

FACETS

A Publication of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Issue 3 — July to September 2014 MIC (P) 090/02/2014



Youth for Causes raise \$62,000

FACETS

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

1 Jurong West Central 2
#05-01, Jurong Point T: 6444 5700
Singapore 648886 F: 6444 7900

www.das.org.sg info@das.org.sg

DAS Patron: Mrs Goh Chok Tong
DAS Advisor: Dr Lee Wei Ling

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Editor: Deborah Hewes
Proofreading: Kristy Wong & Cheryl
Cheong

Design and Layout: Deborah Hewes

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Singapore

Contributors:

Pushpaa Arumugam, Chua Jin Chou, Angela
Fawcett, Gopalakrishnan Givanandam, Deborah
Hewes, Lorraine Keong, Belle Lam, Lim Ser Yee,
Chris Ngon, Shenmee, Jacqueline Song, Alicia Tan,
Thomas West, Irene Yong.

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**DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION
OF SINGAPORE**

HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

DAS Centres

Ang Mo Kio AMK	Anderson Primary School T: 6451 5582
Bedok BDK	Fengshan Primary School T: 6444 6910
Bishan BJ8	Bishan Junction 8, #06-03 T: 6250 0526
Chinatown Point CTP	Chinatown Point, #04-01 T: 6538 1658
Chua Chu Kang CCK	Blk 17, Teck Whye Lane #01-167 T: 6464 8609
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Parkway Parade PWP	Parkway Parade, #22-01/02 T: 6440 0716
Queenstown QTN	Queenstown Primary School T: 6475 9535
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Woodlands WDL	Blk 165, Woodlands St 13, #01-567 T: 6269 0730
Yishun YSH	Blk 932 Yishun Central 1 #01-101 T: 6451 5582
DAS Academy	73 Bukit Timah Road #05-01 Rex House T: 6336 2555 www.dasacademy.edu.sg
DAS International Services	Chinatown Point, #04-01 T: 6538 1658 www.dasint.org.sg
DAS Specialist Assessment Services	Bishan Junction 8, #06-03 T: 6444 5700



Welcome

The next few months will be exciting ones for DAS as we embark on our EMBRACE DYSLEXIA campaign which commences with a Dinner and Seminar on 19 and 20 November. Over the last few months we have been planning this unique event which will celebrate the strengths and talents of individuals with dyslexia.

DAS is looking forward to hosting our international guest Thomas West, who has remarked that he is impressed by what DAS is doing in Singapore to help children with dyslexia.

Thomas, a dyslexic himself, from a family of highly visual artists, silversmiths, inventors and engineers, has been invited to give presentations for scientific, medical, art, design, computer and business groups in the U.S. and overseas. He has given conference lectures and keynote presentations to institutions such as the Magdalen College Oxford, Harvard, MIT, University of California at Berkeley, University of Malta, University of Trieste, the Arts Dyslexia Trust in London and at an education conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Just recently he gave a talk on creative visual thinking, computer graphic information visualisation and dyslexia at Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville, California – and presented a Director's Colloquium on a similar topic for scientists and staff of NASA Ames Research Centre (at Moffett Field in California's Silicon Valley). You can read more on this in the interview with Thomas on page 50.

With this amazing resume DAS is very proud to have Thomas as a keynote speaker and presenter at our EMBRACE DYSLEXIA event.

We hope you can take the opportunity to come to our event and listen to Thomas who champions the strengths and talents of dyslexics. Please register now for the DAS EMBRACE DYSLEXIA Dinner and Seminar, this unique event will bring hope and inspiration to those who work with children with dyslexia.

As always it is a pleasure to be able to bring this issue of FACETS to you, I hope there is something in this issue that interests you and that you can share with someone who may need this information. Join DAS in raising awareness about learning differences and together we can make a better future for our children.

Deborah Hewes



FACETS

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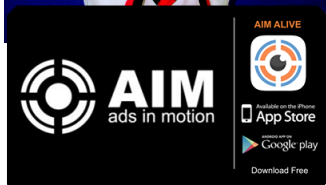
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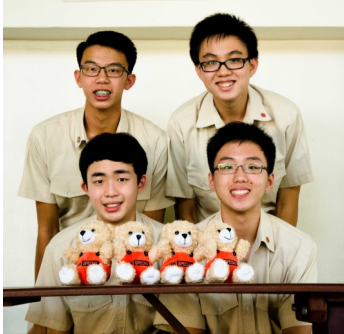
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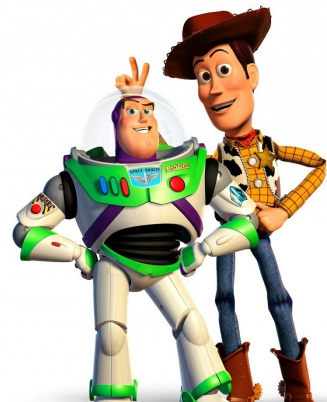
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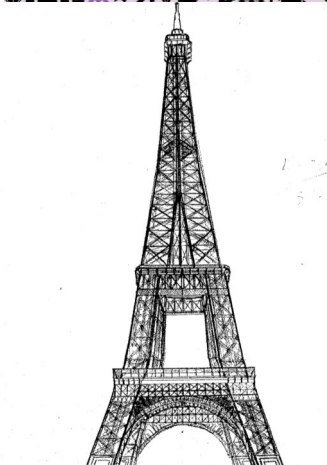
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"Please give the Gift of Education to my friends with Learning Differences."

Dear Friends,

I am Jia Jia and I have dyslexia. I go to DAS so that they help me to learn better. I love DAS! Please help other kids who don't have enough money to come to DAS.

Thank you.

Jia Jia



how YOU can HELP

Make a difference to the lives of children with dyslexia by contributing to DAS. Your donation will help dyslexic children from lower-income families receive all the help that they need to overcome their learning difference.

Research has shown that 10% of the population has dyslexia



The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is a one-stop centre which provides a full range of services to help people with dyslexia. We have a highly qualified team of psychologists, speech and language therapists and educational therapists who support students with dyslexia. Our team of lecturers educate parents, teachers and professionals on how to support children with learning differences.

**Help a Child with Learning Differences by
Donating to DAS!**

www.das.org.sg/donate-to-das



**DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION
OF SINGAPORE**

HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE



Fun & Features

A Gardening Workshop with Nanyang Girls High

By Gopalakrishnan Givanandam
DAS Centre Manager
Chua Chu Kang and Chinatown Point Learning Centres





The June school holidays brought plenty of excitement to our students as they were presented with opportunities to take part in some exhilarating events. The first was a gardening workshop!

Volunteers from Nanyang Girls' High School, organised a gardening workshop. The event served our students with an extensive knowledge to plants and gardening. Parents were also encouraged to take part and watch their child have fun.

The workshop started with ice breaking game sessions and set through a brief presentation by the volunteers on plants and gardening.

Our students were brought on a short walk around the garden facilities of Nanyang Girls' High. It was such an enriching experience for our students who learned about various plants and their benefits.

Afterwards our students had an opportunity to create their own bookmarks using colourful dried leaves and were given the experience of transplanting a potted plant.







Each student was given some soil, a pot and gardening tools to carry out the transplanting. It was a pleasant experience for our students who got to feel the soil, uproot the plant and plant them back.

Our students had a joyful session and walked home with their own potted plants.

We would like to thank our student volunteers from Nanyang Girls High for a well-executed event.





Ice-cream making workshop with trainee teachers

By Gopalakrishnan Givanandam
DAS Centre Manager

Chua Chu Kang & Chinatown Point Learning Centres

Trainee teachers from NIE planned an ice-cream workshop for our students and parents. The event was held at NIE Campus and had a unique introduction; while students were attending an ice breaking session, parents were encouraged to write a card filled with motivational messages to inspire their children.

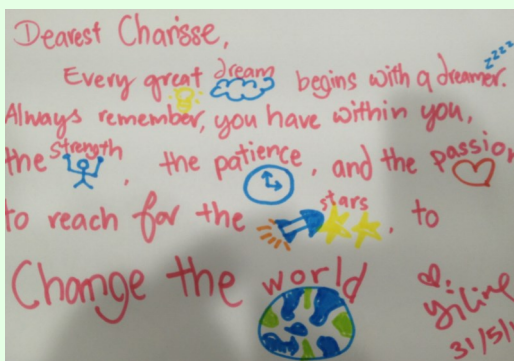
DAS students and parents were involved in the process of ice-cream making. Each parent and child poured in the ingredients required for ice-cream making into a vacuum bag, placed it in a plastic container and wrapped with a bath towel.

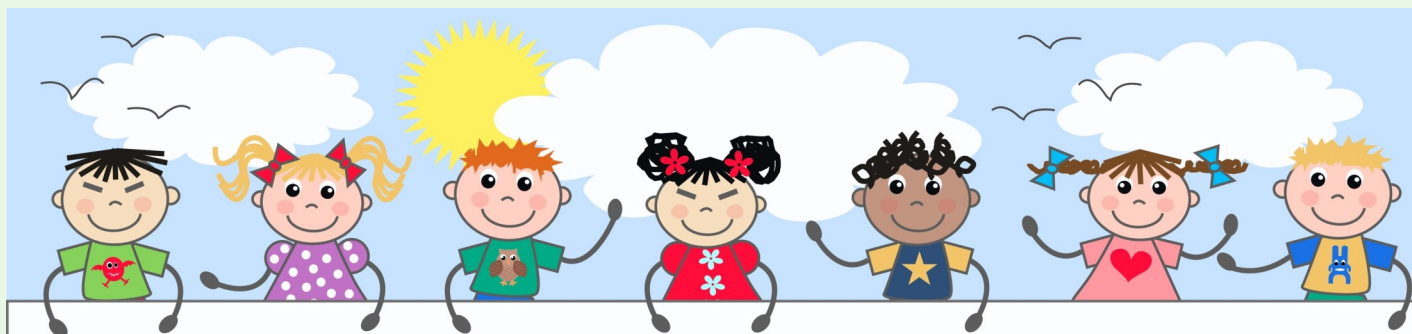
Students were then divided into groups to participate in pulsating game sessions with the ice-cream mixture. Finally, the students and parents had the chance to enjoy their ice-cream with a wide choice of toppings.

Our volunteers completed a reflection on the ice-cream making process with the students and asked parents to present the cards decorated by them to their child. The event was enjoyed by all as observed by one of our parents below.

"I just wanted to say thank you for the fun and educational workshop, I thought it was one of the best we attended! The well-rounded and co-ordinated multi-sensory learning activities for the kids, combining both fun and science surely cemented useful science knowledge in the kids. I imagine this can only be a result of enthusiasm, detailed planning and hard work put in by the NIE volunteers and your DAS team. It is gratifying to know that this bunch of passionate and kind youths will be educators in due course! The activity for the parents to write an encouraging message to our child in their "ice-cream workshop" certificate was also a very endearing touch. Thank you for all your hard work! Heartfelt thanks!" DAS Parent

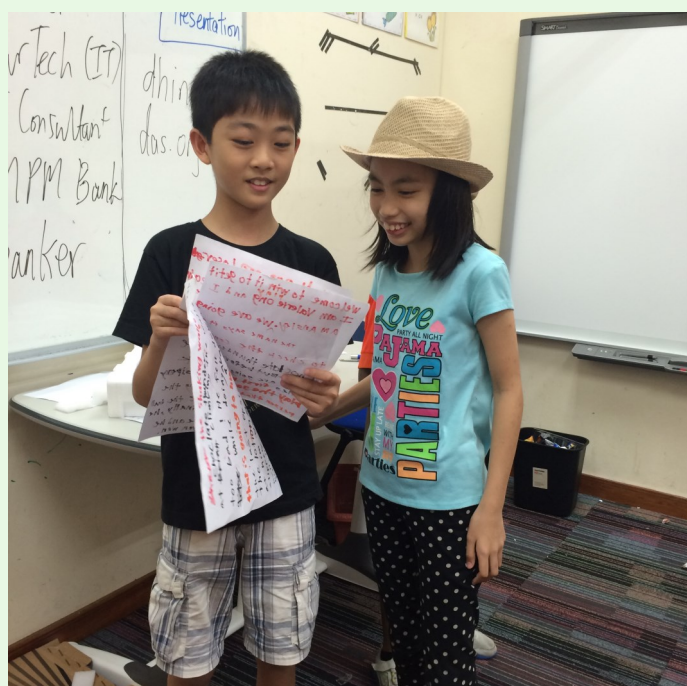


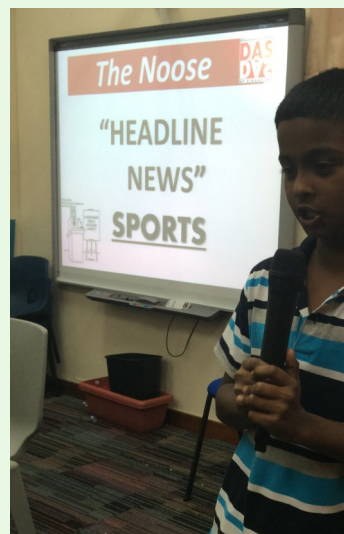
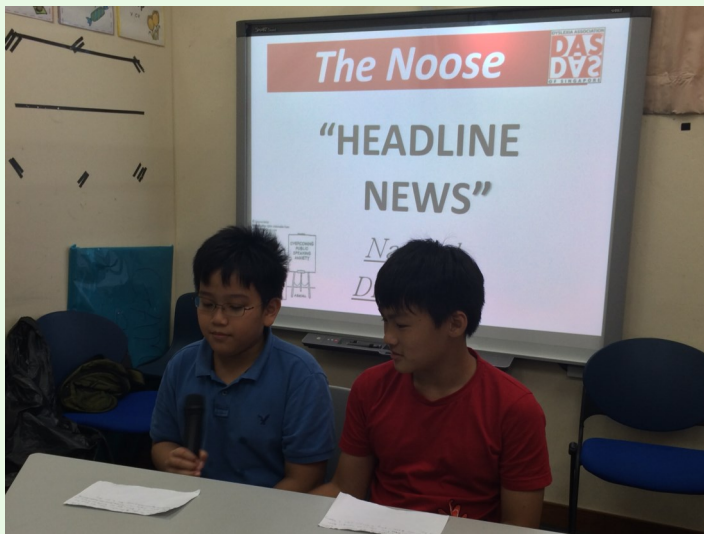
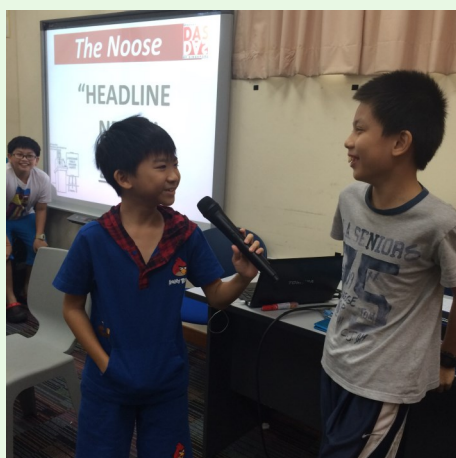
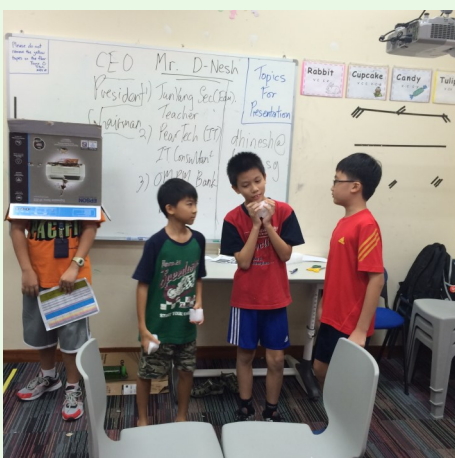
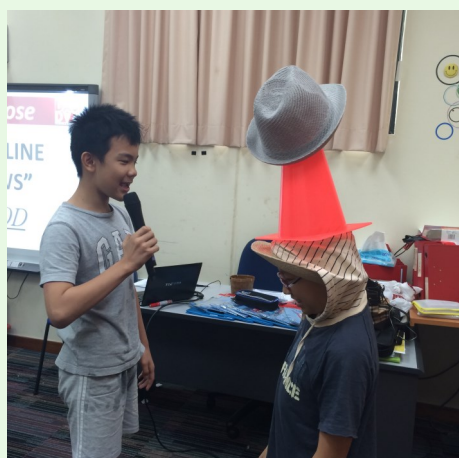




June School Holiday Workshops

Presentation Skills with Dhinesh





Goal Setting with Success with Ashraf



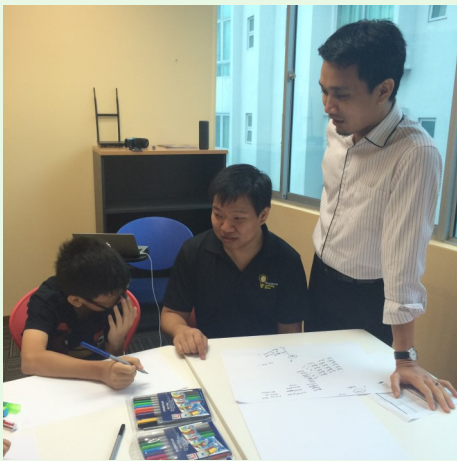
Mindmapping with Ashraf

Linking and Associating

COW Grass Dung Milk Steak Australia

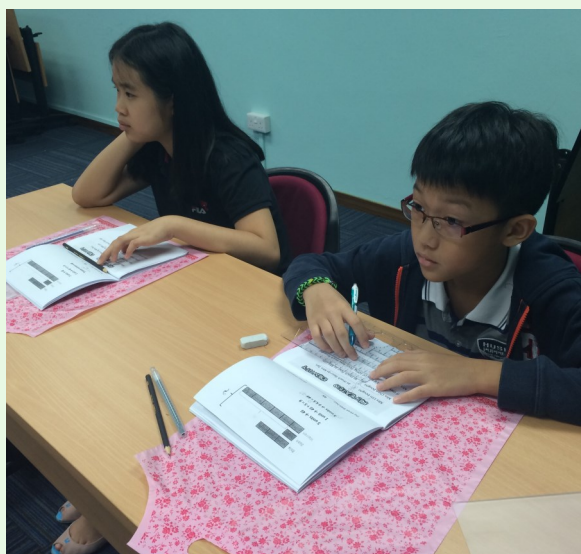
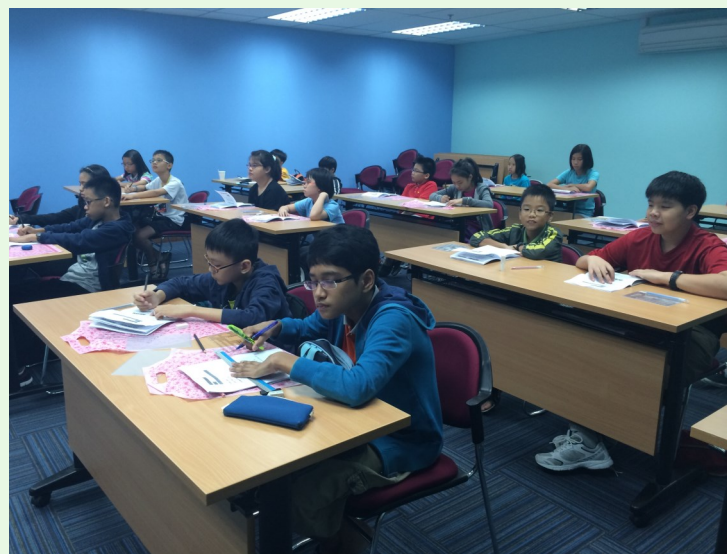
Try your own associations:

SHOPPING

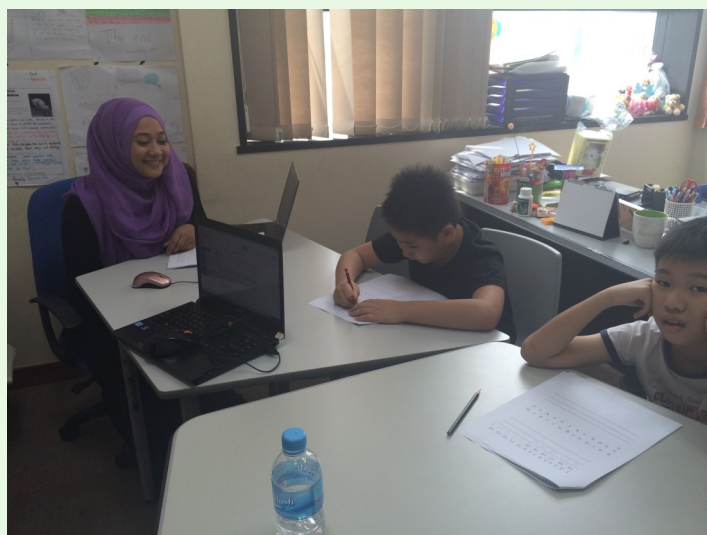
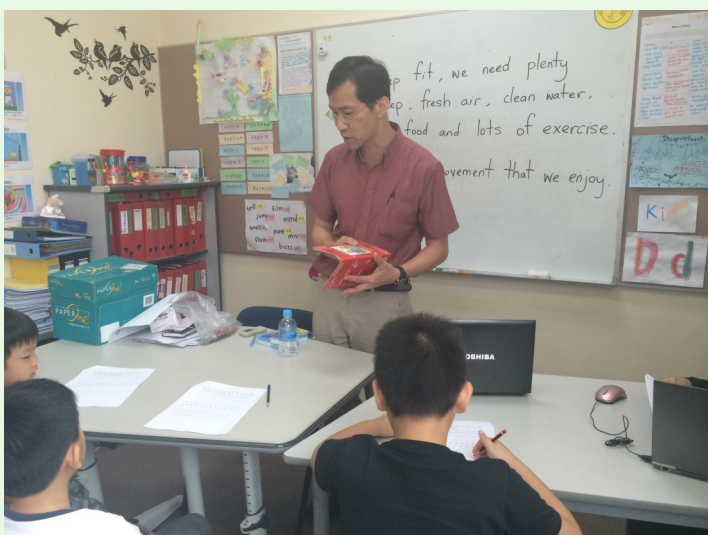
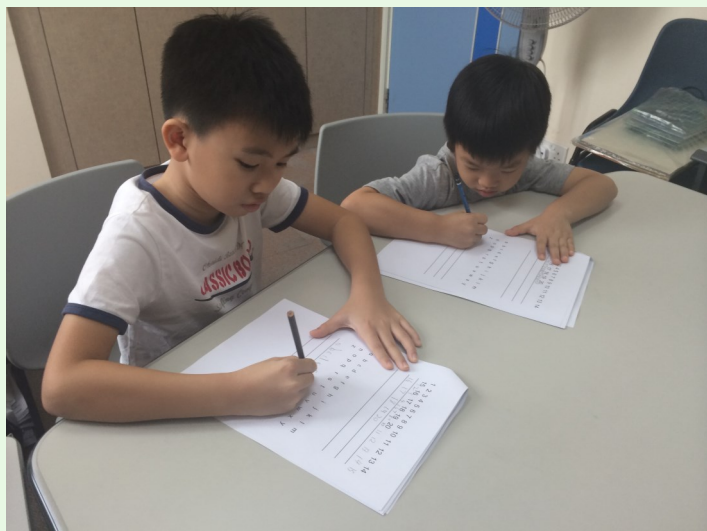
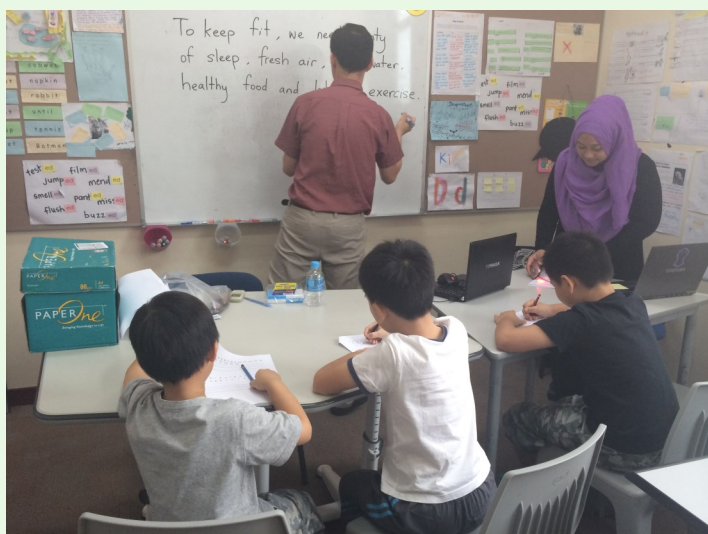


Maths Problems Sums with Afbel and Tam Shuyi



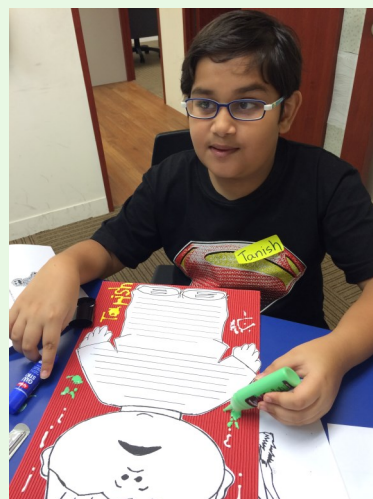
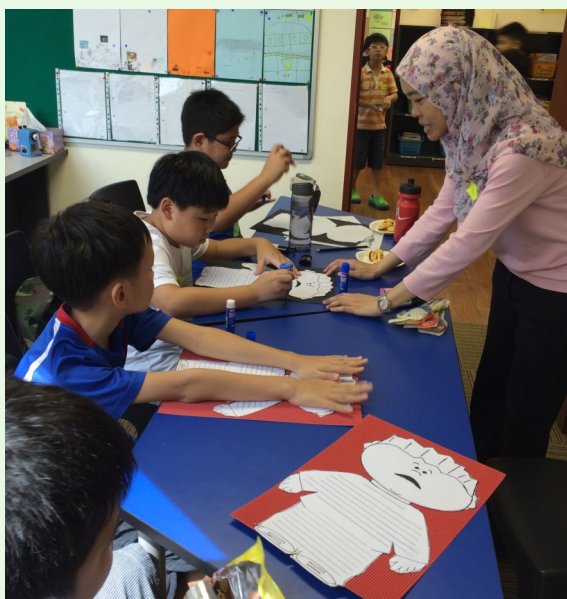
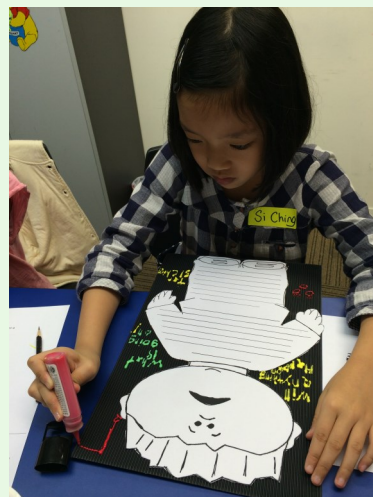
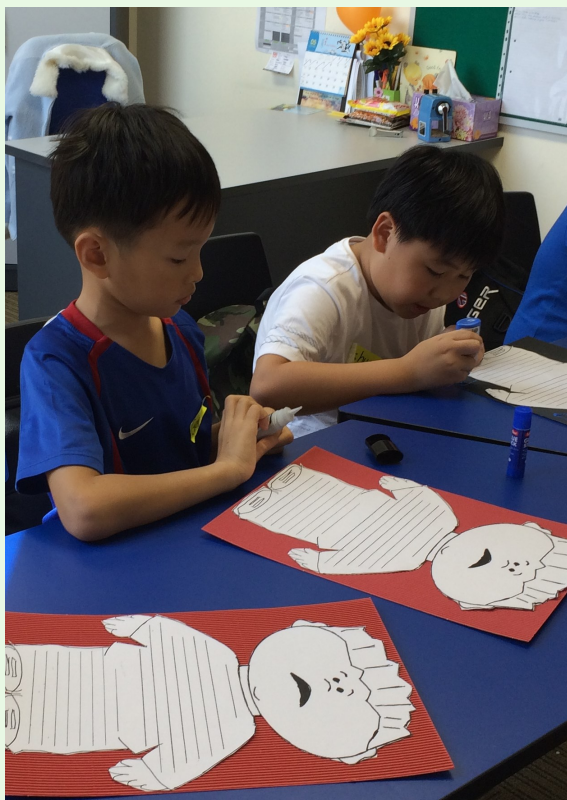
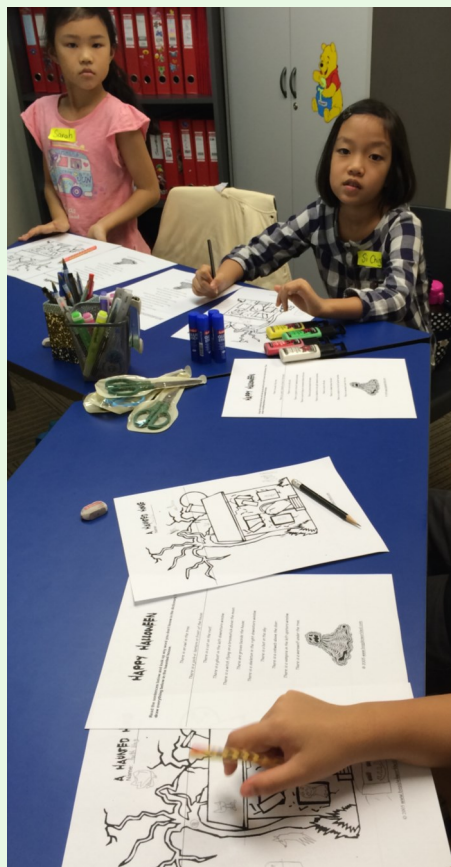


Handwriting without Tears © with Titus



Act to Write with Nicole, Nur Afia and Nithya





Speech and Drama Arts

Our First Year

By Pushpaa Arumugam
Assistant Director
SES Enrichment Programmes

It's been a year since our Speech and Drama Arts (SDA) Programme was piloted for our students at DAS. Since then, SDA has been providing a platform for students to display their talents.

Our Speech and Drama Arts programme provides an inclusive curriculum and pedagogy that works on the premise of exploring creative drama teaching methods that accommodate differentiated learning. Through our programme, students improve in their speech and communication skills, develop better self-esteem, and become confident, expressive and creative. Throughout each term, students inquire, learn and explore various drama skills based on a chosen theme which in return, supports their literacy and social-emotional development.

At the end of term two, our SDA students demonstrated these qualities by performing to an intimate audience of family and friends. Our young performers proudly showed off their brevity and their knowledge in dramatic skills by performing three original presentations. The two stories titled "Universal Studios" and "The Carpenter's House" were crafted during improvisation activities in drama class. These stories were then scripted, devised and rehearsed for the term end presentation. With their seamless delivery of roles and lines, our little performers earned heartfelt praises and applause from the audience.

This showcase, was not only fun and encouraging for the pupils but also an opportunity for parents to see how their children have blossomed over the term through our programme.







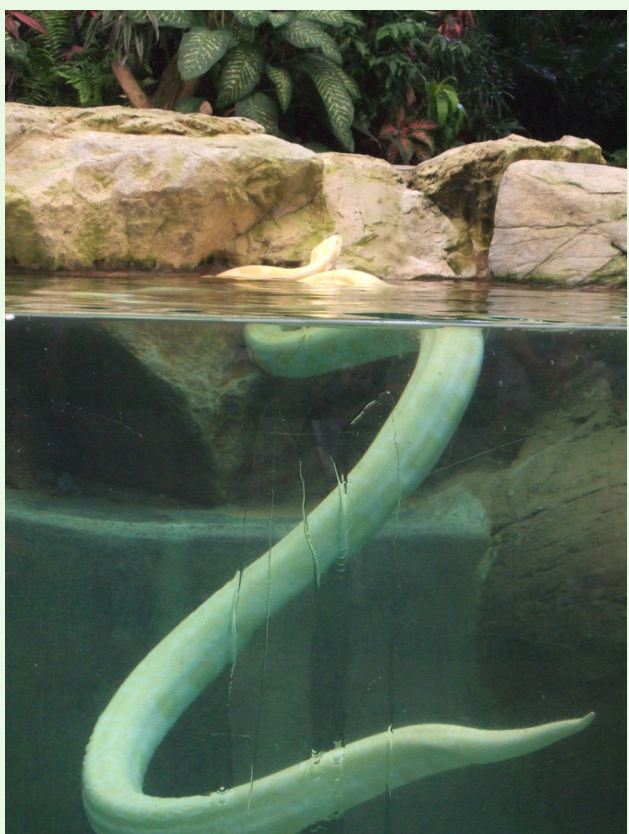
Off to Singapore Zoo!

By Deborah Hewes
Head of Publicity and Publications

On a very hot day in July, DAS Speech and Language Therapists Joyce Tan and Shuet Lian and DAS Specialist Psychologist Adeline Teo turned the Singapore Zoo into a classroom for nine lucky Speech and Language students.

The aim of the zoo excursion was for the students to learn about their favourite animals and what these animals can do, learn how to read the zoo maps and for students to talk about their experiences after visiting the zoo. A great day was had by all!







**"Books open
windows to the
world and have
the power to
transform lives."**

Ralph Lauren

This year, Ralph Lauren proudly supports Children's literacy and education worldwide by providing access to books for children in need.

Ralph Lauren is committed to boosting literacy for children in underserved households. Books have the power to transform lives. By giving books to those in need and encouraging and inspiring families to read together, Ralph Lauren hopes to make a powerful difference in the lives of these children.

As part of this campaign, Ralph Lauren has designed a special Literacy T-shirt and other merchandise that will be sold in the boutiques worldwide.

Ralph Lauren Supports Literacy DAS is the adopted beneficiary

By Jacqueline Song
Head of Fundraising

In Singapore, the products will be sold at their new children's boutique at Marina Bay Sands which opened on 30 August 2014.

The DAS is honoured to be the adopted beneficiary under this programme. 25 percent of the proceeds from the sale of the literacy merchandise will be donated to us, with the aim of providing books and reading material for children in need. Instore signages will be placed within the boutique to inform customers about the beneficiary they have appointed.

The Dyslexia Association of Singapore came to mind because of the many programmes that the association runs to help and support children with Dyslexia. Ralph Lauren Children's Boutique hopes that the proceeds will be able to fund more books and reading materials to assist with programmes and outreach activities that the association conducts.

Thank you Ralph Lauren in helping children with dyslexia achieve!





On 17 September, Mr Lee Siang, DAS CEO, had the opportunity to share about dyslexia and the upcoming EMBRACE DYSLEXIA campaign on The Breakfast Club of 938 LIVE, Singapore's top English news and talk radio station. This is the second time this year that the hosts, Bharati Jagdish and André Ahchak, had invited DAS to be on their popular morning talk show.

Siang gave The Breakfast Club listeners a clear overview of dyslexia and shared the common misconceptions associated with it. He urged teachers and friends of dyslexic children to identify and harness their strengths and encourage them to excel in those areas. To illustrate that dyslexics could be just as successful as their peers, Siang gave several local examples of dyslexics who are well-accomplished in different fields.

He also urged dyslexic adults to step forward and be role models for dyslexic children, as part of the EMBRACE DYSLEXIA campaign. Quoting Joe

Torgesen's 'Catch Them Before They Fall' paper, Siang encouraged parents to look into early intervention if their children have learning differences, to enhance their chances of catching up in school and in life.

As the parent of a former DAS student, André also spoke about his own experience with his son, who was diagnosed at the age of 10 and had difficulty reading prior to intervention.

The interview enabled DAS to raise greater awareness about dyslexia, call for the public to support people with dyslexia in unlocking their potential, and direct the audience's attention to the upcoming EMBRACE DYSLEXIA campaign.

Standard Chartered
Marathon Singapore
2014



KIDS DASH

JOIN IN THE FUN!

*Terms & Conditions Apply



Dr Jiajia is "delicious"

www.giveasia.org/s/ta8ol



The Standard Chartered Marathon Singapore (SCMS) will be held on 7 December 2014. SCMS began with just 6,000 runners in 2002, reaching a peak of 65,000 runners in 2011.

In 2012, the theme – "Run for a Reason" – was introduced to encourage all runners to submit their individual reasons for taking part in the Marathon.

SCMS 2014 is set to once again feature three different start points and routes for the Marathon, Half Marathon and 10km. The Kids Dash also offers aspiring little runners the chance to experience the Marathon, while the Ekiden promises to foster both teamwork and strategic planning among a team of six runners completing the Marathon in a relay format.

Dr Jiajia will be running in the
KIDS DASH

Chua Jin Sen, nicknamed Dr. JiaJia, is 8-years-old and together with his Secondary 3 brother, Chua Jin Chou, better known as BigBro, have been entertaining Singaporeans via their YouTube videos (with over 50,000 subscribers) since 2011. They also have two younger sisters – nicknamed Hello Kitty and Pall Pall – who occasionally appear in their productions.

Dr. JiaJia has dyslexia and he uses his popularity to raise awareness for the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS).

Dr Jiajia has been selected by Standard Chartered Marathon to be the Ambassador for the running community of the East. He will do this by running in the 750m Kids Dash. 100 percent of the funds he raises will be donated to the DAS.



Big Bro and "Hidden Potential"

www.giveasia.org/s/lkg3t

Chua Jin Chou "Big Bro" will be running in the EKIDEN

By Chua Jin Chou (Big Bro)

My team is running for the category, Ekiden. We have formed a group of six and we hope to raise awareness about dyslexia through this marathon. Dyslexia is a learning difficulty common amongst children. The life of a dyslexic child, like my brother, can be very confusing and depressing if he had not been identified and explained what dyslexia is. These kids are unable to remember words despite constant reminders from their teachers and parents.

They are sometimes labelled "below average" by some people and gradually, this mentality sinks into their minds and they start losing their self-confidence. Hence, these kids may never be

able to reveal their true talents.

Therefore, we hope to let more people know about dyslexia and reach out to them instead of demoralising them.

I would like to thank my ever supportive dad for agreeing to participate with me. I would also like to thank Mr James Tang from Brainy Moves, together with his team, who have willingly agreed to run with me in this marathon.

Please support us! We are fundraising for DAS as we hope to raise awareness about dyslexia.



**Big
Brother**

**Dr.
Jiajia**

**Mr. Chua
Weng Foo**

19 & 20 NOV 2014
Traders Hotel
&
NTUC Auditorium
To register:
[www.das.org.sg/
embrace-dyslexia/registration](http://www.das.org.sg/embrace-dyslexia/registration)

EMBRACE DYSLEXIA

FROM **RAT** RACE TO **SNAIL'S** PACE BY MR. CHUA WENG FOO

Parents in Singapore understand too well the rat race of living in a high stress society and they would do anything and everything within their means to give their children a head start. But what if you realize your child is learning in snail's pace no matter how much time you pour in and how much whip you crack. All you could do is watch in horror as every kid in his class overtakes your "snail". By a big margin.

This talk is all about the confession of a type A personality dyslexic parent, **Chua Weng Foo**, who first reacted to his boy's learning disability with incomprehension and disbelief, then panic and anxiety follow suit, and eventually finding his nirvana through acceptance and empowerment. Weng Foo will share with you the learning journey—the pain, blood, sweat and laughter—he faced together with his 8-year-old dyslexic boy, **Chua Jin Sen aka Dr. Jiajia**.

EMBRACE DYSLEXIA Dinner & Seminar

19 Nov 2014 - Embrace Dyslexia Dinner

Listen to inspiring dyslexics share their personal experiences and enjoy the entertainment from DAS students.

Guest of Honour: Mr Sam Tan, Minister of State

Speaker: Thomas West, World Renowned Author

20 Nov 2014 - Embrace Dyslexia Seminar

Make a stand for people with dyslexia at the seminar.

Presenters for the Seminar:

Mr. Thomas West | Mr. Chua Weng Foo | Dr. Thomas Sim

Ms. Michelle-Lynn Yap | Ms. Geetha Shantha Ram |

Mr. Nor Ashraf B Samsudin and more...



Applause



Amelia Chua

It's not about winning every race, but pursuing each one with passion!

By Alicia Tan
Mother of Amelia Chua

Amelia took up short track speed skating around the middle of the year. After watching the 2014 Winter Olympics short track races on television she became fascinated with the sport and since then she had been badgering us to allow her to take up speed skating.

Seeing her keen interest and diligence during training, her coaches encouraged her to compete in both the Singapore Short Track Ice Speed Skating National Championships as well as the Inter-School Ice Skating Competition. Amelia had never competed before and the idea was to expose her to new challenges.

Amelia gamely took up the challenge. We were pleasantly surprised at her courage to step forward to compete. We then emphasised to her that winning was not important. Finishing each race was already an achievement in itself.

In her first race, she was running for second place but fell down twice and ended up last. However, she never gave up, picking herself up each time and getting on with the race. While disappointed, she was focused on finishing the race and improving her performance for the upcoming races. She went on to win gold and silver medals at the competitions!

Amelia joined DAS when she was in K2. In P2 now, Amelia still has some difficulty in focusing on her schoolwork and often finds school assessments challenging. Speed skating is giving her a wonderful boost in self-confidence. We're really

happy and proud of her courage and determination.

More importantly, we have never seen her so focused. We are starting to see a renewed positive spirit in everything that she does, including her school work. And with this new attitude, she recognises that life is not about winning every race or acing every exam, but pursuing your passion, enjoying the process and simply doing the best you can!



Amelia's Awards

**2014 Singapore Short Track Ice Speed Skating
National Championships**

Pony Division Ladies - Gold

2014 Singapore Inter-School Ice Skating Competition

Short Track Speed Skating,

Lower Primary Girls 222m - Gold

Lower Primary Girls 333m - Gold

Queen of Speed, Lower Primary Girls - Silver





Dedicated Dancer, Drea

By Lim Ser Yee
Mother of Drea Lai Jie Ning

When my daughter, Drea, was recently awarded the DAS Special Achievement Award, many were curious especially those who know her as a quiet and reserved 10-year-old, many were wondering about her drive and motivation.

Well the truth is, we thank dyslexia for her achievements and development.

The first sign of her dyslexia was some four years back when she started refusing to go to school in K2. It was a very stressful period for our family trying to cope with work and with an obviously distressed child who would sob when we arrived at the school gate.

Both her Dad and I were at a loss, especially when her teachers were unable to shed light on what was wrong at school. It was after months of frantic consultation with different doctors and professionals that we finally discovered that she was suspected of having dyslexia which could explain the stress she was having and her behaviour. What followed next was an intensive research on our part on dyslexia and explaining to Drea what having dyslexia meant for her.

While waiting for the formal test to be done, we made the decision to let her sit out of English classes, which was the trigger for her stress, for

the rest of her time in K2. Instead, we opted for her an alternative learning of the English language by a private special needs teacher so that she could learn the language at a slower pace and in a less stressful way.

Our biggest worry however, was the emotional impact that struggling to learn was having on her. Drea's self-esteem and confidence was at an all-time low when she started primary school. She would come home each day feeling depressed and frustrated, wondering why her classmates were all doing better despite her putting in her best effort to learn.

I remember crying for the first time since she was diagnosed, when she asked me one day after school "Why am I so stupid mummy?" This struck me hard and I wanted to help my girl build her confidence and self-esteem. I could not face her grow up feeling so small about herself. At that point, academic achievement was the least of my worries.

We started noticing the things that she enjoyed, discovering that Taekwondo and dance were areas that she enjoying and was doing well. We encouraged her to spend more time on these activities.



An opportunity came when her Taekwondo school invited her to participate in the National Poomsae competition when she was 7. She won in her first competition and since then she has not turned back. Her confidence grew from there and so did her self-awareness that within her she has the ability to excel.

As a result she never gives up, she attends classes conscientiously and trains extra hard for her competitions and exams. She was motivated to see her belt changing colours after each exam, signifying she had achieved another milestone. Refusing to give up she reached her first Dan belt last year despite her growing commitments.

Similarly for dance, she loves performing despite her reserved character and we supported her in exploring many different dance genres in ballet, jazz and tap dance. She started competitive dancing in 2013 and despite doing it for a short time, her passion and hard work earned her winnings at local and regional competitions such as the Dance Quest Theatrical State championship Perth held in May this year, where she was placed first for the nine years and under category in Tap dance.

And in the Commonwealth Society of Teachers of Dancing (CSTD) Dance Solo Competition in July this year, she competed in the 12 years and under

tap dance category and she was awarded a second placing, and hence qualifying to compete against representatives from the Asia Pacific region in the 16th Asia Pacific Dance Competition.

It was amazing to see how she blossomed with these experiences, with us constantly reinforcing the learning points to her – that with hard work and self-belief, she is able to achieve like her peers, if not better.

Classes at DAS and the support she receives from Haig Girls' school, have also been critical to her development. At DAS, she enjoys her classes where learning is made fun and enjoyable. She sees the similarities in her friends and enjoys learning with them. At Haig Girls' school, we are open and honest about her condition and we keep on-going communication with her teachers. We are thankful that the school believes in holistic learning, is inclusive and recognises and shares her achievements. This has helped to boost her confidence and she now enjoys going to school. She was also given opportunity for leadership roles and is a school prefect, a role that she takes great pride in representing her school.

While we are happy with what she has achieved,



the greatest joy we have is seeing how her character has developed over the years. In the recently concluded Asia Pacific Dance Competition, she competed in three categories – two in groups for Classical/Lyrical and Tap dances and did well with the first and third placing respectively. She did not win a placing in her solo category but it was truly an amazing learning journey for her given the exposure to so many quality dances and dancers in Asia Pacific region and the key learnings of hard work, teamwork, perseverance and discipline that came along with this.

What touched me most from this experience was how my little girl handled her wins and losses. Right after her dance, she told me, “Mummy, it is ok that I do not win anything because I can see that the rest of the dancers were amazing too.” And when she comforted a fellow dance friend who like her, did not get a placing with “It is ok, you have done your best,” despite her own disappointment.

My heart just melted when I heard that, because I knew then that what my 10-year-old has gained far more than just the results. The gracious attitude and sportsmanship displayed by my usually quiet and reserved girl, was what really mattered. While she was disappointed that she didn’t achieve her target, she recovered very fast, wanting to work even harder and I knew she has become a stronger and more resilient person – a far cry from the sad little girl she was. These life lessons are far more important than the result itself, at least to me.

As we reflect on Drea’s development to date, we are convinced that it is her dyslexia that has helped her become the girl she is today. The struggles – both academic and psychological, that she has faced has given her the opportunity to build strength and resilience from a young age. We have always reinforced that she should look at her dyslexia as an advantage and opportunity – because if she can overcome this challenge, she will be able to face her challenges in the future.

This courageous and “can-do” attitude is far more important and powerful than any academic achievement. She has always remembered that her name “Drea” means “Courageous”, her name is the intrinsic motivation for her to overcome challenges.

However, motivation in itself is not enough, it is essential that one must have the confidence and self-belief for motivation to be put to good use. We are thankful that we made the right decision to shift her focus from academics and towards her strengths.

It is important to discover the non-academic activities – whether it is sports, arts, music, dance etc, that your child enjoys and give them time to enjoy them. As parents, our children look to us for guidance and support. In Drea’s case, her Dad and I are glad that we persisted and never regretted the direction we took, despite having to compromise on her academic schedules.

We resisted the temptation to increase tuition to support her academic work, but reassured her that grades don’t matter as long as she has given her best. We allow her time to do what she enjoys and what she is good at. We believe that when she realises that she can be on par or even better than her peers, her confidence will leap and with hard work, results will follow. This is where this powerful “can-do” mentality can be transferred to her academic learning.

Yes, it is a long continuous process (you do not see immediate results) but we are comforted that we are seeing the light as she is coping better with her academics now, though she still has a long way to go. But we never stop believing that one day, she will overcome this learning difficulty with a right attitude. At the end of the day, I believe that the right character be build first and academic achievements will follow.

We often joke that we are probably the lone set of parents left in Singapore who are so relaxed about academic achievements and we sometimes doubt ourselves and ask “Are we sure?” But each time, we persisted and continue to ride against the tide. I think it is because deep down, we know we just want our child to grow up to be happy.

As long as she is equipped to handle life’s challenges this is all that matters at the end of the day. Dyslexic or not, every child deserves to be given the time and opportunity to discover and develop what they enjoy and what they are good at. The least we can do is be steadfast in our belief in our children (and ourselves) and provide the guidance and support that our children need.



Isabelle Wong

Lil' Miss Singapore

South East Asia

2014

By Irene Yong
Mother of Isabelle Wong

Isabelle was diagnosed with dyslexia at the end of Primary One just before her seventh birthday. It was also at this time that we discovered that Isabelle is very talented at singing.

She will be going to Paris next year to represent Singapore in "Lil Miss Globe". She has grown in confidence with your support and care. Thank you DAS!

In 2013, Isabelle represented Team Singapore in Hollywood, USA and was the Division World Champion for ages five to 10 in the singing and modelling categories. She returned to Singapore with eight Gold medals, one Bronze medal and an industry medal for the most medal wins for a Singaporean representative.



Isabelle was also second runner up in the SAFRA Lil' Star 2013. Isabelle was crowned 'Lil Miss Singapore 2014' representing Singapore at the South East Asia Children Friendship and Beauty Festival in June 2014.





Congratulations

Words from Isabelle

Before I was in school, it was very difficult for me to understand English and Maths. Now because of DAS I am better in school. Things were getting easier in school. It was difficult until I reached Primary three, thanks to DAS I am getting better at my English. For my topical test, I tried to get full marks but I did not, but I was almost there. I felt the best thing I did was that I tried my hardest.

I like performing so I hope I can keep doing the it. My mummy says that school must come first because music also needs Maths and English, like lyrics, notes and beats.

My parents give me lots of love and I'm happy that I win awards in singing to thank them.



Isabelle is only 9 years old. She participates in musical performances and besides singing, she also plays the piano, dances and enjoys archery.





Lorraine Keong

Perseverance Pays Off

"Never give up"

Throughout my academic studies in Temasek Polytechnic (TP), I have been on the director's list for three consecutive years. At the end of my three years at Polytechnic I received the SQL View Course Bronze Medal and the Inshuo International (S) Prize.

Being really weak in my subjects in the earlier days in primary school caused me to lose confidence in studies, resulting in taking a longer route for my Secondary education. My Secondary school results were not that much better off. However, I managed to pass most of my subjects so that I could enter polytechnic, at which I eventually excelled in.

Though my academic achievements seemed to be smooth sailing, I was in fact struggling during the first semester at polytechnic. I was not coping well with modules that were not at all like the secondary school subjects. I even thought about giving up on my studies many times but each time I would tell myself press on and to try my utmost to achieve success.

Eventually, I managed to overcome all my difficulties and struggles with perseverance and thoughts of not letting people down, especially those who believed in me. I knew that whatever I was facing was just a minor setback.

English is very challenging for me. But with guidance from my teacher at DAS, I was able to improve my English language by leaps and bounds. This made it much easier for me to grasp and understand other subjects.

I recommend that if you have problems, especially in English, you should seek help.

I was fortunate to meet a very dedicated and patient teacher in DAS who helped me to overcome my reading disorder and boosted my self-esteem. As a result, I have become a much more confident person.

My parents have been really encouraging. They were always around when I faced trouble with my studies and they gave me advice on how I should really persevere rather than give up. They helped me and gave me strength to carry on when I faced problems that demoralised me.

When facing any difficulties, never lose hope no matter how long it takes. Always remember to continue to strive, because eventually you will succeed.



Lorraine Keong—Success Story

Diagnosed with dyslexia and ADD, Lorraine was advised by her school to transfer to the Foundation year in P6. However, I believed that she was capable of coping with the standard level and strongly objected to this decision. With the support of her parents and by the recommendation of DAS, the school gave Lorraine a chance to prove herself.

Looking back, I now proudly affirm that it was the right decision. Lorraine has evidently shown what Bernadette Devlin meant in her quote: "Yesterday I dared to struggle. Today I dare to win."

What impresses me most about Lorraine is her magnitude of gratefulness. As a teacher, it is very comforting and encouraging that students still remember you after they leave. During one Teacher's Day, I was extremely touched when she came especially to visit with her self-made jelly. And every year, she would drop me a text to wish me a Happy Teacher's Day. Upon receiving the news of her awards, she called to share her joy and express her heartfelt gratitude.

Lorraine has definitely left behind a sweet fragrance that can inspire people with dyslexia to follow.

The Centre Manager, staff and teachers at Bedok Learning Centre are really proud and elated with Lorraine's achievements. We would like to wish her sweet success in all her future endeavours and we believe she will shine in her own unique way. We are really proud of you, Lorraine!

Thank you very much.

Best wishes from Shenmee

by Shenmee
Senior Educational Therapist
Bedok Learning Centre



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Parents, you can now connect with other parents to share your experience and knowledge of raising a child with dyslexia.

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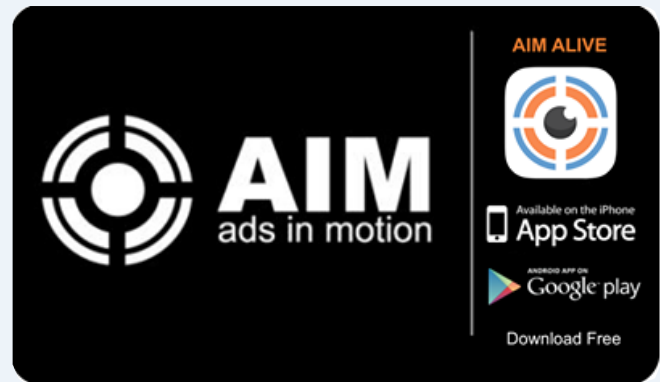
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*DAS is the adopted
charity for*
AIM ALIVE

Deborah Hewes
Head of Publicity and Publications

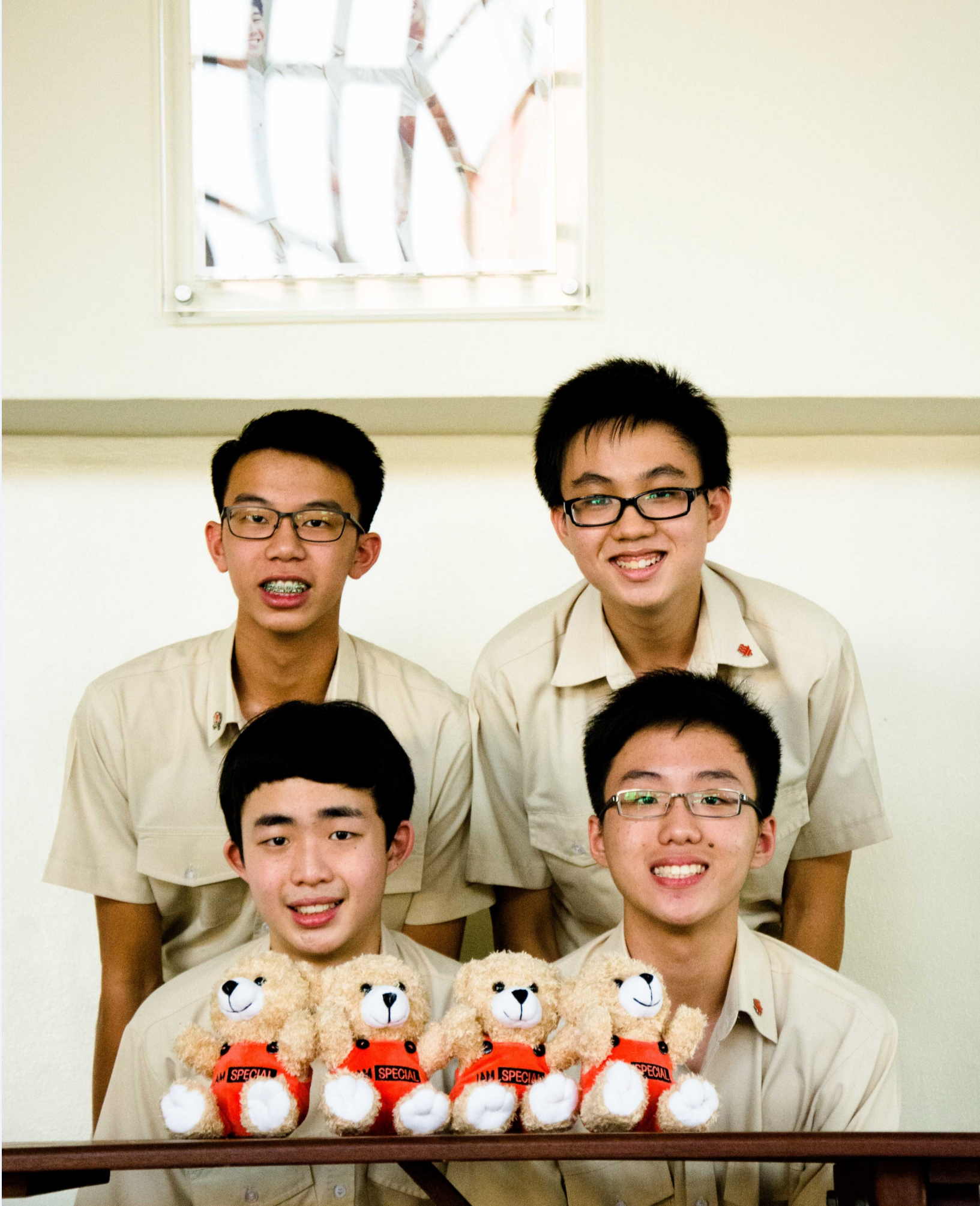


Over the next three months DAS will be using the AIM ALIVE app to promote awareness of dyslexia.

To do this you need to download the app from the APP Store or Google Play and point the camera at our DAS logo.

This is a fun way to promote awareness of dyslexia and we hope that you can share this with your friends.

PLEASE SHARE THE FUN



Cover Story



Youth for Causes raises \$62,000 for DAS

Chris Ngan
Fundraising Officer

Citi-YMCA Youth For Causes provides a platform to allow youths to execute viable and sustainable business plans to raise funds, spread awareness and educate the public about various social causes in Singapore.

We are both grateful and privileged to have six teams adopting us as their beneficiaries under the Youth For Causes Programme this year. Our amazing teams hail from River Valley High School, Dunman High School, Hwa Chong Institution and Anderson Junior College.

They raised a combined amount of \$60,000 through street sales, charity movie gala and other fundraising activities. The teams also raised awareness about dyslexia by sharing knowledge and through the various publicity materials like our quarterly FACETS magazine and our latest

advertising initiative with AIM Alive!

The teams entrepreneurial journey was filled with different issues and challenges. However each team managed to resolve their issues and with determination and a passion to serve the less privileged they succeeded in their projects.

The six teams involved in the Youth For Causes initiative were:

- ★ D-code
- ★ Gifts with a Heart
- ★ Encore
- ★ Project Topsy Turvy
- ★ Peto Donum
- ★ Project Guardian

They share their experiences with us in the following pages.



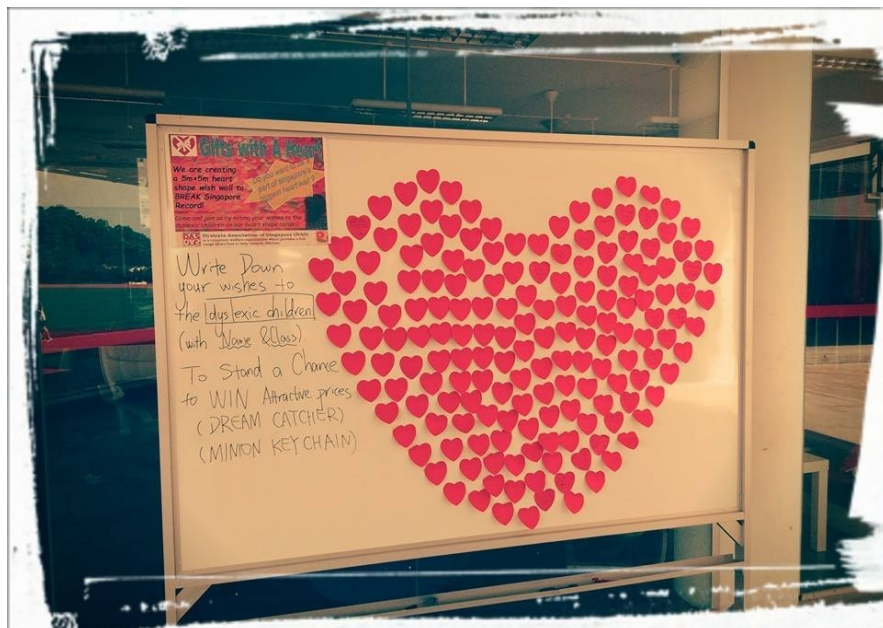
Team D-code

Team D-code'14 is a continuation of our seniors efforts (Team D'Slexia'13) in partnership with DAS. As part of its cause to raise funds for DAS, Team D-code organised street sales across four different locations over the span of six days.

The street sales were successful due to the contributions from more than 100 volunteers helping to sell our attractive badges. We have learnt through this activity how to manage and motivate our volunteers to participate actively in our street sales to achieve this phenomenal success.

Team D-code also set up a booth at Mountbatten CC's Open House to sell our merchandise and raise awareness about dyslexia to the public. We even managed to garner the support of MP Mr Lim Biow Chuan who pledged his support to the Dyslexic community. Finally, we culminated our efforts in a movie event "TakeDysStep", featuring the movie "Step Up All In" on 5 September. The movie event, held at Golden Village Plaza Singapura, managed to attract over 200 movie participants. The team definitely gathered many invaluable learning experiences from the planning to the execution of the event, and would like to express our deepest gratitude to our mentors, seniors and sponsors who've contributed to our success.





Gifts With A Heart

Our team conducted several street sales in Jurong East and Clark Quay, with different themes such as Ignite National Day and Light Up Clarke Quay. We also asked the public to write wishes to dyslexic children on a heart wall.

Things did not always go smoothly for us. The biggest obstacle for the street sales was the search for a venue and sponsorship. We contacted many organisations for permission to conduct fundraising sales or sponsorship.

Surprisingly, NTU allowed us to sell in their campus and Sticky Singapore sponsored us with candies. Rejection is unavoidable, but nothing is impossible if you are willing to try.

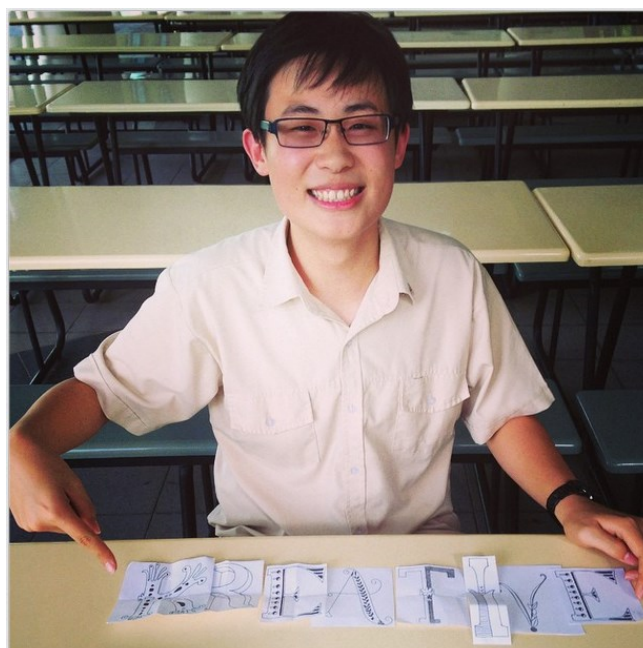


Encore!

Bonjour! We are Team Encore, comprising Zenn, Ling Yun, Katrina and Yan Yee from Hwa Chong Institution (College).

Literally meaning "again" in French, Encore signifies our passion to contribute to DAS. Katrina first introduced us to DAS, as she had been a volunteer at its reading programme for a year. Through her sharings we came to appreciate and empathise for DAS' cause - to help dyslexic people achieve.

We greatly appreciate the aid that DAS has provided us in organising our street sales and word-forming competition. This invaluable and enjoyable experience has indeed improved our communication and event organisation skills but most importantly - imprinted on us the value of altruism.





Project Topsy Turvy

Project Topsy Turvy, our group name, had originated from our wish to help dyslexic children out of their "topsy turvy" world, as we believe their words can be mixed up and reversed.

Our group entered the Citi-YMCA Youth for Causes programme with the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) as our chosen beneficiary, because we feel strongly for this cause, and believe that everyone should be given the chance to achieve.

Working with DAS has been a very fruitful and eye-opening experience, and we would like to thank them for guiding us at every step of this journey. We had initially participated in this programme with the intention of helping dyslexic children through our fundraising events.

Yet ironically, it feels as though we are the beneficiaries of this programme, for we have learnt so much more about responsibility, teamwork, time management, event-organising, and even more about ourselves.





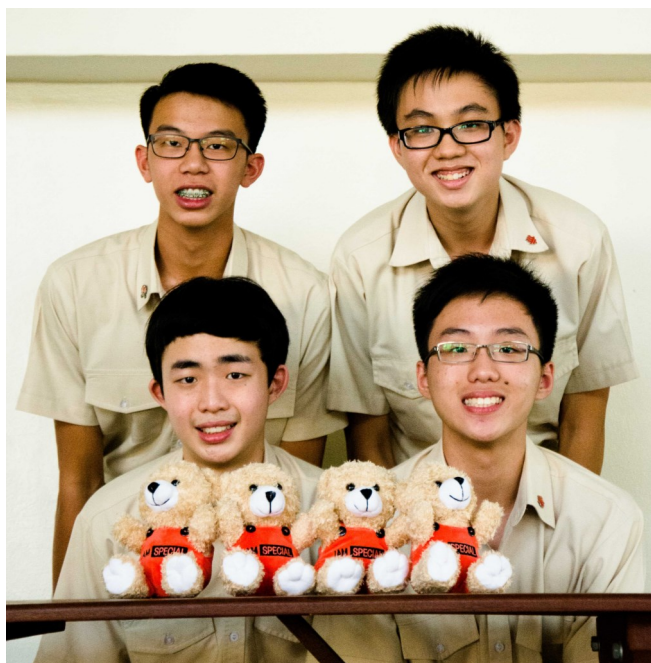
Peto Donum

A few weeks into our Junior College life, a representative from Citi-YMCA: Youth for Causes (YFC) came to our school to share about the programme. The four of us knew then this was the perfect platform for us to contribute back to society before we approach the last milestone of our schooling years.

With that in mind, we formed a team and went onwards to choose a VWO to support. DAS immediately stood out for us as we knew little about the organisation then. While we all knew what dyslexia was, we had little knowledge about this organisation in Singapore that supports people with dyslexia. That is when we knew we should do our part to raise awareness about DAS. Our research on DAS helped us to see the potential for a project to raise funds for DAS. With that, we stepped into YFC with ambitious plans.

As time passed, all of us began to learn the complications with putting together such an event. Fortunately, with the helpful guidance and advice of Elaine Soh, our mentor, Chris and Jacqueline from DAS, this experience proved to be less arduous and rewarding nonetheless. We are glad to have done our part in supporting the efforts of DAS and hope to work with them again in the near future.





Project Guardian

Project Guardian is a Service Learning project spearheaded by four students from Hwa Chong Institution. Initiated in February 2014, the project aimed to provide assistance to the children of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, targeting those enrolled in the DAS Chinese Programme.

Project Guardian has conducted programmes to help the children with their learning of Chinese, adopting a three-prong approach to support them. The group also raised funds to support underprivileged children in the DAS Chinese Programme.

They have also conducted weekly Chinese reading programmes with the children, and successfully ran Camp Ignite, a day camp aimed at building the children's confidence and interest in the Chinese language.





Fundraising

Throughout the June Holidays, Project Guardian carried out the "I Am Special" campaign, where over 200 volunteers were mobilised at Orchard and Bugis areas, selling teddy bears and collecting donations for DAS. The volunteers also handed out information pamphlets given by DAS to educate the public and raise awareness about dyslexia.

On 8 August 2014, the group also set up a charity booth at Pek Kio Community Centre during the National Day Observance Ceremony, where Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew met the group to show his support. They sold their merchandise to residents attending the event and collected donations.

Through the group's fundraising initiative, a total of \$17,700 was raised for DAS.

Chinese Reading Programme

Project Guardian's Chinese Reading Programme was started in March 2014 every Saturday at REX Learning Centre. The programme aims to nurture the children's interest in learning Chinese through reading interesting Chinese storybooks.

Every week, the children read books related to a chosen theme. While reading their books, the children also participated in various games and activities related to the theme for the week.

The reading programme was successfully implemented for six months, coming to an end in September. Survey results from both the children and their parents showed that 90 percent of children enjoyed the programme while 80 percent of parents felt that their child had shown improvement in their learning.

Camp Ignite

On Youth Day, 7 July 2014, Project Guardian carried out Camp Ignite, a day camp at Hwa Chong Institution. A total of 30 participants, three teachers and 20 volunteers were part of this camp, where the children attended a motivational workshop conducted for free by guest speakers from Mind Edge Learning Academy.

Mind Edge's workshop was aimed at building up the confidence of the children, some of whom suffered from self-esteem issues as a consequence of their learning condition.

In line with Project Guardian's objective of harnessing HCI's rich cultural background as a platform to engage the children, a heritage trail of HCI was also conducted, visiting various cultural landmarks around the school compound. At each heritage site, the children participated in cultural games.



Team Reflections from Project Guardian

Our journey has been extremely enriching and memorable and we have benefited much from this project, both in terms of hard and soft skills.

Carrying out this project certainly did not come without challenges. Organising street sales on such a large scale, as well as planning for the camp was not an easy feat. We had much to do to promote our cause and recruit volunteers. In addition, we had to liaise with several external parties, from the ordering of teddy bears to setting up the charity booth at Pek Kio CC.

All our experiences, our mistakes and successes, have allowed us to upgrade our organisational abilities, as well as our communication skills. We have also developed better foresight in planning to prevent slip-ups from occurring on our event days.

Definitely, we cannot forgo the valuable soft skills picked up. This project boosted our ability to work together as a team. Even though we were in the same CCA, there were many differences among us in terms of working style and resolving these differences took time. There were instances where we had disagreements, but looking back, it became apparent that what is most important is not whether we have disagreements, but how we settle them. Life is never a bed of roses, and we will certainly have conflicts with those around us.

However, we must set aside our differences and settle conflicts diplomatically to work together effectively. Only if we stay together in the face of challenges can we overcome them and bring our project to success.

Last but not least, we have further developed empathy for children with dyslexia as well as those with disabilities in general. The project allowed us to experience first-hand contact with the children and learn more about their plight. In future, we hope to regularly play a part in making a difference in the lives of the children, either by volunteering or donating.

We would like to thank our beneficiary, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, for their continued support for our project. We have received valuable advice and guidance from DAS, especially with regards to the fundraising campaign and in the planning of Camp Ignite, where we worked closely with DAS in planning camp activities and arranging the acquirement of logistics. Due to the assistance given to us by our partners from DAS, Project Guardian has managed to exceed the targets we set for ourselves and achieve greater heights.

In conclusion, this project has strengthened our drive to serve the community while providing many opportunities to pick up important life skills which can be useful in many situations in future. This experience has been very memorable and we feel honoured for getting this opportunity to serve the community.

STUDENT ALUMNI

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**DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION
OF SINGAPORE**

HELPING DYSLEXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE



EMBRACE DYSLEXIA



We would like to publish your story

By Deborah Hewes
Head—Publicity and Publications

We are seeking role models to share their story with our DAS students, their families and Singapore. If you are willing to share, we would be very happy to publish your story and you can stand with us to advocate for support for our young students with dyslexia.

DAS is embarking on a new campaign, one that we hope will raise awareness about the strengths and talents of individuals with dyslexia.

We focus so much about the difficulties children face in learning, because children with dyslexia struggle in classrooms everyday.

DAS also knows that there are still many students in the schools in Singapore that have not been identified and require much needed support.

How does DAS raise awareness about dyslexia and ensure that those who need help get the necessary support?

One way is to talk to the public on every occasion possible, and this year we have embarked on a significant publicity campaign to reach out to the community. However, we need to do more and we need your help.

Are you a dyslexic adult? Do you have an interesting story to tell others about your learning journey? Do you have an interesting career path?

If you would like to step forward then please contact me:

deborah.hewes@das.org.sg



Are you an adult with dyslexia?

Can you share your personal story?

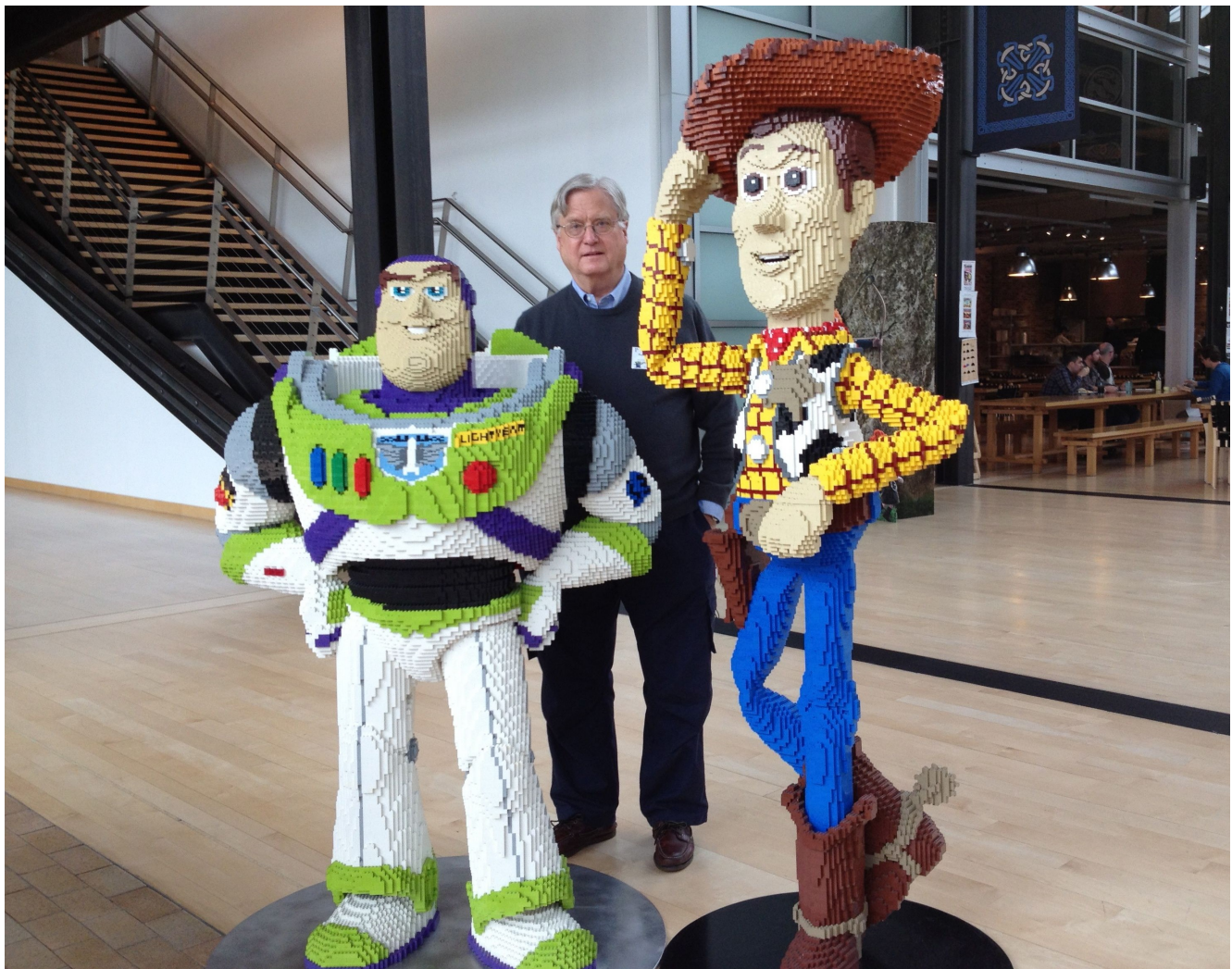
Do you have an interesting career path?

Will you be a role model for our students?

We need to hear from you!



Education Exchange



"Embracing Dyslexia in Computer Graphics"

An Interview with Thomas G. West

Author of 'In the Mind's Eye' and 'Thinking Like Einstein'

By Deborah Hewes
Head of Publicity and Publications

Author Thomas G. West notes that "some computer graphics professionals claim that half of the people in the computer graphics (CG) field are probably dyslexic." He also notes that "some have found that several of the most talented CG teams may be as much as 100 percent dyslexic." He says that "it is a pattern often observed in the CG field but until recently rarely openly discussed. This is changing."

In a recent talk on this topic for computer graphics professionals in Vancouver, British Columbia,

Canada, West provided some history and background for these connections – and invited discussion among the attendees. Indeed, he tried to address the question: what special advantages individuals with dyslexia have in the rapidly expanding field of computer graphics and simulation?

Pictured above: "Author Thomas G. West with figures of 'Buzz Lightyear' and 'Woody' (made from Lego) in the Steve Jobs Building on the Campus of Pixar Animation Studios, Emeryville, California."

During the question period and further discussions after the Vancouver talk, many attendees told stories of their own early childhood dyslexia (and dyslexia among their family members) as well as the way that their dyslexia had contributed to their success in this growing technological field – a field that requires high-level visual thinking abilities along with sophisticated hands-on technological skills.



West was not surprised at the numbers who had a story to tell. The conference organisers had specifically invited him to speak on this topic at the annual conference for CG professionals known as ACM-SIGGRAPH (the Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics within the international Association of Computing Machinery).

The conference is held once a year, usually in August, and between 20,000 to 60,000 attend from all over the world – from all disciplines, from feature films to higher mathematics, from surgery to astronomy, from creative TV ads to realistic video games.

Dyslexic Advantage in Graphical Technologies

More and more high level organisations are becoming aware of the special advantages that dyslexics have in certain fields – especially with the growing use of graphical technologies. For example, in recent years, West has been invited to speak on this topic at several influential venues – an education conference sponsored by Harvard and MIT, at talks at Magdalen College of the University of Oxford in England and at the University of California at Berkeley. Early in 2013, West gave a talk on creative visual thinking, computer graphic information visualisation and dyslexia at Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville,

California – and was invited to present a Director's Colloquium on a similar topic for scientists and staff of NASA Ames Research Center (at Moffett Field in California's Silicon Valley).

West claims that this interest among high-tech groups reflects a growing awareness of major changes. "There are three big trends – and all meet in the CG field – and all favor visually-oriented dyslexics," he claims.

"As large data sets grow in size with extreme speed, there is a greater awareness that these can only be analysed and understood by using recently-developed data visualisation methodologies – the 'fat pipe' to the brain as these computer people say. They say that the 'thin pipe' of words and numbers cannot handle the richness and complexity of certain kinds of information."

At the same time, as West points out, the power and speed of computers has provided the technical tools required – and at increasingly modest cost. The third trend is a greater awareness that many visually-oriented dyslexics have the kinds of brains well suited to these new technologies and methodologies. "Only pictures can effectively handle certain kinds of complex information. And dyslexics often are ahead of the game in this area," West observes.

*Dyslexia is an advantage
in some fields*

West says that "in recent years, dyslexia is coming to be seen, remarkably, as a significant advantage in an increasing number of fields – often linked to high visual talent and substantial success in art, architecture and computer graphics – as well as design innovation, entrepreneurial business and scientific discovery."



"It is amazing but true," he asserts. "The students who look dumb in one context sometimes turn out to be superstars in another context. The technologies change. The rules change. The context changes. The definitions of ability and intelligence begin to change."

"Dyslexics," says West, "take to these new visual technologies like ducks to water. Remarkably,



conventionally successful students – who rely on memorising words and numbers – often have considerable trouble understanding and employing these new modes of information analysis and comprehension. The world is changing and they are left behind. The roles are being reversed. Sometimes, the dyslexics are tutoring the non-dyslexics on how to cope with this new world of visual information."

West explains that "as hard as it is for many to believe, in recent years, in many fields, it is becoming increasingly clear that dyslexics are capable of devising solutions that are beyond the reach even the smartest non-dyslexics. It is also becoming increasingly clear," he notes, "that all of this is because of the dyslexia, not in spite of it."

Dyslexia is about different wiring of the Brain

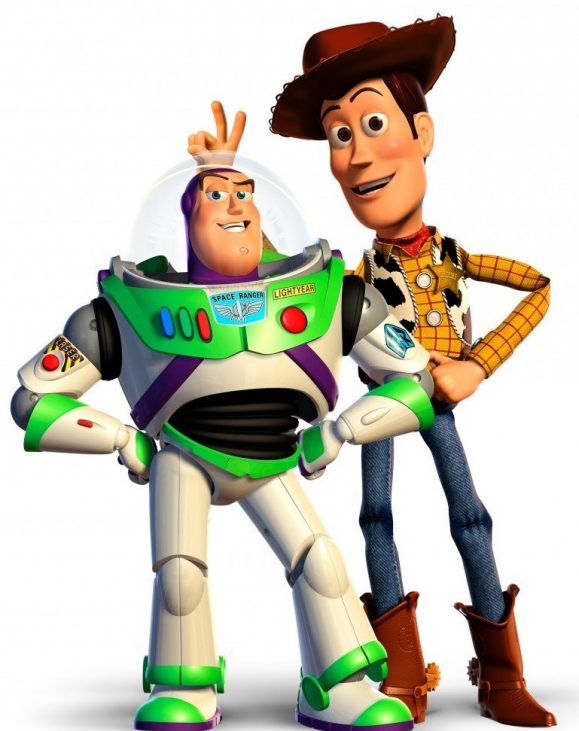
Recently, West explains, a small group of researchers is finding more evidence that "dyslexia does not result from damaged wiring in the brain as many have long believed." Rather, in cases of developmental dyslexia, they see an alternative (a different but valuable) wiring pattern – one that

involves some early educational difficulties – but one that "provides many alternative strengths and capabilities not available to non-dyslexic brain structures."

There are many examples of this paradoxical mix of weaknesses and substantial strengths. West observes that "it is becoming increasingly clear that these are not unusual but are representative of an important subgroup that needs to be understood in both education and work – especially within the context of computer graphics and related fields."

Visual Thinking!

"The fundamental power of visual thinking is often not understood," West points out. For example, one of the founders of the modern study of molecular biology was a powerful visual thinker and a classic dyslexic, with the usual reading and writing problems in his early schooling. As he progressed into laboratory work he found that he could predict the results of many experiments. "He found that he could use his powerful dyslexic visual imagination to see interactions at the molecular level – seeing new patterns and developing fundamental insights and new theories (12 years ahead of all others in the field) about the links between the human genetic code and the development of the immune system."





Later, a different scientist proved experimentally that he was right and received a Nobel Prize.

West explains that the historical significance of these major developments have been briefly summarised by one of the two men who started Pixar – Alvy Ray Smith. With Ed Catmull, Alvy Ray Smith was co-founder of Pixar Animation Studios, later purchased by Steve Jobs, and later still bought by Disney. At Pixar, Smith formed the team that proceeded to create Tin Toy, the first three-dimensional computer animation ever to win an Academy Award. This team later produced the first completely computer-generated motion picture, Toy Story. In addition, while he was a Regent for the National Library of Medicine, Dr. Smith was instrumental in inaugurating the Visible Human Project.

In observations written to support Thomas West's book *In the Mind's Eye*, Smith explained the historical importance of visualisation methods – and the visual thinkers and dyslexics who use them. “The computer is the most malleable tool we’ve ever invented. The Turing revolution, which brought it to us, has proceeded over its 60-year history to absorb field after field of human endeavor. First was simple number crunching. Then text processing, table-making, pie-charting, data basing, and a host of other, more sophisticated, fields have gone digital with the new tool as human brain amplifier.

Visualisation to solve problems

Visualisation is the latest domain to become 'ordinary' this way. Tom West argues that the legitimacy of visualisation as a first-order attack on problem solving is therefore being established after generations of quiet use by only some creators – and some of the best at that. He claims that visualisation is not only a legitimate way to solve problems, it is a superior way: the best minds have used it. West urges us to join the dyslexics of the world and use pictures instead of words. In the process we get fascinating glimpses of how other minds have worked – minds that have changed the world.”

Thomas G. West is presenting at the
Embrace Dyslexia
Dinner and Seminar
on the 19 & 20 November

www.das.org.sg/embrace-dyslexia

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19 - 20 Nov 2014 | Dinner & Seminar

EMBRACE DYSLEXIA



Author Thomas G. West with figures of 'Buzz Lightyear' and 'Woody' (made from Lego) in the Steve Jobs Building on the Campus of Pixar Animation Studios, Emeryville, California, where he was invited to present a Director's Colloquium.

THOMAS WEST

World renowned author and speaker
Keynote Speaker, Embrace Dyslexia
Dinner & Seminar

Topic 1: A New World Shaped by Dyslexics - Seeing What Others Do Not See

Years ago, Harvard neurologist Norman Geschwind observed that "dyslexics... rank high among those who have created the very fabric of our modern world... This is no accident." Recent conferences have included individuals from Silicon Valley and the venture capital world who have talked about how their dyslexia helped them excel in their work – and in so doing have underscored the prescience of Geschwind's observations. Come to hear why many talented dyslexics are highly sought after by the creative industry.

Topic 2: The Power of Dyslexic Visual Thinkers with Computer Data Visualisation

Computer experts have long spoken of the visual system as the "fat pipe" to the brain while words and numbers are the "thin pipe" to the brain. As we amass larger data sets concerning complex phenomena, it is apparent that information visualisation using computer graphics and simulation is required for comprehension and analysis. Examples of computer graphic visualisations will be shown and discussed.

Don't miss out on this exciting event!
Sign up now at www.das.org.sg/embrace-dyslexia/registration

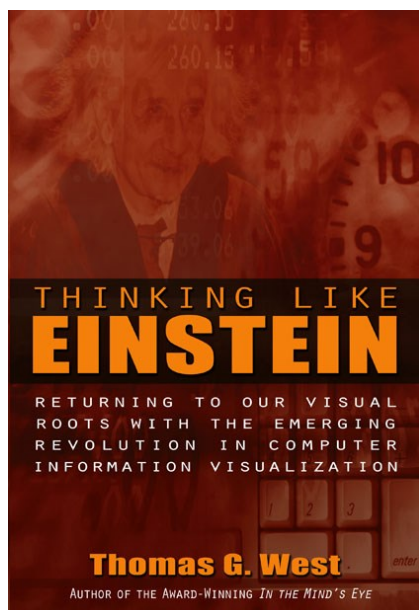


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Books by Thomas West



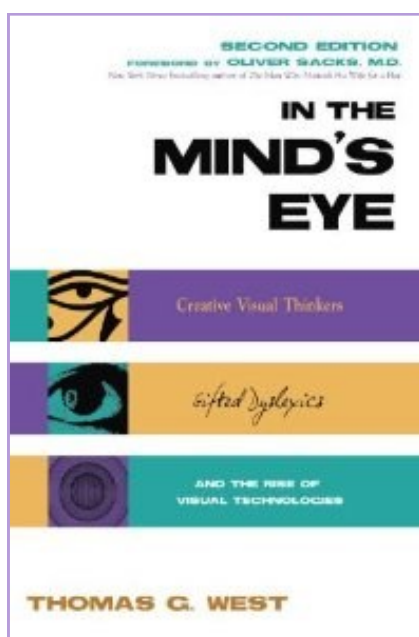
THINKING LIKE EINSTEIN

Albert Einstein once said that all of his most important and productive thinking was done by playing with images in his imagination. Only in a secondary stage did he translate — with great effort, he says — these images into the language of words and mathematics that could be understood by others.

According to Thomas G. West, Einstein was a classic example of a strong visual thinker, a person who tends to think in images and visual patterns, and sometimes has difficulty with words and numbers.

In his award-winning book, *In the Mind's Eye*, West discussed the connections between highly talented, visually oriented persons like Einstein and certain learning disabilities such as dyslexia. Now, in

Thinking Like Einstein, West investigates the new worlds of visual thinking, insight, and creativity made possible by computer graphics and information visualisation technologies. He argues that, with the rapid spread of inexpensive and powerful computers, we are now at the beginning of a major transition, moving from an old world based mainly on words and numbers to a new world where high level work in all fields will eventually involve insights based on the display and manipulation of complex information using moving computer images.



IN THE MIND'S EYE

Creative Visual Thinkers, Gifted Dyslexics and the Rise of Visual Technologies

In this updated edition to his fascinating exploration of the "ironies of creativity," Thomas West furthers his ground-breaking research on how some innovations in computer visualisation are making work and education more favorable to visual thinkers. *In the Mind's Eye* exposes many popular myths about conventional intelligence by examining the role of visual-spatial strengths and verbal weaknesses in the lives of eleven gifted individuals, including Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, Thomas Edison, and others.

West cites research in neuroscience that shows a link between visual talents and verbal difficulties, and he believes that new developments in computer technology herald a significant shift

toward the increased use of visual approaches throughout the economy. These changes may be as revolutionary as the technology of the book, which translated ideas into written words. The use of visualisation and virtual reality computer displays has already begun to move out of the world of science into that business, representing marketing trends through moving pictures rather than tiresome charts and tables of numbers. According to West, creative visual thinkers (many of whom have had difficulty with verbal skills), aided by computers, will be at the forefront of innovation in a dramatically changing society.

"Left Behind at the Beginning of the Race: The Paradoxes of Dyslexia"

By Thomas G. West

I am sometimes asked to write about the positive aspects of dyslexia and the way these positive traits have been reflected in my own life story.

In my own story, the beginning is familiar. The story of a little boy who could hardly read at all for the first three or four years of primary school – and then struggled for many years to keep up with his classmates. For a long time, his greatest ambition was to not be at the bottom of the class.

Gradually, however, as the curriculum changed from rote memorisation to larger concepts and logical thinking, the little boy began to see that he could easily do things that his classmates had trouble with – and that he could quickly see things that they did not easily see.

Over time, amazingly, this little boy became an author of books about dyslexia, visual talents and emerging computer graphic technologies. His writing led to invitations to give many talks, including presentations in 18 foreign countries.

His first book has been translated into three languages – Japanese, Chinese and, most recently, Korean. To his surprise (and to the delight of his publisher), over time, his first book became a classic – an "evergreen," as they say in the trade, a book that never stops selling.

"I was happy as a child... I have been happier every year since I became a man. But this interlude of school [made] a somber grey patch upon the chart of my journey... All my contemporaries and even younger boys seemed in every way better adapted to the conditions of our little world. They were far better both at the games and the lessons. It is not pleasant to feel oneself so completely outclassed and left behind at the beginning of the race."

These are not my words. However, these words perfectly reflect my own feelings through most of my own early education. They are the words of Sir Winston Churchill writing in 1930 of his

own early life. When he wrote these words, Churchill was a well known public figure – indeed, one who many thought was well past his prime – although his greatest test and his chief accomplishments were not to unfold until nine years later with the beginning of World War II. (Churchill, *My Early Life*, 1930, pp. 38-39.)



Paradoxes of Dyslexia

The field of dyslexia is full of puzzles and paradoxes. One of the greatest of these is that sometimes – perhaps one can say many times – the student who appears most dumb in the early years of schooling can be among the most capable and successful later on in the world of work – especially when the work is creative and innovative – involving the ability to ponder, think deeply, envision possibilities and to see patterns that others do not see.

As one highly successful dyslexic pointed out, it is not hard for a dyslexic to think “out of the box” because, as he says, “they have never been in the box.” In contrast, those who always could do quickly exactly what the teacher wanted (getting top grades) can sometimes find it very hard – if not impossible – to have a really new thought or to deal successfully with a really new problem or novel situation. They find it easy to retain old knowledge, but they may find it nearly impossible to create new knowledge.

Personal Discoveries

In my early school years, mostly in a rural state school system, I had learned to read very poorly and very late and had great difficulties with most primary school subjects. This was a puzzle to my teachers and a worry to my otherwise supportive parents.

Even in this comparatively undemanding rural school system, I could barely keep up. I could learn almost nothing by rote. I could not memorise. I could not retain exact texts or numbers. I had to have time to ponder and think. I had to understand. I needed to see the connections between things. I needed to know the story. I had to find a way to visualise the information. Then, I would never forget.

I knew nothing of my own dyslexia at the time. I was not diagnosed until decades later – at the age of 41. But I did know that there were many things that I could not do – that were quite easy for my classmates. Gradually, in the last years before college, at another school, the increasingly high-level content began to change what was wanted – and what I could produce. Gradually, everything

was transformed. The higher-level curriculum began to play to my strengths and my weaknesses became less important.

Before, I had trouble with arithmetic and “math facts,” but in time I came to love geometry, log tables, and even the slide rule. I eventually got good grades in a course on the philosophy, basic concepts and history of mathematics and logic that I was required to take in college. I had trouble with foreign languages, but loved linguistics and the history of language. I still had lots of trouble with spelling and my slow, faltering reading – but I began to see that I seemed to have a special knack for following logical arguments, complex story lines and higher level conceptual thinking in science, engineering and technology.

Gradually, strangely, by my final school year before college, I felt that I was getting more out of the readings than many of my classmates. I can still recall, in some detail, almost all of the readings we did during that year.

I went to a small liberal arts college that proved to be the right place, on the whole, for the further growth of these new-found strengths and abilities. Remarkably, my major studies were English Literature and Philosophy (so many books to be read and understood) and later earned a Masters degree. I found that I was well suited to do high level work – but I had to be careful because I could easily be overwhelmed by large volumes of work.

I had begun to see that, for some people, the easy things in primary school could be quite hard – but the hard things in college, graduate school and work could be quite easy.

School Weaknesses, Work Strengths

After graduate school and military service, I was employed by several consulting and engineering companies where I worked in early computer information systems, studies of the effectiveness of certain new medical services, developing national energy policy and international trade (participating in one trade mission to four Asian countries and then leading a second Asian trade mission).

Eventually, I was the number two manager for a five-year renewable energy development and training program for engineers in Egypt, funded by the US Agency for International Development.

Throughout these work experiences, I found ways around my weaknesses and ways to exploit my talents. I could easily see the big picture of our projects and how to deal with co-workers and clients. However, I learned to never mention a number unless I had it printed in front of me. My memory for certain details was too unreliable. I had little technical training, but – coming from a family of engineers and usually working with engineers, economists or computer programmers – I found I could easily understand the technical concepts and technical projects at an appropriate level. Others could be relied on for the data and details. I could write reports about the projects, explain them, plan them and, eventually, manage them.

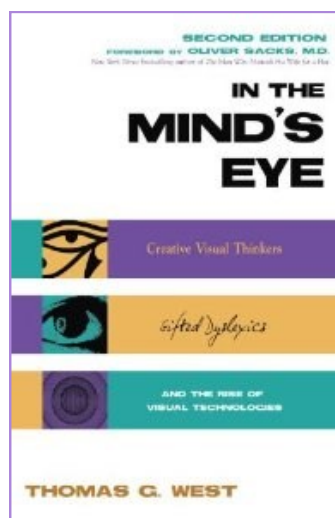
Family Patterns

However, I didn't really begin to understand the common difficulties and the common patterns of talent among dyslexics until our own two sons started having problems in their early years of primary school.

The idea that they were going to go through what I had gone through – this was a great emotional shock for me. Suddenly, I realised that I had to understand this thing that had been running my life – and, in part, the life of my dyslexic artist father as well as other family members, more or less.

So I had myself tested for dyslexia. I attended dyslexia conferences and started the library research that eventually became the book, *In The Mind's Eye*. I had learned that almost all the professionals in the field wanted mainly to fix reading problems. But that they mostly ignored the special talents that many dyslexics have. Coming from a family of visual-thinking artists and engineers – many with dyslexia or related problems and talents – I realised that there was more to the story than just reading problems.

My research and book focused on these talents as no other book had done before – the neurological foundations, the case studies and the profiles of famous people and the growing role of new



computer graphic information visualisation technologies. I found that several important earlier neurologists had emphasised the talent side – but they had been largely ignored. Also, as I did my research, I could see the world of technology was changing in fundamental ways –

almost all in favor of the dyslexics and their distinctive talents – while, of course, most conventional educators and institutions were then – and still are – blind to these changes.

I was shocked to suddenly realize that, in most cases, the major technological changes unfolding today required skills and talents that seem to come easily to most dyslexics (information visualisation, for example) – while the things dyslexics had most difficulty with (rapid reading, fact memorisation and spelling) were becoming less and less important in life and in the workplace. Few experts understand the inevitable consequences of this major trend.

I suspect that the strong focus on the talents of dyslexics is the reason that the book is still very much alive today – and still, amazingly, regarded as radical new thinking – over twenty years since it was first published in 1991. (However, I have often pointed out that most of the basic ideas were not really new. They were set forth earlier by neurologists like Samuel Torrey Orton and Norman Geschwind. But, as noted, these ideas were largely ignored by later researchers and practitioners who mostly focused on pathology alone.) Even the university research librarians liked the book. It was selected out of some 6,000 books as one of the “best of the best” for the year by the American Library Association (one of only 13 books in their broad psychology, psychiatry and neuroscience category).

Over time, the book has come to be highly regarded in many quarters. To my great delight, Dr Oliver Sacks (the famous author of *Awakenings* and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*) came to write in the foreword to the second edition: “*In the Mind's Eye* brings out the special

problems of people with dyslexia, but also their strengths, which are so often overlooked... It stands alongside Howard Gardner's Frames of Mind as a testament to the range of human talent and possibility."

Visual Thinkers, Visual Technologies

Over the years, I have been invited to give talks and workshops for scientific, medical, art, design, computer and business groups in the U.S. and overseas, including groups in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Dubai and twelve European countries.

In addition, I came to be asked to write a regular series of articles and columns on the broad effects of visualisation technologies for a quarterly publication of the international professional association for computer graphics artists and technologists (ACM-SIGGRAPH) – a truly international organization with many creative dyslexics (with conferences as large as 60,000 attendees, often in Los Angeles, California).

These columns have been collected into a second book with the title: Thinking Like Einstein – Returning to Our Visual Roots with the Emerging Revolution in Computer Information Visualization.

Attitudes toward the special talents of dyslexics have been changing, but very, very slowly. Gradually, non-dyslexics are beginning to see why it is important to have dyslexics involved in their start up businesses – or their scientific research.

However, no one could be more surprised that I am with the wide and continuing interest in my books and articles and the ideas they contain. As I started my book research long ago, it was more than a small comfort to me to know that Winston Churchill, for all his major achievements as a leader in time of great crisis, had also once been at the bottom of the class – feeling "completely outclassed and left behind at the beginning of the race."

Thomas G. West, author of *Thinking Like Einstein* and *In the Mind's Eye* (One of the "best of the best" for the year, American Library Association; new revised edition with Foreword by Oliver Sacks, MD, released September 2009). Research Scholar Study Office 1W-16C, National Library of Medicine, office tel. (mobile): 202-262-1266.

Institutional address: Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study, Member of the Advisory Board, 4400 University Drive, MS 2A1, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia 22030-4444.

Email: thomasgwest@gmail.com or thomasgwest@aol.com.

Blog: <http://inthemindseyedyslexicrenaissance.blogspot.com>.





EMBRACE DYSLEXIA

DINNER & SEMINAR—19 & 20 NOVEMBER

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OUR SEMINAR PRESENTERS



Ashraf Samsudin
Director of Specialised
Educational Services



Michelle-Lynn Yap
Director
Continuing Professional
Development



Chua Weng Foo
DAS Parent &
Founder
Sales Faktor



Thomas G. West
Author & Researcher
Krasnow Institute for
Advanced Study



Geetha Shantha Ram
Director of MOE-aided
Literacy Programme &
Staff Professional
Development



Dr Thomas Sim
Executive Director
DAS Academy

PRESENTER	TOPIC
Thomas West	A New World Shaped by Dyslexics -Seeing What Others Do Not See
Chua Weng Foo	From Rat Race To Snail's Pace
Dr Thomas Sim	Dyslexia in Higher Education: Useful iOS Apps
Ashraf Samsudin	Goal Setting for Success
Geetha Shantha Ram	Embracing Literacy... when Literacy is like a Porcupine
Michelle-Lynn Yap	An Initiative: The Change Blueprint
Thomas West	The Power of Dyslexic Visual Thinkers with Computer Data Visualisation

OUR SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS



A NEW WORLD SHAPED BY DYSLLEXICS - SEEING WHAT OTHERS DO NOT SEE

Years ago, Harvard neurologist Norman Geschwind observed that “dyslexics do not merely succeed in making a marginal adjustment in some instances, but that they rank high among those who have created the very fabric of our modern world. . . This is no accident.” Recent conferences have included individuals from Silicon Valley and the venture capital world who have talked about how their dyslexia helped them excel in their work – and in so doing have underscored the prescience of Geschwind’s observations.

THE POWER OF DYSLLEXIC VISUAL THINKERS WITH COMPUTER DATA VISUALISATION

Computer experts have long spoken of the visual system as the “fat pipe” to the brain while words and numbers are the “thin pipe” to the brain. As we amass ever larger data sets concerning complex phenomena, it is apparent that information visualisation using computer graphics and simulation is required for comprehension and analysis. Examples of computer graphic visualisations will be shown and discussed.



FROM RAT RACE TO SNAIL'S PACE

Parents in Singapore understand too well the rat race of living in a high stress society and they would do anything and everything within their means to give their children a head start. But what if you realize your child is learning in snail’s pace no matter how much time you pour in and how much whip you crack. All you could do is watch in horror as every kid in his class overtakes your “snail”. By a big margin.

This talk is all about the confession of a type A personality dyslexia parent, Chua Weng Foo, who first reacted to his boy’s learning disability with incomprehension and disbelief, then panic and anxiety follow suit, and eventually finding his nirvana through acceptance and empowerment. Weng Foo will share with you the learning journey—the pain, blood, sweat and laughter—he faced together with his 8-year-old dyslexic boy, Chua Jin Sen aka Dr. Jiajia.



DYSLLEXIA IN HIGHER EDUCATION: USEFUL IOS APPS

This talk will focus on lecture/tutorial note taking tips, exam and study tips, and general strategies to help students at our Polytechnics and Universities survive and thrive in the Higher Education environment. Useful iOS Apps will be introduced.



EMBRACING LITERACY... EVEN WHEN IT'S A PORCUPINE

For some of our learners, literacy is a thorny issue. With carefully planned outcomes and organised experiences, we’ve enabled our learners to manoeuvre through their difficulties and most importantly, enjoy it!



AN INITIATION - THE CHANGE BLUEPRINT

What does it mean to 'Embrace Dyslexia'? This session hopes to enlighten on how the environment plays a part in the learning development of a child with a specific learning difference (SpLD) like dyslexia. Michelle will also touch on concepts like 'integration' and 'inclusion', and how we can be advocates for learners with SpLD by looking at each child/individual holistically.



GOAL SETTING FOR SUCCESS

Setting goals may seem easy and simple but challenging to accomplish for some. Moving from where you are now to where you want to be involves more than just writing down “smart” goals. It’s a fact that the most successful people do set goals in one form or another. How can you enhance your goal setting efforts? How can you programme yourself to achieve your goals?



EMBRACE DYSLEXIA DINNER

19 NOVEMBER—HOTEL JEN (FORMERLY TRADERS HOTEL)
1A CUSCADEN ROAD - 6:30PM TO 10:30PM

OUR GUEST OF HONOUR



Mr Sam Tan, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

OUR GUEST SPEAKER



Thomas G. West
Author & Researcher
Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study

DINNER PROGRAMME

6:45	Guest of Honour	Mr Sam Tan Opening Speech
7:00	Dinner	International Buffet (Halal) is served
7:30	DAS Students	Entertainment by DAS Students
8:00	Embrace Dyslexia	Unlocking Potential and recognising talents and strengths
8:15	Fashion Show	T-shirt Bonanza
8:30	Guest Speaker	Thomas West, Embracing Dyslexia—One Life Story
10:00	Door Prizes	Something to look forward to!



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SUPERIOR ROOM (Single)	\$250++	RATE INCLUDES BREAKFAST & FREE WIFI WHEN BOOKING MENTION "EMBRACE DYSLEXIA"
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and unlocking their potential.

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EMBRACE DYSLEXIA DINNER & SEMINAR—UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

EMBRACE DYSLEXIA DINNER AND SEMINAR 19 & 20 NOVEMBER 2014	EARLY BIRD RATES to 20 October		STANDARD RATES	
	Single	Group (Min. 5)	Single	Group (Min. 5)
DINNER, 19 NOVEMBER	\$100	10% discount for whole table sales (tables of 10)		
SEMINAR, 20 NOVEMBER	\$178	\$157	\$209	\$188
DINNER & SEMINAR PACKAGE *	\$263	\$232	\$309	\$278

* Further discounts are available for Corporate clients, rates are available on request.

EXCLUSIVE RATES FOR DAS Parents, DAS Alumni & RETA Members

DAS MEMBERS	DINNER	\$50	SEMINAR	\$100
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SUPERIOR ROOM (Twin)	\$270++	

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Book early to ensure your place at this exciting event

Why do I need to keep practicing?!.....



By Angela Fawcett
Academic Director

How many times have you or your children bemoaned the fact that you need to practise? It may be piano or another musical instrument. I can vividly remember torturing scales as a 3-year-old, learning the piano, with my hands not big enough to stretch an octave. Later at age nine I can remember the violin yowling as I tried to practice my notes. I soon gave this struggle up, distressed by the cacophony I created. For you and your children, it may be sports, or for many of those we work with, practicing grapheme/phoneme translation, phonological awareness or simple words, up to trying to make sense of a more complex passage. Why do we need to do this, and why is it even more important for those who are dyslexic?



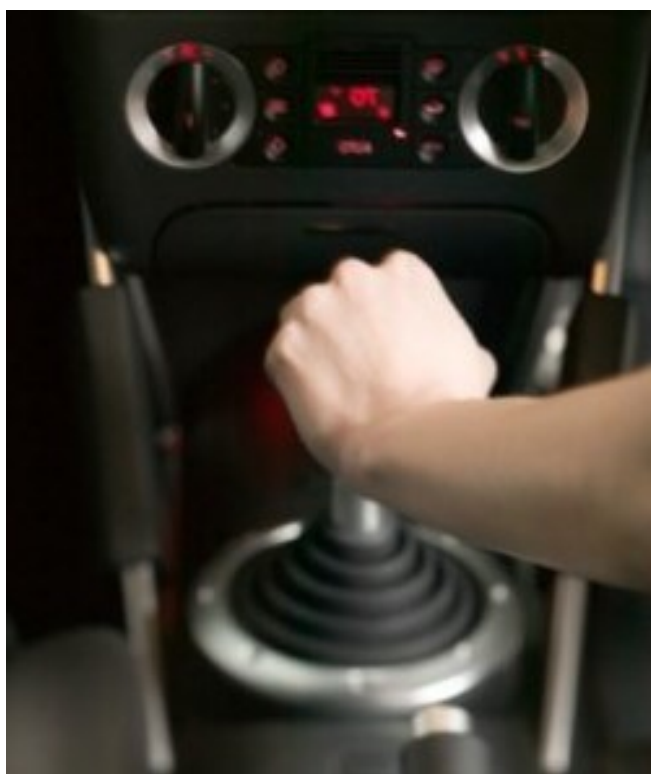
1,000 hours = Expert

It seems that in order to become an expert in anything you need to practice for over 1,000 hours. Maybe we just want to become competent rather than expert, but even this takes many hours of repetition. It's so boring - I can hear you moan! Can anything this boring really be helpful? Well, in our research we have looked carefully at how adolescents learn, over several thousand trials to press a button as fast as they can. We chose this task because this was the only task in our whole battery of tests in which dyslexic children aged 8 to 17 showed no significant deficit. So this may surprise you, that dyslexia is not limited to problems with reading, writing and spelling, but in fact everything we tried including phonology, memory, motor and speeded tasks were impaired in these children with dyslexia.

Procedural learning is where you learn a skill or habit, as opposed to declarative learning where you learn facts. The processes involved are different. It used to be thought that only skills such as tennis were procedural, but now it turns out that most of our language 'habits' are also. A rule of thumb is that if it takes days to learn, and you can do it without being able to explain how you do it, it's procedural.

Proceduralised - Automatic

Consider learning to drive a car. To begin with, a learner has only the declarative knowledge - the fact that you need to change gear to go faster, that there is a clutch pedal, a brake pedal and an accelerator pedal that you manipulate with your feet. There is also a gearstick that you move with your hand, and a steering wheel that you move with your hands to direct progress.



A beginner has to concentrate on each aspect, and can therefore either brake or steer but not both. Performance is slow, effortful and error-prone in the early stages of learning. Changing gear is the most painful, because you need to be able to do a series of actions in synchrony, taking into account the prevailing conditions. For this you need to develop a 'procedure' to do it so that you no longer need to think about it.

Once the skill is proceduralised, it becomes possible to do things without conscious concentration on every aspect, and so real-time driving becomes possible. This stage can take tens of hours of practice, and even longer if you are dyslexic. This then leads into the final stage where (probably over hundreds of hours more practice) the already-proceduralised skill becomes more fluent.

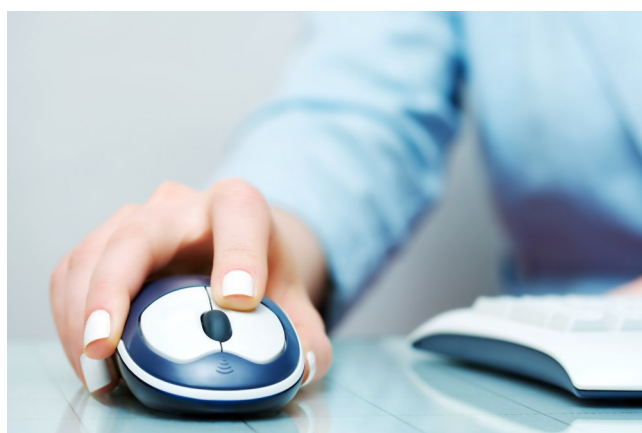
Our Research

A key point here is that the conscious processing is no longer involved, and indeed one has no idea how one does it. What actions do you take when trying to catch a ball thrown to your right? What is the penultimate movement you make when tying your shoelaces? What is wrong with 'The children are in the park playing' - and why?

For obvious reasons we needed our dyslexic adolescents and controls to learn a skill away from reading or phonology, and we decided on the issue of skill blending. In a previous set of studies we had found that dyslexic children performed within the normal range on simple reactions [hear the tone, press the button as fast as possible] but that they were significantly slower on a choice reaction [hear the tone press the button, see the flash stamp on the foot button] (Nicolson and Fawcett, 1994).

So we thought that we would train them on the task and look at the learning curves. Typically there would be a very slow start (while one proceduralises it) then you get into a wonderful middle portion where every time you do it you get better. Then you get the depressing diminishing returns part where you get less and less improvement as you approach asymptote. This is the stage where you get so good your performance does not improve anymore and you can't really tell anyone else how you do it.

This immediately suggested that we should follow the learning process over several weeks, so as to see which of these processes was impaired. Presumably the automatization deficit account would suggest that it is the asymptotic performance that is impaired. Note also that realistic skills do not have just one component, but



you need to be able to combine two components together, so the problems could easily arise in the blending of skills. It is certainly very likely that for many dyslexic children the sub-skills are not fully developed before they are asked to build on them, and this underlies their difficulties



On the simple reactions this group were slightly but not significantly slower than the controls. Both groups got slower as expected when they had to combine the reactions. But there were clear differences in the learning curves. The controls showed rapid improvement in performance, and ended up actually faster on the choice reaction than they were initially just on a simple reaction.

This is one of the major benefits of the automatisisation process. By contrast the dyslexic group did not show much early learning, and ended up considerably slower than they were for the simple reactions. They also made more errors at asymptote than the controls.

We also modelled the data with the important point here that the learning parameter was twice as big for the controls, so they learned twice as fast (Nicolson et al, 2010). In fact it took so long for some of our dyslexic group, that one enterprising young man simply copied his file while I was out of the room and told me had reached asymptote.

But when I checked, in fact the data were exactly the same. So very enterprising, but cheating and he had to carry on until he truly had learned the task. In terms of our initial questions, there were actually problems in all aspects of the learning process. Not just at the end, but also in the speed of learning and in the asymptotic performance.

Square Root Law

It is important to note the power of the mathematical modelling we did. Because of the difference in the learning parameters, it turns out that if you predict how much longer a dyslexic child will take than a control, it depends on how hard the task is.

The square root law says that if the task should take nine trials to master, a dyslexic child will take 27 trials (the square root of 9 is 3, so $3 \times 9 = 27$). If it takes 100 trials, a dyslexic child will take a 1,000 trials, 10 times as many, (the square root of 100 is 10, $10 \times 100 = 1,000$). If it takes 10,000 trials the poor dyslexic child would need 1 million trials. It is important to remember that this was on skills unrelated to literacy, and ones on which no significant difference would normally be predicted under other theories. So these results are dynamite!

x = number of times to learn a task
 \sqrt{x} = multiplying factor that people with dyslexia need to learn a task
 $x \times \sqrt{x}$ = number of times it takes for people with dyslexia to learn a skill

e.g. $x = 9$ $\sqrt{9} = 3$ $9 \times 3 = 27$

If it takes 9 trials to master a task it will take 27 trials for a person with dyslexia to master that task.

It is no surprise, therefore, that even with exemplary support, dyslexic children have difficulty mastering reading, because in common with most 'world class' skills, a skilled reader will probably have spent a thousand hours reading.

So teachers really should not feel inadequate for failing to help a dyslexic child learn to read. Our research shows there is some intrinsic problem with the LEARNING process(es) involved which makes it difficult to become expert in any skill.

We later went on to show that if you are dyslexic, even a high achieving dyslexic, you do not simply consolidate your skills overnight, as most people do, so that the next day what you learned is embedded in your memory.

Yes! You need to Practice!



So returning to our initial question – do I really need to practise? Well, I'm afraid it's a resounding yes, particularly if you are dyslexic. So what is the best way to practise? Should you simply sit poring over your books for hours on end until you are bored silly? No – the best way is distributed rather than massed practice.

As a parent or teacher, you can build in success, by choosing a task a child can just about do, and then pitting them against the clock so they get faster and faster. This can be used for letter

recognition, single words, nonsense words, or even rereading a passage, checking for speed and errors. If you graph the results, you can see that you are faster and more accurate, and this in itself is very rewarding.

If you are dyslexic there is no reason that you cannot become a high achiever, but you will simply need to work harder than others to attain your potential. And don't forget that in some areas you will have strengths which mean you can simply see the answer when others are struggling.

Once we move away from a focus on linear learning into the IT age, as Tom West suggests, those who are dyslexic will have the opportunity to express their strengths and move away from their weaknesses.

Don't forget also, that if you are dyslexic you will have distinctive signature strengths in empathy, seeing the big picture and social skills that can enrich your life and your interactions beyond those of your non-dyslexic peers. It all seems like too much hard work now, but be patient! It will all be worth it in the end.



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Specialised Educational Services

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL



Specialised Educational Services (SES) is a division of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Our Vision

Nurturing individuals with learning differences to achieve success and impact society positively.

Our Mission

Unlocking the potential of individuals with learning differences.

The Specialised Educational Services (SES) is a division of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore which aims to uncover the true strengths of individuals with learning differences and empower them with the necessary skills and strategies to succeed.

We are a dedicated team of professionals who are committed to delivering a quality service focusing on the needs of the individual and striving to bring out their very best.



- Bridging Programme
- Chinese Programme
- Exam and Study Skills Programme
- Essential Maths Programme
- Preschool Programme
- Specialist Tuition
- Speech and Drama Arts Programme

- Occupational Therapy
- Play Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy

Programmes

Therapy

Specialised Educational Services

Assessments

Workshops and Other Services

- Multi-Professional Team Assessments
- Occupational Therapy Assessments
- Psycho-educational Assessments
- Speech and Language Therapy Assessments

- Holiday Workshops
- Professional Support Service



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SPEECH AND DRAMA PROGRAMME

The aim of the SES Speech and Drama Programme is to develop literacy, communication and presentation skills and boost the self-esteem of learners with dyslexia. Drama can be a powerful tool to help students with learning differences.

Our Approach

Using drama activities, students have the opportunity to enhance their persuasiveness and confidence in communication. Students are given the freedom to express themselves freely, using their imagination and creativity. Other vital communication skills that are fostered in the class setting includes listening and concentration. Activities ranging from role-playing to stage performances require students to understand the fundamentals of stage directions, character dialogues, music and light cues. To stage a production, it is necessary for the child to understand, interpret and process the script in detail. This allows them to exercise their working memory and processing speed.

Class sizes are kept to a maximum of 10 students and are conducted once a week in a 1.5 hour session.



Recommended for

Students with low self-esteem or low self-confidence, students who have difficulties expressing themselves as well as students who enjoy drama.

Entry Criteria

All primary school students are welcome to enrol.



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PRESCHOOL PROGRAMME

The aim of the SES Preschool Programme is to help preschoolers who are potentially at risk of dyslexia, or have developmental delay in early literacy, develop skills and strategies to become confident achievers when they enter primary school.



Our Approach

The programme helps preschoolers acquire a good foundation in alphabet knowledge and phonograms, leading up to learning sight words essential for reading. These abilities gear them towards reading and spelling readiness. In class, your child will be taught rules, facts and generalisations about the English language, enabling them to read and spell more effectively. They will also be taught strategies to cope with letter reversals. The programme follows a prescribed scope and sequence for systematic, sequential and cumulative teaching.

Components covered in a typical lesson

- Alphabet Knowledge
- Phonograms
- Learnt Word Knowledge (e.g. said)
- Reading
- Spelling

Preschoolers will be advised to go for a Full Aged Psychological Assessment when they turn six. Children diagnosed with dyslexia have the option to continue with the MOE-Assisted DAS Literacy Programme.

Recommended for

Preschoolers in Kindergarten One and Two who are at risk of dyslexia or having difficulties with reading, spelling and/or writing.



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EXAM AND STUDY SKILLS PROGRAMME

The aim of the SES Exam and Study Skills Programme is to provide students with direct support to better equip them with the knowledge, skills, strategies and attitudes to cope with the demands of the English language syllabus in school.



Our Approach

The programme provides an extension to what students have been taught in the MOE-Aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) and helps to put the skills learned into practical use in their examinations.

In class, students will be exposed to various language knowledge and related strategies to determine their needs in learning the language. Skills covered in a lesson will be reinforced in subsequent lessons to ensure consolidation of learning.

Components covered in a typical lesson:

1. Grammar
2. Comprehension
3. Editing
4. Synthesis & Transformation

Recommended for students with difficulties in grammar and comprehension.



Entry Criteria

Application is open only to:

- Primary 5 and 6 students who have been in MAP for at least a year
- Reasonably reading fluency (obtained from Educational Therapist's feedback)



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CHINESE PROGRAMME

小学华文辅助课程

The aim of the SES Chinese Programme is to help students with dyslexia become independent, inquisitive learners in the Chinese language.

Chinese as a language is more complex than English as many words can be read the same way though each word has a different meaning. The strokes in Chinese words must also be written in sequence. This complexity causes reading and writing Chinese to be very tedious for children with dyslexia.



Our Approach

The programme helps to foster your child's interest in the language through thematic-based teaching. In this way, vocabulary that is covered is relatable and can be used on a daily basis, allowing them to express themselves better in the Chinese language. Students are taught interactively through the use of stories, educational games and hands-on activities to make language learning fun and memorable. Lessons are also structured in a way to increase efficiency in learning the language through the instruction of character structure, radicals, stroke pattern, word recognition strategies and understanding how words are combined together.



Components covered in a typical lesson

1. Word Recognition
2. Vocabulary Instruction
3. Teaching of Sentence Structures

Comprehension and writing activities are also carried out for students who have good oracy skills in the language.

Application is open only to primary school students. Priority will be given to students who are not exempted from Chinese.



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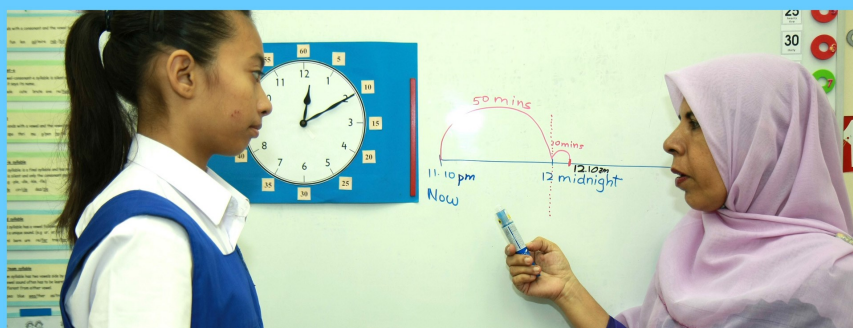
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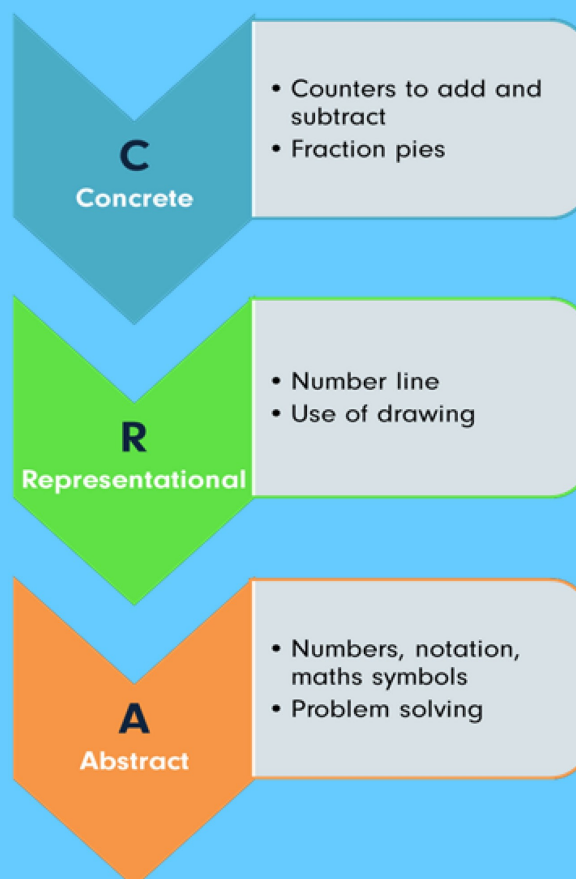
ESSENTIAL MATHS PROGRAMME

The aim of the SES Essential Maths Programme is to effectively support students with dyslexia who have persistent difficulties in mathematics, particularly in maths word problems.



Our Approach

The programme helps to bridge the gap between your child's ability and the mainstream syllabus by addressing areas they are weaker in. This is done through a C-R-A (Concrete-Representational-Abstract) approach. Every stage of learning ensures that the child links mathematical ideas in a progressive and cumulative way, bridging the gap between the student's ability and mainstream syllabus.



Recommended for

Students with dyslexia who have specific areas of difficulty that can affect their mathematical performance such as poor short term and working memory, reversals in words and numbers, problem with sequencing and difficulty with reading word problems.



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SPECIALIST TUITION

SES has a team of specialist tutors who have extensive experience in supporting students with specific learning differences and other learning needs.



Individualised tuition is tailored based on the profile of the child, which is obtained from our multi-disciplinary team of educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapist, and in consultation with parents and educators. Tuition has an individualised problem solving approach where skills focused include:

- Literacy, Numeracy, Oracy, & Writing Skills
- Individual Curriculum support
- Study skills and Exam preparation
- Behaviour and Social support

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BRIDGING PROGRAMME



The key purpose of the programme is to provide intensive remediation in order to bridge the learning gap between your child and his or her mainstream peers.

The programme is delivered in small class groups or individually by our team of specialists:

- Specialist Tutors
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Educational Psychologists

Our aim is to support the development of essential literacy and numeracy skills that are required in the mainstream school curriculum to empower your child with greater confidence, self-esteem and academic competence.



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Psycho-Educational Assessments for Children and Young People

About Our Assessments

Experienced Educational Psychologists

Our psychologists are professionals who have extensive experience assessing people with behavioural, developmental and psychological issues that lead to learning differences.

Comprehensive Reports

We produce professional, comprehensive, easy to understand reports for parents. Our reports are recognised and accepted by institutions and educators world-wide.

Engaging Parents

We understand that you know your child best and we will listen to your concerns. We believe that parents should be actively involved in the whole assessment process. We spend time discussing your child's learning differences with you before and after the assessment.

Psychological Assessments

Psychological assessments identify individual strengths and challenges, and provide recommendations for intervention and support. Formal assessments occur after initial interviews with family and others to identify areas of difficulties.



What do we assess for?

- *Specific Learning Differences*
- *Dyslexia and Dyspraxia*
- *Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia*
- *Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder*
- *Asperger's Syndrome*
- *Psychological and Behavioural concerns*
- *Childhood development issues*
- *Autism Spectrum Disorders*
- *Non-Verbal difficulties*
- *Auditory and Sensory issues*

What can psycho-educational assessments do?

Assessments usually consist of 1-3 sessions with the psychologist working with the child. What is done and how much is needed depends on the age of the child, the purposes of the assessment and the kinds of strengths and weaknesses the child has. The psychologist will do the most appropriate set of tests to make clear what background skills and abilities the child is bringing to their learning. They will also do a range of tests and activities to measure and analyse the literacy skills of the child.

Reports

Psychologists try to provide advice about the best curriculum options and then about how teachers, tutors and parents and others can help the child most effectively. The psychologist can help to set future learning goals which can then be monitored to see if progress is at the expected rate.

Exam Accommodations

We can provide recommendations for exam accommodations at all ages. Our psychologists have internationally recognised qualifications and have experience in working with most exam jurisdictions.

**Early identification and early intervention of learning differences is vital
for your child's well-being and educational progress!**

For more information, please contact us at **6444 5700**



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IS THIS A PERCEPTUAL DIFFICULTY OR JUST BAD BEHAVIOUR



By Marinda Grimbeek
Educational Psychologist



Brenda Horner
Specialist Teacher

Do you know what impact of poor perceptual skills such as auditory, visual and motor perception has on a child's ability to fully access their learning environment?

Marinda Grimbeek our Educational Psychologist & Brenda Horner our Specialist Teacher, will equip participants with tools to recognise these difficulties. Most importantly, participants will receive hands on activities and ideas on how to accommodate these difficulties faced by children in a classroom setting.

Wednesday, 29 October 2014
7:00pm to 8:30pm

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73 Bukit Timah Road, #05-01 Singapore 229832

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BRAIN – BODY FUNCTIONING AND HOW IT CAN IMPACT ON LEARNING



By Marinda Grimbeek
Educational Psychologist

All learning ultimately takes place in the brain, however it is through the body that the brain receives sensory information from the environment and reveals its experience of the environment.

Does your child know something today but has forgotten it the next day? Immaturity or conflict in the brain-body functioning can affect the brain's ability to assimilate and process information and to express itself in an organised way.

This talk by Marinda Grimbeek our Educational Psychologist aims to make parents and teachers aware and to give them a better understanding of why early reflexes are important, what their functions are in early development and how retained reflexes can impact on learning and behaviour.

Wednesday, 12 November 2014
7:00pm to 8:30pm

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Certificate in Understanding Speech and Language Impairment

29 November & 6 December 2014
9.30am to 4.30pm

Certificate in Dyscalculia and Numeracy Teaching

1 & 2 December 2014, 9.30am to 4.30pm
3 December 2014, 9.30am to 12.30pm

Signposts for Building Better Behaviour

21, 29 October & 5, 12, 19 November 2014
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RETA PANEL OF ADVISORS



ANGELA FAWCETT
DAS Academic Director

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



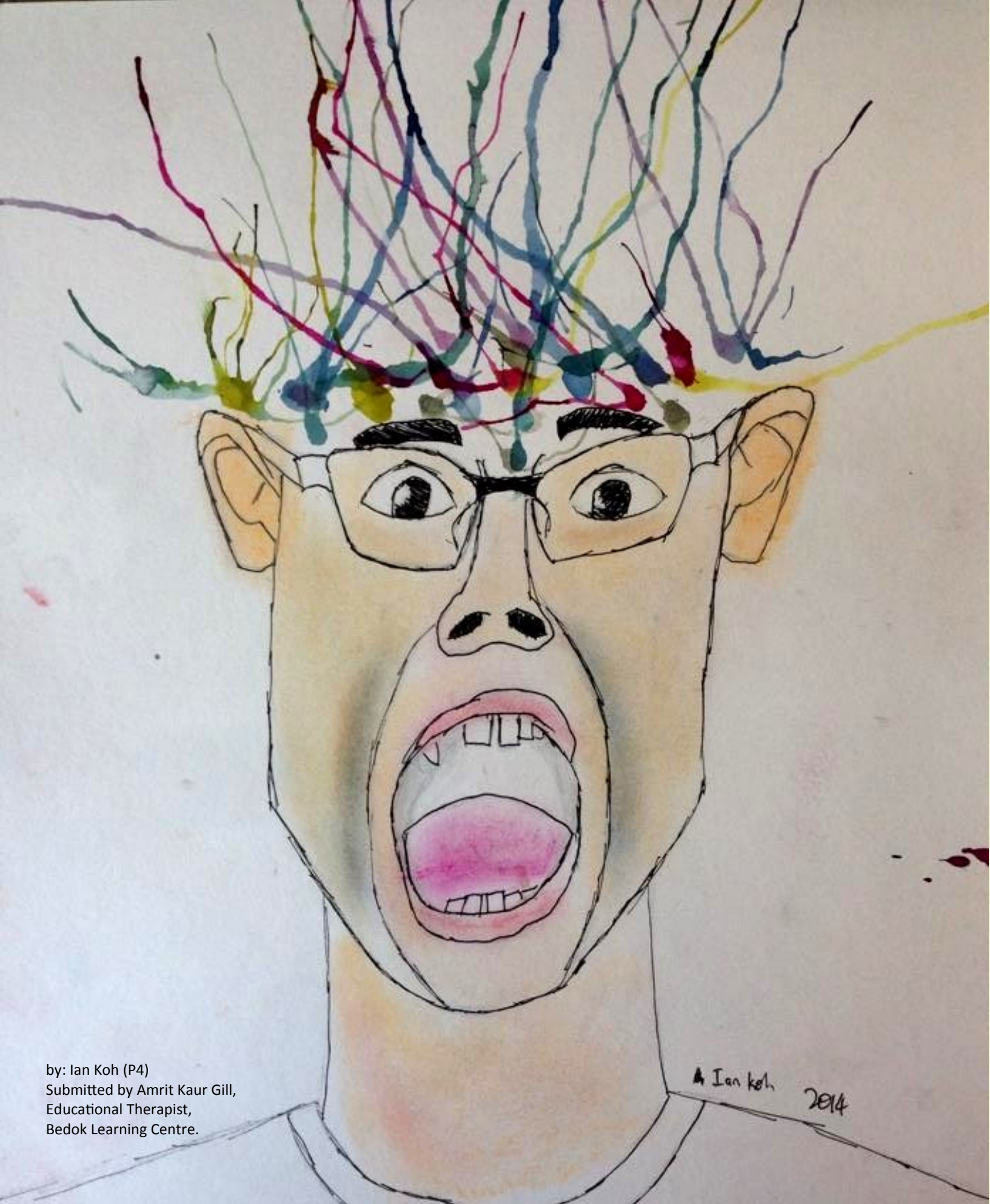
KATE SAUNDERS
CEO
British Dyslexia Association

Dr Kate Saunders is the Chief Executive Officer of the British Dyslexia Association. Kate has over 20 years of experience in the field of dyslexia and special educational needs, having worked as a Senior Specific Learning Difficulties/ Dyslexia Advisory Teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, chartered psychologist and lecturer. Kate has a PhD in Education and is co-author of 'How Dyslexics Learn', published by PATOSS (the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties).



THOMAS SIM
Executive Director,
DAS Academy
DAS Director of Partnerships,

Thomas completed his PhD (Psychology) at the University of Tasmania under the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship focusing on Neuropsychology and Psycholinguistics. He has held various leadership, teaching, and research roles at the Singapore Institute of Technology, SIM University, the University of Manchester, and Wheelock College. Thomas served as the Membership Chair of the Singapore Psychological Society from 2003-2004 and is a Member of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals



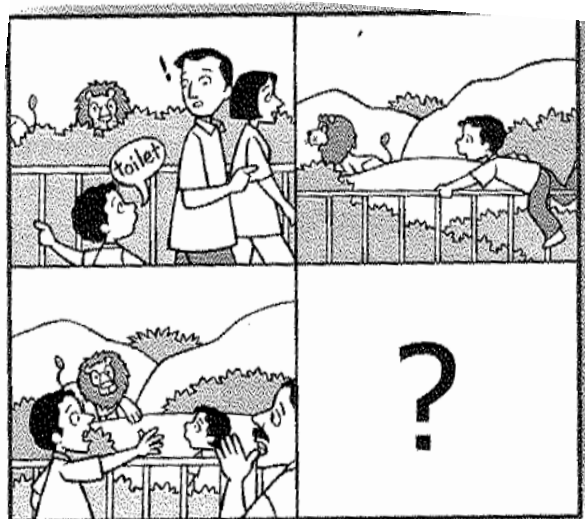
by: Ian Koh (P4)
Submitted by Amrit Kaur Gill,
Educational Therapist,
Bedok Learning Centre.

A Ian koh 2014

Student Gallery

DAS Writer's Corner

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



An Incident at the Zoo

By Chua Jin Sen (P3), Cara-Anne Leong (P4) and Luke Tan (P4)

"I'm so excited to go to the zoo!" Shane squealed in delight as he arrived at the Singapore Mandai Zoo with his parents. Upon entering the premises, he pleaded with his parents to let him visit the lion enclosure first. Shane really liked animals and the majestic, fearsome lions were his favourite.

"No, no... let's go watch the sea otter show first," his parents insisted. "There is only one timing for the show everyday and it is at 10am," they explained. When he heard this, Shane dropped

his head in disappointment. "I really want to go see the lions now," he muttered to himself.

Suddenly, Shane had a devious but bright idea. He asked his parents whether he could go to the toilet and when they agreed, he gleefully scuttered away, making a beeline for the lion enclosure. Shane stood at the lion enclosure, gazing dreamily at the lions. He wondered what it was like to be a lion. "How wonderful it is if I could stroke the mane of the lions," Shane thought to himself. He looked over the railing and being agile, he climbed skillfully over the railings. Without much difficulty, he entered the lions enclosure.

Shane's act of foolishness soon attracted a large crowd, who were alarmed and shocked at his act. "Come out of the enclosure boy!" they pleaded anxiously. The noise attracted the two lions, who noticed the small, helpless boy trapped in the enclosure. His parents too heard the commotion and ran over, shocked to see their son in this predicament.

"Someone! Please help my son who is trapped in the enclosure!" his mum pleaded in fright. Seeing this, the zookeeper acted swiftly, throwing two pieces of meat into the enclosure to distract the lions. Distracted by the juicy delicious meat, the lions walked to the spot where the meat lay and devoured it. Meanwhile, the zookeeper assisted Shane out of the enclosure using some rope. After Shane got out safely, the zookeeper reprimanded Shane for his impetuous act. His parents also scolded him, causing him to feel very remorseful. From that day onwards, Shane learnt his lesson and never did such a foolish act again.

Submitted by Sue-Lynn Teo, Educational Therapist Parkway Parade Learning Centre

Mishap at the Fun-Fair

By Hannah El Hilo (P5), Ashraf Bin Masuri (P4), Brendan Wong (P5)

"Let's go to the fun fair!" Bryan exclaimed excitedly, grabbing the hand of his good friend, Shawn as they entered the grounds eagerly. The thrilling and exciting atmosphere greeted the boys as they stepped in, like a good host welcoming them with enthusiasm.

"Let's go to the Viking!" Bryan suggested, bubbling with excitement. "It's the best ride of the funfair!" Shawn, however, was feeling uneasy and hesitated. Bryan continued to persuade him and finally, Shawn agreed.

The two boys made their way to the viking ride, which surprisingly had a short queue. Soon, it was their turn. The two boys eagerly chose the pair of seats at the end of the viking as it was the most thrilling. The ride operator came round to ensure that everybody's seatbelts were securely fastened.

"Beeeeepppp!" the shrill of a siren filled the air, signaling the start of the ride. Bryan felt a rush of adrenaline in anticipation of his favourite ride. This was in contrast to Shawn, who felt cold sweat running down his neck. "I hope the seatbelts stay secure and the ride will end soon," Shawn thought to himself, half regretting his decision to ride the Viking as it picked up speed. Soon, the Viking reached full speed, rocking back and forth in full motion. Around them, the other riders threw their hands into the air, screaming in sheer exhilaration.

Suddenly, a shrill scream pierced the air, followed by a loud thud. Shawn looked around in bewilderment. To his horror, Bryan had fallen from his seat and laid motionless on the bottom deck of the Viking. A pool of blood started forming around him, much to the terrified expressions on everyone's faces. The ride abruptly slowed down, came to a stop and everyone was asked to exit immediately. Shawn jostled hurriedly through the crowd and got to Bryan. A mixture of fear, confusion and worry flooded his mind. Seeing his injured friend lying so helplessly on the ground, he was too shocked to do anything.

Thankfully, the ride operator had already called the ambulance. Within minutes, it arrived and the paramedics carried Bryan away in a red stretcher hurriedly. Shawn followed along, trembling with worry throughout the ride. Bryan's parents had also been notified and they rushed to the hospital immediately. Fortunately, the A&E doctors who handled the case said that the injuries sustained were superficial, except for a few broken bones that would heal in a few months. Shawn was very relieved of this news and sincerely prayed that Bryan would make a well and speedy recovery.



Bomb Attack

Bombs were coming down like heavy rain. Everyone were stricken with fear. Many people were running away, screaming in terror and fear. Some were so terror-stricken that their feet were rooted to the ground. Their faces were pale white, shivers went ^{down} their spines, their hearts stopped for a second. The kids with innocent faces looked at them with both curiosity and fear. They trembled in the hands of their loved ones, holding on to them as if it was their last. The people watched as their city fell into ruins. People were dying right in front of their very eyes. Their body stiffened ^{up} each time a bomb exploded. Everyone stared at their falling city, their eyes filled with sadness and fear. Their hopes melted away as their dreams burned away. That was the first sign. It was War.

Bomb Attack (Above) by Angel Tan, Age: 13, and Worst Nightmare (Below) by Celest Yan, Age: 12

Submitted by: Nuraini Binte Salleh, Educational Therapist Jurong Point Learning Centre

I was home alone when I heard a knock on the door. I open the door no one was there. Suddenly, there was a voice behind me. I was shivering with fear. I ran into my room. I felt water at my feet. I on the light to my horror the room was full with blood. Suddenly, the door close there was no wind. I find my self falling. I woke up and I say to myself that it was the worst nightmare ever.

Life being dyslexic

Being a 12 year old girl,
having dyslexia as a gene,
sucks.

People judging how slow you are,
having extra time for every
exam you take,
learning things slower than
everybody around you.

Having to receive your report book
back,
seeing the position you are,
last - always last.

Seeing the people around you,
asking and showing off what
position they are,
making your self-esteem drop
drastically,
going to the furthest corner of your
classroom,
tears flowing down your shamed
face like a waterfall.

I guess you just have to live with it
for the rest of your life.

- Anonymous



Me

I was born to be me,
not anybody else.

I was born with straight,
silky hair to be "pretty",

I was born with black eyes to see
things around me.

I was born with ears to
hear positive stuff,

I was born with hands
to write this "amazing" poem.

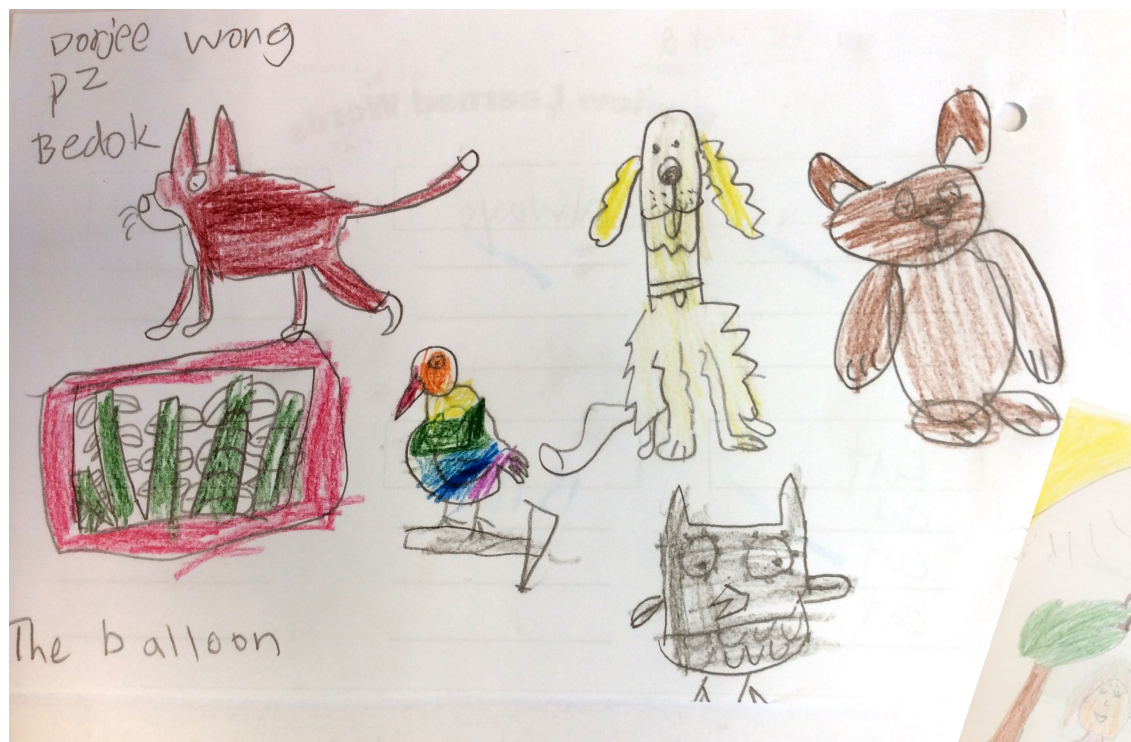
I was born with a nose to smell
the blossomed flower's scent,

I was born with legs to walk
the correct route in my life.

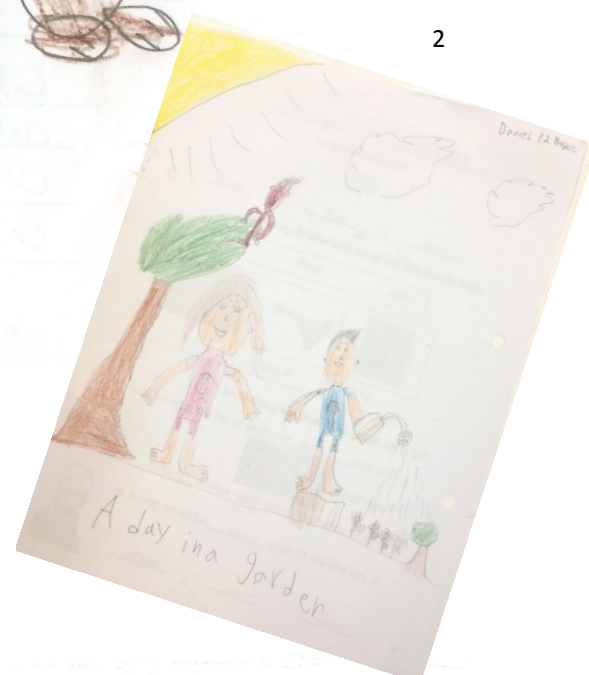
This is me,
and will always be me.

- Anonymous

*Life being Dyslexic and Me by Anonymous P6
Submitted by Sue-Lynn Teo, Educational Therapist , Parkway Learning Centre*



1



2

1. Wong Yong Heng Dorjee (P2)

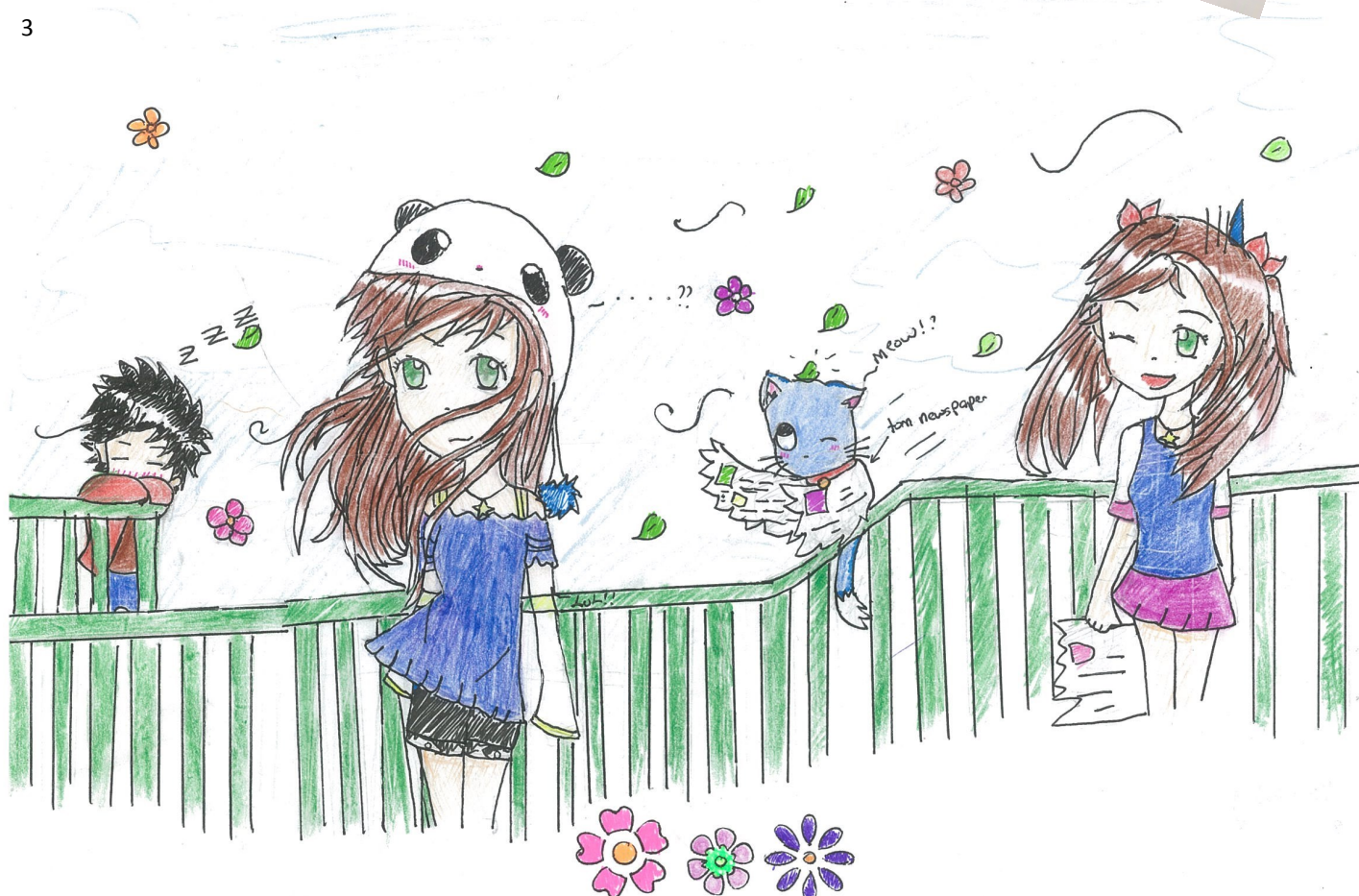
2. Lukasevits Daniel (P2)

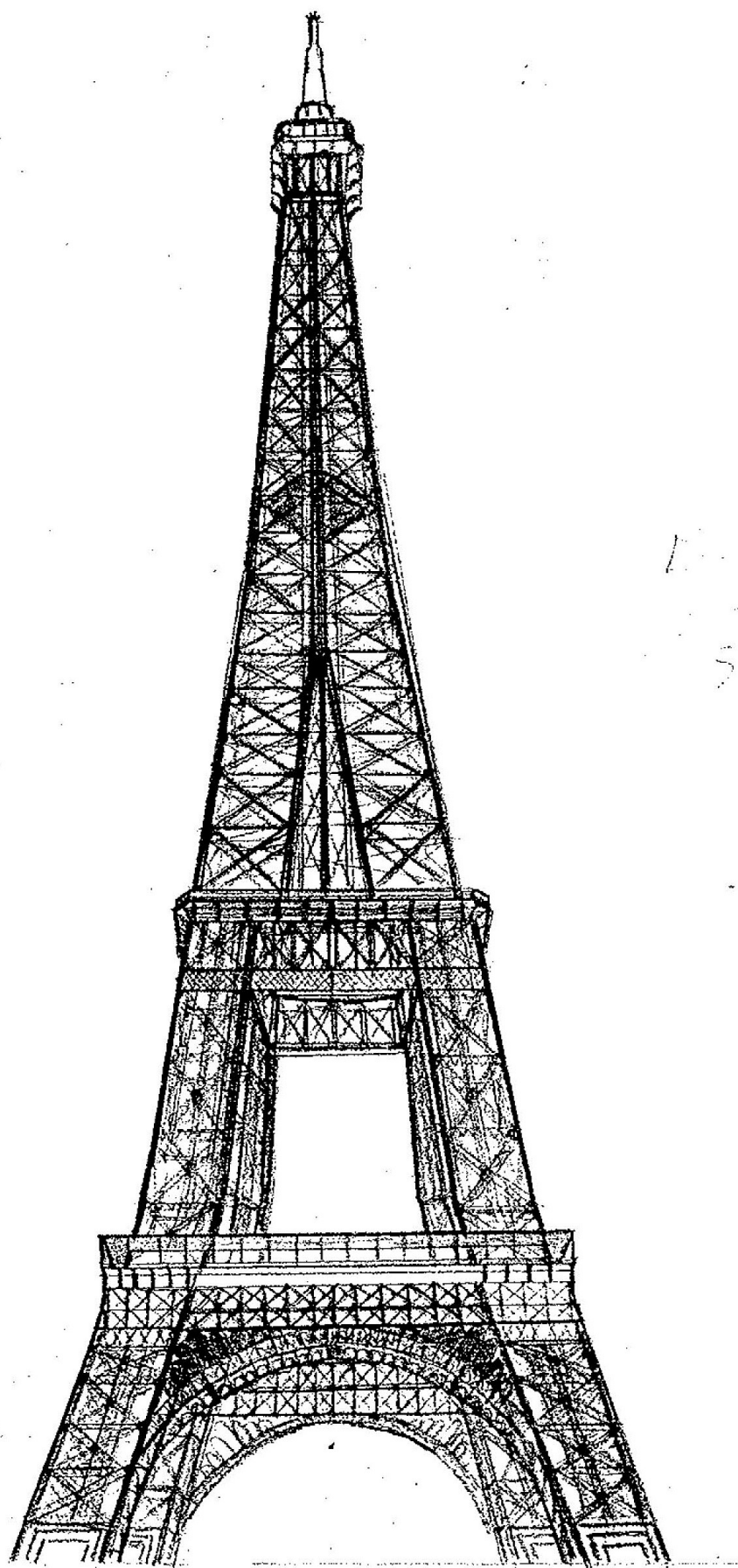
Submitted by Nur Alia, Educational Therapist Bedok Learning Centre

3. Mary Audrey (P6)

Submitted by - Joanne Tan, Educational Therapist, Jurong Point Learning Centre

3





Lim Zi Jie, Aged 15 Submitted by Nicole Chua, Senior Educational Therapist, Yishun Learning Centre



Give a gift of education
to children with
dyslexia.

We need your **help!** Please donate.



Many children are still struggling with dyslexia and attending classes at DAS. Many of these children come from low-income families and receive financial aid from DAS. Although our main remediation programme is co-funded by the Ministry of Education (MOE), we still need to raise more than \$600,000.00 this year to run services and programmes that are not funded by MOE.

We hope that you will support us in raising awareness about dyslexia and funds for DAS programmes. The donations raised will be used to subsidise the fees of programmes or services for low-income families. Eligible students currently receive bursaries between 30% and 100%, depending on the family's household income.

Dyslexia Association of Singapore: 1 Jurong West Central 2 #05-01 Jurong Point Singapore 648886
T 6444 5700 | F 6444 7900 | Hotline 6444 5700 | www.das.org.sg



DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

HELPING DYSLIXIC PEOPLE ACHIEVE

Give the Gift of Education Your Donation Will Change a Child's Life

Of the DAS' student population, almost 40% receive part or full waiver of their fees in view of their family's financial circumstances. In our continuous effort to provide the necessary support to dyslexic Singaporeans, the DAS regularly incurs annual operating deficits in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, even with assistance from the Ministry of Education's funding on a per capita basis. It is through public donations that we have been able to reduce this deficit.

Thank you for considering a monthly donation plan by GIRO



How to complete your GIRO Application

You only need to complete **PART 1** of the GIRO form.

Billing Organisation: DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE		Date:	Please insert the current date or the date this GIRO is to take effect.
Donor Details:		Donor Bank Details:	
Name:	Please print in clear letters your full name and underline your surname.	Financial Institution:	The name of your Financial Institution where the GIRO debit will be activated from.
NRIC:	We require your NRIC so that we can send you a tax receipt for your kind donation. All donations to DAS attract a 2.5 times tax receipt.	Branch:	The Branch of the Financial Institution where your account is held. Eg. Orchard Branch.
Address:	The address where we can contact you about this GIRO and send your tax receipt.	Account Name:	The account holders name where the GIRO will be deducted.
Contact No:	Your phone number where we can contact you for enquires about this GIRO.	Account Number:	The Bank account number where the GIRO will be deducted.
Email:	Your email address where we can contact you for enquires about this GIRO.	Donation Amount:	The amount that you would like to donate each month to DAS.

Terms and Conditions of the GIRO

1. I/We hereby instruct you to process the Billing Organisation's instructions to debit my/our account.
2. You are entitled to reject the Billing Organisation's debit instruction if my/our account does not have sufficient funds and charge me/us a fee for this. You may also at your discretion allow the debit even if this results in an overdraft on the account and impose charge accordingly.
3. This authorisation will remain in force until terminated by your written notice sent to my/our address last known to you or upon receipt of my/our written revocation through the Billing Organisation.

Signature(s):	The signature (s) or thumbprint (s) as per your Financial Institutions records held for the account. Please note: For Thumbprints, please go to the branch with your identification.
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Please return the completed GIRO application form to the above address or to any of our DAS Learning Centres. You will be notified by post when this GIRO arrangement is activated.
We thank you for your kind support and generosity.





Donation Form – GIRO Application

PART 1: For the Applicant's Completion: (See notes about completing this form overleaf)

Billing Organisation: DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE		Date:	
Donor Details:		Donor Bank Details:	
Name:		Financial Institution:	
NRIC:		Branch:	
Address:		Account Name:	
Contact No:		Account Number:	
Email:		Donation Amount:	
<p>1. I/We hereby instruct you to process the Billing Organisation's instructions to debit my/our account.</p> <p>2. You are entitled to reject the Billing Organisation's debit instruction if my/our account does not have sufficient funds and charge me/us a fee for this. You may also at your discretion allow the debit even if this results in an overdraft on the account and impose charge accordingly.</p> <p>3. This authorisation will remain in force until terminated by your written notice sent to my/our address last known to you or upon receipt of my/our written revocation through the Billing Organisation.</p>			
Signature(s):			

Part 2: For the Billing Organisation's Completion

Bank	Branch	Billing Organisation's Account No.	Billing Organisation's Customer Reference No.
7 3 3 9	5 0 1	8 5 4 4 1 8 0 0 1	

Bank	Branch	Account Number to be Debited	GIRO Amount
			. 0 0

Part 3: For Financial Institution's Completion

To: Dyslexia Association of Singapore, 1 Jurong West Central 2, #05-01 Jurong Point, Singapore 648886

This Application is hereby REJECTED (please tick) for the following reasons (s):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Signature/Thumbprint* differed from Financial Institution's records	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signature/ Thumbprint* is incomplete or unclear	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wrong Account Number
<input type="checkbox"/>	Account operated by Signature/ Thumbprint*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amendments not countersigned by applicant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

* Delete where applicable

Name of Approving Officer

Authorised Signature and Stamp of Financial Institution

Date





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

Age: 8+ years

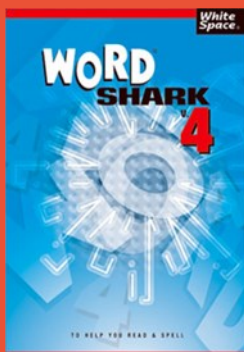
\$45.00 for single user license



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

Age: 5 – 15 years

\$225.00 for single user license



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

Age: 5 – 15 years

\$128.00 for single user license



Number Shark 4 teaches and reinforces numeracy using 45 carefully designed games, with over 500 topics to choose from.

Age: 5 – 16 years

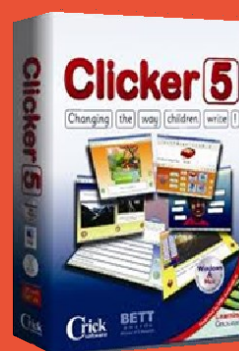
\$108.00 for single user license



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

Age: Above 12 years

\$135.00 for single user license



Clicker 6 is an award winning literacy tool that enables students of all abilities to significantly develop their reading and writing skills.

Age: Above 5 years

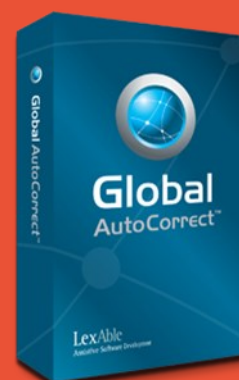
\$170.00 for single user license



ClaroRead is a text-to-speech software integrated closely with Microsoft Word that supports individuals struggling with reading and writing.

Age: Above 5 years

\$326.00 for single user license



Global AutoCorrect is a discreet software tool that assists people with literacy difficulties by automatically correcting your spelling as you type.

Age: All Ages

\$119.00 for single user license

Grab one today!

www.dasint.org.sg/services/at-resources.html

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

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Enquiries: editor@das.org.sg Advertising: advertising@das.org.sg



EMBRACE DYSLEXIA

DINNER & SEMINAR—19 & 20 NOVEMBER

Make a stand for people with dyslexia by embracing their
learning differences and unlocking their potential

www.das.org.sg/embrace-dyslexia