

## From Editor...

Dear Readers,

We are with you again with the Ankara University Faculty of Educational Sciences Journal of Special Education's December 2017, volume 18, issue 3. Initially I would like to thank those who contributed as our authors, reviewers, readers, and our Academic Advisory Board, and then in the following section, I would like to present you a summary of the studies published in our journal's current issue.

The first research article which is published in our current issue is "*An Examination of Stories Written by Students with Hearing Impairment in Inclusive Classrooms*" which was produced by *Arzu EFE and H. Pelin KARASU*. The purpose of this research was to examine the written expression skills of students with hearing impairments in inclusive classrooms and student characteristics considered to be associated with these skills. This research which was designed as a descriptive model that was conducted with students with hearing impairments attending inclusive classes in the 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades of state schools in Eskişehir province. During the data collection process, the students were given a brief preliminary preparation period, after which they were asked to write a story. Stories were scored using the Writing Skills Evaluation Form and evaluated using the Written Skills Evaluation Tool. In the data analysis, the quantitative descriptive analysis was performed, and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. Findings indicated that the students' achievement average was 46.99% and they had the most difficulty in following grammar rules and organizing their thoughts to draw conclusions. No significant relationship was found between the scores for written skills and the characteristics of the students that were thought to be connected. Possible reasons for this include the limited number of participants, homogeneity of distribution, the wide range of ages and aspects of the inclusive students' educational environment.

The second study "*A Study on the Communicative Functions Used in Various Contexts by a Child with Hearing Loss*" was conducted by *Esra GENÇ, Yıldız UZUNER, and Tamer GENÇ*. This case study aimed to examine the communicative functions in various contexts of a child with hearing loss. The data of the study were gathered by video recordings of natural interactions in various contexts, interviews with mothers, researcher diaries, and examining products and documents. The collected data were analyzed either inductively or descriptively. A total of 6 observations were conducted by paying attention to the context variation. By paying attention to the context variation again and the spontaneity of the interactions, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> observations were accepted as master tapes. The master tapes were analyzed by different researchers descriptively utilizing the control list of communicative function definitions which were derived from this research. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the child exhibits 14 different communicative functions. The findings of the research showed that the child exhibited communicative functions similar to that of a child without a hearing loss in a variety of natural contexts, and he used communicative functions in verbal and/or nonverbal forms, a finding which is consistent with previous research studies. It was considered that the research would guide the related research and children with hearing loss, their families, and teachers in the use of communicative functions.

The third article including the research entitled as "*The Investigation of the Relationship between Stress Level and Roles of Parents of 3-6 Years-Old Children Who Have Special Needs*" study was conducted by *Tülay İLHAN*. In the research, to eliminate the stress sources of parents of children with special needs, firstly the need to explain the factors which lead to stress was emphasized, and thus the stress sources which restrain parents from exhibiting effective parental roles could be eliminated. The aim of the study was to explain the relationship between stress level and roles of parents of 3-6-year-old children who had special needs and to determine direction and level of that relationship. Forty-eight parents participated in the study, and correlational model, one of the methods of quantitative research, was conducted. Data were collected through Perceived Stress Scale and Parental Roles Scale, which is the subscale of Family Evaluation Scale. As a result of the research, a significant negative correlation was found between parents' stress levels and parental roles. Finally, possible causes of parental stress were discussed, and suggestions were made to reduce the stress level of parents.

The fourth research article which was authored by *Emine Sema BATU, Serhat ODLUYURT, Ezgi ALAGÖZOĞLU, Melih ÇATTIK, and Şerife ŞAHİN* has the title of "*Determining the Opinions of Preschool Teachers Regarding Inclusion.*" The general purpose of the study was to determine the opinions of preschool teachers about inclusion. Participants were 45 preschool teachers from 8 preschools who had students with special educational needs in their classes during the study or had in the previous years and who were working in public preschools in Eskişehir, Turkey. They had 2-27 years of teaching experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers and the data were analyzed descriptively. The results of the study revealed that although the participants had positive opinions about inclusion, they still did not have enough knowledge about that. Besides, the inadequate knowledge according to the teacher opinions was related to the types and characteristics of disabilities of the children, inclusion, effective teaching methods, accommodations, and so forth.

The last article including the research entitled as the “*An Investigation of The Semantic Word Processing Skills of Hearing Loss and Hearing Students in Inclusive Classroom*” was conducted by Halime Miray SÜMER, Tevhide KARGIN, and İsa Birkan GÜLDENOĞLU. In this study, which aimed to comparatively examine the semantic word processing performances of students with normal hearing and students with hearing impairments using cochlear implants or hearing aids, causal-comparative research model was used. A total of 101 students, of which 32 were normally hearing, 34 were using a hearing aid, and 35 had a cochlear implant, from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades participated in this study. In the study, data were collected by a process which included 48-word pairs (24 were related two-word pairs, 24 were unrelated two-word pairs). The analyses showed that readers with normal hearing performed better than readers with hearing aid and cochlear implants in terms of semantic word processing accuracy rates. In addition, performances of readers with hearing aids and cochlear implants were found to be similar in terms of both response speed and error averages. When the processing skills of all the readers participating in the research in terms of words in different semantic categories were examined, it was seen that the readers processed the words with similar response speeds and error rates without depending on the semantic categories.

The first review study of this issue is “*Review of the Studies on Writing Skills of Students with Specific Learning Disabilities in Elementary Education*” which was conducted by Özlem İLKER and Macid Ayhan MELEKOĞLU. The authors suggested that learning disabilities that negatively affect students’ academic performance can be observed in many skills including listening, speaking, understanding, reading, writing, and mathematics. In the study, it is claimed that some students encounter problems in recognizing words, while others struggle with grabbing pencils or written language, and there are some interventions implemented to identify or overcome those challenges that students experience in primary education. The authors who suggested that the current literature on the topic of learning disabilities indicates that most of the interventions focus on reading skills and there are a limited number of studies on writing skills, and those studies on writing are usually conducted with students with typical development, aimed to review intervention studies on writing skills of students with learning disabilities in primary grades. In the direction of this aim, they searched the databased such as Google Scholar, EBSCOHost, Elsevier Science Direct and ERIC, and they examined 23 studies that met the inclusion criteria of this study. The results of the study showed that that majority of those studies were on writing strategies, most of the studies focused on self-management strategy, the most widely study group consisted of 4<sup>th</sup> graders, the number of male participants was more than female participants. Moreover, it was found that most of the studies used experimental or single subject designs, there was no consensus on implemented interventions and those interventions were different from each other.

In the second review study which was authored by Salih RAKAP “*Naturalistic Instructional Approaches to Support Inclusion of Preschool Children with Disabilities*” were discussed. In the study it is indicated that educating preschool children with disabilities along with their typically developing peers with in- and out of class support is a common practice that has been used since 1970s in the United States and other developed countries, and over the years, the practice has been named as mainstreaming, integration, and inclusion. Moreover, it is suggested in the study that for inclusive education to be successful, one of the requirements is that teachers who work with children with disabilities in inclusive settings should be able to adapt their instructional practices and have the skills to identify and use naturalistic instructional approaches. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe five commonly used naturalistic instructional approaches designed to support development and learning of preschool children with disabilities in inclusive settings, explain active ingredients of these approaches, and present a summary of scientific evidence for their effectiveness. In this context, firstly, the common characteristics of the naturalistic instructional approaches and their historical development were presented and following this the most widely used five naturalistic approaches (incidental teaching, milieu teaching, activity-based intervention, transition-based teaching, and embedded instruction) were given in detail. In addition, the features of effective professional development programs for training teachers to use naturalistic instructional approaches were also offered.

The last reviews study with the title of “*Feeding Problems and Evidence-Based Behavioral Interventions in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*” was authored by Bekir Fatih MERAL. It is indicated in the study that feeding problems are quite prevalent among children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), which is defined as the displaying limited repetitive behaviors, interests, and activities as well as the impairments in social communication and social interaction. Therefore, the purpose of the current review was to summarize the feeding problems experienced by children with ASD and what the non-pharmacological behavioral interventions based on evidence-based practices are toward solving these problems. In the study, a couple of tips were aimed to be provided with regard to the intervention techniques for parents of children with ASD initially, and educators, experts or caregivers in coping with feeding problems.

I would like to kindly thank my colleagues who are working with me in the Editorial Board for our journal to be published timely and to increase the quality: Vice Editors Instructor Meral Çilem ÖKCÜN-AKÇAMUŞ, PhD,

*Res. Assist. Şeyda DEMİR, PhD, Res. Assist. Zeynep BAHAP-KUDRET, PhD; and Technical Coordination Executives Res. Assist. Gamze ALAK and Res. Assist. Hatice AKÇAKAYA. Their infinite energy and patience make our work exciting and enthusiastic even during the most difficult times. In this issue, Assist. Prof. Bahar KEÇELİ KAYSILI, who has worked as a Vice Editor, put such a great effort to make our journal come to this day, and who also worked as a Technical Coordination Executive for a long time before she became a Vice Editor, left our team. I would like to thank her on behalf of Editorial Board and I wish her success in her ensuing career. With this issue, as a Technical Coordination Executive one of our colleagues joined us. I would like to welcome Res. Assist. Cebrail TURNA and wish that he will make a significant contribution to our journal with his dynamism and energy.*

I would like to thank our dear readers, authors, and reviewers for their support and contributions once again and I would like to kindly request you to continue your support and contributions during the ongoing process...With my warmest regards...

*Assoc. Prof. Hatice Bakkaloğlu*