

TOTAL COMMUNICATION THERAPY

CENTRE NEWS

Dear Parents and Colleagues,

As Easter approaches, we are thankful for the continued growth and harmony that radiate throughout our centre in the heart of Newton. Our children continue to amaze us with their progress and stamina as we come full circle - a year - since 2020's Circuit Breaker.

We are excited to announce our newest team member, Zhi Ying Tan, our Educational Psychologist. Zhi Ying studied her MPsych at Queensland University of Technology, Australia and her BSc (Hons) from University of York, UK. Educational Psychology is a vast area of study and a profession we already work closely with to enhance the scope of our trans-disciplinary way of working. Zhi's experience and knowledge are a very welcome addition to our clinic and we are sure we will learn much from each other by having her on the team.

Our therapist training and continued professional development is one of the areas we pride ourselves on as a company. So it was a joy to have our speech and language therapists attend Nuffield Dyspraxia Training recently. We are able to finetune our approach to Childhood Apraxia of Speech and speech disorders in general, as they present in children orally and in literacy too.



This issue of our newsletter is jam-packed full of goodies including the continuation of our series on Dynamic Math and its functional application in the classroom, as well as daily life. We also speak to our Educator & Family Liaison Manager, Catherine, to find out more about her take as a parent on one of our commonly used therapy approaches - declarative language.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter holidays with your loved ones.

Charlotte (Hughes) Barfoot,
Regional Manager



Watch our new video here!



The TCT team have been busy showcasing our centre to parents, teachers, and other allied health professionals! Check it out by scanning the QR code on your phone.



A WEALTH OF RESOURCES

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

We are incredibly fortunate to be one of the most well-resourced clinics in Singapore, boasting an abundance of standardised assessments, therapy materials, tactile resources, and evidence-based programmes. This means our students get exactly what they need when they need it, leading to better outcomes and happier families.



One caveat of having a plethora of therapy materials is that there is no one-size-fits all solution for any problem, much as there is no 'go-to' therapy approach for one child; each child must be assessed thoroughly and considered as an individual. As such, we may boast possession of hundreds of books and games but we truly understand a tool is only one of many in the toolkit.

Thankfully our team are trained in resource selection and clinical judgement, that caters to the specific needs of each child.

THERAPIST'S CORNER

Our therapists share with you their favourite resources, books, games, and therapy materials.

THERAPIST: Ivy

FAVOURITE RESOURCE: Hoot Owl Hoot

TELL ME MORE:

It's a simple boardgame which requires cooperation between the players to bring baby owls back to their nest before the sun comes up.



USE IN THERAPY:

It's excellent for teaching children to take turns in a non-competitive environment, as well as for teaching and practising colour names. I find that the colourful graphics and cute pictures make the game an instant hit with most children!



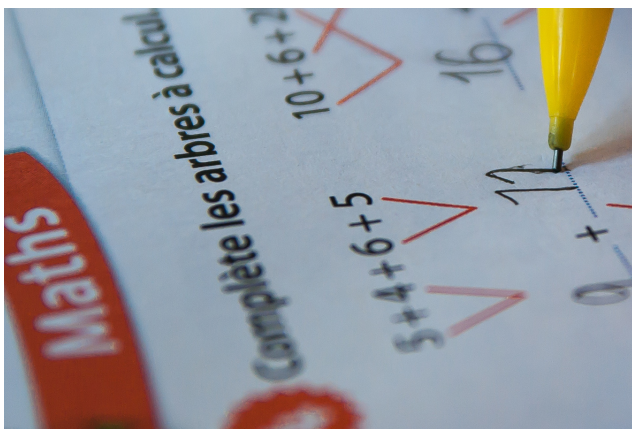
DYNAMIC THINKING AND ITS APPLICATION IN MATHEMATICS

BY DIANA MENDIOLA & JANICE FONG

Many aspects of our daily lives require us to adapt to problems, people, and settings that are constantly changing and developing. Having the ability to successfully solve complex problems, prioritise multiple demands, maintain meaningful relationships and achieve long term goals is the skill of having Dynamic Intelligence.

It is a gift that has helped us evolve through our lifetime to continuously engage with our environment, by using adaptive responses in coping with everyday demands.

The static brain searches for a single response to match associations with a specific stimulus. In Math, a child may look at a word problem and solve it to match the demands required by the problem. The dynamic brain, on the other hand, is created to search out new potential responses to continually add to the list of perspectives.



Many mathematical systems use static math skills, acquired through rote learning. Dynamic math requires a more flexible approach.

We continue this series on Dynamic Thinking Skills by delving deeper into selected intelligences below:

DIFFERENTIATING

Differentiating is an important dynamic mental process, and it is one of our most natural forms of mental processes. If we are unable to differentiate, and take notes of similarities and differences between objects, a lot of learning would be impossible.

Take geometry for example. Children start by differentiating a square, and a circle. Later on, they differentiate more complex figures, such as cubes, cuboid, prism, cylinder, pyramid and cone.

Being able to differentiate between geometric shapes is important for an architect, a designer, an engineer, or even a Lego builder master!

Fuzzy Thinking

Fuzzy thinking refers to the ability to estimate and make a judgment, even if all the information is not available. We use fuzzy thinking in our everyday lives. Estimation and rounding off is a mathematical concept that all students should be familiar with.

For example, when grocery shopping, we make purchases and estimate how much the total will be (without actually calculating the total amount of the purchases.)

Deconstructing

As important as integrating is, deconstructing is equally important. A child should be able to isolate numbers as representatives of itself, but also integrating them with the context of the problem (i.e. parts of a whole, processing the gestalt).

An example of this is seen when children attempt word problems. In order to solve a word problem, deconstructing must be well done. Let's take a look at the following word problem:

You have 5 pieces of candy. Your mom gives you 3 more, but your brother eats one of them. How many pieces of candy do you have left?

To solve the word problem, we have to deconstruct it sentence by sentence:

"You have 5 pieces of candy"

We start with the number 5.

"Your mom gives you 3 more"

more = addition; Hence $5+3 = 8$.

"but your brother eats one of them"

$8-1=7$

"How many pieces of candy do you have left?"

I have 7 pieces of candy left.

What to us as adults (with fairly well developed skills) may seem a simple problem is actually a complex problem with many parts, requiring multiple functions calculated simultaneously.

INFERENCING

This refers to the ability to attend to the information given and link it with existing knowledge.

For example, when a child is asked, how many more does Person A have than Person B, a child has to take the information they know (e.g. would 'more' mean addition or subtraction; who is it in comparison with; what are the numbers involved?). This would therefore help them to determine the outcome according to the demands of the question.



Professionals including Educational Therapists and Speech-Language Therapists who have trained in Dynamic Intelligences are able to work closely together to support the development of these skills.

This dynamic skill therefore includes understanding the various math language and concepts involved in problem sums and word problems. This inquiry-based approach sets the stage for other dynamic skills to be incorporated, such as integration, representation and contextual processing.

More next issue!

SHADOW SUPPORT

A SUCCESS STORY WITH TCT'S SHADOW ADVANTAGE

BY JANICE FONG



Evan* was referred by an international school for our Shadow Service. The school had requested a Shadow Teacher for Evan as he had a history of meltdowns and tantrums in school. Evan had difficulty regulating his emotions in class and found it difficult to stay in school for the entire school day.

The first thing was to set smart, achievable goals for Evan and his family. The main goal for Evan was to attend school consistently for the school term but a secondary goal was also for Evan to gain the ability and skill to self-regulate during school time.

Evan was assigned to a Shadow who was a good match for him. As the Shadow Manager, I made sure that the Shadow, Laura*, understood Evan's personality, likes and dislikes, academic history, therapy goals and relationship with his family. I also personally mentored Laura to ensure that she had strategies she could use with Evan.

*Names have been anonymized

For example, she could bring Evan out of the classroom for breaks and regulate him, before returning to class.

The first month of school was challenging. Evan wanted to go home, instead of attending school. He was frustrated and upset in school and could not attend his classes. Laura would then step in and support Evan by giving him breaks, using strategies from the Zones of Regulation programme or facilitate when he was having difficulties with his school work.

With Laura's direct involvement and close support in the classroom, Evan's emotional dysregulation grew less intense, and less frequent. Evan also started therapy sessions at Total Communication Therapy for emotional regulation, social skills and executive functioning.

By the end of the 5th month of Shadow, Evan had integrated well in school. Evan could now attend classes independently and no longer showed signs of school refusal. He has made gains in his emotional regulation and Evan's teachers and parents were very happy with his progress.

Evan's successful integration into school was a team effort. Shadow work is not done alone, but in a team consisting of the Shadow Manager, parents, teachers and the Shadow.

NEED A SHADOW?

Enquire about shadow support by emailing:
enquiries@shadow-advantage.com

BOOK CLUB BONUS:

"WHAT SHOULD I DO OR SAY IN THE FACE OF EMOTIONAL FRUSTRATION BROUGHT ON BY MY CHILDREN?": A REVIEW OF DECLARATIVE LANGUAGE HANDBOOK

BY CATHERINE LIU-JOHNSEN

As a mother of two 6-year-old twins, I experience the highs and lows of communication interactions with my children every single day. This may be a familiar encounter for you too if you are a parent or educator!

Our children's emotional reactions are ones adults can relate to: feelings of frustration, seeing the whole picture, maintaining friendships, and solving problems. So, it's natural that we experience emotional breakdowns, tantrums, and other challenging behaviors that are part of being human. A question I find myself asking daily is: What should I do or say in the face of emotional frustration brought on by my children?

This March, as part of our Professional Development Book Club, our clinical director, Prudence Low, introduced a useful book to the team: Declarative Language Handbook. Although it's written by a speech and language therapist/ RDI® Consultant (Linda K. Murphy),



Catherine Liu-Johnsen is the Educator & Family Liaison Manager at TCT

it's an easy read for parents and teachers alike with ready-to-go strategies that can be used immediately.

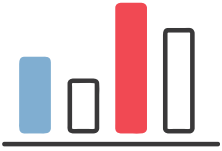
From this book, I learned how to use declarative language to better help my children grow in social interactions. This book was written to teach you how making small shifts in your language and speaking style will produce important results. You will stop telling your children what to do and instead thoughtfully give them information to help them make important discoveries in the moment. These moments build resilience, flexibility, and positive relationships over time.

You might be a therapist or a teacher, or you might be a parent, grandparent, or babysitter. Your child might have a diagnosis such as Autism, Asperger's, ADHD or another learning disability. But they also might not. No matter your child's level or learning style, this easy-to-read book was written to help you feel equipped to make a difference, simply by being mindful of your own communication and speaking style.

In Total Communication Therapy Centre, we are constantly striving for the best ways to work for your children and students. We are continuously learning and revising our practices and therapy approaches to benefit our children, adolescents, and their families.

If you want to find out more, please enquire about our parent training program or ask your therapist about declarative language!

FACTS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL LANGUAGE DISORDER (DLD)



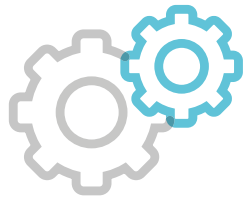
It affects approximately 7% of the population
(more common than Autism and ADHD)

It affects more boys than girls



There is no known cause

It is a lifelong condition but
therapy (intervention) can help



It is difficulty with talking and/or understanding
and affects learning, confidence, and socialising

TOTAL COMMUNICATION

Total Communication Therapy centre is located in the leafy 10 Winstedt Rd complex. Speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, and educational therapists work closely with families and schools. If you would like to know more please feel free to contact the team using the information below.

Phone: 6467 2995 / 9115 8895

Email: enquiries@totalcommunication.com.sg

Visit: 10 Winstedt Road, Block A #02-01, Singapore 227977



Facebook: [totalcommtherapy](https://www.facebook.com/totalcommtherapy)



Instagram: [totalcommmsg](https://www.instagram.com/totalcommmsg)

