

# IARLD 2025

47<sup>th</sup> Annual IARLD Conference



Assessing Neurocognitive  
and Social-Cognitive Performance  
of the Developing Brain in  
Learning Disabilities

17 – 19 September, 2025

Nicosia, Cyprus

[www.cyprusconferences.org/iarld2025](http://www.cyprusconferences.org/iarld2025)



Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου  
University of Cyprus





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# WELCOME NOTE

## WELCOME NOTE



### Assessing Neurocognitive and Social-Cognitive Performance of the Developing Brain in Learning Disabilities

We are delighted to welcome you to the 47th Annual IARLD Conference, “Assessing Neurocognitive and Social-Cognitive Performance of the Developing Brain in Learning Disabilities,” at the Department of Psychology, University of Cyprus, from September 17-19, 2025, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The conference focuses on innovative methods for evaluating neurocognitive and social-cognitive functioning in individuals with learning disabilities. Cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving form the foundation for acquiring knowledge. Social skills, including communication, emotional regulation, and social interaction, shape how individuals engage with their learning environments. Together, these aspects help to explore how learning disabilities manifest in various settings. Through the examination of both sets of skills, we can identify early signs of learning disabilities, such as difficulty processing information, participating in social interactions, or adjusting to school environments.

Key topics include behavioral and cognitive assessments, neurophysiological techniques, and social cognitive measures that advance our understanding of brain development and learning disorders. Because learning disabilities often contribute to social challenges, such as difficulty forming friendships or feelings of isolation in the classroom, we encourage discussions on the impact of individual and environmental factors, performance profiles, early childhood interventions, and socio-emotional development.

Contributions from psychology, education, cognitive neuroscience, and healthcare enrich our conversations. The main goal of the conference is to promote collaboration between researchers and practitioners, enhance our understanding of learning disabilities, and inform evidence-based methods for assessment and treatment that address both cognitive deficits and social factors challenges.

We invite you to join this exchange of knowledge and help advance the study of learning disabilities. We are excited to have you at the University of Cyprus for this event!

Timothy C. Papadopoulos and George Spanoudis

Department of Psychology and Center for Applied Neuroscience

University of Cyprus

Nicosia, Cyprus

## COMMITTEES

### ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

**Timothy C. Papadopoulos**, University of Cyprus

**George Spanoudis**, University of Cyprus

**Evgenia Kouki**, University of Cyprus

**Andreas Savva**, University of Cyprus

### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

**George Spanoudis**, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

**Timothy C. Papadopoulos**, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

**Esther Adi-Japha**, Bar Ilan University, Israel

**Faye Antoniou**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

**Kyriakos Antoniou**, Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus

**Débora Areces Martínez**, University of Oviedo, Spain

**Marianna Christodoulou Devledian**, European University Cyprus, Cyprus

**Panayiota Dimitropoulou**, University of Crete, Greece

**Argyro Fella**, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

**Diamanto Filippatou**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

**Yafit Gabay**, University of Haifa, Israel

**Esther Geva**, University of Toronto, Canada

**Evgenia Kouki**, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

**George Manolitsis**, University of Crete, Greece

**Angeliki Mouzaki**, University of Crete, Greece

**Kakia Petinou**, Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus

**Fotini Polychroni**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

**Paige Pullen**, University of Florida, USA

**Asimina Ralli**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

**Celestino Rodríguez Pérez**, University of Oviedo, Spain

**Andreas Savva**, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

**David Scanlon**, Boston College, USA

**George Sideridis**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

**Elena Yiangou**, European University Cyprus, Cyprus

οικειών των 2000 περίπου αιώων, τα οποία είναι μικρολίθου με απλές εγχάρακτες στη θέση των ματιών, κοντό λαιμό και καθήμενη στάση πριν την τελική γεμάτη δυναμισμό, κλασική σταυροειδή μορφή τους με εγχάρακτα τετράγωνα μάτια, μακρό λαιμό και καθήμενη στάση. Αναγνωρίζεται όμως ότι αυτή η διάταξη δεν αποτελεί παρά μόνο μια γενική τάση αφού σε μερικές περιπτώσεις η χρήση διαδοχικών τύπων ήταν πιο συχνή.

### THE PICROLITE CRUCIFORM FIGURES AND PENDANTS

Picrolite figurines seem to appear sometime at the beginning of the 4th M.B.C. and to have continued down to the mid-3rd M.B.C. with a more frequent occurrence in Western Cyprus. It is assumed that the use and possibly the production of picrolite figurines began from the site of Kissonia in Mycenaean times, an intermediate stage between the late Neolithic and the early Bronze Age. The evidence for a tentative evolution of the type is provided by the discovery of a series of types, simple stone figures of a flattened cylindrical form, with a short neck, a seated posture, and a pair of eyes, from the Sotira group of sites. These evolved into picrolite figurines with a more pronounced seated posture, a pair of eyes, and a pair of arms, developing into the powerful classic cruciform shape with a square head, a long neck, and a seated posture. At the same time, the types diachronically arranged may have been produced simultaneously.



**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKERS**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Evelyn H. Kroesbergen**  
(William Cruickshank Memorial Lecture)

Professor of Special Educational Needs  
Behavioural Science Institute  
of Radboud University

**Title**  
Twice exceptionality: Characteristics and educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities

### **Abstract**

In this lecture, we will explore how learning disabilities manifest in gifted students. What are the differences and similarities compared to other students with learning disabilities, and what can we learn about learning disabilities in general from studying this particular group? There are large discrepancies between various cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics in these students. How does this affect their learning and development, and what do they need to learn effectively and develop their potential? Practical implications regarding the identification and educational needs of twice-exceptional students will be addressed.

### **Short CV**

Evelyn Kroesbergen is Full Professor of Special Educational Needs at the Behavioural Science Institute of Radboud University, the Netherlands. She leads a research group on the educational needs of children with learning disabilities and gifted children. Her research focuses on the cognitive characteristics of children with special educational needs, with a special focus on mathematical development and dyscalculia. Another research line is focused on the early identification and education of gifted children with learning disabilities.



**Andreas Demetriou**

Professor Emeritus

University of Cyprus and University of Nicosia  
Cyprus Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts

**Title**

The Typical and Atypical Developing Mind: A Common Model

**Abstract**

We present a theory of atypical development based on a developmental theory of the typical mind integrating developmental, cognitive, and psychometric research. We first outline the theory of typical development. The theory postulates central cognitive mechanisms, such as relational integration, executive and inferential processes, and domain-specific processes underlying different environmental relations, such as visuospatial or quantitative relations. Cognitive development advances in cycles satisfying developmental priorities in mastering these systems, such as executive control in preschool, inferential control in middle childhood, and truth control in adolescence. We then discuss atypical development, showing how developmental disorders emerge from deficiencies in one or more of the processes comprising mental architecture. Deficiencies in relational integration mechanisms, together with deficiencies in social understanding yield ASD. Deficiencies in executive processes yield ADHD. Deficiencies in symbolic representation yield specialized learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. Finally, we discuss clinical and educational implications, suggesting specific remediation programs.

**Short CV**

Andreas Demetriou is Professor Emeritus of Psychology of the University of Cyprus and the University of Nicosia and a founding member of the Cyprus Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts, a fellow of Academia Europea, the International Academy of Education, and the Association of Psychological Science. He is an Honorary Doctor of Middlesex University London and the University of Szeged, Hungary, and an Honorary Professor of Durham University, UK and the Northeastern Normal University, China. He was the Minister of Education and Culture of Cyprus. He studied at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and the University of New South Wales, Australia. He was a professor of psychology at the Aristotle University, Greece (1975-1996), the University of Cyprus (1996-2008), and the University of Nicosia (2011-2017). He served in top academic positions, such as President of the Cyprus Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts, Vice-Rector and Acting Rector of the University of Cyprus (1999-2002) and founding President of the Cyprus University of Technology (2004-2008). He is a member of many learned societies, including the International Society for Research on Intelligence. He is also on the editorial board of several journals, including *Intelligence*, the *Journal of Intelligence*, and *Intelligence and Cognitive Abilities*. He published more than 200 books and articles in top technical journals presenting his work on cognitive development, intelligence, and related applications. His book, *GROWING MINDS* (with George Spanoudis, Routledge), Routledge 2018, presents his theory of cognitive development. The book *EDUCATING THE DEVELOPING MIND*, Routledge 2024, presents the applications of the theory in education. Recent papers published in *Psychological Review* (2023) and *Development and Psychopathology* (2024) show the empirical substantiation of the educational aspects of the theory for typical and atypical development. The journals *New Ideas in Psychology* (1998), *Developmental Review* (1999), *Developmental Science* (1999), *Educational Psychology Review* (2011), *Intelligence* (2014), *Journal of Intelligence* (2018), and *Human Development* (2018) devoted special sections for the discussion of his theory of cognitive development, its relations to general theory of intelligence, and implications for education.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Mikko Aro**  
Professor of Special Education  
University of Jyväskylä

**Title**  
Understanding the role of non-cognitive factors in learning:  
A challenge for learning disability research

### Abstract

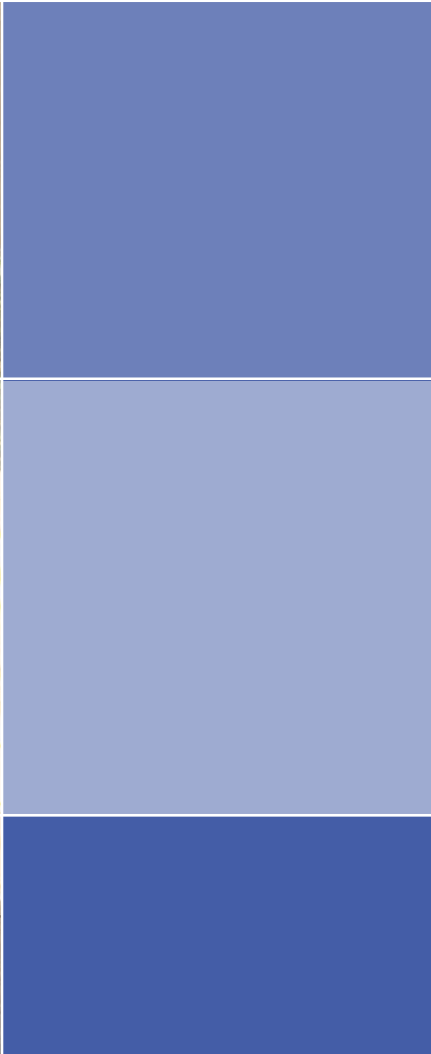
Research shows that learning disabilities are both concurrently and developmentally often associated with not only other neurodevelopmental problems, but also behavioral-emotional problems. However, the mechanisms and developmental dynamics underlying this association are not sufficiently understood. Further, one common finding in intervention studies of learning disabilities is the existence of non-responders and large inter-individual variation in response to support. This presentation discusses the findings concerning the association between learning and non-cognitive factors, such as learning motivation, learning-related emotions and self-beliefs. The findings raise questions whether for understanding learning disabilities, or for developing and investigating efficient support for learners with learning disabilities, the focus should be widened from cognitive domain to cover these factors relevant for active engagement in learning.

### Short CV

Mikko Aro is a professor of Special Education at the University of Jyväskylä. His research interests include typical and atypical development of reading and math skills, and developing school-based support methods for children with learning disabilities. He is currently a co-leader of the Center of Excellence in Learning Dynamics and Intervention Research (InterLearn), funded by the Research Council of Finland (2022-2029). The InterLearn is a consortium of three research groups focusing especially on the interplay between learning and various psychosocial factors in long-term development and within the context of educational support.



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



# WEDNESDAY

September 17, 2025

Room: B108

08:30 Registration

09:00 Welcome Remarks

## 09:30 Symposium 1

### **Fostering Academic Success in Higher Education for Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders (SLD and ADHD): The Role of Cognitive, Motivational and Socio-Emotional Factors**

The Role of Academic Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated Learning in Predicting Academic Achievement among Students with SLD and ADHD

*Adi Sharabi, Marisol Cueli, Gerardo Pellegrino, Celestino Rodríguez, Barbara Carretti*

Anxiety Experience Among College Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDD):

The Intolerance of Uncertainty (IU), Hope, Academic Self-Efficacy (ASE) and Perceptions of Social Support as Serial Mediators

*Malka Margalit, Adi Mana, & Oranit Davidson Begerano*

Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Satisfaction in Higher Education, the Role of Accommodations for SLD and ADHD students

*Marisol Cueli, Celestino Rodríguez, Adi Sharabi, Barbara Carreti, & Gerardo Pellegrino*

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Keynote 1: **Evelyn H. Kroesbergen**

William Cruickshank Memorial Lecture

Twice Exceptionality: Characteristics and Educational Needs of Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities

12:30 Lunch

## 14:00 Symposium 2

### **More Than Words: Decoding the Emotional, Motivational, and Environmental Landscape of Reading and Writing in Diverse Learners**

Understanding the Path to Reading Comprehension: The Role of School Climate, Emotions, Motivation and Learning Strategies

*Panagiota Dimitropoulou, Diamanto Filippatou, Michalis Michaelides*

Developmental Psychoemotional Profiles Specific to Reading in Typically Developing Children and Those with Specific Learning Difficulties or Developmental Language Disorder

*Diamanto Filippatou, Panagiota Dimitropoulou, Elisavet Chrysochoou, Asimina Ralli*

Empowering Self-Regulation: The Impact of a Structured Writing Intervention on Self-Control and Emotional Competence in Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

*Faye Antoniou, Vasiliki Kokkali, Diamanto Filippatou*

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 Keynote 2: **Andreas Demetriou**

The Typical and Atypical Developing Mind: A Common Model



## INTERACTIVE POSTER SESSION

1. Understanding Reading Difficulties: Eye-Tracking Measures in Typical and Atypical Childhood Readers  
*Argyro Fella, Timothy C. Papadopoulos*
2. Blending Realities: A multilevel iVR-based and Psychosocial Intervention for Children with Attention Deficits  
*Iouliani Pachiti, Panagiota Dimitropoulou, Fotios S. Milienos*
3. Spelling Difficulties in Greek-Speaking Children with Specific Learning Disabilities: Error Patterns and Challenges  
*Vasiliki Kokkali, Faye Antoniou*
4. The Relationship Between Reading Fluency and Self-Reported Speed and Effort in Reading  
*Sivan Medina, Adi Shechter, David Share*
5. Auditory and Visual Perceptual Category Learning in Adults with ADHD: Implications for Learning Systems and Domain-General Factors  
*Yael Ben Anat, Casy L Roark, Yafit Gabay*
6. Badge Me If You Can: Gamifying EFL Vocabulary Learning with Emotional Engagement  
*Iman Garra-Alloush, Liron Hazan Cohen, Tami Katzir*
7. Mixing Motor Skills with MRI Modalities Towards Machine Learning Evaluation of ADHD  
*Karen Waldie*
8. Reading Outcomes in Hebrew-Speaking Children with Persistent Versus Transient Language Difficulties: A 5-year Longitudinal Study  
*Ravit Cohen-Mimran, Liron Reznik-Nevet, David Share*
9. Inclusion in Education: Teachers' Attitudes And Parents' Concerns about Support Services for Children with Learning Disabilities from Minority Backgrounds  
*Sohni Siddiqui, Gino Casale, Mona Kurz*
10. Predicting Reading Development in Hebrew: Word Reading Fluency as a Screening Tool from Grades 1-4  
*Liron Hazan Cohen*
11. Unraveling Cognitive and Literacy Mechanisms in Hebrew Reading and Spelling Profiles  
*Anat Zafrani, Shelly Shaul*
12. Screen vs. Paper: Medium Effects on Time Estimation in Students with ADHD  
*Yael Meer, Tami Katzir*
13. Cognitive Effort in Word Learning: A Pupillometric Investigation of Orthographic Learning  
*Adi Shechter, David Share*
14. The Language Profile of Children with Learning Disabilities in Cyprus  
*Antri Tsangari, Eleni Theodorou*
15. Canadian Post-Secondary Students with Learning Disabilities: The Relationship Between Consistent Barriers to Accommodation, and Practical Implications  
*Cameron McKenzie, Sarah Southey*

16. The Effects of Morphological Awareness Intervention on Reading Comprehension of Bilingual Elementary Children with Specific Learning Difficulties In Reading  
*Theodora Papastefanou, Kyriakoula Rothou*
17. The Association Between Socioemotional Skills and Developmental Language Disorder: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis  
*Olga Socratous, Eleana Lamprou, George Spanoudis*
18. Parental Stress, Feelings of Shame and Guilt and Coping Strategies During Homework with Children with Learning Disabilities and ADHD  
*Fotini Polychroni, Despoina Athanasiadou, Vassiliki Ballou, Marina Kavouridi, Evangelia Liakopoulou*
19. Parental Styles Profiles in Families of Children with ADHD Since a Person-Centred Approach  
*Marisol Cueli, Natalia Martín, Laura Canamero, Miguel García, Paloma Gonzalez-Castro*
20. Guessing During Testing is a Person Attribute Not an Instrument Parameter: The Relevance in Learning Disabilities  
*Georgios Sideridis, Evelyn Law*
21. Narrative Skills In Preschool Children With and Without Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Review of the Literature  
*Aglaia Stampoltzis, Sofia Kouvava, Katerina Antonopoulou, Ioannis Vogindroukas, Maria Andreou, Vasilina Spanou, Irini Patroumpa, Aggelos Tzoumailis, Sofia Mavropoulou, Eleni Peristeri*
22. Children's Executive Functioning and Language Abilities Related to Reading Comprehension: ExeFun-READ Intervention  
*Iveta Kovalcikova*
23. Challenges in Higher Education: Differences Between Students with and Without Learning Disability and the Moderating Role of Executive Functions  
*Marlyn Khouri, Noga Cohen*
24. The Development of Hemispheric Lateralization of Word and Face Processing: A Longitudinal Observation of Students with and Without Reading and Attention Difficulties  
*Tal Erez-Hod*
25. Decoding Cognitive Clusters in Children at risk of Learning Disability: The Role of Attention, Working Memory, and Reading Abilities  
*Inmaculada Méndez-Freije, Débora Areces, Celestino Rodriguez Perez, Steve Majerus*
26. A Systems-Level Framework for Implementing Tier 2 Reading Interventions in India  
*Sunaina Shenoy, Radhika Zahedi, Noella Samuel*
27. Gender, SES, and Reading Abilities Among 4th and 5th Grade Students  
*Shir Gofer*
28. Creativity and Pre-Literacy Skills: Unexplored Connections in the Prevention of Learning Disabilities  
*Débora Areces, Claudia Flores, Inés López-Manrique, Carlota Tielve, Celestino Rodriguez Perez*



29. From Theory to Practice Translating Research into Everyday Practices to Support Students with Learning Disabilities through Compensatory and Remedial Teaching  
*Lydia Muchina*
30. Exploring Dyslexia Awareness in Pre-Service EFL Teachers in Poland  
*Monika Lodej*
31. Increasing Middle School Struggling Readers Reading Outcomes: The Promise of AMP-IT-UP  
*Mary Beth Calhoon*
32. A Conceptual Map for Improving Reading Skills in Students with Specific Learning Disorder  
*Paloma Gonzalez-Castro, Marisol Cueli, Rebeca Cerezo, Nerea Quiroga, Daniel Fernandez-Lanvín, Alejandro Alvarez*
33. Be-Friendly: A Digital Classroom Program for Students with LD and ADHD to Increase Empathy and Self-Control and Reduce Aggression  
*Maly Danino*
34. Sleep, Screen, and Symptoms: Investigating Social Media Use Among Young Adults with ADHD Symptoms  
*Ayse Dilsad Yakut, Havva Dagtas*

# THURSDAY

September 18, 2025

Room: B108

08:30 Registration

09:00 Announcements

09:15

## Symposium 3

### Language and Cognitive Development in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Related Learning Difficulties

Investigating Shared Features of Autism and Developmental Language Disorder in School-Aged Populations

*George Spanoudis, Natasa Georgiou, Timothy C. Papadopoulos*

Examining Autistic Children's Reading Comprehension Using Eye-Tracking: Findings on Bridging Inferencing

*Eleni Peristeri, Michaela Nerantzini, Timothy C. Papadopoulos, Spyridoula Varlokosta*

Investigating EFL Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Computer-Based Intervention with Eye-Tracking Evidence

*Georgia Andreou, Ariadni Argatzopoulou*

10:45 Coffee Break

11:15

## Keynote 3: Mikko Aro

Understanding the Role of Non-Cognitive Factors in Learning: A Challenge for Learning Disability Research

12:30

Lunch

14:00

## Symposium 4

### Accuracy-Disabled vs. Rate-Disabled Subtypes of Dyslexia: Distinct Subtypes Require Different Interventions

Reading Comprehension at Different Levels of Text Representation Among Subtypes of Reading Disability in 4th-5th Grades

*Hila Shakir, Michal Shany*

Rate-Disabled Versus Accuracy-Disabled Subtypes of dyslexia: A Longitudinal Study from Kindergarten to Grade

*Dana Gott, Ravit Cohen-Mimran, David Share*

Dyslexia Subtypes in Arabic: Reading Accuracy and Rate: Insights from a Longitudinal Study from Preschool to First Grade

*Maysa Jabbour-Danial, David Share, Yasmin Shalhoub-Awwad*

Dyslexia Subtypes in Arabic: Reading Accuracy and Rate: A Longitudinal Developmental Retrospective from Grade 3 to First Grade

*Yasmin Shalhoub-Awwad, Maysa Jabbour-Danial*

Reading Subtyping of Arabic-Speaking University Students: A Contribution to the Accuracy vs. Rate Model of Dyslexia

*Asaid Khateb, Bahaa Madi Tarabya, Samer Andria*

Reading Disabled Adults With High Levels of Phonemic Awareness: Who are They?

*Michal Shechter-Lerner, Zvia Breznitz, David Share*

15:30

Coffee Break

16:00

## Round Table 1

### How Best Might we Expand Crosslinguistic Research, and Cross-National Research on Orthographic-Complexity Impacts?

Chair: Susan Galletly

*David Share, Mikko Aro, Timothy C. Papadopoulos, George Spanoudis*

19:30

Conference Dinner

FRIDAY

September 19, 2025

Room:B108



09.00 -13.00

**Post-Conference Social Activity**

Pick up: from City Centre and Semeli Hotel around 08.45

Welcome at Lefkara by a representative of the Municipality

Points of interest:

- Church of the Holy Cross
- "Lokumi" Making Workshop
- Lefkara Municipality Handicraft Center with live workshops
- Shop showcasing the art of silversmithing
- Free time for shopping, coffee, and meals



SOCIAL EVENTS



## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Welcome Reception

Date: **Wednesday 17 September**

Location: University of Cyprus (Venue)

Time: **17:30**

The Welcome Cocktail is the first social gathering between all conference delegates and it will take place at the Venue's foyer. It will be a relaxing evening during which delegates will have the opportunity to talk to colleagues and peers, while enjoying local drinks and ample canapés.

Ticket per accompanying person: **€40.00**



### Conference Dinner

Date: **Thursday 18 September**

Location: **Stoa tou Demetri Restaurant**

Time: **19:30**

We will gather at a traditional tavern to enjoy an authentic Cypriot meze meal, accompanied by local drinks. The experience will feature a wide variety of traditional dishes, complemented with regional beverages and homemade desserts.

Ticket per accompanying person: **€60.00**



### Post Conference Activity/Tour

Date: **Friday 19 September**

Departure Location: **City Center & Semeli Hotel**

Location: **Lefkara Village**

Time: **8:45 – 13:00**

We will depart at 08:45 from the city center and the Semeli Hotel in fully air-conditioned buses, accompanied by a tour guide ([click here to view the exact departure locations on the map](#))

Upon arrival in the picturesque village of Lefkara, we will explore local landmarks, discover traditional crafts, and experience the village's rich cultural heritage. You will also have free time to enjoy shopping and lunch at your leisure.

The buses will return to Nicosia at 13:00

Ticket per accompanying person: **€32.00**





**UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS**



## University of Cyprus

**T**he University of Cyprus (UCY), a remarkable institution located in the heart of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus was established in 1989 with the collective vision to meet the evolving intellectual needs of the Cypriot people, and it has since grown into a modern, diverse, and evolving institution that prides itself on scientific thought, diversity, inclusiveness, equity, and creativity.

With around 7.000 students, 860 faculty and staff members, UCY is a rapidly expanding university and the biggest employer in Cyprus for young graduates and researchers, currently employing about 740 young scientists. Its 14 research centres (including 3 Centres of Excellence) and various research laboratories justify its international reputation as a primarily research-oriented institution. At the same time, its 8 faculties and 22 departments offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Since its inception, UCY has managed to reach significant milestones, reflecting its commitment to excellence. In fact, UCY is the leading university in Cyprus as evident by its positioning in the global university rankings:

- In the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) for the year 2024-2025, UCY holds a position in the range of #801-900, being the only university in Cyprus to appear in this prestigious list. This ranking reflects UCY's standing on a global scale based on various academic and research criteria.
- Furthermore, in the Times World University Rankings, UCY has secured a notable position at #401-500, while ranking #64 in the Emerging Economies University Rankings, emphasising its impact in developing regions.
- In the QS World University Rankings, UCY stood at #452





**CENTER FOR APPLIED NEUROSCIENCE (CAN)**



## Center for Applied Neuroscience (CAN)

The Center for Applied Neuroscience (CAN) of the University of Cyprus is a dynamic research center dedicated to advancing neuroscience through innovation and collaboration. Established in 2011, it was officially recognized by the Republic of Cyprus as an accredited research institution, with the mission to bridge the gap between basic research and clinical applications, addressing some of the most pressing neurological and psychological challenges of our time. Its vision is to generate new knowledge and develop innovative methods and technologies that advance science, improve health, and enhance quality of life.

CAN focuses on the study of language, cognition, emotion, and behavior across the human lifespan, from childhood to older adulthood. Its research teams investigate both typical development and conditions such as traumatic brain injury, dementia, learning disabilities, and anxiety disorders. By employing cutting-edge technologies such as neuroimaging, non-invasive brain stimulation, virtual reality, psychophysiological measurements, and advanced computational tools, CAN produces knowledge that drives innovative interventions and contributes to improving quality of life.

The Center hosts six specialized laboratories: the Neurocognitive Research Laboratory, the Clinical Psychology and Psychophysiology Laboratory, the Learning Disabilities Group, the Language and Cognitive Development Group, the Translational Neuropharmacology Laboratory, and the Cognitive Neuroscience and Functional Neuroimaging Laboratory. Over its fourteen years of operation, CAN has trained more than 100 postgraduate, doctoral, and postdoctoral researchers, generated extensive research datasets, and provided free evaluations and guidance to thousands of children, adults, and families across Cyprus. CAN's mission aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with particular emphasis on promoting



health and well-being, reducing inequalities, and strengthening gender equality. Through outreach, education, and public engagement activities, the Center seeks not only to advance neuroscience but also to contribute to building a healthier and more inclusive society.



The background is a solid blue color. A large, white rounded rectangle is positioned in the upper right quadrant. A horizontal black bar spans the width of the page, containing the text 'BOOK OF ABSTRACTS'. There are several semi-transparent blue circles of varying shades arranged in a grid-like pattern, with two circles in the middle row being a lighter cyan color.

**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**



### ● **Mixing motor skills with MRI Modalities Towards Machine Learning Evaluation of ADHD**

*Karen Waldie*

This study presents a new biomarker metric for ADHD by integrating four MRI modalities, including anatomical, functional, diffusion, and spectroscopic, with fidgeting related motor skills, in a machine learning model. The model achieved a prediction accuracy of 73%, highlighting the potential of this approach in enhancing ADHD diagnosis. To explore the effect of fidgeting, the Flanker task was used together with functional MRI (fMRI) to evaluate higher executive functioning of the prefrontal cortex. The default mode network correlations were inspected using both task-related fMRI and resting-state fMRI. This study successfully identified key neurobiological markers of ADHD. Combining motor skills and MRI features appears to enhance prediction using an SVM model.

### ● **A Systems-Level Framework for Implementing Tier 2 Reading Interventions in India**

*Sunaina Shenoy, Radhika Zahedi, Noella Samuel*

This paper explores the systems-level changes that were adopted by a school in Mumbai, India to implement Tier 2 reading interventions. We specifically report on three areas at the micro level of change: universal screening for proactive support, systematic intervention for strategic support and team collaboration for coordinated support; and four areas at the macro level of change: capable leadership, team capacity, inclusive culture and continuous improvement. The purpose of this paper is to provide practitioners in the Indian context an insight into creating a sustainable framework for implementing reading interventions at the Tier 2 level.

### ● **Narrative Skills in Preschool Children With and without Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Review of the Literature**

*Aglaia Stampoltzis, Sofia Kouvava, Katerina Antonopoulou, Ioannis Vogindroukas, Maria Andreou, Vasilina Spanou, Irini Patroumpa, Aggelos Tzoumailis, Sofia Mavropoulou, Eleni Peristeri*

Narrative ability starts early in life and requires cognitive and socio-cultural skills and can be used as a tool to assess children's language production. Relevant research in preschool children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is scant. The present research reviews the findings of 28 studies, published between 2004 and 2024, focusing on the narrative skills of preschool children with or without ASD. The results showed that children with ASD face difficulties in grammar accuracy, syntax complexity, and the understanding of goal-directed behaviours. Additional factors influencing children's narrative skills are the development of theory of mind, executive functions, and the familial socio-educational background. As narrative skills have been shown to advance social functioning, this review has important psychosocial implications.

### ● **Children's Executive Functioning and Language Abilities Related to Reading Comprehension: ExeFun-READ Intervention**

*Iveta Kovalcikova*

The objective of poster is to evaluate the effectiveness of a cognitive stimulation program, ExeFun-READ (executive functioning stimulation via the L1 curriculum with a specific focus on reading comprehension). ExeFun-READ was designed primarily for low-performing students professional tutoring. The intervention consists of 30 units; unit lasts for 45–60 min. A stimulation unit approximates a teaching unit rather than a clinical experimental intervention. In total, 151 low-performing part in the project. The study employs a pretest–training–post-test design with three conditions: experimental, active control, and passive control. The intervention led to improved language abilities related to reading comprehension (semantic knowledge, syntactic knowledge, verbal fluency and inferencing) in the experimental group. In terms of executive functioning, the improvement only extended to switching fluency.

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## **Reading Outcomes in Hebrew-Speaking Children with Persistent versus Transient Language Difficulties: A 5-year Longitudinal Study**

*Ravit Cohen-Mimran, Liron Reznik-Nevet, David Share*

This study examined reading outcomes among Hebrew-speaking children with persistent language difficulties, transient language difficulties, and typical language development from kindergarten through fourth grade. A sample of 451 children was assessed on language and reading measures in Grade 4 after initial language evaluations in preschool. Results revealed that children with persistent language difficulties performed significantly lower than those with typical language development across all reading measures, and significantly lower than the transient language group on pointed word reading accuracy and unpointed word reading accuracy and fluency. No significant differences emerged between the transient language and typical language groups. The results indicate that early language impairments can have lasting effects on academic performance, emphasizing the importance of early detection and support.

## **Be-Friendly: A Digital Classroom Program for Students with LD and ADHD To Increase Empathy and Self-Control and Reduce Aggression**

*Maly Danino*

Children and adolescents may be exposed to complex social situations which can lead them to avoidance, anxiety and loneliness. With the aim of preventing boycotts and shaming phenomena and to strengthen children's self-confidence and sense of self-image, we developed an innovative classroom program that incorporates a digital interface for improving social and emotional skills among children and adolescents in the era of social media. During the sessions, challenging social scenarios are presented to the participants from different points of view through a digital interface. A chatbot prompts the children with questions about each scenario, encouraging them to reflect on their feelings and thoughts. The scenarios presented in the interface are used as a trigger for the discussion in the group. A preliminary study was conducted to evaluate the program impact. 45 children participated in the study, most of whom were boys (71%), aged 9 to 14 years. Study results were compared to outputs from the AI analyses of participants' responses which were assessed using narrative practices. Findings indicate a significant increase in children's self-reported empathy and self-control, as well as in parents' reports of their child's empathy. Additionally, there was a significant decrease in parent's report of child aggression.

## **Inclusion in Education: Teachers' Attitudes and Parents' Concerns about Support Services for Children with Learning Disabilities from Minority Backgrounds**

*Sohni Siddiqui, Gino Casale, Mona Kurz*

The increasing prevalence of learning disabilities worldwide, including in Germany, is of concern to educators and policy makers. Despite efforts to improve inclusion in Germany, challenges remain in the integration of children with learning disabilities from ethnic minority backgrounds. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusion practices, focusing on the concerns of parents of children with disabilities from ethnic minority backgrounds and the attitudes of teachers responsible for their inclusion. This study will use a mixed methods approach, including surveys (Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8 and an adapted Teachers' Attitudes to Inclusion Scale) and focus groups. Findings may reveal biases or inequalities in inclusion and inform policy to improve support for children from minority backgrounds with learning disabilities.



### **Fostering Academic Success in Higher Education for Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders (SLD and ADHD): The Role of Cognitive, Motivational and Socio-Emotional Factors**

*Adi Sharabi, Michal Al-Yagon*

Students with SLD and ADHD in higher education face many academic, cognitive and socio-emotional challenges and need special accommodations that help them cope with academic demands. The three studies in this symposium focus on key aspects related to the academic, motivational, cognitive and emotional-social resources and challenges of undergraduate students with SLD and ADHD from four cultures: Israel, Italy, Spain, and Turkey. The focus of the first presentation is on the role of motivational and metacognitive factors related to academic achievement; the second presentation reports the mediating role of hope, academic self-efficacy, and social support perception on anxiety experience; and the third study addresses the necessary accommodations for students with SLD and ADHD in higher education, and their relationship to academic self-efficacy and satisfaction. The discussion will explore the factors that can support academic, social, and emotional aspects among undergraduate students with SLD and ADHD.

### **Challenges in Higher Education: Differences Between Students with and without Learning Disability and the Moderating Role of Executive Functions**

*Marlyn Khouri, Noga Cohen*

Students with learning disabilities (LD) face challenges in the academic skills, the social, emotional, and executive function (EF) domains. These challenges may increase vulnerability to rumination—a repetitive and maladaptive focus on distress, which is significantly linked to emotional difficulties. This study explored differences in academic, social, emotional, and EF challenges between students with and without LD and investigated whether these challenges moderate the relationship between LD and rumination. Results indicated that students with LD reported significantly higher levels of rumination, and greater EF challenges. Furthermore, findings revealed that EF difficulties significantly moderated the link between LD and rumination, with students experiencing both LD and EF challenges showing the highest rumination levels. Implications for practice and further research are discussed.

### **Predicting Reading Development in Hebrew: Word Reading Fluency as a Screening Tool from Grades 1-4**

*Liron Hazan Cohen*

This longitudinal study examined the predictive power of first-grade word reading fluency (WRF) for fourth-grade reading outcomes in Hebrew, and explored cognitive-linguistic skills underlying early reading fluency. 809 firstgraders were assessed on WRF, phonological awareness, rapid naming, morphological awareness, and vocabulary. Three years later, 663 of these students were evaluated on text reading fluency and reading comprehension. Results showed phonological awareness, rapid naming, and vocabulary significantly predicted first-grade WRF. WRF explained 22% of variance in fourth-grade pointed text fluency, 20% in unpointed text fluency, and 14% in reading comprehension. WRF effectively differentiated between struggling and typical readers across fourth-grade reading outcomes. Findings highlight WRF's potential as an efficient early screening tool for identifying children at risk for long-term reading difficulties.

### **Unraveling Cognitive and Literacy Mechanisms in Hebrew Reading and Spelling Profiles**

*Anat Zafrani, Shelly Shaul*

The relationship between reading and spelling is complex in Hebrew due to its rich morphological and orthographic structures. This study examines cognitive and literacy mechanisms shaping distinct readingspelling profiles among 646 Hebrew-speaking fourth graders. Participants underwent comprehensive assessments including phonological awareness, orthographic choice, morphological tasks, vocabulary, and rapid naming. Four groups emerged: Low Both (struggling readers/spellers), Low Reading (poor readers/good

spellers), Low Spelling (good readers/poor spellers), and Typical readers/spellers. Phonological awareness and orthographic knowledge strongly predicted literacy difficulties, while robust orthographic skills compensated partially for poor reading fluency. Poor spelling, despite strong reading fluency, reflected insufficient orthographic representations. Findings highlight the necessity of tailored interventions emphasizing shared and unique cognitive profiles in literacy instruction for complex orthographies like Hebrew.

## ● **Screen vs. Paper: Medium Effects on Time Estimation in Students with ADHD**

*Yael Meer, Tami Katzir*

This study examined how reading medium (paper vs. screen) affects time estimation and comprehension in higher education students with and without ADHD. Fifty-three students completed reading tasks on both mediums, estimated completion time, and rated confidence. While comprehension scores were similar, students with ADHD showed less accurate time estimation on screens compared to paper and controls. They also reported lower confidence in their estimates across both mediums. Both groups answered questions faster on screens. These findings extend the Attentional Gate Model (AGM) by suggesting that digital reading competes for attentional resources, affecting time perception. Beyond extended testing time, accommodations like enhancing time awareness and segmenting tasks may better support students with ADHD in digital learning.

## ● **Understanding Reading Difficulties: Eye-Tracking Measures in Typical and Atypical Childhood Readers**

*Argyro Fella, Timothy C. Papadopoulos*

This systematic review summarizes fifteen years of eye-tracking research in reading, analyzing studies of children with reading difficulties. The review methodology was developed using the PRISMA framework, incorporating data from established databases, including PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Scopus. It highlights key eye-tracking measures and findings related to reading performance in both typical and atypical young readers across various languages. Analysis of 26 studies reveals the growing use of eye-tracking technology in research on reading difficulties. Findings indicate that children with reading challenges exhibit longer and more frequent fixations, reduced parafoveal processing, and increased regressions compared to same-age peers. These results emphasize the potential of eye-tracking for guiding targeted interventions for reading difficulties.

## ● **Cognitive Effort in Word Learning: A Pupillometric Investigation of Orthographic Learning**

*Adi Shechter, David Share*

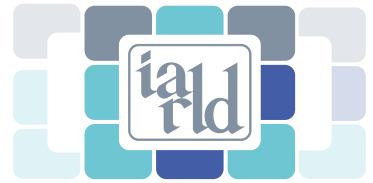
The concept of cognitive effort plays a key role in understanding skill learning and word reading, but its definition remains unclear. This study explored whether familiarization with printed words reduces cognitive effort, using pupil size as an index of effort. 26 skilled readers were observed during a self-teaching experimental paradigm, using pupillometry. Results showed that repeated exposure to unfamiliar words between learning sessions led to decreased pupil dilation, indicating reduced cognitive effort. This effect persisted a week later, showing retention of orthographic learning. The pattern of within-session pupil changes suggests neural tuning, demonstrated by both attenuated and enhanced responses. Findings highlight pupil size as a sensitive marker for reading effort and offer new insights into word learning and skill learning.

## ● **Gender, SES, and Reading Abilities Among 4th and 5th Grade Students**

*Shir Gofer*

Most research made on reading indicates gender differences in reading-related emotions, but not in reading abilities such as accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

This study, conducted on a sample of 2,147 fourth and fifth Israeli students, examined the effects of gender on both aspects, and whether these effects are moderated by SES, which described as an essential factor in reading abilities.



The findings show gender effect on reading-related emotions, and SES effect on both measures. In addition, SES was found to have a moderating effect on the relationship between literacy skills and negative academic emotions – a poor vocabulary is linked to negative emotions towards reading, and this relation was the strongest among children with lower SES.

### **Spelling Difficulties in Greek-Speaking Children with Specific Learning Disabilities: Error Patterns and Challenges**

*Vasiliki Kokkali, Faye Antoniou*

The development of spelling skills is a challenging process for children with or at risk of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), characterized by repeated failures and slow progress, requiring targeted interventions. This difficulty is intensified by the complexity of the Greek orthographic system. This study investigates common spelling errors made by 54 Greek-speaking second graders at high risk of SLD and 73 Greek-speaking third graders diagnosed with SLD, assessing their skills at the word and text levels. Qualitative analysis revealed significant difficulties in historical and grammatical spelling. Understanding the mechanisms these children use to spell words correctly can enhance our comprehension of their struggles and support the creation of more effective, targeted intervention aimed at improving their spelling skills.

### **The Development of Hemispheric Lateralization of Word and Face Processing: A Longitudinal Observation of Students with and without Reading and Attention Difficulties**

*Tal Erez-Hod*

This study investigates the development of hemispheric lateralization in word and face processing, emphasizing their relationship during critical developmental stages. It explores whether visual field preferences for letters and faces are interconnected and how these processes evolve over time. Two groups of children were compared: those with low face processing ( $\leq$  25th percentile) in the left visual field (LVF) and those with high face processing ( $\geq$  75th percentile). Participants performed tasks identifying letters or faces displayed in different visual fields. Results showed that children with stronger LVF face processing exhibited significantly better right visual field (RVF) letter processing, suggesting early lateralization. No significant differences were observed in LVF letter processing. These findings highlight the role of hemispheric specialization in development.

### **The Language Profile of Children with Learning Disabilities in Cyprus**

*Antri Tsangari, Eleni Theodorou*

Assessing children with suspected Learning Difficulties is crucial for their school progress. Current literature highlights the inability to identify a common policy regarding the assessment of children with LD in Cyprus. Nevertheless, there exists evidence that LD and Language Disorders share common language difficulties and/or coexist in some cases.

This study aims to record and describe the literacy and language profile of 28 children attending 2nd - 4th grade, a number of whom receive special education services in Cyprus. The findings showed that children receiving special education services express language difficulties - which mirror a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder - with a number of these children not having received a language assessment in the past.

### **Canadian Post-Secondary Students with Learning Disabilities: The Relationship Between Consistent Barriers to Accommodation, and Practical Implications**

*Cameron McKenzie, Sarah Southey*

In Canada, 6.6% of post-secondary students identify with a learning disability (LD), defined as a specific impairment in information processing that impacts basic academic skills. Access to accommodations for postsecondary students with LDs has improved, yet significant barriers remain. It is important that we

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understand these barriers and how students must navigate them. Because there is minimal research that includes the voices of these students, we conducted interviews with 40 Ontario university students who self-identified with LD. Using thematic analysis, three themes emerged: non-apparent disability, self-advocacy and mental health. Students shared their experiences of attitudinal barriers related to having a non-apparent disability. They described challenges related to the need to self-advocate to access accommodations. Finally, they reported mental health concerns associated with having an LD. To further amplify student voices, we share their “expert” recommendations to reduce barriers and thereby increase social inclusion and accessibility at post-secondary institutions.

## **More Than Words: Decoding the Emotional, Motivational, and Environmental Landscape of Reading and Writing in Diverse Learners**

*Diamanto Filippatou, Georgios Sideridis*

This symposium combines three studies that investigate how environmental, psychoemotional, and cognitive mechanisms shape reading and writing in students with diverse learning abilities. The first presentation explores how perceived school climate influences academic emotions, reading motivation, and learning strategies, ultimately affecting reading comprehension in typically developing students. The second presentation delves into psychoemotional profiles related to reading among students with learning disabilities and developmental language disorder, identifying distinct patterns that highlight the importance of targeted support. The third presentation presents a structured writing intervention designed to enhance self-control and emotional competence in students with specific learning difficulties, demonstrating the positive impact of metacognitive strategy instruction. Collectively, the studies underscore the need to move beyond cognitive models of reading and writing and adopt holistic approaches that integrate environmental, emotional and executive functioning supports. The findings have significant implications for tailoring interventions to meet the diverse needs of students with learning challenges.

## **Creativity and Pre-Literacy Skills: Unexplored Connections in the Prevention of Learning Disabilities**

*Débora Areces, Claudia Flores, Inés López-Manrique, Carlota Tielve, Celestino Rodriguez Perez*

This study aims to know how divergent thinking is related to pre-literacy skills. A total of 80 Spanish children aged between 3 to 5 years participated in this study. With this objective, a figurative drawing test was designed to assess fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in the creative process and product. the Aptitudes in Early Childhood Education - Revised test was also administered to assess pre-literacy skills. The correlation analysis revealed that pre-literacy skills were strongly related to the creative product. For its part, MANOVA analysis revealed significant differences between girls and boys in the creative profile. These findings suggest the need not to ignore divergent thinking when designing intervention programs to improve children's literacy skills since they are interrelated.

## **Decoding Cognitive Clusters in Children at risk of Learning Disability: The Role of Attention, Working Memory, and Reading Abilities**

*Inmaculada Méndez-Freije, Débora Areces, CELESTINO RODRIGUEZ PEREZ, Steve Majerus*

Learning disability (LD) is a major cause of school failure and several types of LD have been proposed. The study examined the subcategorization of LD into attention-deficit disorder (ADHD), developmental language disorder (DLD), dyslexia, at risk of reading disorder (risk group) and their differentiation from a neurotypical children population. Using k-means cluster analyses based on reading, attention and working memory scores, we identified three clusters. These clusters, however, did not directly mirror the different subgroups, questioning the validity of current LD categorizations.



### **The relationship between reading fluency and self-reported speed and effort in reading**

*Sivan Medina, Adi Shechter, David L. Share*

Speed and effortlessness in word reading are key components of fluent reading. DSM-5 (2013) defines specific learning disorder in reading as “inaccurate and/or slow and effortful word reading” (p. 66). However, recent studies revealed a disassociation between speed and effort in reading (Hershman & Henik, 2019; Shechter & Share, 2021). This study explored the relationship between perceived speed and effort in reading and reading fluency among 133 skilled readers. Results revealed a positive relationship between perceived speed of reading and reading fluency, but no relationship between perceived effort and reading fluency. However, perceived speed mediated the negative relationship between perceived effort and reading fluency. These findings suggest new avenues for research on the connection between effort, speed, and reading fluency.

### **Blending Realities: A Multilevel Ivr-Based and Psychosocial Intervention for Children with Attention Deficits**

*Iouliani Pachiti, Panagiota Dimitropoulou, Fotios S. Milienos*

Attention deficits impact school-aged children’s lives, highlighting the need for effective interventions. This study evaluated a multilevel intervention program combining parent training with child training, which included cognitive-behavioural techniques and virtual reality (VR) cognitive training to improve outcomes in children with attention deficits. A randomized controlled cross-over trial involved 16 families of children aged 9–12, assigned to two groups based on the sequence of receiving parent and child training. Following the program, children demonstrated enhanced sustained attention, inhibitory control, working memory, planning skills, and reduced behavioural problems. Emotional competence and processing speed gains were particularly evident in the group receiving parent training first. These findings underscore the value of integrated digital and psychosocial approaches in supporting children with attention deficits.

### **The Effects of Morphological Awareness Intervention on Reading Comprehension of Bilingual Elementary Children with Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading**

*Theodora Papastefanou, Kyriakoula Rothou*

This study examined the effects of a structured morphological awareness (MA) intervention on bilingual children with specific learning difficulties in reading (SLD in reading). Fifteen children aged 8–12 received explicit instruction focused on derivational morphology over eight weeks. Pre- and post-intervention assessments measured MA, expressive vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Results showed significant improvements in derivational morphology ( $t(14) = 5.62, p < .001$ ), vocabulary ( $t(14) = 4.89, p < .001$ ), and reading comprehension ( $t(14) = 3.94, p = .001$ ). These findings highlight the potential of MA instruction to support language and reading comprehension in bilingual children with SLD in reading. The study demonstrated the importance of integrating morphological strategies into clinical interventions.

### **Parental Stress, Feelings of Shame and Guilt and Coping Strategies During Homework with Children with Learning Disabilities and ADHD**

*Fotini Polychroni, Despoina Athanasiadou, Vassiliki Ballou, Marina Kavouridi, Evangelia Liakopoulou*

The present study examined parental stress, feelings of shame and guilt and coping strategies related to the homework of primary school children with Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The sample consisted of 211 parents, i.e., 52 parents of children with LD, 37 parents of children with ADHD, and 122 parents of typically developing children who formed the comparison group (CG). Participants completed self-report questionnaires and responded to questions regarding daily homework habits and their perceptions of school support. Results showed that parents of children with LD reported higher levels of all negative emotions and stress as compared to the CG. Mothers and parents who perceived that school support was low were more vulnerable.

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## **The Association Between Socioemotional Skills and Developmental Language Disorder: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis**

*Olga Socratous, Eleana Lamprou, George Spanoudis*

The purpose of this systematic review and meta-analysis is to examine the association between socio-emotional difficulties and strengths and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) and to assess potential moderators of these associations. The study is pre-registered in PROSPERO and reported using the PRISMA guidelines. Studies were identified according to a search strategy conducted in PubMed, Web of Science and Embase. Results were summarized through a narrative synthesis of the characteristics and quality of included studies and study findings. A robust random effects meta-analysis was conducted to pool estimates of the association between DLD and socioemotional difficulties and strengths. The findings and conclusions are discussed.

## **Increasing Middle School Struggling Readers Reading Outcomes: The Promise of AMP-IT-UP:**

*Mary Beth Calhoon*

For middle schools students with reading disabilities (SWRD) learning to read is complex. The knowledge and skills required to increase reading abilities for this population, takes multiple years. However, multi-year studies, at the middle school level, examining the effect of intensive reading instruction, for SWRD. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a 2-year (6th & 7th grades; N=50) study comparing the AMPIT-UP reading program to a control group on reading outcomes for SWRD. Results demonstrate SWRD in the AMP-IT-UP treatment demonstrated significant gains and medium to large effect sizes over the control group on the reading subtests of the WCJ IV. Results and their implications for improving middle school SWRD reading will be discussed.

## **A Conceptual Map for Improving Reading Skills in Students with Specific Learning Disorder**

*Paloma Gonzalez-Castro, Marisol Cueli, Rebeca Cerezo, Nerea Quiroga, Daniel Fernandez-Lanvín, Alejandro Alvarez*

A relevant number of students are at risk of specific learning disorders (SLD) while a significant percentage of children present low levels of reading comprehension. In this context are necessary to develop strategies for improving reading comprehension and minimize the risk or consequences of SLD. In this context, the present work presents a specific strategy called EPI for improving reading skills. EPI is based on the adaptation of the strategy Hypertexto, an enriched concept map technic. With the application web of EPI we try to improve reading in students with and without learning disabilities considering the previous results which are positive and promising.

## **Language and Cognitive Development in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Related Learning Difficulties**

*Timothy C. Papadopoulos*

This symposium explores language and cognitive development in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and related learning difficulties, focusing on shared features and underlying mechanisms. Paper 1 examines overlaps between ASD and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in school-aged children, yielding common cognitive-linguistic impairments and potential combined effects on development. Paper 2 investigates inferencing in children with ASD using eye-tracking, showing that while they successfully draw inferences, they require more time, pointing to adaptive processing and links with executive functions. Paper 3 evaluates a computer-based English as a Foreign Language (EFL) intervention for children with ASD,



assessing vocabulary acquisition and retention through behavioral tasks and eye-tracking. Together, the findings highlight distinct methodological approaches to studying language and cognition in ASD and the value of combining behavioral and process-based measures.

### ● **Parental Styles Profiles in Families of Children with ADHD Since a Person-Centred Approach**

*Marisol Cueli, Natalia Martín, Laura Canamero, Miguel García, Paloma Gonzalez-Castro*

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has been linked in recent decades to problematic parent-child interactions in the family setting. The present study is aimed at determining the parent style profiles in a sample of families of children with ADHD. Participated in the study a total of 189 parents of children with ADHD aged between 6 and 16 years old. We conducted Latent Profile Analysis, and five parental style profiles were identified. We found the relationship between parental style and the type of presentation of the disorder. As conclusion, family interactions need careful attention considering the relationship on the type and, specially, on the severity of ADHD symptoms.

### ● **Accuracy-Disabled vs. Rate-Disabled Subtypes of Dyslexia: Distinct Subtypes Require Different Interventions**

*David Share, Yasmin Shalhoub-Awwad, Michal Shany, Dana Gott, Michal Shechter-Lerner, Asaid Khateb, Maysa Jabbour-Daniel*

Shany and colleagues have reported converging cross-sectional evidence in Hebrew and Arabic for the validity of a subtyping approach based on the distinction between selective deficits in word reading accuracy and reading rate. These findings indicate true accuracy/rate subtypes in the strict double dissociation sense of selective impairment on one dimension alongside intact performance on the other dimension. Furthermore, double dissociations (i) are observed on additional non-definitional reading measures, (ii) the two selectively disabled subgroups present distinct cognitive-linguistic profiles and (iii), background factors do not explain the subgroup differences. The accuracy-only subgroups display a broad range of language weaknesses – primarily phonological and morphological awareness (but intact RAN), whereas the rate-only subgroups show impaired RAN alone (alongside intact language skills).

This double symposium reports six new studies (longitudinal and cross-sectional, adults and children, Hebrew and Arabic) exploring Shany's accuracy-rate typology. Our findings are clear: Distinct subgroups call for different interventions.

### ● **Exploring Dyslexia Awareness in Pre-Service EFL Teachers in Poland**

*Monika Lodej*

The present paper explores dyslexia awareness among BA and MA students enrolled in a TEFL program at a Polish university. Dyslexia, a language-related difficulty affecting reading fluency and accuracy (Gabrieli, 2009), necessitates greater awareness among pre-service teachers to ensure effective language support for dyslexic students. While research has primarily focused on teacher preparedness, studies on dyslexia awareness remain limited, particularly in Poland. This study replicates Soriano-Ferrer et al. (2016), which examined knowledge and beliefs about dyslexia among Spanish- and Peruvian-speaking pre-service and in-service teachers. By employing a replication methodology (McManus, 2023), the study facilitates a contrastive analysis of dyslexia awareness levels, both within the Polish sample (comparing undergraduate and graduate students) and between the Polish and Spanish/Peruvian educational contexts.

### ● **Auditory and Visual Perceptual Category Learning in Adults with ADHD: Implications for Learning Systems and Domain-General Factors**

*Yael Ben Anat, Casy L Roark, Yafit Gabay*

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is linked to prefrontal cortex and striatum abnormalities, potentially impacting perceptual category acquisition. This study investigated auditory and visual rule-based (RB) and information-integration (II) category learning in adults with ADHD compared to neurotypical controls.

Results showed consistent impairments in both RB and II learning across modalities in the ADHD group.

Computational modeling indicated slower adoption of optimal learning strategies in adults with ADHD.

These findings suggest disruptions in multiple learning systems in adults with ADHD, extending across sensory modalities and stemming from impairments in domain-general mechanisms.

## **Badge Me if you can: Gamifying EFL Vocabulary Learning with Emotional Engagement**

*Iman Garra-Alloush, Liron Hazan Cohen, Tami Katzir*

This study explores the impact of a gamified mobile platform on vocabulary learning and emotional engagement among 433 Arabic-speaking EFL elementary students. Using pre- and post-test comparisons between an experimental (n = 74) and control group (n = 73), the intervention showed significant gains in vocabulary acquisition, spelling, and contextual usage. Guided by the Octalysis Framework, the study examined how elements like badges and coins influenced students' emotions. A questionnaire (n = 343) and focus group interviews revealed heightened enjoyment, persistence, and positive attitudes toward learning. Results suggest that gamification fosters both cognitive and emotional growth, offering a student-centered, curricular-based model for self-regulated EFL vocabulary instruction. Implications are discussed for integrating gamified tools into classroom practice.

## **Sleep, Screen, and Symptoms: Investigating Social Media Use Among Young Adults with ADHD Symptoms**

*Ayse Dilsad Yakut, Havva Dagtas*

The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of social media use in the relationship between Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms and sleep quality among young adults. This research aims to explore whether individuals exhibiting higher levels of ADHD symptoms are more likely to engage in excessive social media use, and whether this behavior, in turn, contributes to disruptions in sleep quality and duration. This research will be carried out with young adults between the ages of 18–30 who self-report symptoms of ADHD. The research is quantitative in nature by using online questionnaires and snowball sampling technique. Young adults are increasingly affected by digital fatigue, sleep deprivation, and attention-related challenges, all of which can compromise their well-being, academic performance, and professional readiness. By examining these dynamics, the study contributes to the field by highlighting the importance of mental and digital well-being.

## **How Best Might we Expand Crosslinguistic Research, and Cross-National Research on Orthographic-Complexity Impacts?**

*Susan Galletly*

IARLD has adopted a Call to Research encouraging focused within-nation and collaborative-across-nation researching of early-literacy development and impacting factors ([www.iarld.com](http://www.iarld.com)).

Towards promoting research, IARLD is actioning a Special Issue of IJRLD, plus inviting engagement in a Collaborative Orthographic-Impacts Reading-Writing Research Project, now exploring preliminary research in key areas.

The RoundTable presenters will engage in the Call to Research pre-conference event, as videoed, online or face-to-face attendees and are invited authors for the IJRLD Special Issue.

In addition to significant expertise in early-literacy development, literacy instruction methods, and the needs and difficulties of children and adults with literacy difficulties, generally, each presenter has own-nation specific expertise. European regular-orthography nations enjoy rapid, easy, early literacy development with children soon highly accurate, independent, self-teaching readers, writers and learners.

Asian regular-orthography nations struggled till mid-1900s when they achieved similarly highly-effective early literacy development by moving to 2-Stage Early-Literacy, with children first reading & writing their nation's fully regular beginners' orthography.

Anglophone nations continue to struggle, with little awareness that the crosslinguistic gap between regular orthography and Anglophone nations is immensely wide.

Research is needed, but how should we action it for maximum efficiency and effectiveness?

This Roundtable will encourage interesting, exciting and extremely useful discussion.



### **Excessive Anglocentrism continues, impacting both research and instruction methods**

*David Share, University of Haifa, Israel*

The science of reading has made genuine progress in understanding reading and the teaching of reading, but is the science of reading just the science of reading English? Worldwide, a majority of students learn to read and write in non-European, nonalphabetic orthographies such as abjads (e.g., Arabic), abugidas/alphasyllabaries (e.g., Hindi), or morphosyllabaries (e.g., Chinese). Over a decade ago, I argued that the extreme inconsistency of English spelling–sound correspondence had confined the science of reading to an insular, Anglocentric research agenda addressing theoretical and applied issues with limited relevance for a universal science of reading. Here, I ask if the science of reading has moved forward. Acknowledging some limited progress over the past decade, it is evident that even today, mainstream reading research remains entrenched in Anglocentrism, Eurocentrism, and another form of ethnocentrism that I call alphabetism. Even the two dominant theoretical frameworks for describing cross-script diversity, orthographic depth and psycholinguistic grain size theory, give little or no consideration to non-European alphabets or nonalphabetic scripts, promoting a one-dimensional view of script variation (i.e., spelling–sound consistency). Consideration of the full spectrum of the world’s languages and writing systems reveals multiple dimensions of writing system complexity, each liable to create obstacles for the developing reader. If the science of reading is to contribute meaningfully to assessment, diagnosis, instruction, and intervention for all readers around the world, then we must extricate our field from entrenched ethnocentrism and embrace global diversity.

### **Methodological Issues in Literacy Research Across Languages: Evidence From Alphabetic Orthographies -**

*Timothy C. Papadopoulos, University of Cyprus*

Drawing on the work of Papadopoulos, Csépe, Aro, Caravolas, Diakidoy, and Olive (2021, RRQ), Papadopoulos will address methodological challenges in literacy research across alphabetic orthographies, focusing on word reading, spelling, reading comprehension, and writing. While cross-linguistic studies reveal broad similarities in literacy development, differences in orthographic depth, instructional practices, and assessment procedures complicate the validity of comparisons. A core concern is ensuring measurement equivalence and factorial invariance so that data across languages capture comparable constructs. The talk will consider how predictors such as phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming, and letter knowledge vary in importance depending on orthographic transparency and developmental stage. The discussion will also cover challenges in sampling, task design, and testing conditions that may affect validity. Participants will be invited to reflect on the importance of well-matched measures, ecologically valid tasks, and clearly defined constructs for producing reliable cross-linguistic evidence, including studies of children with specific learning disabilities.

### **Orthographic impacts on reading and literature: Methodological challenges of cross-linguistic research**

*George Spanoudis, University of Cyprus*

Cross-linguistic research on orthographic impacts faces significant methodological challenges that complicate direct comparisons. Key issues include controlling linguistic confounds, as orthographic depth (transparency) intertwines a language’s grammatical structure and script type. Equating participant groups on reading ability versus age introduces maturity confounds, whereas matching stimuli on psycholinguistic variables, such as frequency and meaning, across languages is notoriously difficult. Furthermore, cultural and educational differences in literacy instruction and practices present confounding variables. These challenges are amplified when investigating higher-order processes in word- or text-reading, where orthography-specific features are important. Consequently, researchers must employ carefully controlled designs, often comparing languages within the same script family, and explicitly use advanced statistical techniques, such as multidimensional scaling or mixed linear modeling. Researchers should acknowledge the limitations of generalizing findings across diverse linguistic systems in every case.

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## **Needs for crosslinguistic research on reading development and beyond**

*Susan Galletly, Central Queensland University, Mackay, Australia*

Anglophone nations have disproportionately excessive word-reading and spelling difficulties relative to regular-orthography nations.

Their key risk factor is being born in an Anglophone nation such as Australia, UK, USA, where Early-Literacy instruction mismatches children's developmental readiness against excessive orthographic complexity well established as being damaging for beginning readers.

Compelling evidence shows orthographically-sensitive instruction, notably 2-Stage Early-Literacy using English fully-regular beginner orthographies, e.g., EasyWrite (Ee'zee'riet) or ITA, can dramatically improve outcomes.

Asian nations' 1940s–50s shift to 2-Stage Early-Literacy is a powerful precedent, and English 2-Stage Early-Literacy is advantageous, logical, and easy to implement.

Anglophone education leaders, unaware of the need for, and ease of, unfortunately largely ignore these issues, and Anglophone disinterest is widespread. Misconceptions persist: conflating orthographic reform with spelling reform, dismissing crosslinguistic comparisons, and Anglocentric bias that impedes exploration of successful international models.

Ethical issues are also present, given highly-effective alternative instructional-methods are well-established, but cognitively-misaligned Anglophone instruction is perpetuating easily-prevented literacy struggles.

Galletly's (2022, 2023) logical, realistic, '2035 goal' is easily achievable, if Anglophone disinterest is overcome:

By 2035, Australian education will be routinely, efficiently, gently and easily achieving highly effective, rapid development of children's word-reading, spelling, writing and early-literacy skills, in GENTLE manner, in every early-years classroom, in all schools across our nation, as efficiently as is achieved routinely across schools in regular-orthography nations such as Taiwan, Japan and China, with at least 98% of Australian school children being confident, independent readers and writers, able to read 95% of the 10,000 most-frequent words, by age 8.5 years, or within 18 months of starting formal word-reading instruction.

Urgent research is thus needed equally into both:

- Strategies to overcome entrenched Anglophone disinterest, and
- Orthographic impacts and crosslinguistic differences in literacy development



● **Guessing During Testing is a Person Attribute Not an Instrument Parameter:  
The Relevance in Learning Disabilities**

*Georgios Sideridis, Evelyn Law*

The three-parameter logistic (3PL) model in item response theory (IRT) has long been used to account for guessing in multiple-choice assessments through a fixed item-level parameter. This study evaluates a novel alternative—the Two-Parameter Logistic Extension (2PLE) model—which reconceptualizes guessing as a function of a person's ability rather than as an item-specific constant. Using data from the PIRLS 2021 reading comprehension assessment, we compared the 3PL and 2PLE models on recovery of latent ability, predictive fit (LOOIC), and theoretical alignment with test-taking behavior in students with and without RD. In an empirical analysis involving 131 fourth-grade students from Saudi Arabia, model comparison again favored the 2PLE). Importantly, person-level guessing estimates were significantly associated with established person-fit statistics (U3), supporting their construct validity.

● **From Theory to Practice Translating Research into Everyday Practices to Support Students with Learning Disabilities through Compensatory and Remedial Teaching**

*Lydia Muchina*

This study explores translating research on learning disabilities into practical strategies for everyday classroom use. By integrating compensatory and remedial teaching approaches, on engaging students with diverse cognitive profiles, enhancing engagement and learning.



## ABOUT NICOSIA

## ABOUT NICOSIA



**N**icosia is the capital of Cyprus; a status it has enjoyed for 1000 years since the 10th century, though its beginnings date back 5000 years to the Bronze Age. It lies roughly in the centre of the island in the Mesaoria Plain, flanked by the beautiful northern range of Kyrenia Mountains with its distinctive ‘Pentadaktylos’ – the five finger mountain. There are various suggestions as to the origin of the name Nicosia – or ‘Lefkosia’ In Greek – but the most likely one is linked to the popular tree, the tall ‘Lefki ‘ which once adorned the city.

Based in Nicosia are the Government head offices, Diplomatic headquarters and the cultural centre of Cyprus. The capital presents two distinct faces: the old, original part of the city, surrounded by sturdy Venetian walls over 400 years old, and a busy modern metropolis which has a population of 171.000 together with the suburbs.

Within the large area, encircled by the strong bastion walls that served to protect the town for centuries, are many places of great historic interest.



The central Eleftheria Square links old Nicosia with the elegant modern city that has flourished outside the walls, where hotels, offices restaurants and gardens blend happily with the fine old houses and colonial buildings of this cosmopolitan city.

Nicosia is a sophisticated and cosmopolitan city, rich in history and culture that combines its historic past with the amenities of a modern city.

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Cyprus is served by two International Airports; Larnaca International Airport, (LCA) and Paphos International Airport, (PFO). More than 50 International Airlines connect Cyprus to the whole world; for more details regarding flights to/from Cyprus, please visit the official website of both airports at <http://www.hermesairports.com>. Furthermore, domestic communication between both airports and all the major cities on the island is very quick and easy via the extensive highway system.

Larnaca International Airport (LCA) is the main airport used by many airlines with multiple routes every week. Paphos International Airport (PFO) has fewer connections but serves as a hub for some low-cost airlines like EasyJet and Ryanair.

For a hassle-free experience, conference attendees are advised to use only these two airports. Please be aware that a third airport, Ercan Airport is situated in the Turkish-Occupied North part of Cyprus, and it is not a recognized port of entry into the Republic of Cyprus.

### Distances

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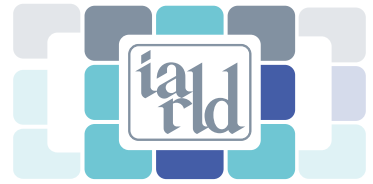
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## TRAVEL



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