



كلية الإمارات للتطوير التربوي
Emirates College for Advanced Education



ECAE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

FALL ISSUE 2019

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ECAE 2019 GRANT FUND AWARDS

ECAE has had a record year in terms of approved research grant applications – a total of EIGHT projects approved in 2019! In addition to the three research projects already outlined in the Spring Newsletter, we would like to congratulate to the following teams of researchers, who have been awarded ECAE 2019 Grant Funding to carry out their research:

Dr. Mary Lynn Woolsey et al:
Hearing the Deaf: Perspective on Communication, Education, Access and their Vision for Deaf in the UAE

Dr. Claudine Habak et al: **Math Learning through Language and App Usage, Measures of Brain Activity**

Dr. Mohamed Seghier et al: **Brain correlates of individual differences in non-cognitive skills and academic achievement among high school Emirati students**

Dr. Scott Parkman et al:
Instructional Technology Use in Abu Dhabi and Ajman Public Schools: A Holistic Analysis of factors Affecting Use.

Dr. Nagla Ali et al: **The effect of using Tinker Cad software and 3D printing on the social and vocational skills of Emirati students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

All research and grant proposals are reviewed thoroughly by ECAE Research Committee, and ECAE Institutional Review Board / Research Ethics Committee. The committees work hard to give constructive feedback which hopefully encourages researchers in their work. Many thanks to the reviewing members of the two committees serving this year, and welcome to the new members too.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Congratulations to the researchers who published the following Journal Articles and Book Chapters recently:

Professor David Pedder:

Pedder, D. and Opfer, V.D. (2019) 'School orientation to teacher learning and the cultivation of ecologies for innovation: a national study of teachers in England'. In: David Hung, Shu-Shing Lee, Yancy Toh, Longkai Wu and Azilawati Jamaludin (eds.) Innovations in Educational Change - Cultivating Ecologies for Schools., pp. 147-178., Springer.

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-6330-6_8

Fazal, S., Naz, S., Khan, M., and Pedder, D. (2019). 'Barriers and enablers of women's academic careers in Pakistan', Asian Journal of Women's Studies, 25:2, 217-238. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/12259276.2019.1607467>.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/12259276.2019.1607467>

Dr. Clodagh Murray and Dr. Michelle Kelly:

Ms. Bethan Chambers, Dr. Clodagh M. Murray, Dr. Zoe V.R. Boden & Dr. Michelle P. Kelly "Sometimes labels need to exist"– Exploring how young adults with Asperger's Syndrome perceive its removal from the DSM-5, Disability & Society. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.1649121>.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.1649121>

This study involved interviews to ascertain the opinions of people with Asperger's Syndrome on the removal of that diagnosis from DSM-5. Overall, participants were not happy with the change and they felt that identification with a community of people with Asperger's (sometimes called Aspies) had been an important part of their personal journeys. They were also concerned that people like them in the future might miss out on specialized support that had been helpful to them.

Dr. Patricia Fidalgo, Dr. Ieda Santos

Luisa Menano, Patricia Fidalgo, Ieda Santos and Joan Thormann:

Integration of 3D Printing in Art Education: A Multidisciplinary Approach, Computer in Schools,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07380569.2019.1643442>

The article is about how 3D printing can be used in schools to enhance teachers' perspectives and uses of technology in the classroom.

Dr. Michael Melkonian, Dr. Shaljan Areepattamannil, Dr. Patricia Fidalgo

Dr. Michael Melkonian, Dr. Shaljan Areepattamannil, Luise Menano and Dr. Patricia Fidalgo

Examining acculturation orientations and perceived cultural distance among immigrant adolescents in Portugal: links to performance in reading, mathematics, and science. Social Psychology of Education, July 2019

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11218-019-09506-5>

Dr. Suha Al-Hassan

Chang, L., Lu, H. J., Lansford, J. E., Skinner, A. T., Bornstein, M. H., Steinberg, L., Dodge, K.A., Chen, B.B., Tian, Q., Bacchini, D., Deater-Deckard, K., Pastorelli, C., Alampay, L.P., Sorbring, E., Al-Hassan, S.M., Oburu, P., Malone, P.S., Di Giunta, L., Uribe Tirado, L., & Tapanya, S. (2019). Environmental harshness and unpredictability, life history, and social and academic behavior of adolescents in nine countries. Developmental Psychology, 55, 890-903.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fdev0000655>

The study investigated, based on a 6-year longitudinal sample, the association between environmental harshness and lack of safety and externalizing behavior and academic performance of 1,245 adolescents and their parents from 9 countries.

Dr. Martina Dickson

Dickson, M. (2019). Student mothers' experiences of workplace internship. Journal of Workplace Learning, 31 (7), p. 465-480.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-12-2018-0151>

This study explored the experiences of student mothers as they undertook their final year internships in schools, and presents findings of the support systems which contributed to their successful completion of the internship.

ECAE WELCOMED 4 NEW FACULTY MEMBERS THIS SEMESTER, ALL OF WHOM HAVE EXCITING RESEARCH INTERESTS



Dr. Mohamed Azaza

Assistant Professor in the Assessment and School Evaluation Division

Dr. Mohamed's research interests are in the areas of teacher professional learning, organizational learning, educational leadership and school improvement. His current research focuses on two related areas: teacher professional learning and school improvement. It is concerned with understanding the significant and untapped potential of utilizing teachers' feedback reports of their value-practice dissonance as one of the many forms and strategies of school self-evaluation for optimal use by school leaders.



Dr. Clodagh Murray

Assistant Professor in the Counseling Special Education and Neuroscience Division

Dr. Clodagh's research interests lie mainly in the area of teaching play skills to children with autism, with a focus on building flexibility by increasing the variety of toys children will play with and the variability in actions they emit with them. She aims to investigate the impact of this work on the subsequent acquisition of communication and social skills. She is also interested in optimum methods for teaching functional, academic and vocational skills to those for whom they are difficult to acquire, with a view to supporting diverse perspectives in the workplace and beyond.



Dr. Qasim Alshannag

Associate Professor in the Curriculum and Instruction Division

Dr. Qasim's research interests include assessment, e-teaching and learning in science, environmental education and education for sustainable development. During his career he was teaching courses in science education and curriculum and instruction, supervising graduate students, and conducting research. He was a principal researcher for funded research projects at University of Jyväskylä, King Saud University, United Arab Emirates University & University of Jordan. His experience also includes professional development training courses for teachers, school leaders, academic supervisors and university faculty members. Dr. Alshannag has published in international and national peer-reviewed research journals



Dr. Pey-Yan Liou

Associate Professor in the Assessment and School Evaluation Division

Dr. Pey-Yan Liou's research interest focuses on individuals' motivational beliefs and self-perceptions, and is conceptualized in the two main themes: 1) International large-scale student assessment data analyses and 2) STEM education program evaluation. For the first theme, she is particularly interested in different motivational dynamics across countries from the cross-cultural perspective. For the second theme, Dr. Liou had conducted program evaluations to investigate the effectiveness of a scholarship recruiting STEM majors to become teachers in high-needs schools in the U.S as well as of a program aiming to increase students' technological literacy in local schools in Taiwan.



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Congratulations to our faculty who recently travelled to present at international conferences, funded by ECAE

Dr. Farouq Al Meqdadi who attended the International Conference on Research in Education and Science (ICRES) in Cesme Izmir, Turkey

Dr. Patricia Fidalgo, Dr. Ieda Santos, Dr. David Litz and Dr. Scott Parkman who attended Edmedia + Innovation Learning 2019, Amsterdam, Netherland.

Dr. Nagla Ali, who attended the 2019 Paris International Academic Conference on Education & Social Sciences. Paris, France.

Dr. Mohamed Seghier, who attended the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Organization for Human Brain Mapping (OHBM), Rome, Italy.

Dr. Shaljan Areepattamannil who attended the 50th Annual Australasian Science Education Research Association (ASERA) Conference. Queenstown, New Zealand.

Dr. Martina Dickson who attended the ESERA (European Science Education Research Association) 13th International Conference 2019 in Bologna, Italy.

Dr. Cara Williams who attended the EDULEARN'19 International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies, Palm de Mallorca, Spain.

Open Access Journal Article Funding

The following article will be published open-access in a Q1 journal, courtesy of ECAE funding. Open access to small number of articles in high ranking journals will be funded this year in order to increase the number of views, downloads and citations of the article. **Congratulations to Dr. Dean Cairns!**

Cairns, D. (2019) Investigating the relationship between instructional practices and science achievement in an inquiry-based learning environment. International Journal of Science Education.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09500693.2019.1660927>

In his own words, Dr. Dean describes this article as “an attempt to reconcile the experimental and correlational literature, this study investigates the discrete effects of inquiry-based instructional practices that described the PISA 2015 construct ‘inquiry-based instruction’ and how each practice, and the frequency of each practice, is related to science achievement”.





ANNUAL ECAE RESEARCH FORUM

The forum was held on June 19th 2019. Attendees and presenters came from a diversity of educational fields, including ECAE, Zayed University, Higher Colleges of Technology, Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Special Education, The British School Al Khubairat, Al Yasmina Academy, Al Ittihad Private School, Al Yasat Private School, and others.

The day began with presentations from our two keynote speakers:

Dr. Kay Gallagher
Associate Dean, College of Education, Zayed University
Education in the UAE: Innovations and Transformations



Book editor and chapter author Kay Gallagher discussed her forthcoming book, *Education in the UAE: Innovation and Transformation*, published this Summer by Springer. The book provides an overview of the evolution of education in the United Arab Emirates from its humble beginnings in palm frond huts, to today's proliferation of prestigious international schools and global university branch campuses.

Chapter authors are academic experts who have extensive first-hand experience of contemporary developments in the country's various educational sectors. The book addresses innovations and

transformations within chapters on Early Childhood Education by Anna Dillon, K-12 Schooling by Susan Kippels & Natasha Ridge, Higher Education by Fatima Badry, Arabic Language Education by Hanada Taha, English Language Education by Melanie Gobert, Special Needs by Eman Gaad, STEM Education by Martina Dickson, Dean Cairns and Patricia Fidalgo, Teacher Education and Professional Development by Kay Gallagher, and ends with a chapter on Quality Assurance in Education by Rana Tamim & Linda Colburn.

David Dingus
Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research
Current research initiatives and funding opportunities



Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2019, the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research was established through Emiri decree to aid in the social, cultural, and economic development of Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates. The Foundation is considered a non-profit, quasi-governmental organization, and its research and programmatic activities are focused on building the capacity of the local education sector. The session highlighted the Foundation's current research on boys' education and the

growing role of philanthropy in education. Collaboration opportunities related to grant funding and publishing were also shared.





Parallel sessions running throughout the day offered attendees a variety of talks to attend and participate in. Thanks to all of our faculty members who presented during the forum:

Critical Debate: Quantitative versus Qualitative Research? **Professor David Pedder** v **Dr. Shaljan Areepattamannil**

Dr. Nagla Ali, Teacher Training and Intention to Use Robotics in their Teaching

Dr. Michelle Kelly, "Sometimes labels need to exist: - exploring how young adults with Asperger's Syndrome perceive its removal from the DSM-5.

Dr. Claudine Habak, Difficult for me but easy for you: Perceptual Complexity and Task Difficulty Change with Age

Dr. Suha Al Hassan, Parents' Behavior and their Children's Academic Achievement in 9 Countries Roundtable:

Dr. Shaljan Areepattamannil, Adolescents' Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS): Links to Academic Performance and Collaborative Problem Solving Performance in Advanced and Developing Economies Roundtable:

Dr. Farouq Al Meqdadi, The Effects of the Flipped Classroom and Peer Instructional Models on Learning Calculus

Dr. Mohamed Seghier, How to assess relative left-right hemispheric differences in brain function: a parallel with classic similarity indices.

Dr. Dean Cairns, Investigating the relationship between the frequency of individual inquiry-based instructional approaches and science achievement across 69 countries

Special Congratulations to our undergraduate students who presented sessions too:

B.Ed. Student **Marwa Al Maazmi**: Strategies using the Behavioral principles of reinforcement and punishment for students with autism

B.Ed. Student **Maittha Al Qahtani** – Hands on Activities to Teach Science

There was also a poster session led mainly by ECAE undergraduate and graduate students, where they answered questions and led discussions about their work. Congratulations to all!

Poster Presentations:

Dr. Mohamed Seghier, Professor Mohamed Fahim, Dr. Claudine Habak

Modulation by task-difficulty in the default mode network varies with the complexity of perceptual information during decision making

Final Year B.Ed. Student: **Merah Al Hameli**

Language Development Teaching Strategies

Final Year B.Ed. Students: **Mariam Ahmed Salman Yousef Alhammadi** and **Ameera Salem Hussain Shikhan Bawazeer** Functional Behavior Assessment of Challenging Behavior in Individuals with Autism

Final Year B.Ed. Students: **Noura Ali Ahmed Saleh Alansi** and **Kulood Abdulaziz Qasim Abbadi Mohamed** Technological Advances in Functional Communication Training for Students with Autism

Graduate Student: **Sara Ahmad** Participants' Perceptions of a Customized and Controlled Application to Teach Vocabulary in Moral Education to Grade 4 students

Graduate Student: **Mariam Bader Al Marzooqi** The Effectiveness of Mand Training Using a Communication Device on Increasing Vocal Verbal Requests with an Individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder

THE LIFE OF AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER

We interviewed Professor David Pedder, ECAE's Academic Dean, to find out about his life journey as an Academic Researcher.

Can you please tell us what led to you becoming an educational researcher?

I think the road to me becoming an educational researcher is indivisible from the life that I was leading as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language. I worked for six years in Papua (the Easternmost province of Indonesia), as an English teacher. One of the challenges faced in Papua was that all the curriculum materials for learning English are contextualized entirely inappropriately, using images and examples drawn from an entirely different context from other areas in Indonesia. We got funding to visit teachers in isolated areas of Papua to inform our development of textbook

materials to try to rectify this, and as part of doing that we were asking the question – what is it that teachers do when they're teaching in classrooms, in isolated classroom and school contexts? We adopted very open ended, exploratory approaches, we stayed with the teachers, followed them at school, we watched them teach. To cut a long story short, our development of materials was formed very much by what we learned finding out what teachers do when they teach in classrooms. That alerted me to the practical relevance of educational research, which has stayed with me to this day, which is that educational research can and should be used to inform and contribute to improvements in classroom teaching and learning, in curriculum design, and in the development and improvement of school leadership. So I think those are the initial influences that shaped me as an educational researcher.

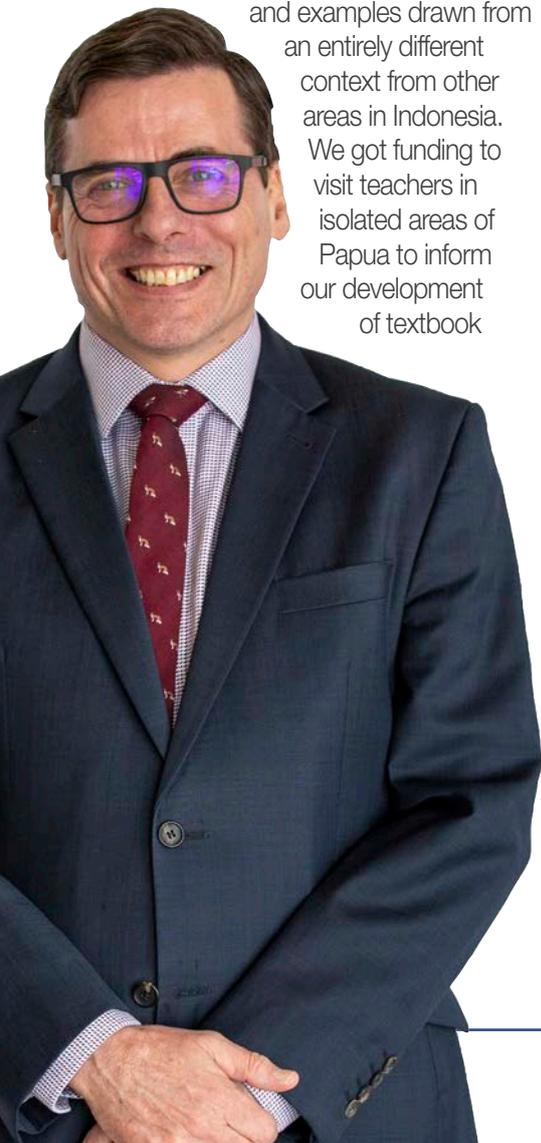
Tell us about your current areas of research interest

My current areas of research are wide-ranging. I began life as a classroom researcher. In my doctoral research I was trying to understand the effects of class size on the quality, quantity and distribution of students' learning opportunities. I adopted classroom observation and interview strategies to address that research focus. Then, on completion of my PhD, I was employed on a funded classroom-based research project looking at how teachers change their practice in the light of the comments, ideas and suggestions that their students contribute to them. And how prepared and open are teachers to the ideas of their pupils, particularly when those ideas and suggestions are critical of their teacher's practice. I am essentially

a researcher interested in pedagogic innovation, and the organizational and policy influences on successful pedagogic innovation. The particular examples of this which have developed throughout my career are pupil voice in different classroom and school settings, and the development of learning how to learn. Intrinsic to classroom innovation is professional learning, so that became a focus of interest to me – how do teachers learn on the job, with others in collaborative settings, and in what ways do their experiences and processes of professional learning relate to changes in teachers' classroom practices? Ultimately, how do those changes in teachers' classrooms that spring from professional learning influence students' learning outcomes? So that summarises a key part of my core research agenda.

What do you find most enjoyable about your research work?

I'm by nature and character trait a very curious person, so I bring a natural curiosity to the world as a human being; discovering through research so much scope to find out what is it that teachers do in their classrooms? Or when they come together in lesson study to improve this or that aspect of practice – what kinds of practice and policy do school leaders develop to really build a learning culture in an organization? These kinds of questions continue to be of real interest to me – not only because I'm a curious person, but also because the answers to those questions are so interesting, always vary in interesting ways in different contexts and carry implications for policy and practice. So for a researcher, there's always something new to be developed. One can never be satisfied by what one has just learnt! Or by a recent thing one has just written, or by what one has





just claimed to know – there’s always something that needs to be further developed. There’s always something new to learn from teachers, leaders and pupils! So those are my own enduring satisfactions. There is something intrinsically exciting to me about the process of discovery!

Under what circumstances do you do your best research writing?

It’s an interesting and important question. I have been fortunate to be able to work, particularly in my formative years, with some truly great researchers. One of the things which has stuck in my mind was a conversation on a train, I think it was to Waterloo Station in England, with Jean Rudduck. She was a pioneer in Pupil Voice . I worked with her during my time at Cambridge and she was an extremely busy person. She commented that she finds it difficult to get long stretches of quiet time in which to write, and so she simply had to develop the skill to squeeze her writing into the busy schedule of her days! So she would take half an hour here, twenty minutes there, on the train here, in the staffroom there, and snatch time in quiet and noisy environments whenever she could! I wish I could say the same for me, but I cannot. I need complete quiet – I can’t have headphones on for example, listening to music while I write, I can’t be in a room full of noisy people. I need to be in a quiet environment, and I can’t be at home. I don’t work at home as a rule, even though home can be a quiet place. So for me, a university library or my office are the two places I can sit down and write quietly, which allows me the depth of concentration and frankly, the perseverance to continue thinking through the knotty problems which are at the centre of hard-end research writing.

What do you think are the most challenging aspects of being a researcher?

I’m going to interpret challenge positively. There’s nothing about research which is impossible; there’s no analytic problem that can’t be solved. A huge part of our work as researchers involves serious head-scratching. It’s like you encounter a problem and you can’t resolve it. But what does it mean to resolve a problem? Does it mean to come to some tidy resolution, some tidy analysis of quite complex data? Or do you need to simply ‘sit’ with the data? So I think a key development as a researcher is to sit with an unresolved, analytic problem and allow the time needed in which to develop clarity, just allow myself time for slow thinking, breaking complex problems down, and also sharing problems with colleagues in my research group. Trying to find different ways to resolve and ask the problem! Also, there needs to be that link between the research I carry out, and the practice and policy world into which I want my research to articulate. Practice can be extremely difficult to articulate in words! How do you formulate research questions that properly address the complexities involved? So that’s another challenge. And finally, having our research taken seriously by people who matter: ministers, school leaders, people with regional responsibility for developing educational systems. A wealth of insights and understandings can be drawn from educational research! It’s often not clear to me in many contexts how educational policy and practice are informed by research and this I think continues to be one of the major challenges we face as a research community: how to make educational research a central component of educational

policy and practice development and improvement. We need to find ways of bridging between the intellectual and methodological disciplines that frame our work as university researchers and the policy and practice priorities that from the work of school leaders, teachers and policy makers. And so there need to be new kinds of collaboration, new orders of partnership between colleges of education like ECAE and key stakeholders such as schools and the Ministry of Education.

What tips or advice would you give to new researchers?

When I teach beginning researchers, one of the things I say to them is that you will be reading some extremely difficult theoretical and methodological literature. When you encounter difficult concepts, and you find yourself having to read, re-read and struggling to understand difficult concepts, I advise my students to retain a self-confidence in their own intellectual powers! The fact that they’re grappling with difficult problems doesn’t mean that somebody is lacking in intellectual power or is ill-suited to the work of research. Actually, grappling with difficult problems is part and parcel of the work of researchers. So if you find yourself having to read slowly, scratching your head, please be confident that this is normal! My second piece of advice is: don’t stray too far from your original seed of curiosity which brought you into your field in the first place. Stay true to your values, interests, beliefs and ideals! It’s these that will sustain you in your curiosity, desire to continue to explore new things in the educational field. The other piece of advice is that as your career and your research experience develops, new priorities will come into view. So follow your curious nose down a range of different pathways, so your research profile will take on a dynamic character! **Thank-you very much!** Thank-you, it’s been a pleasure.

RESEARCH PROJECT FOCUS: CHILDRENS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AS SCIENTISTS

In this edition of ECAE Research And Development, we focus on a research study being conducted by Dr. Martina Dickson, Dr. Dean Cairns, Dr. Melissa McMinn (HCT), and Sharon Osei-Tutu (teacher), entitled: "Feeling like a Scientist": Factors affecting children's selections of technology tools in the science classroom. The study is funded by an ECAE grant.



The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which students' science identity impacts upon their choices of methods to perform science measurements, and to identify whether using technological devices to 'perform' science leads children to 'feel' more like scientists.

Previous research into how primary school students thought of themselves as 'doing science' in school, and comparing themselves with 'real' scientists found a diversity of responses, including; being involved in hands-on investigations, completing their workbook, learning from their teacher, working alone, and doing 'dangerous' things (Zhai, Jocz, & Tan, 2014).

By contrast, students who do not identify themselves as being able to do science, being 'scientific', good at science, or 'doing' science, often do not have strong science identity. This manifests itself in a number of ways, such as hesitancy, lack of participation in the class, or deliberately refraining from choosing activities

or equipment, which indicate more challenge or are perceived as more 'scientific'.

As the use of technology is becoming more commonplace in schools, research is beginning to emerge about the ways in which technology impacts on students' identity as being both 'techy types' and as scientists. The way in which technology impacts on one's identity is important to explore and understand, since technology and science education are so intrinsically linked.

The study aims to answer the following questions:

Q1. How do primary students perceive 'doing' science in the classroom, and how does this influence or impact their own science identity?

Q2. How does a student's decision to choose to 'do' science manually or by using technology relate to their self-expressed science identity?

Q3. What variations are observed, for both gender, age groups, and single-gender versus co-educational settings, for equipment selection (using technological, versus manual, tools), RQ1 and RQ2?

The study was recently piloted in an Abu Dhabi private school. Students of a grade 6 and a grade 7 class were led through an experiment to find out if the way penguins huddle together works to keep their babies warm (insulation). This was facilitated by the students' regular teacher, who was assisted by the researchers. Students were given a choice to use either a glass thermometer (analog) or a thermometer probe with screen (digital) when measuring temperature. Following the class, students were interviewed in focus groups about what kinds of work they think scientists do, why they choose the tool they used in the penguin experiment, and if they felt like scientists using the tool. Twice as many students chose the digital tool over the analog tool. However, their reasons for their choices were varied, with some students from both groups wanting more challenge, or to feel like a scientist (due to the tool chosen), and some looking for an easier or less risky option. Some initial findings support previous findings (e.g. children's beliefs that science involves dangerous things).



REMINDERS FROM THE RESEARCH OFFICE

Funding for Journal Fees - Open Access

If you have received, or are about to receive, an official acceptance from a high quality journal (e.g. Q1 or Q2 ranking in SJR database or equivalent) where open access options are available, please send an email outlining the details to research@ecae.ac.ae.

Research Conferences

Faculty are encouraged to apply to present their research at high quality, national and international conferences in areas directly applicable to their areas of interest and expertise. Allowable conference expenditure per faculty is 15,000 AED, starting from the calendar year Jan 1st 2020. Conferences provide fantastic opportunities to share work, gain feedback, and networking / possible collaboration opportunities too. We also greatly benefit from you sharing your presentation with your ECAE community upon your return. The conference application form is available on the portal (research forms), so please start researching good conferences to send your abstracts to! Best of Luck!

WINTER NEWSLETTER

Please share any research news: publications, exciting findings, study approvals etc. with the Research Office for inclusion in our next Newsletters!

If you would like to be our featured 'educational researcher', or if you would like to highlight the work of your research group in the 'Research Project Focus', please let us know!

research@ecae.ac.ae