

Editor's introduction

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We are happy to announce that *LTHE* is now listed in the Clarivate (formerly Thomson Reuters) [Emerging Sources Citation Index](#). This is a reflection of the quality of the journal, already shown by its listing in indexes such as Google Scholar and EBSCO.

The first paper in this issue, by Causapin and Groombridge, addresses a key issue in English-medium education in the Gulf: the relation between language and students' developing understanding of course content. English (a second language for most students and for the local community) is used for both instruction and assessment in most subjects in the majority of institutions of higher education in the region. Using a carefully planned methodology, the study investigates how the use of simplified or complex English, of the students' first language or of supporting images affects students' comprehension of mathematics word problems of the type commonly used in courses and tests. The authors make some very interesting inferences from their findings, about processes of learning and assessment. The second paper in this issue, by Michael and Gorpe, takes a different perspective, looking at how an extracurricular event organized in collaboration between the university and a professional association might integrate various complex skills and provide a valuable learning experience for students. They analyse students' feedback on this event, and find promising results which would support the wider use of such events.

Albers et al.'s paper considers the potential of different types of online communication to support project work by groups of students. The authors implemented an Inquiry Based Learning approach, encouraging learners to try different communication tools and to make the most of the tool(s) which they felt were most useful. The study analyses students' choices and their reflections on the advantages of their chosen tool, in the light of literature on Inquiry Based Learning and Communication. Mishra et al.'s paper, like Michael and Gorpe's, focuses on the discipline of Public Relations, this time in terms of how and why students choose a particular specialization for their major. They identify key sources of information on which students rely (not necessarily within the university) and the factors which shape students' decisions; they consider implications of these findings for the promotion of certain majors for the benefit of the students and of society. Finally, Mohammed's paper presents an innovation in a mandated course (Emirati studies) linked to a field (Arabic/Islamic studies) which has tended to take a didactic, transmission approach to teaching. The author describes how a project based approach can engage students and help them develop a variety of valuable skills and knowledge relevant to their future lives.

As always, we would like to thank the *LTHE* peer reviewers for their valuable insights, without which the quality of the journal would not have reached its present standard. Reviewers for this issue include Cindy Gunn, Gail Alhafidh, James Piecowye, James Scotland, Marielle Patronis, Mohammed Goma Tanko, Nicholas Yates, Omnia Amin, Oonagh McGirr, Salim Khan and Sameer Dandan.

CJ Davison's book review in this issue presents the book *Small teaching: everyday lessons from the science of learning*, which provides a wealth of practical and relevant teaching ideas, based on evidence from research on learning.

We look forward to receiving submissions to *LTHE* presenting original work with data and experience from Gulf higher education contexts. Before submitting a paper, please review the information in the ABOUT section of our website <http://lthe.zu.ac.ae> to understand the scope and policies of the journal; then register as an Author, log in and select *New submission*. *LTHE* also informs readers and Twitter followers about events related to the scope of the journal; if you would like to circulate information about such an event (or raise any other matter), please contact us using the email or comment links on our website or via Twitter ([@LTHEgulf](https://twitter.com/LTHEgulf)). Following our Twitter feed will enable you to receive up to date information about the journal and relevant events.