Fuyu, who also helped designed the program shares with us too on her experience.

Fuyu: My brother, diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of 7, was the one who got me interested in dyslexia as well as helping people with dyslexia. Since then, I've attended various courses at the DAS and read up research articles on dyslexia hoping to help my brother as well as others like him.

This project has enabled me to understand the various ways to help dyslexic students and the details to pay attention, such as, the colour schemes that may affect these individuals.



From left: Kevin Smith (Director of Training), Norlin Mohtar, Isaac Lim, Yew Min Li, Raymond Ho (SP Lecturer)

COURSES AND WORKSHOP 2012

WORKSHOPS

January

Jan 7	Helping Your Infant Develop Communication Skills - NEW
Jan 14	Helping Your Preschooler Develop Communication Skills - NEW

February

Feb 4 & 11	Understanding Phonics Instructions (Run 1)
Feb 18	Computer Assisted Learning
Feb 25	Developing Your Child's Vocabulary

March

Mar 3 & 10	Developing Self-Esteem in Your Child (Run 1)
Mar 24 & 31	Coping With Spelling (Run 1)

COURSES

18, 25 Feb & 3 Mar	Essential Literacy Approach Elementary - NEW
17, 24, 31 Mar	Essential Literacy Approach Advanced - NEW
15, 16, 17 Mar	Foundation in Supporting Lecturers with Numeracy Difficulties



Students' Works

Here's a selection of writings of students' from the School-Based Remediation Centres on their thoughts and expressions on DAS:

The DAS class! Ace/yn

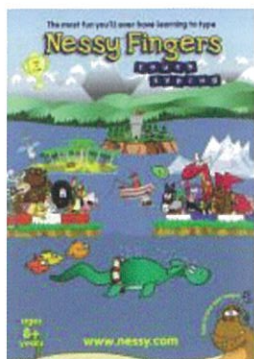
I love DAS class. I love DAS class because there are games puzzle and word search to do. I enjoy the class to. I love spelling, reading and more.

The DAS class Alden Ng

I like Das it is because I like doing comprehension and (doing) card drill and spelling.

THE DAS/SEIT

I LIKE DAS SO MUCH.
I LIKE MY DAS TEACHER.
I LIKE SPELLING.
I LIKE TO GO DAS.



Nessy Fingers is a powerful way to improve typing through exciting games. You can even add your own word list.

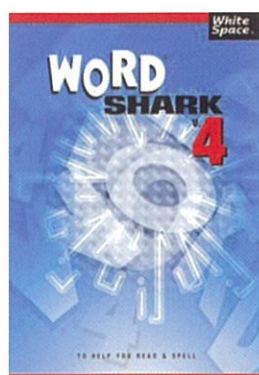
Retail Price
\$45.00 for single user license



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

Age: 5 – 14 years

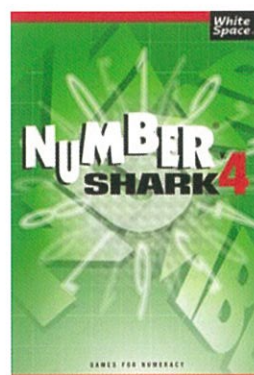
Retail Price
\$225.00 for single user license



Word Shark v4 combines the excitement of computer games with the serious task of learning to read and spell.

Age: 5 – 15 years

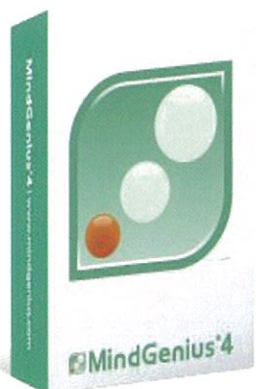
Retail Price
\$128.00 for single user license



Number Shark v4 teaches and reinforces numeracy using forty-five carefully designed games, with over five hundred topics to choose from.

Age: 5 – 16 years

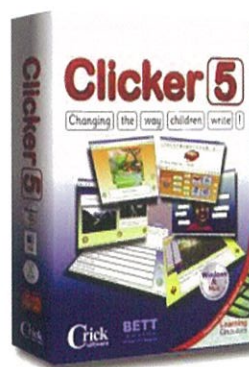
Retail Price
\$108.00 for single user license



MindGenius Education 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

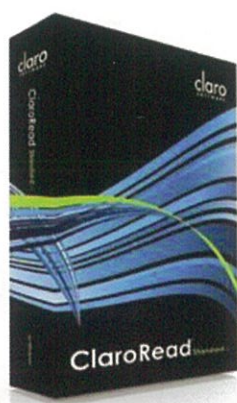
Retail Price
\$135.00 for single user license



Clicker v5 is an award winning tool for students with learning difficulties, which integrates text to speech.

Age: 4 – 14 years

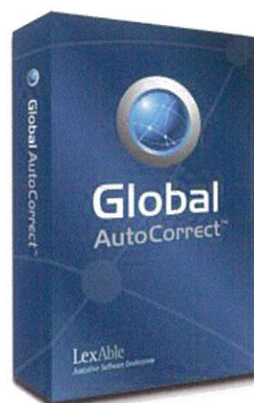
Retail Price
\$250.00 for single user license



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

Age: 5 – 15 years

Retail Price
\$326.00 for single user license



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

Retail Price
\$119.00 for single user license

These software can be ordered at www.dasint.org.sg

Prices are correct as at printing and are subject to change. Please refer to web site for up to date prices.





Cuddly
Happy
Intelligent
Lovable
Daring
Radiant
Energetic
Nimble

by Nicole Ong, Bishan Learning Centre

My Invention: A Rocket

I call it the Dino Joel Star.

How to build it:

1. Get a fizzy drink bottle, a small cone, four plastic fins, some duct tape and the cap of a hose.
2. Tape the sides of the fins.
3. Then tape them to the bottle, one on four sides.
4. Bend the rubber cone over and tape it to the end of the bottle.
5. Remove the cap of the bottle and replace it with the cap of the hose.
6. Fill the rocket with enough water, pull it back and it will fly a distance.
7. Remember, all you have to do is aim your rocket at an upwards direction and it will take off!

Joel Teo

