

From the Editor...

Dear Readers,

We are with you again with the Ankara University Faculty of Educational Sciences Journal of Special Education's last issue, March 2022, Volume 23, Issue 1. As always has been, I would like to thank here those who contributed as our authors, reviewers, readers, our Academic Advisory Board, and our Editorial Board. I would like to indicate that as the Editorial Board, we put forth the effort to move our journal to a higher level both quantitatively and qualitatively in the forthcoming process. Before introducing the articles in this issue, in the presence of our readers, I would like to announce changes to our Editorial Board Members. I would like to inform you that two other colleagues have been cooperated with us as the Assistant Editors in our Editorial Board members. I would like to welcome and convey my wishes of success to *Assist. Prof. Çiğdem TIKIROĞLU* from Pamukkale University and *Assist. Prof. Şule DEMİREL-DİNGEÇ* from Anadolu University. In addition, two new friends have accepted to take part in our journal as an English Language Editor. *Assist. Prof. Kürşat ÖĞÜLMÜŞ* from Kırıkkale University and *Assist. Prof. Üzeyir Emre KIYAK, Ph.D.* from Uşak University will contribute to our journal on this subject, I thank them and wish them success. Finally, I welcome *Res. Assist. Naciye Ece ÜNAL* from Anadolu University, who joined our journal as the Technical Executive; and I thank *Res. Assist. Yasemin ŞENGÜL*, who served as a Technical Executive for our journal and left our team, for her contributions to our journal and for her devoted work, and wish her success in her future works.

In this issue of our Journal, there are six research and four review articles. The first research article in the current issue includes a study of *Hüseyin ÖZTÜRK, Kemal AFACAN* and *Seden DEMİRTAŞ-İLHAN* namely "*Examining Preschool Picture Storybooks about Individuals with Special Needs.*" In this study, preschool picture storybooks published since 2000 about individuals with special needs were analyzed using content analysis. A total of 20 books were included. In this study that was carried out using assessment scales included in the international literature, the personal characteristics, character traits, character depictions, character development, and information about the point of view of the story, as well as the relationships between characters with and without special needs were examined. Eight different special need conditions were identified in the 20 picture storybooks. Of the 20 books that were examined, physical disability in six studies, hearing impairment in four studies, intellectual disability in three studies, dyslexia in two studies, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder in two studies, visual impairment in one study, autism in one study, and speech disorder in one study were the subject. While the variety of these conditions were similar to previous studies, the results regarding character development and relationships between characters differed. This study identified picture storybooks that could raise awareness towards individuals with special needs and provided recommendations for reading programs.

The second study namely "*The Effect of Teaching Activities Organized to Improve Metacognition Upon Teacher Candidates' Metacognitive Awareness*" was conducted by *Gamze KAPLAN* and *Çiğil AYKUT*. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of metacognitive learning activities presented in the lesson on the development of metacognitive awareness of teacher candidates. The study was conducted in the course of Integration in Special Education in the second-year curriculum of the Department of Special Education. A quasi-experimental method was conducted in the research. The pre-test post-test control group design was utilized. The students were assigned to two categories: The experimental group (n = 20) and the control group (n = 20). Groups were randomly divided into two categories. Data were collected using Metacognitive Awareness Inventory and analyzed using a t-test. When the experimental group and the control group were compared, no significant difference was found between metacognitive awareness in terms of total score obtained from the scale. While there was a significant difference in the planning from the sub-dimensions of the scale in favor of the experimental group, there was no significant difference in the other sub-dimensions. When the groups were compared with each other, there was a difference between the total scores. There was also a difference between the declarative knowledge and evaluation sub-dimensions in favor of the experimental group. The study revealed that the metacognitive learning activities resulted in a change in metacognitive awareness. It also showed that the teacher candidates' metacognitive awareness was low. There were limitations in their development and acquisition prior to the implementation. In the regulations of the Council of Higher Education at undergraduate level and the Ministry of National Education on professional qualifications, skills such as self-evaluation and self-regulation are specified as a requirement for the teaching profession. For this reason, it was argued that there was a need to make the regulations that would meet the defined qualifications to be functional and to develop alternative assessment ways to meet these competences during the selection and appointment of pre-service teachers.

The third research article in this issue is authored by *Seniha KURTOĞLU* and *Atilla CAVKAYTAR* namely "*The Effectiveness of a Family Education in Teaching Self-Care Skills to Individuals with Intellectual Disability.*" This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the teaching skills of a mother on her child's acquisition of self-care skills. The study was conducted with an 18-year-old individual with intellectual disability (ID) and her 42-year-old mother. The study employed multiple probe design, one of the single-subject research models. The

independent variable of the study was the family education program entitled “Self-Care Instruction to Individuals with ID.” These were the teaching activities carried out by the mother with her child with ID in line with this program. The dependent variable was the level of the individual with ID to fulfill the targeted self-care skills. The findings revealed that the instruction given by the mother who completed the family education program on teaching self-care was effective in her child’s acquisition of self-care skills; the child was able to generalize the skills acquired to other environments, different individuals, and different materials. Also, the child was able to perform the skills well following the program. Research findings demonstrated that using videos to model instruction on self-care skills was both and scientifically based. By the end of the program, the child’s performance in all of the self-care skills showed improvement, which meant that the results supported those of previous studies.

Damla İŞİTAN and Eylem DAYI have co-authored the fourth research article namely “*Opinions of General Education Teachers Having Special Needs Students in Their Classes on Special Education Counseling.*” This research aimed to determine the opinions of teachers who have students with special needs in their classes on special education counseling. Semi-structured interview technique was used within the scope of basic qualitative research design. The participants of the research consisted of a total of seven teachers who were working in the preschool, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades and had a student with special education needs. The data were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Findings showed that teachers experienced different problems in their classrooms and needed special education counseling to solve these problems. As a result of the analysis of the data, the findings were examined within the scope of the research questions and examined under the headings of general classroom environment, classroom problems, problem solving methods of teachers, and needs and expectations for special education counseling. Topics such as preparing an individual education plan (IEP), dealing with behavioral problems, needing external help to solve the problems they encounter, thinking that they have insufficient knowledge and practical skills about inclusion practice were seen as the most frequently mentioned areas by teachers. Research findings showed that teachers experienced different problems in their classrooms and needed special education counseling to solve these problems. As a result of the interviews with the teachers, it was suggested that special education counseling including cooperation would be a facilitating factor in the process of inclusion for teachers and students, and within the scope of these research findings, it is emphasized that special education specialist support and cooperation should be provided for the successful continuation of inclusion practices.

The fifth article which was conducted by *Dilay AKGÜN* and *Yasemin ERGENEKON* is namely “*Effect of Social Stories Designed and Presented by Pre-Service Teachers on Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.*” This study aimed to examine the effect of social stories (SS) were designed and presented by pre-service teachers (PST) on target social skill (sharing toys, saying hello, and forming a line) acquisition, maintenance, and generalization of preschool children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The study was conducted with a multiple probe design across dyads, and content analysis was used for the assessment of social validity data obtained in the study. Two different groups participated in the present study. The first group included children with ASD, and the second group included PST who attended teaching practice courses. Study results demonstrated that PST achieved the skill of accurately authoring and applying the SS after the provided training, while children with ASD acquired the target social skills, maintained, and generalized these social skills. Social validity data showed that the study was considered positively both by PST and the parents of participating children with ASD. PST wrote social stories correctly and applied with high treatment integrity. Children with ASD quickly acquired, maintained, and generalized target social skills.

The sixth research article namely “*Expert Perspectives on Distance Special Education Interventions for Students with Special Needs and Their Families in Turkey during the COVID-19 Pandemic*” was authored by *Sunagül SANI-BOZKURT, Gülден BOZKUŞ-GENÇ, Sezgin VURAN, Gizem YILDIZ, Seçil ÇELİK, İbrahim Halil DİKEN, Çiğdem UYSAL, Hasan GÜRGÜR, Güleşan Özge KALAYCI, Özlem DİKEN, Nazmiye NAZLI-ATEŞGÖZ, Rıfat İÇYÜZ, Murat DOĞAN, Pınar ŞAFAK, and Pınar DEMİRÜREK.* In this study, it was aimed to reveal the distance special education interventions carried out for students with different special needs and their families in Turkey during the restriction period due to the COVID-19 pandemic through expert perspectives. The study, which was designed as a collective case study, included a total of 15 academics as the direct participants of the study to report their own experiences and observations. According to the results of the study, it was observed that distance education-based interventions for students with special needs and their families were provided by official, private institutions and individuals along with the rapid transition to distance education in Turkey. The interventions were not systematic in that they could not be spread across the country. This clearly demonstrated that there were lessons to be learned from this process, such as enriching mobile applications for each disability group, and establishing family-oriented support mechanisms. It was predicted that the results of the study might help to draw a forward-looking road map in planning special education interventions in different countries, especially in Turkey. In response to the lockdown conditions, the special education practice in Turkey became one of the good examples in the process of transition. In the study, suggestions were presented to decision makers, schools, institutions, experts, and families.

The article namely “*Systematic Review of Studies on Executive Functions in Children with Hearing Loss*” that was authored by *Emel ERTÜRK-MUSTUL* and *Murat DOĞAN*, is the first review article of this issue. The aim of this study was to provide a general perspective on the relationship between executive functions and other cognitive processes/skills in children with hearing loss (HL), and performance of these children by reviewing studies focusing on executive functions. Fifteen studies on executive functions in children with HL were reviewed. The findings indicated that (a) there was an interdependence between executive functions and language, and in terms of executive functions (b) children with HL experienced more difficulties compared to hearing peers, (c) there was no difference between children with cochlear implants and hearing aids, and between native sign language users and hearing children, (d) children with cochlear implants in the inclusion were more successful than those at school for the deaf, and (e) cognitive processes in early education programs should be supported in a balanced manner with language. The finding that children with HL lagged behind hearing peers was suggested to be consistent with the findings of studies examining other cognitive processes. No definitive conclusion was reached regarding the relationship between executive functions and other cognitive processes/skills, although interdependence was found between executive functions and language. Findings indicated that further research was needed on the topic and new research might contribute to early education programs. It could be argued that through early education programs, supporting cognitive as well as language development in a balanced manner might help children with HL close the gap with their hearing peers in executive function.

The second review article in this issue with the title of “*Math Problem Solving Interventions for Middle School Students with Learning Disabilities: A Comprehensive Literature Review*” was authored by *Ufuk ÖZKUBAT*, *Alpaslan KARABULUT*, and *Cihan SERT*. This study aimed to review math problem solving interventions for middle school students with learning disabilities in the last 20 years, list the characteristics of the studies descriptively, and examine them in terms of quality indicators. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, nine articles were selected. They were investigated in the context of descriptive analysis and quality indicators. The studies were analyzed descriptively. Their characteristics were identified. The studies were examined, and their quality levels were determined based on the quality indicators specified for the research using single-subject experimental designs. Direct instruction, concrete-semi-concrete-abstract strategy, schema-based strategy, self-regulation strategies and hint cards, STAR strategy, open expression method, LAP strategy, visual strategies, Solve It!, and the SOLVE strategy were used for teaching problem solving skills as target skills. The general findings related to quality indicators showed that all studies met the specified criteria regarding the baseline level of basic quality indicators, experimental control/internal validity, and external validity. Considering other components, it was observed that the study ranging from 44% to 78% met the specified criteria. Only one study was met all quality indicator items. The findings were discussed, and suggestions were provided for teachers and researchers. Accordingly, it was suggested that it would be useful for experts working with students with learning disabilities to create intervention programs that include strategies to facilitate students' problem solving successfully, such as problem-solving stages, schematic modifiers, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and think-aloud protocols.

“*Professional Ethics and Ethical Evaluations in Special Education*” is the third review article, and it is authored by *Omur ÖZDEMİR*. It is stated in this article that professional ethics can be defined as standards that determine, dictate and observe the behaviors that employees should display or avoid while performing their profession. These standards are defined by established ethical and practical principles. Therefore, ethical and practical principles are indispensable elements of professional ethics. Ethical evaluation is another element that may be necessary to ensure standards regarding professional ethics. It is a systematic problem-solving process that leads to appropriate decisions in ethical violations or dilemmas. It can be said that special education is more vulnerable toward ethical violations. For this reason, educators must have knowledge and skills about ethics and ethical evaluations. Despite these necessities, it is seen that studies relating to special education professional ethics in Turkey have begun to emerge recently and these studies are limited in number. Therefore, the aim of this study was stated to share information on ethics along with theoretical and practical information related to ethical principles and evaluations within the scope of special education. Ethical evaluation framework presented in the study provided an exemplary content that might be useful considering Turkey’s conditions and assess their effectiveness. Along with studies on other elements that make up professional ethics, it was suggested that these would contribute to well-being of both service receivers and providers.

The fourth and the last review article of this issue was authored by *Gözde TOMRİS* and *Seçil ÇELİK* entitled “*Early Childhood Special Education: Theoretical and Legal Grounds, Latest Trends across the World and Turkey.*” This study aimed to discuss main characteristics and theoretical grounds of ECSE, its historical progress, the latest legal regulations in the field, current developments about ECSE practices across the world and Turkey, unresolved problems in Turkey, and some suggestions that could improve quality of services. It was stated that

although legal regulations in Turkey showed parallelism with the other developed countries and the field studies have gradually gained momentum; issues such as lack of ECSE system model specific to Turkey, lack of qualified personnel in the field, inter-specialist and inter-institutional cooperation still remained unsolved. The study was expected to provide contributions especially to children with special needs and their families in Turkey, experts, and educators in ECSE services, researchers in the field, and lawmakers.

I would like to kindly thank once again my colleagues for their vigorous efforts who are working with me on the Editorial Board for our journal to be published timely and to increase the quality. 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. I wish to be with you again in the upcoming issue which will be published in June, 2022...

Prof. Hatice BAKKALOĞLU