

Abu Dhabi Education Council impact study

Abu Dhabi Education Council

United Arab
Emirates



Cambridge Assessment English contributed to an evaluation of the effectiveness of a reform programme introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

When the Abu Dhabi Education Council introduced a new bilingual language education programme in the school sector (which had previously been predominantly monolingual), one of their providers, the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), sought to evaluate the effectiveness of this reform against the strategic objective of improving the quality of teaching and learning. We were asked by CfBT to contribute to this work.

Underpinning principles of the reform programme included developing more active student involvement in learning and the provision of greater bilingual education, particularly in the subjects of maths, science, and information and communication technology.

Using a range of research methods such as focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, observations and document review, we conducted an impact study.

The study aimed to assess the impact of CfBT's bilingual provision in terms of students' learning progression and their active involvement in their learning, and the fostering of student-centred teaching practices.

The study also looked at how the bilingual education provision affected students' understanding of content subjects (such as maths), their proficiency in both Arabic and English as a foreign language and students' behaviour, discipline and relationships with peers and teachers. The extent to which the bilingual programme fostered maintenance of national identity and students' own heritage was also assessed.

Eight schools were selected to participate in the study. Within these schools, the study focused on Grade 4 students, teachers, school principals and parents.

The report showed a positive picture, with success stories including improved English language proficiency of learners and an increase in student-centred teaching practices, as well as an increase in collaborative working amongst teachers. School principals and teachers saw these key changes as being a direct result of the programme.

We were also able to report on areas of the reform that teachers felt could be further improved, such as increased parental involvement in the programme and further self-access learning opportunities for students.

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