

RITA M. EWAZ

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Education

- University of California, San Diego** **Sep. 2023 – June 2028** (*expected*)
Doctor of Philosophy in Education Studies *La Jolla, CA*
- Tufts University** **Sep. 2022 – May 2023**
Master of Arts in Education and Psychology *Medford, MA*
- University of California, San Diego** **Sep. 2018 – June 2022**
Bachelor of Science in Human Developmental Sciences *La Jolla, CA*

Research Interests

- * Mixed-Methods
- * Emotional Regulation
- * Child Development
- * Resilience
- * Quantitative Analysis
- * Community Research
- * Implementation Science
- * Maternal Mental Health

Experience

- UC San Diego Center for Community Health** **April 2025 – Present**
Data and Evaluations Intern *La Jolla, CA*
- Conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis for community-based programs supporting refugee and immigrant families, with emphasis on youth development, maternal health, and after-school engagement.
 - Designed, piloted, and refined surveys and evaluation tools (including Likert-scale and open-response items) to capture parent, youth, and community partner feedback across multiple initiatives.
 - Cleaned, coded, and managed large data sets from interviews, focus groups, and surveys; applied thematic coding, reliability checks, and descriptive statistics to identify program outcomes and areas for improvement.
- Child and Adolescent Wellbeing Lab** **Jan. 2020 – Present**
Graduate Research Assistant/Lab Manager *La Jolla, CA*
- Oversaw and project managed all research initiatives, meetings, and events for the lab. Led several mixed-methods research projects focused on youth mental health and well-being, specifically on participatory research.
 - Composed and edited IRB applications, collected quantitative and qualitative data, and developed surveys for research studies on well-being and social-emotional learning.
- University of California, San Diego** **Nov. 2021 – Sept. 2022**
McNair Scholar *La Jolla, CA*
- Co-principal investigator on a mixed-method research project to understand student academic resilience in relation to socio-economic status during COVID-19. Investigated how motivation, community-building, and well-being practices aided students in times of academic distress. Identified academic strategies used by low-income students during the pandemic and analyzed the disparities of available resources between socio-economic classes.
 - Attended and presented my research at academic symposiums and conferences, engaged in student events, and research-based presentations.
- Contra Costa County Department of Education** **June 2019 – Sept. 2019**
Research Assistant *Pleasant Hill, CA*
- Analyzed adolescent drug abuse trends within the Contra Costa County school districts and developed drug-specific, evidence-informed educational instruction and activities.
 - Collected data and conducted per school analysis to develop trend reports on the current drug abuse trends for public health use.
- Halpern-Felsher REACH Lab** **June 2018 – Sept. 2018**
Research Assistant *Palo Alto, CA*
- Assisted with developing an evidence-based Tobacco Prevention Toolkit. This toolkit includes video lessons, quizzes, activities, and presentations for students and for educators to use. Highlighted the risks of youth smoking, empowering teachers to educate students effectively. <https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/about.html>
 - Assisted with qualitative data collection, entry and verification.

Publications

(*In-review*) **Ewaz, R. M.**, and Phuong, A.E., (2025). Resilience and Socioeconomic Status in Higher Education *Contemporary Educational Psychology*.

(*In-review*) **Ewaz, R. M.**, Phuong, A.E.,(2025). Transforming Student Learning in Statistics: Examining the Positive Impact of Adaptive Equity-Oriented Pedagogy (AEP) *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal*

Bintliff, A. V., Levine, R. S., Peninah, B., Namanda, Z., **Ewaz, R. M.**, Cheung, W. W., ... Love, J. (2024). Trauma-Informed SEL with Refugee Youth in Uganda via an International Research-Practice Partnership: Lessons Learned from The Wellbeing Club. *Journal of Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy*, 100041.

Ewaz, Rita M. "A Thematic Analysis of the Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Student Academic Resilience in Higher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Order No. 30489416 Tufts University, 2023. United States – Massachusetts: ProQuest. Web. 7 Sep. 2023.

Presentations

"Critical Service-Learning for Refugee Education: Positioning Youth as Experts and Leaders". International Association on for Research on Service Learning and Community-Engagement. Durban, South Africa, August 18, 2025.

"Integrating Positive Youth Development and Social Justice in School-Based Wellbeing Programming with Refugee Youth in Uganda". International Mind, Brain, and Education Conference. Leuven, Belgium, July 11, 2024.

"A Thematic Analysis of the Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Student Academic Resilience in Higher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic". Masters Thesis Defense. Tufts University, Medford, MA, May 3, 2023.

"Academic Resilience in Relation to Socioeconomic Status During COVID-19"." Summer Research Conference. University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA, August 12, 2022.

"Academic Resilience in Relation to Socioeconomic Status During COVID-19"." Undergraduate Research Conference. University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA, May 14, 2022.

Guest Lectures

"Ewaz, R." (2025, May). Parametric and Non-Parametric Techniques. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 163: Building Equitable Learning.

"Ewaz, R." (2025, May). Risk and Resilience. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 118: Adolescent Development.

"Ewaz, R." (2025, March). Hypothesis Testing: Correlation. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 103: Intro to Quant Analysis.

"Ewaz, R." (2024, Feb.). Positive Youth Development. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 133: Counseling, Mentoring, and Academic Advising.

"Ewaz, R." (2023, Nov.). Social-Emotional Learning. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 115: Cognitive Development and Education.

"Ewaz, R." (2023, Nov.). Motivation Theory. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 115: Cognitive Development and Education.

“Ewaz, R.” (2023, Oct.). Executive Functioning and Self-Regulation. Presentation delivered at UC San Diego Department of Education Studies 115: Cognitive Development and Education.

Professional Experience

Council for Economic Education

Sept. 2022 – June 2025

Adjunct Instructor

Boston, MA/Remote

- Taught financial literacy classes to high school diverse females from underserved backgrounds in the Boston public school system.
- Facilitated discussions around financial well-being, budgeting, investing, and taxes etc. to empower women to be financially independent.
- Assessed curriculum, created activities, and fostered a safe space in the classroom for students to ask questions and share their stories to better have agency.

Cambridge School Volunteers

Sept. 2022 – June 2023

Program Assistant

Cambridge, MA

- Recruited volunteers and actively worked with school staff to match referred students with a tutor.
- Solicited feedback from students, volunteers, and CPS staff to assess successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Acted as a liaison between the tutors/students to make sure healthy relationships are fostered.

Other Skills

Languages: English, Persian/Farsi, Spanish

Applications: SPSS, R, Stata, Excel

Awards

EDS Summer Fellowship -Summer 2025

Tufts University Dean's Scholarship -Fall 2022

Provost Honors at University of California, San Diego -Sept. 2018 - June 2022

People Who Make a Difference Leadership Award -Contra Costa County of Education- June 2020