

# Introduction



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**Kathleen G. Burriss, Editor**

In order to promote all children's holistic learning and development, this IJWC issue provides readers with descriptions of integral theoretical underpinnings, new evidence-base data, and relevant innovative pedagogical practices. In particular, authors provide teachers, parents, and pre-service candidates with numerous hands-on activities, multiple tech-based applications, and several strategies to support professional growth. This content allows teachers at all levels the opportunity to uncover deeper meanings, implement innovative strategies, and consider holistic possibilities for all 21<sup>st</sup> century children and their families.

## Articles

In the first article, "Teachers in War Zone Education: Literature Review and Implications," Maryam Sadat Sharifian and Pat Kennedy discuss and conceptualize the under-researched topic of war zone education. Building on past research, they describe issues teachers confront as they educate children in war zones. Education provides hope for resolving conflict and securing future peace. Sharifian and Kennedy highlight the critical role of quality care and further, discuss the importance of a teacher's emotional well-being. They provide information for readers with a limited knowledge of the topic and discuss more in-depth issues for those seeking a deeper understanding of the concerns.

In the second article, "International Teacher Perspectives on Quality in ECE: A Case Study," Julie Chappell and Judit Szenté, explore guidelines and perceptions regarding quality, care, and education for young children. Using data collected in both the United States and Finland, this comparative case study, provides readers with insights regarding the similarities and differences teachers described for high-quality early care. Specifically, the researchers examined cultural and societal distinctions represented by the U.S. and Finnish teachers. In particular, Chappell and Szenté provide a voice for those teachers who enforce the high-quality standards they provide for their children and families.

In the third article, “Developing a Professional Identity in a Global Society,” Jo Beth Oestreich and Kathleen Fite provide a rationale for teachers and pre-service candidates to seek an understanding of their professional identity. In order to ensure students’ relevant and engaging learning, it is important for educators to understand how to implement effective and responsive teaching. The authors believe developing a professional identity is crucial to ensuring best practices for all children. To support their argument, they describe the positive relationship across professional identity and teacher retention, genuine motivation, and sensitive interactions with diverse student populations. In addition to their comprehensive review of supporting research, Oestreich and Fite identify a variety of learning activities beneficial for teachers and learners of all ages and at all stages.

### **Pictures for Reflection**

Sandra J. Stone, in her narrative, “About Twins,” describes the biological origins of twins, discusses their similarities and differences, and highlights the potential for each child to become their own person. Stone not only acknowledges the profound context of what it means to be a twin, but also reminds educators to dignify holistic learning and promote each child’s unique development.

### **Tech Talk**

In “Using Edtech to Enhance Learning,” Brianna Donahoe, Derrian Rickard, Hunter Holden, Kerra Blackwell and Nancy Caukin provide readers with a variety of rationales and examples for using technology throughout the learning process. Authors describe ways to “begin to use edtech,” “introduce the time to use edtech,” “avoid edtech as a distractor,” and finally, “how edtech supports assessment.” Authors identify strategies whereby edtech frames students’ higher-order and critical thinking. Additionally, authors discuss how edtech demonstrates the possibility of improving student engagement, increasing sustained attention, and designing alternative assessment. The authors believe edtech enhances learning, but does not replace the teacher.

### **ETC.**

In “Equity Audits of Ethnicity in Three Transitional Series: Moving Toward Diverse Series Books for Today’s Young Readers,” Sonia M. Balkaran and Sherron Killingsworth-Roberts, provide readers with a praxis model for the ETC column. Recalling the aim for the ETC content, authors identify effective instructional support by connecting research data with classroom best

practices. The authors believe it is important for children to see role models similar to their own racial and ethnic contexts. In order for teachers to ensure these types of reading experiences occur, it is critical they know how to identify and use literature featuring strong protagonists of varying races and ethnicities. Employing an equity audit analysis, Balkaran and Killingsworth-Roberts describe protagonists of various multicultural backgrounds in three transitional series. Additionally, they support teachers' continued understanding and best practices by identifying relevant multicultural series books for young readers.

### **Children and Families: Health and Wellness**

In their article, "Dating Violence in Adolescent Relationships," Tiffany Wilson and Matthew Maloney discuss how adolescents undergo physical, social, and emotional changes and describe how these changes can cause an adolescent to become more vulnerable to risk-taking behaviors and exposure to violence. Existing data show increasing numbers of young adolescents engaging in dating relationships. Authors describe how early dating experiences may influence adolescents' views of intimate relationships as well as frame their later behaviors in adult life. This information benefits educators, parents, and counselors.

### **STEAM**

In their manuscript, "The Potential of Purposeful Play: Using the Lens and Language of Crosscutting Concepts to Enhance the Science and Engineering Practices of Play," Criselda Lozon and Jacqueline Grennon Brooks set forth a powerful argument for implementing play into children's learning. They recognize how playful activities naturally foster science and engineering practices; purposeful play teaches children to think critically and at a higher-order capacity. Lozon and Brooks identify specific strategies and particular language to help teachers begin implementing play into children's science and engineering learning.

### **Page Turners: Books for Children**

Editors Maria T. Genest, Katrina Bartow Jacobs, Carla K. Meyer, Michelle J. Sobolak and Patricia A. Crawford identify and discuss an array of current children's literature. They provide educators and parents with a variety of books for early childhood, elementary years, and adolescent readers; and again, they included an opportunity to introduce children to the wonder of poetry.