



6th May 2017

Dear [Principal's name],

I am writing in my capacity as a Research Fellow at the University of Oxford leading a project with the non-governmental organisation Lebanese Alternative Learning NGO (LAL-NGO) to evaluate the science material provided through the Tabshoura platform in terms of task design and translation.

Rationale and Purpose of the Study

LAL-NGO has developed an online facility called Tabshoura which provides tasks in various subjects including science in different languages (English, French and Arabic) for middle school children, based on the Lebanese science curriculum. LAL aims to provide access to quality education to the most vulnerable including deprived Lebanese and Syrian refugee youths. The NGO is currently in the process of reviewing the developed material in terms of task design and translation to improve it. Research in science education and assessment emphasises the central role of task design, including the way instructions are presented, the way questions are formulated, the visual representations adopted etc. in making tasks more or less challenging for students and hence less conducive to learning.

Methodology

The study consists of two phases: (1) diagnostic test phase; (2) interview phases. In the first phase, a 45-minute test comprising a number of Discovery science tasks available on the Tabshoura platform will be administered to a two classes (~50 to 60) of Grade 6 students. These tasks will be marked and five students scoring around the average will be selected to participate in 45-minute interview where they will be asked to solve Tabshoura exercises while thinking-aloud (i.e. saying out loud all their thoughts). The interviews will be audio-recorded to facilitate data analysis.

Data protection and students' participation

The University of Oxford and the Economic and the Social Research Council (ESRC) funding the project follow strict ethical guidelines of high quality research. The data collected will be treated under strict confidentiality following the ethical guidelines adopted by the University and the Funder. The data will be used for research purposes only and for the NGO's material improvement. The identity of participating students, teachers and school will be anonymised in all future publications and conference presentations. Participating schools and teachers will be made aware of their rights to withdraw from their study at any point and that their decision to participate has not implications on their status as teachers or students.

Kindly find enclosed relevant consent forms and supporting documents.

Please tick a box from the list below:

- ☐ Our school does not wish to participate in this research.
- ☐ Our school would like to find out more about this research.
- ☐ Our school would like to take part in this research.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Yours sincerely,



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