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International Journal of the Whole Child

Table of Contents

Volume 4 Number 2 2019

Articles:

Teachers in War Zone Education: Literature Review and Implications 9-26

Maryam Sadat Sharifian, Pat Kennedy

International Teacher Perspectives on Quality in ECE: A Case Study 27-42

Julie Chappell, Judit Szente

Developing a Professional Identity in a Global Society 43-52

Jo Beth Oestreich, Kathleen Fite

Pictures for Reflection:

About Twins 53-56

Sandra J. Stone

Tech Talk:

Using Edtech to Enhance Learning 57-63

Brianna Donahoe, Derrian Rickard, Hunter Holden, Kerra Blackwell, Nancy Caukin

ETC.:

Equity Audits of Ethnicity in Three Transitional Series: Moving Toward Diverse Series Books for Today's Young Readers 64-81

Sonia M. Balkaran, Sherron Killingsworth Roberts

International Journal of the Whole Child

Table of Contents

Volume 4 Number 2 2019

Children and Families: Health and Wellness

Dating Violence in Adolescent Relationships 82-87

Tiffany Wilson, Matthew Maloney

STEAM

The Potential of Purposeful Play: Using the Lens and Language of Crosscutting Concepts to Enhance the Science and Engineering Practices of Play 88-94

Criselda Lozon, Jacqueline Grennon Brooks

Page Turners: Books for Children

Maria T. Genest, Katrina Bartow Jacobs, Carla K. Meyer, Michelle J. Sobolak, Patricia A. Crawford 95-99

IJWC Updates 100

Introduction

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 21st 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 Szente, 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 Szente 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.

International Journal of the Whole Child
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Teachers in War Zone Education: Literature Review and Implications

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Maryam Sharifian is an Assistant Professor at James Madison University, College of Education. Dr. Sharifian received her undergraduate and graduate degree in School Counseling from Tehran University in Iran. After completing her PhD in Early Childhood Education from SUNY at Buffalo. Dr. Sharifian targets educational issues relating to children and teachers in areas of armed conflict (providing for their well-being and supporting resilience strategies). In addition, she has worked with children of undocumented Afghan immigrants, schoolgirls in rural Tanzania and street children in Iran.

Patricia Kennedy is the Director of the College of Education's Young Children's Program, a lab school located on the campus of James Madison University. Ms. Kennedy received her undergraduate in Special Education from Madison College and M.Ed. in Reading Education from James Madison University. Ms. Kennedy supports educational issues regarding trauma informed care, resiliency, and mindfulness.

Abstract

Teaching is traditionally considered one of the most stressful of occupations. Lack of experience, training, and working with children with behavior problems represent variables shown to increase teachers' stress. Research also demonstrates teachers' stress can reduce their performance and also might lead to negative attitudes (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). The magnitude of concerns of teachers in war zones, however, greatly exceeds those typically discussed. Identification of psychological needs of teachers and students during crises is necessary in order to minimize future teaching and learning challenges (Sommers, 2002). During war, teachers and children both struggle through immense trauma. In this time of enhanced struggles, it is critical teachers concern themselves with effectively managing classrooms of often-traumatized children who have a right to a quality education (Brody & Baum, 2007). In the past, few studies however, focused specifically upon the emotional well-being and difficulties of teachers in war zones (Sumner, 2005; Ramos, 2010, Sharifian, 2017). This is clearly the case in describing Syrian teachers working and living inside the war zone.

Keywords: Primary Teachers, Resilience, War zone, Syria

Introduction

In June 2012, the United Nations proclaimed that Syria was in a civil war (BBC News, 2012). Syria currently is known as the world's largest producer of both internally displaced people and refugees (USA for United Nations High Commission for Refugees [USA for UNHCR], n.d.). Currently, 13.1 million Syrians are still in need of humanitarian assistance within Syria (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018). Of these, about 6.6 million lost their homes and are currently internally displaced persons (IDP). In addition, 5.6 million Syrians were forced to flee their home to neighboring countries. More than half of these refugees are children (World Vision, 2018).

A history of war prevails in the Middle East. If this history of continuing armed conflict is to diminish for future generations, it will most likely come about through education. Sommer (2002), describes how access to education is extremely difficult in wartime. During war, the education of children is generally given a low priority. This low priority comes at a time when the needs of children (e.g. trauma from abuse, and psychological/emotional challenges) exhibit the greatest intensity. If education is the best hope for resolving conflict and enabling future peace, high quality education is most needed in war zones. Yet, little is known about the quality of education in war zone schools.

The Education of Children in War Zones: The Syrian Context

Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) describes education as an essential right for all children even during the times of emergencies (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2008). Dryden-Peterson (2011) suggests education is directly related to improving the quality of life for all people of the world. Education can lead to “poverty reduction, holding promises of stability, economic growth, and better lives for children, families, and communities” (Dryden-Peterson, 2011, p.8). Postponing or neglecting to provide education for children during crises is not only counter-productive, but is also likely to lead to delay achievement of sustainability (Global Education Monitoring Report Team UNESCO, 2015). Education, however, is seldom a priority in war zones. Sommers (2002) reported a large majority of war-affected children in their home country and those who have obtained refuge in neighboring countries are deprived of education mandated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This is clearly the case in Syria.

Prior to the conflict, education was an important (and free) part of Syrian society. There, “more than 90% of primary school-aged children were enrolled – one of the highest rates in the Middle East” (Save The Children, 2013, p. 12). War, however, has affected all aspects of Syrian lives and education is no exception (United Nation Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2018). Under international humanitarian law, targeting and attacking schools remain strictly prohibited (United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary for Children and Armed conflict, n.d.). In spite of this international prohibition, however, UNICEF reported that most of Syria’s schools have been destroyed, damaged, or transformed into shelters. Throughout the war, the Syrian army used schools to harbor combatants which made schools prime targets for attack (Save The Children, 2013).

The UNICEF (2018) reported more than 2 million children inside Syria are out of school in 2016-17. Likewise, nearly 700,000 registered school-age children living in refugee camps outside of Syria (Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, & Iraq) did not enroll for school (UNICEF, 2018). In addition to the possibility of bombing at any time, students and teachers going to school are beset with many other dangers such as the fear of being abducted, raped, stepping on landmines or being caught in crossfire.

Because of these serious challenges, increasing numbers of fearful families chose to not send their children to school (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Yet, research suggests that attending schools in times of war actually lessens the psychological damage caused by the many horrors of war. Safety should be a basic principle for all schools (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Safety alone, however, does not necessarily lead to high quality education. A clear example of this is education in refugee camps. Where schools are available, refugee children study in a relatively safe environment. Research, however, suggests that children in refugee camps suffer from a disturbingly low quality of education. Indeed, the outcomes of students' learning are not even close to the education of children outside the camps. For instance, Dryden-Peterson (2011) found that among Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, less than 6% of refugee children had reached benchmark reading fluency by grade 4" (p. 6). In addition to a plethora of disputes described earlier, perhaps the most significant of all challenges to quality education in refugee camps, is securing a cadre of qualified teachers (Sommers, 2002). Critically. It is such qualified teachers that provide the greatest potential for creating a future generation of citizens who can find ways of solving problems without war (Miller & Affolter, 2002). Thus, war zone education is inherently an act of peace building, a commitment to peace education.

Teachers in War Zones

Buchanan, Casbergue, and Baumgartner (2010) suggest that in addition to family and community, teachers play a critical role in children's mental health following war trauma. Indeed, Buchanan et al. (2010) state that considering the lack of adequate support services to address the mental health of children, teachers may have the most potential to improve the mental health of disaster-affected communities. Stead (1940) comments:

> Teachers have a great and difficult duty in wartime. More than any other section of the community they are the guardians of the future. For when armies melt away and the noise of battle dies down, it will be the products of the school who will have to repair the damage done. And this duty of the teachers involves a jealous guardianship of the proper function of schools and education (p. 102).

Similarly, Winthrop and Kirk (2008) suggest that re-building society by educating children after conflict was an important role of teachers in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. Likewise, Sommers (2002) suggests that the impact of teachers during crisis is even more critical than during peacetime. In addition to teaching and educating, teachers promote and foster the physical, social and psychosocial development of children. Aside from parents, de Berry et al. (2003) suggest teachers remain the most trusted adults in children's lives and because of this, they can have a major impact upon the child even in the absence of educational materials.

Being a teacher (even during peacetime) is no easy task. Teachers face many daily challenges at school and in classrooms. Stressors reported by teachers include: lacking professional resources, interacting with students with behavioral difficulties, overcrowding in classrooms, overloading in work responsibilities, wanting of administrative support, ongoing conflicts in work environments, missing staff communication, and diminishing of parent-teacher professional support (Lambert, O'Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006; Betoret, 2006; Younghusband, 2005; & Ullrich, 2009). Dealing with such challenges cause significant levels of teacher burnout (Betoret, 2006).

The magnitude of concerns of teachers in war zones, however, greatly exceeds those sited above. For example, Wa-Mbaleka (2013) identifies seven major educational challenges for teachers working with children in war zones including "disparities in access to financial support; large numbers of learners; few educational facilities; limited opportunities for teacher preparation; restricted choices for curriculum selection; minimal access to marketable skills, and negative attitudes towards female education " (p.34) . Thus, teachers in war zones encounter many more challenges likely to contribute to greatly expanded teacher burnout at a time when they are most needed to be at their best (Sommor, 2002).

During armed conflict, teachers encounter children experiencing greatly heightened psychological demands. Research suggests that school-based interventions through teachers are practical and achievable methods for the reduction and prevention of the symptoms of war trauma in children (Werner, 2005). However, securing high quality teachers capable of adequately addressing psychological demands of children in war areas is made even more difficult by the many personal challenges of teachers. Given the tenuous status of wartime governments and greatly decreased support from NGO's, for example, teachers who are willing to risk their lives to educate children in war zones most often perform this critical service with no compensation. Further, Dryden-Peterson (2011) suggests that teachers in war areas regularly teach overcrowded classrooms often exceeding ratios of one teacher to seventy students. Moreover, such teachers in war zones are likely to be severely untrained.

Refugee camp teacher training generally includes about 10 days of training. A limited number of teachers receive even this minimal training. In addition, Machel (1996) suggests that teacher performance generally declines greatly during wartime. This is often because they, too, may have been subjected to savagery, injury, trauma and/or sexual abuse for being a teacher. Teachers' mental health is an important factor that can affect their teaching performance and the quality of education that children receive in emergency situations (Seyle, Widyatmoko, & Silver, 2013). It may also impact teachers' emotional exhaustion and burnout. Because of these additional stressors, Ramos (2010) recommends it is critical for researchers to study the impact of trauma, burnout and resilience in quality of teachers in war zone schools.

Trauma in War Zone Teachers

War is a powerful source of enduring psychological disturbance. It involves an extensive range of violent and traumatic experiences, including the immediate threat of death and/or disfigurement, physical injury, witnessing injury and/or death of others, and involvement in injuring or killing both combatants and civilians (Weathers, Litz, & Keane, 1995). For some, war includes witnessing/participating in atrocities, as well as undergoing rape, capture, and prisoner-of- war experiences such as confinement, torture, and extreme physical deprivation. The impact of such traumatic experiences can affect all aspects of human lives. These traumas, in turn, can produce a variety of symptoms and disorders. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM-IV), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a condition emerging from "exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (2011) reports PTSD is the most common mental illness among those from war zones.

Symptoms of PTSD in children after experiencing war trauma become illustrated in numerous investigations (Morgos, Worden, & Gupta, 2007; Ursano & Shaw, 2007; Elbert, Schauer, Schauer, Hirth, & Neuner, 2009). These studies consistently suggest that more than half of children exposed to war exhibit PTSD symptoms (Allwood, Dolan, & Husain, 2002). Furthermore, war trauma not only affects the current health conditions of children, but their future education may also be severely affected by these experiences (Berson & Baggerly, 2009).

Research also emerges regarding trauma in adults. Studies suggest the military population with experience of war demonstrates a high rate of PTSD (Vasterling et al., 2010; Kaiser, 2012). Additional trauma research conducted with refugees demonstrates connections. For example, Bojic, Njoku, & Priebe (2015) performed a meta-analysis of long-term mental health of war-affected refugees comparing results from 29 different studies. They found that the prevalence of anxiety, depression and PTSD were significant in the refugee population. This study further indicated that prevalence range of PTSD was between (4.4-86%). Özer, Şirin, & Oppedal (2013) investigated war experiences and mental health of 311 children ages nine-18 in the Islahiye refugee camp in Turkey. Findings describe how 74 % of children experienced loss of a family member, 60% exhibited symptoms of depression, 45% indicated PTSD, 22% demonstrated aggression, and 65% evidenced psychosomatic symptoms. Furthermore, Al-Shagran, Khasawneh, Ahmed, & Jarrah (2015) studied 155 Syrian refugees living in a Jordanian refugee camp and found that rate of PTSD was higher in: females, those with greater than high school diploma ($p < .02$), those married ($p < .05$), those who experienced first-hand trauma, those physically hurt ($p < .000$), those who had observed family member(s) being physically hurt ($p < .000$), loss of a family member, and those exposed to traumatic events ($p < .000$).

Research is evident in the context of social ecology, the impact of caregiver's' mental health on children's trauma in war zone and refugee populations (Betancourt, Yudron, Wheaton, & Smith-Fawzi, 2012; Van Ee, Kleber, & Mooren, 2012). In a longitudinal study of 1,362 caregivers and children ages11-16 in two settings in Afghanistan, researchers described a significant association between caregiver's' mental health and children's mental health outcomes. Results suggested that outcomes in post- traumatic stress, depression, psychiatric difficulties, and prosocial strength were significantly correlated with their caregivers' mental health (Panter-Brick, Grimon, & Eggerman, 2014). Caregivers with better mental health, were increasing the possibility of higher mental health in children. A similar pattern was revealed between maternal post-traumatic stress symptoms and an infant's developmental and psychological problems and parent-child interactions for refugees in Netherlands (Van Ee, Kleber, & Mooren, 2012).

As caregivers, teachers may also have an important role in supporting children who have experienced violence and trauma (Baker & Cunningham, 2009). In a study of teachers' experiences in refugee camps, Wa-Mbaleka (2013) found that 89% of teachers expressed their concern about traumatic experiences of their students in refugee or Internally Displace Person (IDP) camps.

Similarly, the role of teachers as support systems for children in traumatic environments is highlighted in school intervention studies (Berger, Pat-Horenczyk, & Gelkopf, 2007; Ehntholt, Smith, & Yule, 2005; Alisic, Bus, Dulack, Pennings, & Splinter, 2012). For example, researchers examined posttraumatic symptoms (PTS) and anxiety levels of children in northern Israel to investigate the impact of teachers' training in Building Resilience Intervention (BRI) of students. In this study, teachers received 12 hours of training to learn how to increase resilience in themselves and their students. Participants included 524 students with PTS and 490 students with anxiety issues in grades 4 and 6 from 4 schools. Subjects were divided into 2 groups of control and into 2 groups of intervention. The results indicate that students' PTS and anxiety decreased significantly in the intervention group compared to the control group ($p < 0.005$). Researchers concluded that teacher training in interventions focused on enhancing resilience to war trauma may help reduce PTS and anxiety in students with war and terror experience. This study also reported significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher PTS and anxiety levels in females, younger age children, and those having a longer history of trauma (Baum et al., 2013).

Teaching is traditionally considered one of the most stressful of occupations. Lack of experience, training, and working with children with behavior problems are variables shown to increase teacher stress. Research also demonstrates that stress in teachers can reduce teachers' performance and also might lead to negative attitudes (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). For example, Rogers (1997) studied how teachers during the Nicaragua conflict perceived effects of the war on their professional roles. The researcher interviewed twelve educators who were teaching during the time of war and postwar and asked them to use auto photographic techniques and take twelve pictures to portray the critical features of their current life. Then, dividing the pictures into three categories (related to the war, to professional role, and both), results of the interviews and photographs showed teachers perceived a loss of a future, violation of potential, failed expectations, incomprehensibility, disconnection, and uncertainty. Yet, these teachers remained committed to "the profession, to students, to improvement of the profession and to the concept of peace" (Rogers, 1997, p. iv).

Research also indicates that during war teachers themselves may suffer from trauma. For instance, Potts (2010) examined the relationship between community violence, PTSD and forgiveness in 193 Salvadorian teachers living in a high violence area in San Salvador as well as rural areas. El Salvador was involved in a civil war from 1980 to 1992 and still suffers from high community violence. The researcher implemented 16 hours workshops in managing aspects of burnout, PTSD, and self-care for participants in high violence communities. Using bivariate one-tailed Pearson correlation, findings describe a significant positive, albeit rather low, relationship between PTSD and community violence (r =0.19, p = 0.01) and negative relationship between forgiveness and PTSD (r = - 0.25, p = 0.000). PTSD also demonstrates significant reverse correlation with forgiveness ($\beta = -.542, p < 0.01$). However, forgiveness as a moderator did not show a significant relationship with PTSD and community violence.

Similarly, Linscott (2010) studied the association among community violence, PTSD and fatalism in Salvadorian educators. Of the 193 participants, 65.8% identified as female and 32.6% identified as male. Samples participated in free training workshops to learn about vicarious trauma and self-care in working in high violence areas. Of those, 19.9% suffered from a high level of PTSD and 28.8% reported symptoms of PTSD. The study found a significant relationship between community violence and higher levels of PTSD in teachers (p <0.001). No significant correlation between fatalism and other variables evidenced. Likewise, Wolmer, Laor & Yazgan (2003) found that after crises, teachers may suffer from severe post-traumatic stress, depression and grief. Therefore, teachers might not be able or even interested in continuing working with students who experienced traumatic stress.

Trauma and emotional dysfunction in teachers during and after war may significantly impact teachers' emotional exhaustion and burnout (Ramos, 2010). Therefore, in addition to problems of obtaining qualified teacher candidates described above, the likely presence of psychological trauma creates additional challenges to providing children with greatest need of high-quality teachers (Sommers, 2002). Although research is beginning to investigate the association between PTSD and burnout in occupations related to human communication associated to health, education, and social services during crises, there is minimal research specifically investigating the psychological health of teachers in war zones.

Burnout in War Zone Teachers

Burnout in teachers is a major concern in education (Chang, 2009; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). Van Tonder and Williams (2009), state "burnout has become a crucial issue for all institutions that aim to produce quality products and services on a sustainable basis and to remain innovative in an increasingly competitive environment" (Van Tonder and Williams, 2009, p.1). According to U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), for example, 8% of 3,377,900 teachers of public schools in USA left their job during 2011-2012 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). In addition, Ingersoll & Smith (2004) suggest that burnout is a major concern in novice teachers since around 50% of them leave the profession early in their career. Moreover, teaching disadvantaged and special needs children demands even greater time and effort both inside and outside the classroom, which often leads to even greater burnout (Brown & Roloff, 2011).

Chubbuck & Zembylas (2008) describe how inner-city teachers often face challenges such as violence, lack of learning materials, students with emotional disorders, and a poor quality of learning environment. For example, Standish (2014) assessed the burnout and resilience of Black secondary school teachers in inner- city public schools. Thirteen Black secondary school teachers (grades 9-12) in inner-city schools of District of Columbia participated in in-depth interviews in this qualitative study. The entire population (100%) of participants suggested that professional development is a potentially powerful source for nurturing resilience. More than 92.3% of participants further indicated that professional development is inadequate, 92.3% irrelevant, and 76.9% a waste of time and resources. In addition, all teachers (100%) expressed that the competitive environment at school was another variable relating to teacher burnout. Participants (92.3%) also claimed that decisions and policies were often not in favor of students as the most important stakeholders. Findings of this study also suggest that the DC inner- city public school setting does not help teachers to foster resilience. Nevertheless, teachers indicate that factors that assist them in developing resilience include: their relationship with God or a higher power (92.3%); their relationship with themselves (92.3%); their relationships with friends and family (86.1%); and their relationships with students (92.3%) (Standish, 2014).

Results of a study of teachers working with AIDs children suggest that teachers suffered symptoms of burnout, stress, exhaustion, and sadness. Consequently, teachers started to leave their job or lost their zeal for this work (Lucas, 2007). Ramos (2010) studied the association between emotional exhaustion using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), vicarious trauma by Community Violence Checklist (CVC), and Self-Care Checklist in a sample of 110 Salvadorian teachers. Results of the study suggest a significant correlation between teachers' vicarious trauma and emotional exhaustion (r =. 38, *p* = .01). In addition, data show a significant correlation between lower levels of self-care practices and emotional exhaustion *(r* = .38, *p* = .01). The researcher recommends future research examine self-care's possible moderating effects on emotional exhaustion in teachers reporting high levels of vicarious trauma. Bobek (2002) also suggests that challenging conditions related to the teaching profession require that teachers represent high levels of resilience. Therefore, to prevent teacher burnout there are suggestions such as "significant adult relationships; a sense of personal responsibility; social and problem solving skills; a sense of competence, expectations and goals, confidence, a sense of humor; and a sense of accomplishment" (Bobek, 2002, p. 202).

Teachers in war zones encounter perhaps the most vulnerable of all children who have suffered from an entire cauldron of traumatic experiences. It is no surprise that research is beginning to demonstrate a major PTSD impact on the cognitive and emotional behavior of children. Specifically, findings regarding war-related trauma indicate to negatively affect children's intelligence, cognition, memory, and attention (Allwood et al., 2002; Qouta, Punamäki, Miller, & El Sarraj, 2008a; Qouta, Punamäki, Miller, & El Sarraj, 2008b). In addition, some of the educational obstacles and challenges that children face in war zone's (Strekalova and Hoot (2008)) include: exposure to traumatic experiences, new language challenges, impact of culture on identity, resistance of parents to allowing children to go to school, discrimination challenges, and socio-economic status.

Sharifian (2017), in her study on 70 Syrian primary teachers working inside the war zone, investigated the burnout level of teachers via Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey Format (MBI-ES). The one-way ANOVA analysis found a statistically significant main effect for teachers' training and emotional exhaustion (burnout subscale), F (2, 67) = 0.76, p < 0.01. This suggests educators with teacher training (M = 23.62) experienced greater emotional exhaustion than teachers without teacher training (M = 15.15). Data revealed no significant differences between teacher training with depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (burnout subscale).

Given the aforementioned factors, nations envisioning a future citizenry who solve problems without war are left to determine how to create and retain a cadre of highly competent and resilient teachers (Patterson, Collins, & Abbott, 2004) who can overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges. Yet, research data guiding nations in *how* to do this is, for the most part, silent--especially in the Middle East.

Resilience in War Zone Teachers

People often react differently to traumatic events in their lives. Some show psychological traumatic symptoms (e.g, PTSD), while others appear resilient to these events (Winter, Brown and Goins, 2015); still others, remain not as severely affected (Bojic et al., 2015). Bonanno, Westphal & Mancini (2011), however, found that a major explanation for the differences in response to the same traumatic event was a variable called resilience. Bonanno (2004) defined resilience as:

The ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances who are exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event, such as the death of a close relation or a violent or life-threatening situation, to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning (p. 20).

Similarly, Connor & Davidson (2003) suggest, “resilience embodies the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity” (p. 76). Fostering resilience depends on a variety of factors. Goins (2015) classified factors affecting resilience as personality, environmental factors, previous stressors, agency and self-efficacy, priori beliefs and worldviews, faith and spirituality, acculturation skills, and the physical environment.

There is a growing body of resilience research with subjects involved in armed conflict. Besser, Weinberg, Zeigler-Hill, & Neria (2014), for example, explored the impact of intrapersonal (i.e., levels of hope, optimism, and self-esteem) and interpersonal sources (i.e., levels of support from family, friends, and significant others) upon resilience in treating PTSD symptoms and dissociative experiences in times of war. Researchers recruited 140 non-clinical female participants from the ongoing Israel War in Gaza. These researchers measured participants optimism by using the Life Orientation Test-Revised, hope by Trait Hope Scale, self-esteem by The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, perceived social support by Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, PTSD by PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version, and Dissociative Experiences by Dissociative Experiences Scale. Through structural equation modeling and data analysis, researchers reported a significant relationship between intrapersonal resilience and interpersonal resilience ($r = 0.42$, $t = 3.41$, $p < 0.001$) in addition to a significant relationship with acute anxiety symptoms ($\beta = -0.52$, $t = -2.92$, $p < 0.003$ and $\beta = -0.40$, $t = -2.55$, $p < 0.01$). These data indicate resilient sources of support for people in war zones can serve as a deterrent from negative psychological outcomes such as PTSD.

Findings also describe resilience in children during war. For example, Punamäki, Qouta, Miller, & El-Sarraj (2011) studied resilience in Palestinian children in Gaza. Researchers recruited 640 children ages six-16 years-of-age for the study. Researchers measured a number of related demographic variables of both children and their families. These variables included: parent's education, family income, place of residency and family size, traumatic events, emotional and conduct disorders, resilience classification, parental mental health, parenting practices, school performance, physical health and cognitive-emotional functioning, and ante- and perinatal problems. Findings suggest that 23% of children evidenced high degrees of resilience. The study also found significant positive parental mental health ($p< .002$ mothers and $p < .003$ fathers), supportive parenting practices ($t = 2.87$, $p < .001$), and cognitive functioning ($t = 5.87$, $p< .001$) for the resilient group. Researchers concluded that school performance and physical health of resilient children were higher than less resilient children (Punamäki, Qouta, Miller, & El-Sarraj, 2011).

Groves (1997) asserted that early childhood teachers and educators may exhibit an important role in recognizing and supporting resilience in children living with violence and conflict. Furthermore, teachers can provide a nurturing environment through constancy, stable schedules, and creating a curriculum to support children (Baker & Cunningham, 2009). However, when enmeshed in war environments, nurturing the above skills becomes much more challenging for teachers given variations in resilience. For people who have experienced war and potentially trauma, resilience is an important factor in preparing them to move on to a healthy and successful future.

Despite these many challenges, however, Gu & Day (2007) describe how many teachers continue to develop their professional skills and maintain their commitment and their teaching effectiveness—i.e. resilience. Perhaps the mitigating variable here may be teacher resilience which Henderson & Milstein (2003) suggest can help teachers "bounce back from negative life experiences and become stronger in the process of overcoming them" (p.2). Likewise, Bobek (2002) suggests that "A teacher's resilience is enhanced when he is capable of assessing adverse situations, recognizing options for coping, and arriving at appropriate resolutions" (p. 202). Being a resilient teacher, then, is an important factor for developing resilient students who count on their teachers as a "role model" (Henderson & Milstein, 2003).

Resilience also allows educators to overcome many challenges of the teaching occupation. For example, Brunetti (2006) studied 13 teachers with more than 12 years' experience in inner- city schools. The researcher utilized semi structured and in-depth interviews. Results suggest that important variables relating to teacher resilience included: teachers' love of students, their professional and personal job satisfaction, and the support they received from school leaders and administrators.

Additionally, researchers studied teachers' resilience with teachers in disadvantaged schools of Australia. Howard and Johnson (2004), interviewed 10 teachers who were identified at-risk of burnout and stress, but they maintained their resilience by successful coping. Teachers in these schools faced a variety of challenges such as violent student behavior, students with experienced significant trauma (e.g., abuse/ neglect), lack of student motivation as well as lack of support from administrators and colleagues. Further findings described resilient teachers to possess coping skills that included a sense of agency (opposite of helplessness) i.e., these teachers believed their ability to overcome obstacles, they expressed strong group support (i.e., they evidenced a strong social network outside of school such as family and/or friends who provided support, and they felt competent through a sense of achievement (producing to their success of making change in children lives and their professional ability).

An emerging body of research suggests teachers can play an important role in assisting children in overcoming symptoms of post war trauma such as PTSD and anxiety by developing resilience in their students (Wolmer, Laor, Dedeoglu, Siev, & Yazgan, 2005; Baum et al, 2013). However, little is known about the actual resilience of teachers in active war zones--especially in the Middle East. Sharifian's (2017) study of resilience of 70 primary teachers inside the Syria war zone suggested that sense of personal accomplishment, faith and spirituality, and teacher training programs remain necessary to not only prepare teachers to increase their resilience, but also promote the sense of purpose and belongings in crisis circumstances.

Brody & Baum (2007) studied the resilience of 2 kindergarten teachers in Israel. Using Richardson's Resilience Theory to inform their investigation, researchers found each teacher individually developed coping resilience strategies in communication with their students during the ongoing war and terror. The personal strategy of the first teacher was implementing direct discussion with her students about traumatic experiences of war in their daily lives. She asserts that children are capable of understanding war. The second teacher applied the opposite strategy and avoided any direct discussions regarding traumatic events. This teacher felt that preventing discussion of traumatic experiences at school would make school a much-needed space for comfort. Instead, she focused on enhancing self-esteem, promoting self-efficacy, and nurturing optimism in children by teaching decision-making skills, meeting achievable tasks, and teaching prayer; these strategies assist children to be resilient.

To investigate the hypothesis that greater resilience would result in less teacher-burnout during the war time, Sharifian (2017) utilized Pearson correlations to measure possible relations among all three burnout subscales (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) and resilience. The results described how only the burnout subscale of personal accomplishment represented a significant positive correlation with resilience ($r=0.50$, $p \leq 0.001$). This suggests teachers with higher levels of personal accomplishment demonstrated higher levels of resilience. According to the MBI-ES, higher personal accomplishment indicates lower burnout; therefore, the positive correlation between personal accomplishment and resilience found that higher resilience resulted in less teacher burnout. In addition, to measure the relation between burnout and trauma, Pearson correlations were calculated. Correlations among trauma and burnout subscales suggested that trauma had a significant negative correlation ($r=-0.39$, $p < 0.001$) with personal accomplishment. This indicates teachers with higher trauma levels showed lower personal accomplishment. However, emotional exhaustion revealed no statistically significant relation with trauma ($r=0.261$, $p < 0.1$).

Nurturing resilience in wartime, however, is not easily achieved. War trauma presents more challenging conditions for teachers that demand even greater resiliency to maintain quality teaching and supporting students in such an environment. However, teacher resilience in war zone research receives minimal attention compared to research in more stable teaching environments (Brody & Baum, 2007).

Conclusion

A major conclusion of the research on teachers in conflict areas involves the trauma and burnout struggles confronted by these courageous teachers in crisis. There is a potential role that resilience might play in decreasing trauma and burnout levels of teachers in active war zones. The issue remains how the teacher education profession might address assisting our international colleagues in conflict in increasing their capacity toward resilience. Teacher training programs remain necessary to not only prepare teachers to increase their resilience, but also promote their sense of purpose and belonging in crisis circumstances. It is important for research to consider conducting studies regarding the influence of training and workshops to improve resilience and coping strategies of teachers in war zones.

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International Teacher Perspectives on Quality in ECE: A Case Study

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Abstract

The goal of early childhood programming is to provide children with high-quality early care and to support educators' understanding and ability to implement high-quality practices on behalf of children and their families. Quality in early childhood care is an ambiguous concept, relative to various social and context-specific factors, making it difficult to define in standardized terms. A classroom teacher's proximity to decisions in the early childhood classroom validates the need for teacher perceptions to be considered in practices regarding high-quality care. This paper presents a comparative case study that sought to explore teacher perspectives of high-quality care from two nations, Finland and the United States, and examined how these perspectives differed or aligned across the influences of culture. Using an interpretivist design for qualitative research methods, preschool and early year teacher participants completed pre-surveys in which they rated various indicators of quality. Survey responses guided semi-structured interviews. Additionally, participants discussed photographs of classroom and school activities that they felt exhibited quality. In vivo and values coding were used to analyze the interview data and generate themes in which teachers described high quality. Generating from both participant groups, the analysis resulted in various themes, such as child-centered classrooms, physical environment, and highly educated teachers. While language and terminology differed, teachers in Finland and the United States valued similar indicators of high-quality early programs.

Keywords: comparative, high-quality, early years, early childhood

Introduction

High quality early childhood education is recognized as leading to positive outcomes for children as well as economic benefits to society (Nores, Belfield, Barnett, & Schweinhart, 2005). However, scholars warn against a universal definition of high-quality early care. Nearly two decades ago, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999) recognized the importance of understanding early childhood education as more than predictable and controlled, as implied by the language of quality. Quality continues to be an ambiguous term, including both objective and subjective factors that are relative to values, beliefs, and needs of various stakeholders (Cryer, Tietze, & Wessels, 2002; Barros & Leal, 2015). As a socially constructed concept (Dahlberg et al., 1999), the term quality lacks a definitive conceptualization.

By assuming a cross national investigation of teachers' perceptions, this study aims to situate quality as a culturally and socially interpreted term while exploring possible associations or similarities among teachers' views of high-quality early care. Since measures of quality continue to be used to determine what is important in the early childhood classroom, teachers' perceptions of quality remain essential.

Specifically, the focus of this paper, referred to in Finland as early childhood education and care (ECEC), occurs before children enter primary education, between the ages of one and six. A distinction is made between preschool teachers (teachers of pre-primary children at the age of six) and kindergarten or ECEC teachers (teachers of children between the ages of one and five) (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018). In the United States, early childhood education (ECE), most often referred to as preschool, occurs between birth and age five, after which children enter their compulsory education as kindergarteners in primary schools. The vast majority of states offer free voluntary prekindergarten for four-year-old children.

The purpose of this study is to investigate components of high-quality care from the perspectives of teachers representing Finland and the United States. In focusing on teachers' perceptions, teachers become the knowledgeable experts in providing high-quality care. This study begins to describe how cultural and social factors affect and shape perceptions of high-quality care by exploring differences and similarities of teachers' beliefs. The findings of this study begin to provide a valuable understanding of the global construction of quality from the viewpoint of educators as important stakeholders in the early childhood classroom setting.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

(1) How do teacher perceptions of quality compare between early childhood teachers in the United States and Finland?

Within the guiding research question, two sub-questions emerged as:

(2) Which aspects of quality do teachers in the United States and Finland place the most value? and

(3) What role, if any, does culture and society have in teacher perceptions of quality in the United States and Finland?

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

This study seeks to understand teacher perceptions through comparative and socio-cultural perspectives. Comparative education involves utilizing a critical lens to explore educational practices and policies from different countries and cultures (Clarkson, 2009). The increasingly global society in which we live provides impetus for educators, researchers, and practitioners to examine not only relationships with the wider society, but as well to critically reflect on our own educational systems and practices by increasing our knowledge and understanding of systems and practices that differ. Epstein (2017) explains while the field is influenced by many disciplines, the key indicator of comparative education is the desire for an understanding of global education. For this reason, the current study seeks to view comparative education through a socio-cultural lens. Socio-cultural theory is grounded in the work of Lev Vygotsky and suggests that our interactions and experiences become largely influenced by the culture in which we live and interact with others. Specifically, Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural theory proposes it is the signs and tools in our environment that initiate social contact with others. Thus, learning or internalizing, is initially an external, cultural and social activity that becomes part of the individual. It is through this lens of socio-cultural influences that the current study intends to explore teachers' perceptions of quality care.

Quality in Early Childhood

In a generally defined way, quality is considered from structural and process indicators. Structural indicators include the characteristics of a classroom that can be regulated, such as staff qualifications and ratios, licensing policies, and facility and maintenance requirements. Process indicators represent the everyday interactions, experiences, and relationships occurring in an early childhood environment. While structural and process indicators remain distinct, structural indicators do effect certain process indicators; for example, wages and teacher education evidence as structural indicators to influence process indicators (Cassidy et al., 2005).

Quality as a broad concept poses difficulties in providing a universal measure of quality. Quality measurement tools such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), Early

Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revision (ECERS-R), Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS), and the Association for Childhood Educational International's Global Guidelines Assessment evaluate different facets of quality indicators. After reviewing 11 quality measurement tools with the intention of analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each, along with the sustainability of the tools in an international context, Ishmine and Tayler (2014) conclude that among the tools evaluated, many lacked some of the core elements of quality to be considered important. More relevantly, the researchers note that the purpose of quality assessment measures remains critical to support and provide feedback to teachers in developing and planning curriculum and interactions (Cottle & Alexander, 2012; Ishmine & Tayler, 2014). Harrist, Thompson and Norris (2007) evaluated parent and caregiver perspectives on the quality of childcare using formal rating methods, much like Rentzou (2012) demonstrated in comparing researcher and practitioner ratings of quality. Evaluations of quality, as previously mentioned, continue to be subjectively based upon the purposes and priorities of the stakeholder. Woodhead (1998) called for a contextually based approach to examining quality, as "there are many different potential criteria of quality which are closely linked to beliefs about the goals and functions of programmes" (p. 11). A teacher's obvious proximity to decisions regarding the early childhood environment underscores the critical importance of teachers' perceptions of quality in the classroom.

National Contexts

Finland. The early childhood educational systems in Finland and the United States continue to be influenced by the various structures, policies, social and cultural contexts unique to each nation. Education in Finland is viewed as a basic human right for all and is reflected by the nature of a free schooling, even through both vocational and university levels (Kangaslahti, 2013; Havu-Nuutinen & Niikko, 2014; Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018). Although the Ministry of Education and Culture, oversees Finish education, educational system decisions are made collaboratively between all stakeholders, including policy makers, professionals in the field of education, teachers, parents, and sometimes even students (Kangaslahti, 2013). Municipalities themselves remain responsible for the operating of schools; principals at each school are given the authority to manage individual schools, typically in collaboration with teachers (National Center on Education and the Economy [NCEE], 2015). At the classroom level, teachers demonstrate the freedom to construct the learning environment, choose learning materials, and set the curriculum (Kangaslahti, 2013).

Turunen, Määttä, and Uusiautti (2012) discuss how curriculum is "always part of cultural and political zeitgeist of the society in which it is written; the curricula in early childhood are also tightly connected to national societal goals" (p. 586). At the time of the current study, the *National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care* served as the relevant curriculum document for ECEC in Finland *(in Finland* published in Finnish in 2003 and English in 2005). The purposes of the *National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland* include: to provide equal opportunities for education across the country, to evidence developmental activities, and to introduce uniform principles. Emphasis is placed on the child's well-being, care and health, play, exploration, physical activities, and language

(National Research and Development Center for Welfare and Health, 2005; Havu-Nuutinen & Niikko, 2014). The new *National Core Curriculum for ECEC* was released after study completion. While the new curriculum is considered a standard rather than a guideline, local municipalities continue to maintain authority to develop their own curricula based from the new core curriculum. Kangaslahti (2013) cautions that the Finnish educational system (or any other national system) cannot merely be copied into another cultural context, though it does provide an important example. The Finnish ECEC system is highly dependent on the cultural factors of equality, trust, and responsibility, the high quality of teachers, and the research-based pedagogy of child-centeredness and care.

United States. Current United States ECE policy evidences historical roots beginning in the 1960s. Many early childhood programs originated as a response to the War on Poverty initiatives in the mid-1960s and the economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Winter & Kelley, 2008), initially developed to target high-risk, impoverished, and economically and socially disadvantaged children. In 1989, the National Educational Goals 2000 introduced the goal of education as producing an improved workforce, thus highlighting the top-down need for children to be better prepared for school (Winter & Kelley, 2008). Neuman (2015) writes about the current policy goals, including a focus on improving the quality of early childhood programs and providing equitable access to quality programs for supporting children from lower socio-economic areas.

An emerging focus of early childhood programs in the United States is the idea of school readiness, preparing children for formal schooling in kindergarten, resulting in policy makers becoming more fixated on the long-term investment of early care (Brooks & Murray, 2018). DeBruin and Slutzky (2016) explored the early learning standards across the different states in the U.S., noting the variance in standards alignment to age and grade level ranges. Evans (2013) acknowledged the pre-primary approach to school readiness, commonly found in the United States, primarily focuses on child outcomes, standards-based models, and basic academic skills required for school.

Methodology

Design

The study used a comparative case study approach to data collection and analysis. Case studies become useful when a researcher seeks to investigate a particular group of individuals, program or techniques (Lichtman, 2013). This study most aligns with the case study views illustrated by Sharan Merriam and Robert Stake, which assume the constructivist lens of epistemology (Yazan, 2015). Yazan (2015) explains both Merriam and Stake understand reality is constructed, multiple viewpoints exist, and researchers remain interpreters of information; researchers construct their own meaning from the findings, although Merriam also acknowledges the influences of researchers views on the interpretations. Following an interpretivist paradigm in design, the aim is to develop deep, comprehensive understanding of topics through multiple perspectives (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Thanh and Thanh (2015) explain the interpretivist as one that values subjectivity and dismisses universal standards of human behavior and research.

In this study, a rich understanding of quality from two varying cultures and various individuals supports the interpretivist design.

Sample

The inclusion criteria for teacher participants was solely limited to current classroom teachers working in an early childhood setting that taught in Finland. This included kindergarten (ages birth to five) and pre-primary (age six) teachers, and in the United States this included infant, toddler and preschool teachers (ages birth to five). The three teacher participants in Finland represent three different centers, each with varying local contexts, school specific goals and structures. One Finnish teacher participant was from a pre-primary class within a primary school, and the other two teachers interacted with children in kindergartens with children through the age of five years of age. In the United States, both teacher participants were in preschool classrooms with children ages three and four. The two teacher participants from the U.S. were also at the same school. Demographic data on the teachers were not deemed pertinent to the current study and thus not collected from participants; however, each participant was a qualified teacher with a bachelor or master's degree in teaching the specific age group with which they worked.

Procedures

The total number of participants in the study was five: three early years teachers residing in Finland and two preschool teachers in the United States. An exemplary sampling method was used to request participation from individuals at schools and early care centers in Finland connected with a partnering university through a study abroad program during the spring semester of 2016. Before the program began, directors or principals were emailed study permission requests. The final sample of Finnish participants included three early childhood teachers from three different centers, with two of the interviews approved for audio-recording. Exemplary sampling was again used in the United States during the spring semester of 2018 as participants were also sought from a child-care center connected to the university. The center director was contacted and emailed study permission requests, along with the pre-surveys for teachers to complete ahead of time. The two interviews conducted were audio recorded.

Data Collection

In order to answer the research questions, data were collected in the form of pre-surveys, interviews, researcher notes and audio-transcriptions, and photo elicitations when available. The setting for each interview varied depending on the availability of space. In Finland, two of the interviews were conducted in a space used by children during the interview (a hallway and a dining and play area). The last interview in Finland was conducted in a classroom kitchen area that children were not using at the time. In the United States, both interviews were conducted in teacher workspaces. The interview lengths also varied depending on time availability and ranged from eight to 45 minutes. Each teacher (representing Finland and U.S.) used their teacher preparation and/or break time to complete the interview. Prior to the interview, teachers completed a pre-survey in which they rated indicators of quality based on the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) Global Guidelines Assessment (GGA). The results of the survey guided the interview questions. The pre-survey also provided space for teachers to input their own indicators of high quality they felt were not included in the GGA. Semi-structured interviews focused on the indicators rated as most important as well as any additional indicators provided by the participant. In addition, teachers in Finland were given a camera and asked to walk through the center and take pictures of ideas they thought illustrated high-quality. Teachers in the United States had pictures prepared for the interview session.

During the interviews, the first author also jotted down notes to highlight salient points made by interviewees. These notes were added to the transcripts, but were not coded if directly redundant with other codes found in the interviewee's transcription. It is also pertinent to note that only two of the three Finnish interviews were audio recorded. The third interview was documented by note taking. For this reason, the coding of this interview only included values coding, as verbatim quotes cannot be verified. Both interviews conducted with U.S. teachers were audio recorded and research notes were limited to clarifying questions.

Data Analysis

In order to answer the research questions, inductive, open coding was used to eliminate researcher preconceptions and focus on emergent concepts generated within the data (Lin, 2013). To satisfy the purposes of the research, two different coding methods were used in the first cycle coding analysis. Since the primary focus of the research was to understand the teacher perceptions of high-quality early childcare, in vivo coding was utilized to honor each participant's voice and ideas (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This was particularly vital in this study as the researcher only speaks English and participants from Finland spoke English as a second language. The second first cycle coding method applied was a variation of values coding, which is appropriate in studies that wish to convey a participant's values, attitudes and beliefs. (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2009). However, during the values coding process, the decision was made to replace the code of 'belief' to 'practice.' This change was made during a peer and mentor evaluation session, and documented in the auditable decision trail, to provide a more accurate description and richer analysis of the photo elicitation piece of the interview that focused on aspects of the interviewee's current practices that they perceived to display high-quality. Values coding in this study included attitudes (defined as participants' thoughts or feelings about aspects of quality), values (defined as aspects of quality that participants place value), and practices (defined as activities the participants do to promote or show high-quality). After transcribing and coding the interviews (in vivo and values coding), each code was summarized into a short concept and then labeled with one of the emerging themes.

Results

Emergent Themes

Category and theme names from each set of interviews were chosen independent of each other, and then similar categories and themes were merged. Figure 1 below displays the emergent themes generated from the data analysis. Eight themes, as shown in the double-sided arrow, were common between both Finnish and U. S. teachers, while other themes were specific to each country.

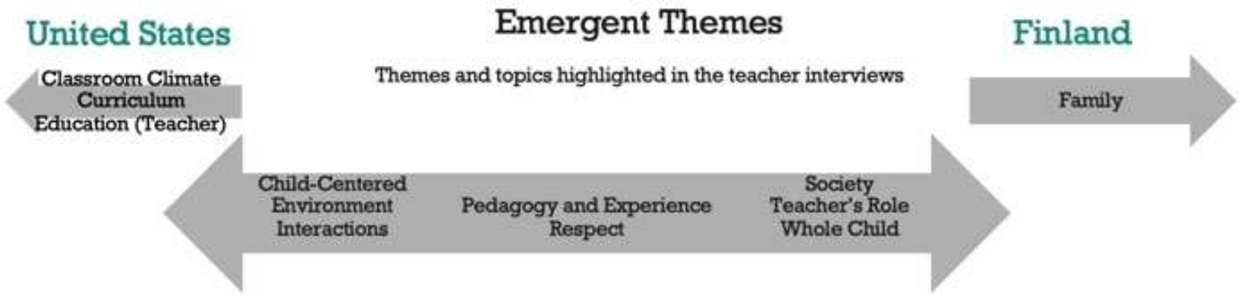

Figure 1. Emergent themes. This figure illustrates the common and country-specific themes developed through data analysis.

Common Emergent Themes

Environment. The environment theme was the largest with multiple sub-categories. Each of the Finnish teachers commented on the importance of a flexible and adaptable environment based on children's interests. Teachers described the physical environment and materials as needing to be "inspiring," "clean," "secure," and "interesting," as well as to "motivate" and have "space." As co-constructors of the environment, the children's needs and interests drive the room arrangement and materials presented. As it will be discussed later, part of a teacher's role is actively listening to children, which includes creating spaces with and for children that will engage them, lead to social interactions, and promote their well-being. The teachers from the United States highlighted predictable expectations and routines as important to the environment, and further described the physical environment itself as promoting independence. Critically, the physical environment promotes children's ability to flexibly move items about the classroom; children access resources without asking for a teacher's assistance.

Interactions. Child-child and teacher-child interactions were included in the final interviews. One interviewee noted that teacher-child interactions are the "basis for everything." This is supported by other statements that teachers should "not be absent" but rather be present in their interactions with young children. One-on-one time with children is valued, despite difficulties of large classes. Child-child interactions are supported by teachers that facilitate problem solving when needed. One U.S. teacher emphasized the value of nurturing teacher-child interactions in creating a foundation for later learning.

Pedagogy and experience. During the final interviews, participants were asked about what influenced their decision-making regarding high quality care; respondents identified education and experience. The teachers described their multiple education degrees and years of experience working with children, including the years to achieve their degrees. The term pedagogy was chosen as an emerging theme rather than education or studies, because it better captures the essence of how the teachers described their educational experiences. One interviewee elaborated that teachers should continually research, update their knowledge and apply new pedagogical knowledge to their teaching. Part of this included communicating with colleagues and sharing ideas, which was included in this emergent theme.

Child-centered. Child-centeredness was a theme for both teachers from the U.S. and Finland. Although the term was not specifically used when discussing children, the theme was woven into aspects of the teacher's role and the environment. For example, interviewees in Finland described that teachers should "look after the child's benefit" and that the "child is in the center" of the environment. In Finland, the teachers viewed child-centeredness as the ability of children to make their own choices and make decisions about the classroom and their own learning. One interviewee stated that children "are to be the adults" in planning and creating an environment for themselves. Furthermore, the furniture and materials should be child sized and appropriate for the children's age and development. In the teacher interviews (U.S.), child-centeredness focused on the importance of listening to children's interests in order to guide activities and support learning topics. Using a project approach, one class in the U.S. chose to explore airplanes by testing paper airplanes, dramatizing plane rides, and learning about the various roles of airline employees. Moreover, one of the teachers representing the U.S. explained "quality education doesn't necessarily mean that…teachers have to own every moment." The teacher goes on to explain that unstructured movement, play or outside time is important for children to experience.

Respect. While following the codes for child-centered, the word respect was repeated time and again. It became evident that a distinction would need to be made between statements that focused on applications of child-centeredness (a teacher following children's interests in planning activities, or children's abilities to make choices about what they want to do, as described above) and statements about valuing children's input and their contributions to the classroom. For example, one of the teachers in the U.S. explains that children's attempts at learning, prior knowledge and feelings should be respected. The teacher discussed how children are competent enough to make choices about who they do and do not want to hug, or how they want to be greeted in the morning. In the same sense, the Finnish interviewees valued children's agency, and commented that children should be trusted.

The whole child. The emergence of the whole child was developed particularly as a subset of many of the other themes such as the teacher's role, child-centered and the environment. As the interviewees representing Finland discussed aspects of quality that were easily coded into the theme of environment, the participants also explored the ideas of supporting the child's entire well-being with areas for rest and food, cleanliness and safety. The terms "nurture" and "well-being" and "emotion" were mentioned in discussing the teacher's interactions with children, and that "the care has always been more important than the education of the teaching aspect of early childhood education." The child's emotional development and holistic well-being were discussed as being more important than academic knowledge and teaching. The interviewees from the U.S. discussed supporting the whole child in ways such as role-playing conflict resolution, using job charts to help children feel ownership, and making sure children have moments that are just pure and happy.

Teacher's role. Both the Finnish and U.S. interviewees shared a variety of roles that are vital for educators. The teacher's role was described by a Finnish interviewee as "the very heart of this work comes from…the ethic and values that we have as being the…adults that raise the children here;" the role encompasses the teacher's attitude, interactions, education and knowledge, listening skills and flexibility. The teachers from Finland discussed practices such as setting up the environment with the children, focusing on the "care and the nurture," facilitating problem solving and social skills with children, listening actively and being present with them, and applying knowledge of pedagogy to the selection of classroom materials and adapting to the needs of children. The Finnish participants believed teachers do not merely attain knowledge of early childhood education; rather, they possess the years of experience and understanding of how to use the E.C. knowledge in the classroom. Teachers should be able to provide engaging materials and spend time with children in one-on-one sessions. Another role of the teacher involves planning and incorporating cross-curricular activities that meet the needs and interests of all children. The interviewees from the U.S. mentioned roles such as modeling positive language, helping children to feel good about coming to school, guiding social and emotional learning, multitasking, using teachable moments effectively, and, "always being proactive," to ensure that children know the expectations and can begin to self-regulate.

Society. The theme of society, not initially seen as a direct indicator of quality, emerged as the participants spoke about how society views teaching. In terms of providing high-quality care, it is inferred that the teachers valued their autonomy in the classroom, even though society may not. While asking about cultural influences, one of the interviewees in Finland responded by describing the contrast between what teachers experience of the complexities of teaching and how she perceived society to view teaching. This participant mentioned that teachers are underappreciated and people outside of education do not know what it is like, stating, "they don't actually know what we do here." Similarly, interviewees in the United States recognized teachers do not often receive credit for the work they do, but believe teachers remain critical to the lives and development of children. A participant from the U.S. said, "We're trying to squeeze childhood into everything else we're doing today." In order to promote high-quality care, it is critical for educators to be valued and respected to demonstrate the freedom and autonomy to make decisions on behalf of the children in their classrooms.

Finland Generated Theme

Family. Emerging solely from the Finnish interviews were discussions of families and parents. The emergent theme remains simply as "Family" because the more specific topics of involvement, engagement, and parental role did not align with all the statements and codes regarding families. Teachers spoke slightly of the teacher's role in meeting with families and valuing their input, but the focus was more on the child's needs and not the family's. Two of the Finnish interviewees alluded to the fact that parents are sometimes "not interested in all those things" such as the day-to-day activities and goals, or that parents are busy and don't need to be bothered about all the details and specifics. Communication with families about their child's main goals and planning for learning is a sign of quality mentioned in the interviews.

U. S. Generated Themes

Education. Regarding teacher qualifications, the interviewees from the U.S. primarily focused on the need to develop highly educated individuals working with children. For the participants representing the U.S., highly educated also meant teachers were life-long learners participating in continuing education and professional growth opportunities. Both interviewees mentioned an article they recently read in order to keep themselves abreast of relevant research and current ideas in early childhood education. Some continuing education opportunities teachers mentioned included webinars, classes, and conferences.

Classroom climate. One of the sub-categories of the Environment evolved as a unique theme: Classroom Climate. This theme generated from statements reported by teachers from the United States. In quality programs, it is critical for children to feel a sense of belonging. Employing teacher encouragement, identifying clear and consistent expectations, implementing activities promoting classroom families, and assigning class tasks supporting children's empowerment and group membership frames classroom climate to develop children's positive self-images.

Feelings of safety, in the sense of risk-taking, were grouped with this theme because the teachers explained that if children, "do not feel safe, they are not willing to take chances and learning is a lot of taking chances." On the contrary, when "a child feels belonging and feels calm and safe, they are able to grow from there."

Curriculum. Another theme that emerged from the interviewees in the United States included the need for teachers in high-quality programs to provide children with a variety of activities to support learning. While the children's interests may guide the activities, it is the responsibility of the teacher to plan a variety of experiences that support a child across all learning domains. As one of the U.S. interviewees explained, "children need to be given a variety of experiences…'cause there are all different type learners. They learn in different ways, so we need to give them opportunities to experience things differently." The teachers from the U.S. stressed that not one single approach works best for all children. Thus, the theme of curriculum is not an indicator of using a pre-packaged curriculum model, but rather, facilitating a variety of daily learning experiences across all domains, not forgetting the gross motor domain, experiences that are meaningful to children and their different learning styles. Moreover, one interviewee emphasized play as the essential avenue for children's learning. The teacher stated, "they have to have the building blocks before they can learn to read. And that's all, running, jumping, playing, talking, singing. It's got nothing to do with worksheets…"

Conclusions

This study focuses on comparing teachers' perceptions of high-quality early care among teachers in Finland and the United States, seeking to gain insight to the cultural or societal distinctions. As a comparative case study, this research did not aim to generalize teacher perceptions across all of Finland or the United States, but rather to provide a voice to the teachers who are often rigidly judged according to the high-quality standards that they provide. In a statement combining perspectives of six experienced early educators from Africa, India, Europe and the United States, Jalongo et al. (2004) explore an earlier version of ACEI's Global Guidelines for the Education and Care of Young Children and provide insight that supports the notion of similarities existing in our global view of high-quality early care. In much the same way, this study purports that evaluations of high-quality are not systematic across societies and nations, but this study also values the multiple perspectives that comparative education research can highlight.

In addressing the first research question, the analysis of interview data suggests that there are similarities between how Finnish and U. S. teachers view high quality care. The attitude of each interviewee was that of excitement, passion, and respect for providing children with the best possible care. Common emergent themes included child-centeredness, interactions (focused on teacher-child interactions), the teacher's role in the classroom, pedagogy and experience of the teacher, respect for children, societal influences, respecting the child, and supporting the whole child. The second research question is addressed in highlighting the differences that existed in terminology used and emphasis on which indicators may be more important to quality. For example, in the Finnish data, two teachers spoke of the need for a flexible environment, one that responds to the needs and the interests of the children. In the interviews with teachers from the U.S., the theme of environment focuses on the physical set up and promotion of independence. Both the teachers from the U.S. and Finland stressed the importance of putting the children first, whether that means supporting their interests in the curriculum or trusting that they can make competent choices.

The last research question regarded the influences of teacher perceptions. When asked about possible influences regarding their ideas, both groups of participating teachers described education and experience as influencing their beliefs associated with high quality care and, similarly, both groups recognized and made statements describing the value of childhood. According to one teacher, "we're trying to squeeze childhood into everything else we're doing." Society and our way of life seem to be pushing childhood away, primarily by individuals outside the field and decision makers that "don't actually know what we do." The teachers felt that the early childhood profession warrants respect and appreciation adequate to justify their making decisions about their classrooms and the children they nurture.

Limitations

Qualitatively, a small-scale case study as demonstrated here, has its limitations. Teachers were purposively selected as exemplar teachers and because of their connections to university programs. Both nations represented are developed, White-European nations and may already represent quality standards that are similar. Language was another limitation, as the researcher did not know Finnish. Although the Finnish teachers spoke English well, it is probable that some concepts and ideas were made ambiguous in translation. It is important to also note the role of the researcher in data coding. While in vivo and values coding were selected to enhance the participant's ideas and values, the researcher ultimately made the final decisions about the emerging themes, and as such, themes are regarded in terms of the researchers' own vocabulary. Furthermore, the emergent themes do not contain an exhaustive list of participant values of high-quality. A lack of an emergent theme, for example, the theme of Families discussed only by Finnish teachers, is not meant to implied as devalued by teachers from the United States.

Future Research

This study provides a vital initial step in honoring teacher knowledge and expertise of high-quality program standards. Teachers from Finland and the U.S. recognized their own education, experiences and ideas about pedagogy influence what they valued in the classroom. An important feature of future research would be an analysis of the content of teacher preparation programs in both nations. This would aim to enhance knowledge of cultural and societal influences mentioned by both groups of teachers. Since experience was also stated as an influence, it is recommended that future studies on high-quality early care in education employ a sampling method to include a variety of teacher experience levels.

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Developing a Professional Identity in a Global Society

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For decades, teacher attrition continues as a global concern; more teachers leave the profession than enter, especially among beginning teachers (Dassa & Derose, 2017). Research targeting the development of teacher identity describes how it transacts with teacher retention, motivation, and learning in diverse cultural and social contexts. These findings provide insight regarding successful pedagogical practices (Schutz, Hong, & Cross-Frances, 2018; Anspal, Eisenchmide, & Lofstrom, 2011).

Developing a professional identity as a teacher is a dynamic, complex, and ongoing process (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Ivanova & Skara-Minecāne, 2016). In teacher preparation programs, preservice students facilitate the development of their professional identity by focusing on why they want to become a teacher, why they think they will be effective, and how they can cultivate a culturally responsive classroom for their students (Muhammad, 2017).

Pre-service teachers facilitate a social, cultural, and global identity as they prepare children of diverse backgrounds as well as native learners to explore their roles in the macro and global societies (Lerseth, 2013; Chong, Ling, & Chuan, 2011). Additionally, preservice teacher candidates develop a geographic identity as they learn about the homelands of their students. This is important because this history shapes the identities of children and their families. Thus, in developing a professional identity, because teachers take the time to know themselves and their motivations, they become better able to frame the learning of their diverse students to meet the challenges of the global community.

Background and Definitions

For the purposes of this discussion, *Teacher Professional Identity* refers to “the beliefs, values, and commitments an individual holds toward being a teacher (as distinct from another professional) and being a particular type of teacher (e.g. an urban teacher, a beginning teacher, a good teacher, an English teacher, etc.)” (Hsieh, 2010, p. 1).

Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) reviewed research based on teachers’ professional identity. The authors organized their findings into three categories described as professional identity formation, characteristics of teachers’ professional identity, and professional identities represented through teachers’ stories. Other terms used in this discussion include the following:

Global identity is a “consciousness of an international society or global community transcending national boundaries, without necessarily negating the importance of state, nation, or domestic society” (Shinohara, 2004).

Global society “can be described as one which has overgrown the tendency to pull apart and has embraced a new culture of sharing and networking with people from all different backgrounds, mindsets, cultures, religions and other differences that in the past were used as excuses to keep us separated” (eNotes, 2011).

Geographic identity refers to “an individual or group’s sense of attachment to the country, region, city, or village in which they live” (Oxford Reference, 2019).

The term, “C*ultural identity”* describes “the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is a part of a person’s self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture” (Wikipedia, 2019).

The goal to develop professional identity supports pre-service teachers’ capacity to connect with their personal attributes and further, to determine how they will transition into their future role as a teacher of diverse students (geographically, culturally, economically, socially). Ultimately, these future teachers facilitate their students as they become citizens of a global society. The following content describes the process as it interfaces with the opportunity to grow more informed socially and culturally sensitive teachers (Oestreich & Fite, 2019).

Texas Public Schools

As a result of the changing demographics in Texas, pre-service teachers, entering the field, work with students who represent demographics (culturally, ethnically, and economically), which are varied and often apart from their own experiences. Public school students in Texas represent a diverse population, culturally and ethnically, ranking second to California (Arguello, 2018). Maxwell (2014) reported findings from the National Center for Education Statistics, a 50.3% projected increase in varying degrees of Latino and Asian-Americans in public schools. These population shifts occurred in California, Florida, New York and Texas, and in many communities throughout the United States (Maxwell, 2014). To illustrate this demographic shift in Texas, refer to the following table, which reflects 2018-2019 Student Enrollment in Texas Public Schools:

Ethnicity	***Student Count***
American Indian Or Alaska Nat	20,414
Asian	242,657
Black Or African American	685,775
Hispanic/Latino	2,854,590
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific	8,271
Two Or More Races	129,904
White	1,490,299
State Total	5,431,910

Source: Texas Education Agency (2019, March 13)

Interestingly, additional data gleaned from the Texas Education Agency (2019, March 13) on 2018-2019 school enrollment data, reflect not only a growing student population, but also a change in numbers of diverse students. For example, data extracted from the 2008-2009 school year showed 4,749,571 students enrolled in Texas public schools (Texas Education Agency, 2019, July). Current data reveal student enrollment in 2018-2019 increased to 5,431,910 students. Additionally, within the student enrollment data, students identified as English language learners (ELL) grew 16.9% in 2008-2009 school year to 19.4% in the 2018-2019 school term (Texas Education Agency, 2019, July). These data evidence the shift in classroom communities in the state of Texas. Furthermore, changes in Texas classrooms demonstrate not only cultural shifts, but as well increases in servicing economically disadvantaged students, i.e. 25% increase from the 2008-2009 to 2018-2019 enrollment period (Texas Education Agency, 2019, July). Moreover, growth in Texas schools as compared nationally increased by 17.1 percent between 2005-2015, more than six times the increase in the United States (2.7%) beyond the same time period (Texas Education Agency, 2019).

Developing Professional Identity

Using a multicultural curriculum frames teachers' understanding of the changes diverse students bring to the rich tapestry of the classroom community; strategic learning experiences intend to assist preservice teachers in their evolving professional identity. Multicultural programming is

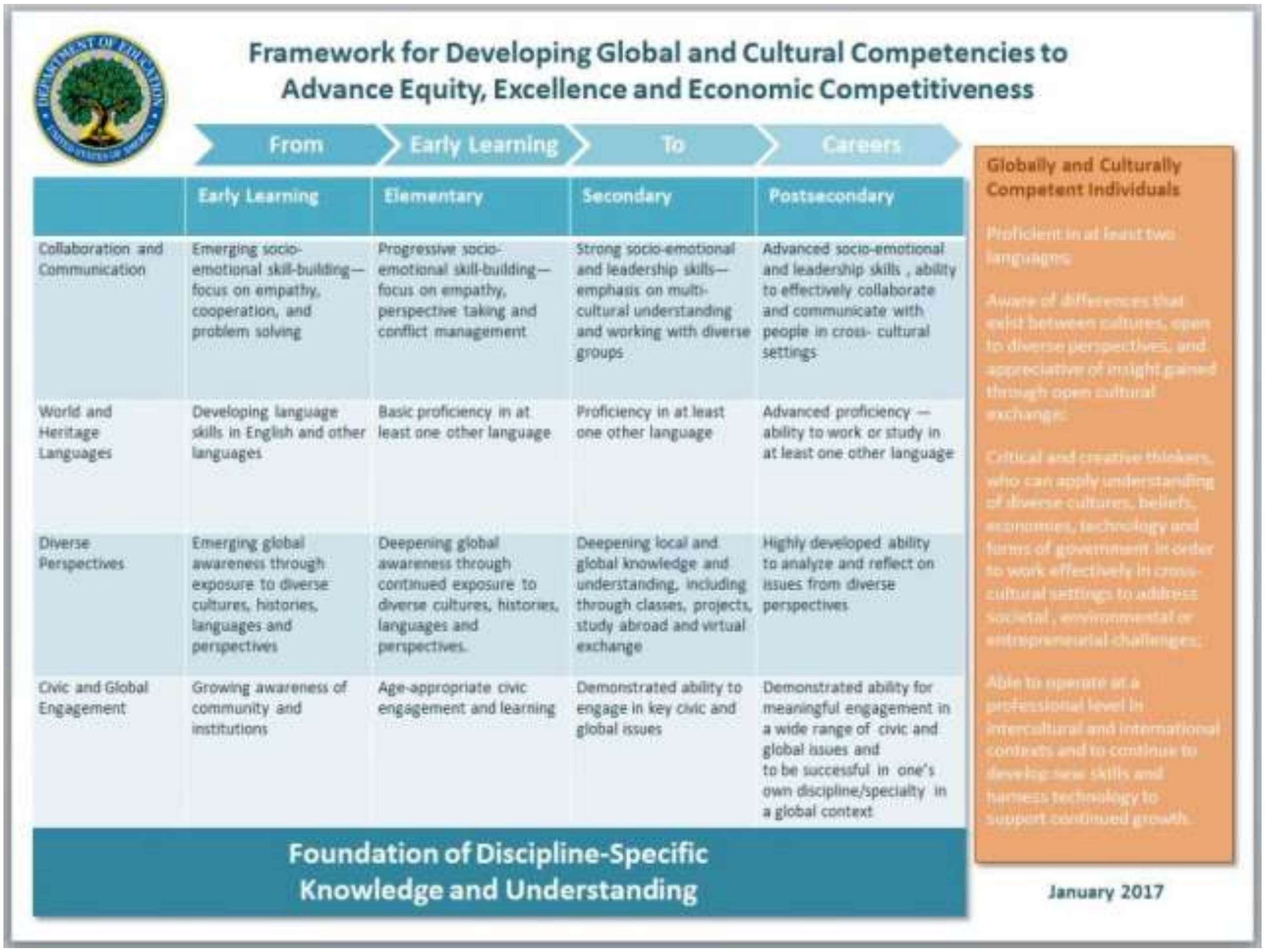
one of support; it provides both teachers and students support as they acknowledge the changing demographics, supports students developing more positive attitudes toward the broadening expanse of diversity in their surroundings, and supports students' ability to interact in a global arena (Sadker & Zittleman, 2018; Hanvey, 1982). Engaging in a multicultural curriculum can help teachers develop a broad, more global sensitivity, understanding, and identity with the community of learners they serve.

Today, it is common for teachers to work with students from ethnicities and cultures different from their own. Many parents of these students are first generation immigrants to the United States. Thus, the experiences brought to a classroom may represent intranational and international values and mores. Looking beyond the classrooms of yesterday, the contemporary teacher, through use of the Internet, other tools and media, integrate an expanse of different cultural, social, and ethnic values and practices.

In a seminal article, Hanvey (1982) states "…global perspective is not a quantum, something you either have or don't have" (p. 162). He references this perspective:

> The recognition or awareness on the part of the individual that he or she has a view of the world that is not universally shared, that this view of the world has been and continues to be shaped by influences that often escape conscious detection, and that others have views of the world that are profoundly different from one's own. (p. 162)

Many individuals attempt to assume a global lens, for "most people in the world, direct experience beyond the local community is infrequent—or nonexistent" (Hanvey, 1982, p. 163). Hanvey (1982) also stated, "Direct experience is not the way that contemporary peoples learn about their world" (p. 163). Many people do not travel abroad and experience firsthand different world cultures; thus, teachers explore other ways to develop global competencies. Ark and Liebtag (2017) described global competencies as including opportunities to connect with one's ancestry and culture, demonstrate intercultural competence, and bridge global to the local. Ark and Liebtag's (2017) online piece included a table created by U.S. Department of Education entitled *Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness:*



Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness

From › Early Learning › To › Careers

	Early Learning	Elementary	Secondary	Postsecondary
Collaboration and Communication	Emerging socio-emotional skill-building—focus on empathy, cooperation, and problem solving	Progressive socio-emotional skill-building—focus on empathy, perspective taking and conflict management	Strong socio-emotional and leadership skills—emphasis on multi-cultural understanding and working with diverse groups	Advanced socio-emotional and leadership skills , ability to effectively collaborate and communicate with people in cross- cultural settings
World and Heritage Languages	Developing language skills in English and other languages	Basic proficiency in at least one other language	Proficiency in at least one other language	Advanced proficiency — ability to work or study in at least one other language
Diverse Perspectives	Emerging global awareness through exposure to diverse cultures, histories, languages and perspectives	Deepening global awareness through continued exposure to diverse cultures, histories, languages and perspectives.	Deepening local and global knowledge and understanding, including through classes, projects, study abroad and virtual exchange	Highly developed ability to analyze and reflect on issues from diverse perspectives
Civic and Global Engagement	Growing awareness of community and institutions	Age-appropriate civic engagement and learning	Demonstrated ability to engage in key civic and global issues	Demonstrated ability for meaningful engagement in a wide range of civic and global issues and to be successful in one's own discipline/specialty in a global context

Foundation of Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Understanding

Globally and Culturally Competent Individuals

Proficient in at least two languages;

Aware of differences that exist between cultures, open to diverse perspectives, and appreciative of insight gained through open cultural exchange;

Critical and creative thinkers, who can apply understanding of diverse cultures, beliefs, economies, technology and forms of government in order to work effectively in cross-cultural settings to address societal , environmental or entrepreneurial challenges;

Able to operate at a professional level in intercultural and international contexts and to continue to develop new skills and harness technology to support continued growth.

January 2017

Source: International Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Education (2017).
https://sites.ed.gov/international/global-and-cultural-competency/

These competencies extend from the ancestry of the students in classrooms, be they first generation or later. Developing a perspective, of who "we" are, who "we" are in our environment, and who "we" are in a larger context by creating a cross-cultural perspective, helps students and teachers overcome the limitations of a more narrowed lens. In our evolving society, teachers become strategic in supporting students with a range of language needs. Combined with content knowledge, multicultural programming, and an ethos of caring and sensitivity, these attributes foster community building; thus, children require teachers with strong professional identities. It is time for "schools to address and infuse global awareness into curriculum and instruction" (Burnouf, 2004, p. 1).

Geography helps shape identity. Therefore, there is a direct relationship between geography and identity. People develop their identity according to the region and climate conditions in which they live. Geographic conditions shape people's view of life, the values they share, and the expectations they establish. Karasu, İbret, and Recepoğlu (2017) believe living in the same geographic conditions allows for the forming of human communities and the sharing of common social memories.

Reflective exercises can help pre-service teachers make the transition between their existing personal identity and their emerging professional identity, especially one with a "bigger than self" lens that encourages having an understanding of students with less common backgrounds and cultures. Bukor (2015) stated "analysis of teachers' personal life experiences and their impact on teaching can lead to a holistic understanding of the dominant influences on the development of their teacher identity" (p. 305). Korthagen (2004) identified several examples of reflection exercises used in different pre-service programs. Examples included Pope and Denicolo's (2001) personal biography exercise called "*River of Experience"* and Clandinin's (1992) and McLean's (1999) use of students exchanging stories. Korthagen's (2004) examples include students reflecting on positive and negative role models encountered during their elementary and secondary school experiences; creating a *life path* (i.e. timeline of important events and influential people); and creating students' *geo-bio footprint* (Oestreich & Fite. 2019). In another example, *All About Me,* preservice teachers provide a power point and/or oral introduction about themselves. A *Bio-Geo Blast* is a brief geo-biography describing preservice teachers' global experiences (include domestic/international photographs) and describes how these travels led to understandings of their role as global educators. Essays describing, "*Why I Want to Teach"* also are important. This descriptive or visual representation provides a rationale for pre-service teachers deciding to become teachers. They share this insight with other preservice students. The information includes individuals (teachers, church congregants, family) who influenced their career path and also identifies those who claimed the candidate "had a gift to teach others."

Preservice teachers can be encouraged to find out about the journeys of their own families by interviewing the oldest living member; preservice teachers can also learn about their students by visiting with first- and second- generation relatives of the children in their classroom. For example, one exercise that can be used is an autobiography wherein students present a notebook or digital storybook of their lives to share with a small group of peers in order to explore commonalities and differences. Students are encouraged to bring to class an artifact that represents their culture or a keepsake from their travels. These often have rich cultural roots such as mementos from a student's *Quinceañera*, a Hispanic tradition which celebrates a girl's fifteenth birthday and coming of age (Blum, 2005). Other examples might include photographs from a *Bat Mitzvah,* a religious ceremony for Jewish girls turning twelve years old and recognized as an adult, or a *Bar Mitzvah,* a religious celebration of Jewish boys turning thirteen years old (Pelaia, 2019). Additional examples include the sharing of souvenirs or pictures from a remote, impoverished area where students traveled to volunteer with a church or other group. The dialogue among the peer group is rich with opportunities for participants to ask questions and learn about and from one another. Presentations can be in the format of digital PowerPoints or traditional notebooks or scrapbooks. Later, artifacts can be added to these projects. The project may represent an individual's continual growth or may serve as a collaborative work for all students to contribute as representative of the classroom community. Other stories can be told and imaged about these travels including what they found or perceptions of what they think about the area or country. For example, students may include narratives and descriptions regarding the landscape, traditions, or challenges.

Another helpful activity is "*My Life in a Bag,"* wherein students fill a bag with a designated number of artifacts representing their culture or family history and tell about the item, its sentiment, value, or meaning. Pen pals are another option. Pre-service teachers may have pen pals themselves or encourage their students to adopt a pen pal so they can learn about life in areas quite different from their own (i.e. education, family structure, government, society, and landscape and environmental issues). Another activity is a matching game, whereby artifacts are secretly placed in a container and then positioned in front of a group of students whose charge is to "match" the item with whom they think brought it and the meaning they interpret. A *bio-museum* provides students an opportunity to identify five artifacts with a description reflective of their family history. As students visit the bio-museum, this provides students with an opportunity to critically determine what information is most important for them to share with others. This is an important exercise for students to reflect upon how museums determine what they exhibit.

There are numerous activities that build geographic identity. For example, a study of rice provides a range of learning opportunities to expand students' understanding of the world and its people. Researching the origins of rice, the ways in which it is grown, cultivated, and shipped to different markets illustrate the global community at work. Students and their families feel comfortable to share culture-rich stories to others in the class.

Preservice candidates benefit from connecting with their personal and public lives, what they know, people they met, places they traveled, various foods they tasted, music they enjoyed, and artifacts they received or purchased as they learn to bridge their experiences with their students' own experiences. Preservice teachers reflect on who they are, how their own experiences shaped their thinking, and how they interact and learn about their students; critical reflections help in creating a sense of class community.

Classrooms, filled with diverse individuals with unique experiences, prove to provide rich and meaningful learning experiences for both the teacher and the students. As pre-service teachers incorporate culturally responsive activities and cultivate and embrace their diverse student classrooms, they continue developing their professional personal, global, geographic, and cultural identity.

In order to create a culturally responsive community, it is imperative teachers know about their own personal history and culture as well as to learn about the varied cultural attributes their students bring to the classroom. Ark and Liebtag (2017) describe how cultures, once residing halfway around the globe, now live just down the block. Students meet the world first-hand in their classrooms. In order to prepare and reduce attrition rates of pre-service teachers, it is important to provide preservice teachers with a framework of global curricula, and training on multi-faceted cultural perspectives. Chuck Palahniuk (1999) suggests that nothing of a person is an original. He believes each of us is the combined experience of all past interactions.

Additionally, for the purpose of this current discussion, the classroom teacher remains a powerful influence for children as they move forward into an expanding world of difference. In order to promote and nurture diverse students' holistic learning and development, it is essential contemporary classroom teachers understand their sense of professional identity.

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Pictures for Reflection

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About Twins

Twins, unique and similar – oh, the marvel of it all. Consider the fact that twins represent only about 3% of the population. The amazing journey of a set of *identical twins* begins with one single egg, which splits during fertilization into two eggs with the same genes. Having the same genetic makeup is why identical twins have similar hair and eye color, height, and build. Most often, identical twins also share the same family environment, which means they also have a similar background.

Even though identical twins come from the same fertilized egg, they are not completely the same because of genetic variations within each developing egg. Examining twin's DNA show differences at various points in their genomes. While quite similar, each twin is uniquely different. Identical twins are known to have different tastes in friends, music, and hobbies. Twins, though genetically alike, are still two different, unique individuals with their own personal interests.

Although some think that twins have a telepathic bond, there is no evidence that this type of bond really exists. Twins' minds may be similar but they are not linked together. Twins, who are separated at birth, though, often have similar interests such as reading the same books and participating in similar hobbies and household routines.

Just as amazing, *fraternal twins* come from two separate fertilized eggs at the same time of conception. Fraternal twins each inherit a *different set of genes*. These twins' genes are no more alike than other siblings in a family even though they may look quite similar. Fraternal twins can be the same sex or opposite sex. Fraternal twins may or may not look similar in appearance. Male/female twins, of course, develop uniquely across gender lines. Fraternal twins are more likely to have different personalities than identical pairs, but still share many personality traits.

Whether identical or fraternal, twins begin a journey of innate friendship from the womb into adulthood. Twins are aware of each other from infancy, but babies, in general, even twins, don't begin to really interact with one another until around age one. In normal child development, children first play alongside each other in solitary play, then side-by-side in parallel play.

Eventually, around age 3, they move on to social play with each other. Twins are the same in this development.

While the bond begins at birth, as twins begin to play with each other, the lifelong friendship begins. With friendship being an important part of early child development, twins have the advantage of a built-in playmate. Twins have the unique opportunity to share their social world together. Because of this, twins are often more socially aware and more socially confident than children who are not twins. Twins, early on, learn how to negotiate, share, take turns, and express their thoughts and feelings with each other. The daily give-and-take with twins becomes a fulfilling friendship of first friends and then best friends - a friendship which provides each other with support and care. This is very different from a single child's experience, even with siblings. Each twin has a lifelong relationship with his or her twin of the same age.

Eventually, twins take these personal social skills into a wider range of friendships with children outside the family. Interestingly, one-egg twins share more outside friendships with others than two-egg twins, suggesting that similar genetic relatedness may contribute to having the same mutual friends. Same friends may also choose the one-egg twins more often because they have similar personality characteristics.

Along this amazing journey for twins, moving from childhood into adulthood, it is important to note that being a twin does not overshadow each person's individual identity or sense of self – each is unique, yet similar. As adult twins grow older, it is truly together, friends for life. The marvel is that twins enjoy this special, unique bond and identity of being part of a twin pair - for a lifetime.

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Using Edtech to Enhance Learning

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Allowing students to use technology in the classroom has been increasingly more popular as technology advances and becomes more ubiquitous. However, many educators wrestle several aspects of edtech, including, how to start using edtech (Caukin, 2018), when to use edtech (National Education Technology Plan [NETP], 2017), how to incorporate it without creating more distractions for students (Thomas, 2019), and ways that edtech can move students towards higher levels of thinking (Caukin & Trail, 2019). It is important for educators to provide opportunities for students to not only participate in effective and meaningful learning experiences, but also engage them, sustain their attention, and assess them in a variety of ways, all of which edtech can provide (NETP, 2017).

Activating Strategies

There are many ways in which edtech can be used to engage students. One way is in an activating strategy, which allows teachers to link content to prior knowledge or build background knowledge by providing them with new experiences. It is important to have an activating strategy for each lesson, so the learner has an opportunity to gain interest in the topic in a fun and interactive manner. By using edtech in an activating strategy, teachers can draw students into their lessons by using tools students are familiar with and potentially passionate about. One way to use edtech in an activating strategy is through gaming. Gaming can allow students to use what they have already learned to complete informal pre-assessments in a fun and stimulating environment. For instance, the teacher can give an assignment the night before and the students go home and practice what they have been learning. The next day, using a gaming method in their activating strategy, the teacher can challenge students to apply what they learned from the assignment to the game, preparing them for the day's objectives and expanding that skill further. The students have so much fun during the game that they do not even realize they are reinforcing their learning. One enjoyable and beneficial edtech game that can be used in the classroom is Kahoot! This free, online gaming service allows teachers to make their own multiple-choice questions that can be used with low-stakes in healthy competitive environment. Teachers can even create question banks (or use the ones provided), which can make future games quicker to create. There are pre-made Kahoots! available for free. With a Pro subscription, teachers can use the puzzle feature, slides feature for providing more content, and the polling feature. There is an image library and an advanced reports option as well. With a Premium subscription, teachers can play school-sized games and use open-ended questions.

Polling is another approach that can be used as an activating strategy. Polling gauges students' interests and progress in real time and pre-assesses what students have learned before teaching a new concept. When using a poll, teachers can see what each student knows without singling them out. Polling also promotes students' awareness of their individual progress. Because polls are anonymous, the student is able to see how they are doing with new content without feeling the pressure of getting an answer wrong. For example, as teachers introduce a new concept, they can add one or more polls at the beginning of their lesson to monitor how well the information is being absorbed. It is handy for teachers to be able to see how well students are taking in new information individually and as a whole class. Teachers can monitor how well previous teaching has been understood by evaluating how students perform on the polls, as well as identify areas they should create scaffolding for during the coming lesson. Wooclap is a free online site that allows teachers to create their own polls as well as multiple choice quizzes, or open-ended questions. Other useful sites for polling include: Poll Everywhere, Mentimeter, and AnswerPad.

Brainstorming can also be used as an activating strategy. It is a way that teachers can encourage students to think about what they will learn in the future. Brainstorming as an activating strategy is an effective way to get students thinking about a new topic. For example, when introducing a new concept on the elements in chemistry, teachers could ask a question like "What is your favorite soda?" Then, students will become excited and interested in the topic of elements without realizing it. The key is to make your activating strategy as relatable and entertaining as possible so teachers can gain students' attention and keep it for longer than if they had just used a typical bell ringer. A useful tool for brainstorming as an activating strategy is Padlet.
With Padlet, teachers can post an open-ended question and students can see their own responses as well as those of other students. It can be anonymous, or students can add their names to their responses. Other helpful sites are: Tricider and AnswerGarden.

Instruction

Once students' interest has been captured through a meaningful activating strategy, online content can be made easily available through QR codes. A QR code is a matrix bar code that is scanned by any device with a camera (Apple products) or with a free, downloadable QR code reader. Once scanned, the QR code navigates the user to a pre-determined website. Teachers can vet specific articles, videos, etc. that they want students to use during the lesson to learn online content. Any website location can be used to make a QR code, even an edtech site such as Kahoot!, Poll Everywhere, etc. Making a QR code is easy, first search for a free QR code generator, copy and paste the URL of the site you want a QR code for, and then paste it on any electronic document, PowerPoint, etc. This form of technology can be used to enhance learning, because it saves time during transitions, so students can spend more time interacting with the material. QR codes give students easy and instant access to material and learning tools. Some recommendations include: https://www.qr-code-generator.com/, https://www.qrcode-monkey.com/ , and www.the-qrcode-generator.com.

Another edtech tool that is helpful when enhancing student's learning is Nearpod. Nearpod is a free website that allows teachers to create an interactive "PowerPoint." There is an upgraded version that teachers can pay for at a small cost that includes more options of slides and content to incorporate into presentations, but many features are available for free. All that is required to access Nearpod is an email address. When creating a Nearpod, teachers can import slides from presentations they already have or create new ones directly on Nearpod's website. Teachers also have the choice to create slides that allow students to draw, take a quiz, interact with 3D models, practice math or science problems, visit a website, engage in a discussion board, and the list continues.

When the teacher presents, they have their students visit Nearpod.com on their smart device, which can be a smart phone, computer, iPad, or tablet. The students enter the code provided after the teacher makes the Nearpod lesson live. The free version is teacher-paced which allows the teacher to control the slides which will keep all students on the same slide at the same time. The paid version allows for student-paced lessons, which allows students to flip through the slides and interact with the material at their own pace. Another one of Nearpod's features is that the teacher can choose a student's drawing, discussion post, etc. to display on the screen to discuss without showing the student's name. So, for instance, if a third-grade teacher used a Nearpod presentation for his or her lesson on the water cycle, the teacher could have the students draw a diagram including the 5 steps of the water cycle. Then, once the drawings are submitted, the teacher can choose one to display and discuss while maintaining the student's anonymity. Nearpod is a great tool for teachers of all grades to use in their classroom to promote student engagement and incorporate technology in the classroom. A comparable resource is Pear Deck, which uses many of the same tools, except it uses Google Slides and students and teachers must have a Gmail account to sign in.

There are numerous free edtech apps that can be used to help students with reading (ReadWorks, Whooo'sReading, Rewordify), math (Geogebra, Math Cats, Math Chimp), social studies (Digital Civics Toolkit, Smithsonian's History Explorer, Big History Project), science (Science Bob, DIY Sun Science, Phet Interactive Simulations), writing (NaNoWriMo), coding (Scratch), music (GarageBand) and other topics as well. Of course, there are many edtech tools that have a fee.

Assessment

Assessments are one of the most important parts of a lesson. It shows if students are mastering objectives and learning targets. The power of technology can be leveraged to administer assessments and analyze the data from assessments. Using technology as tool for assessment can save time, resources, and streamline the process as well as provide needed differentiation and assistive tools.

The edtech tools for informally assessing students during a lesson can take a cue from some of the applications discussed in the Activating Strategy section. For example, Kahoot! is a game-like assessment that is sure to engage students and assess them individually in a whole-class setting. Nearpod offers the option to embed questions into slides that can gauge learning. Using Padlet, AnswerGarden, AnswerPad, and Mentimeter allow teachers to capture students' thinking in the moment and make it visible to the class for further discussion and exploration.

Edtech can also be used for formal assessments. For example, a Google form can be created that allows options for question types and embedding of images or videos. Individual student answers can be viewed as well as the class as a whole. Responses can be exported into a CSV file and feedback can be given to individual students. Socrative is a free tool for creating exit tickets in real time. It engages students and provides teachers with feedback on student mastery. Quizziz is a free, self-paced way to review, assess, and engage students with single choice or multi-choice answers. Quizalize is a gameshow-like edtech tool that allows teachers to create assessments and track student results (there is a fee for tracking). Another helpful edtech tool for formal assessments is Plicker. This free, low-tech option uses printable paper cards as "clickers" for student-responses.

Feedback

With all the information provided on edtech tools in the classroom, an essential aspect of teaching and learning that needs to be mentioned is feedback. It is through meaningful and timely feedback that learning can be improved (Wiliam, 2016). Using edtech tools during an activating strategy, instruction, or assessment, teachers can provide real-time feedback to correct misconceptions, redirect, and promote deeper thinking. Many of the edtech tools provide instant data on student performance and some allow teachers to provide feedback to students individually. Nearpod and Padlet allow teachers to give feedback to questions instantly. Teachers can post or comment on each student's comment on the Padlet, which allows for a quick feedback to individual students. Nearpod allows the teacher to show students' work as artifacts of exemplary work or for common errors that can be used for whole-class instruction.

It is important to note that edtech should be used to enhance instruction, not replace the teacher. It is also encouraged that teachers check school and district technology policies and are ensure their students are using technology in safe, appropriate ways. Technology is growing increasingly more prevalent in today's culture, and it is important for educators to take advantage of the hundreds of resources made available to them and their students. Not only will utilizing technology influence the way educators teach, it will also increase student engagement (NEPT, 2017). Common Sense Education is a helpful site that can be accessed to read reviews of many edtech tools. This site provides pros, cons, the bottom line, and reviews from teachers. You can easily search the edtech tool you want to learn more about and then access the website of the tool.

By using edtech in the classroom, teachers may have the popular option of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). Students love being able to use their devices during class and teachers know they are being used for educational purposes. Overall, using technology for education is extremely beneficial, not only when it comes to starting a lesson with an activating strategy, but also for instruction and assessment. Using these free online tools can not only add fun to teachers' classrooms during the activating strategy, instruction, and assessment, but also save them on material costs!

Resources

Answergarden - https://answergarden.ch/

Answer Pad - https://app.theanswerpad.com/homepage.html

Common Sense Education - https://www.commonsense.org/education/search?contentType=reviews

Digital Civics Toolkit - https://www.digitalcivicstoolkit.org

DIY Sun Science - https://www.lawrencehallofscience.org/do_science_now/science_apps_and_activities/diy_sun_science

Garage Band - https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id408709785?ign-mpt=uo%3D4

Geogebra - https://www.geogebra.org/?lang=en

Google Forms - https://www.google.com/forms/about/

Kahoot! - https://kahoot.com/

Math Cats - http://www.mathcats.com

Math Chimp - http://www.mathchimp.com

Mentimeter - https://www.mentimeter.com/

Nearpod - https://nearpod.com/

Padlet - https://padlet.com/

Pear Deck - https://www.peardeck.com/googleslides

PHET Interactive Simulations - https://phet.colorado.edu

Plickers - https://get.plickers.com

Poll Everywhere – https://polleverywhere.com

Quizziz - https://quizizz.com

Quizalize - https://www.quizalize.com

ReadWorks - https://www.readworks.org

Readwordify - https://rewordify.com

Science Bob - https://sciencebob.com

Scratch - https://scratch.mit.edu

Smithsonian's History Explorer - https://historyexplorer.si.edu

Socrative - https://socrative.com

Tricider - https://www.tricider.com/

Whooo'sReading - https://www.whooosreading.org

Wooclap - https://www.wooclap.com/

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Equity Audits of Ethnicity in Three Transitional Series: Moving Toward Diverse Series Books for Today's Young Readers

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Abstract

This manuscript explores representations of protagonists of various multicultural backgrounds in three transitional series. Prior studies, such as Gangi (2008) and Green and Hopenwasser (2017), exposed the deficiencies of multicultural literature in elementary classrooms, particularly among transitional series books. Green and Hopenwasser emphasize the developmental importance of equal representation in transitional books with characters of diverse ethnicities, because they act as mirrors and windows for students to learn, grow, and reflect. These studies argue that in order to allow children to see themselves and to develop a positive self-image in primary grades, it is critical for teachers to be thoughtful while choosing series books. For the purposes of this study, to explore ethnic and racial representations of protagonists with the actual demographics of third graders, researchers conducted an equity audit on three transitional series, published across different decades and commonly found in elementary classrooms. Equity audit data show multicultural representations lacking. In order for children to see healthy role models who mirror their own racial and ethnic contexts, authors describe the importance of teachers choosing series with strong, diverse protagonists to include in their classroom libraries.

Introduction

The assimilation of the multiplicity of ethnicities in American school systems has come a long way from times of segregation with much variety among its 323.1 million people. Racial and ethnic enrollment in public elementary schools increased steadily from the early 2000s. From

2004-2014, enrollment experienced a 75% increase of Hispanic, African American, Pacific Islander, and Asian students. By 2014, less than 50% of students enrolled in elementary schools in the U.S. identified as Caucasian, a 58% decrease from 2004. In 2017, the demographics of elementary students in the U.S. representing a minority background surpassed the demographics for students from Caucasian backgrounds (52% of the population vs. 48% of the population), reinforcing the reality of diversity, especially within public schools (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

Especially now, offering elementary students books reflecting acceptance and inclusiveness is important for developing a healthy self-identity in young children. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) contend that bias is built into the institutions that serve young readers with one solution being to provide literature reflecting today's diversity. They believe diverse characters in books can engender respect, open discussions surrounding cultural contexts, even in neighborhood schools with homogenous populations, encouraging healthy development:

> Inequity of resources, and the biases that justify that inequity, have an enormous impact on children's lives. It is important to remember that it is not human differences that undermine children's development but rather unfair, hurtful treatment based upon these differences. One major dynamic of advantage and disadvantage that especially affects early childhood practice is that of the 'visibility' or 'invisibility' of certain kinds of people or cultures in a program. Too many early childhood materials focus on children and families who resemble the stereotypes of American culture… (p. 3)

Therefore, multicultural transitional series literature with well-established ethnic protagonists allows students to explore worlds both identical and different from their own (Ausdale & Feagin, 2002). In particular, series books offer students opportunities to vicariously experience the world with characters across a multiplicity of books. Thus, in order to identify patterns or trends, an equity audit of a three transitional series for young students was performed. Comparisons across the three publication dates, ranging from 1940 to present provide interesting insights. Lastly, in order to encourage positive development for young readers, authors recommend current multicultural series books for young readers.

Review of Related Literature

Multicultural literature is defined as "books by and about people of color and First Nations." (Cooperative Children's Book Center [CCBC], 2019a). All children deserve to read books with underrepresented groups, including race, ethnicities, exceptionalities, and diversity outside the mainstream. Multicultural books include all genres, fiction, nonfiction, all formats, as well as transitional series books for young readers. Focusing on series books, Green and Hopenwasser (2017) describe transitional series books as straightforward, predictable, and comprehensible literature, usually for kindergarten through third grade students. Children engaged with transitional series will read for pleasure as an adult (Green & Hopenwasser, 2017). In the last five decades, the protagonists of transitional literature moved away from the cookie-cutter mold of an Anglo-Saxon, suburban, American character between the ages of nine and 13 (Szymusiak & Sibberson, 2001). By the late 1980s, the multicultural educational movement, a push for equal rights that relates to schools and schooling (Bishop, 1997, p. 2), allowed for the inclusion of diverse, complex characters in literature. According to Rudine Bishop (1997):

> Protagonists in literature have slowly been socially and culturally reformed to include characters of Latinos, American Indians, Asian Americans, the disabled, gays and

> lesbians, and the elderly; all of whom felt victimized, oppressed, or discriminated against in some way by the dominant majority. (p. 3)

Mirrors, Windows, Sliding Glass Doors

With an influx of immigrants attending U.S. schools, it is especially important for students of all backgrounds to engage in opportunities to grow, learn, and reflect on themselves and others around them, in and out of school (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). With elementary schools in the U.S. becoming increasingly diverse, transitional series can provide a vehicle for all students to reflect upon themselves and others for healthy self-identity and growth. In fact, multicultural series literature can act as "*mirrors and windows*" (Bishop, 1990; Green & Hopenwasser, 2017). Exposure to literature can become a shared experience, allowing students to reflect on their own perspectives and individual backgrounds before looking at others. As children learn about themselves and others, they explore differences and similarities that allow them to learn to appreciate both their own and others' cultures (Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007). Because traditionally children's literature contained more white characters, students within this dominant culture view themselves and their lives as being "normal" and view other people of different ethnicities as "exotic" (Bishop, 1997). Moreover, minority students who do not see any reflections of themselves, or who see stereotypical, distorted, inaccurate, or comical depictions of themselves, may grow to view themselves of little value, stunting personal growth.

In 1990, Rudine Sims Bishop coined the term "sliding glass doors" to describe outlooks of diversity gained from children's books, noting these fluctuating phases:

> Books are sometimes windows, offering views of the worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. When lighting conditions are just right however, a window can also be a mirror. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. (p. ix)

Sliding glass door books allow openings for vicarious adventures beyond their own experiences. The growing diversity in the U.S. contrasts with 73.3% of protagonists as Caucasian; therefore, it is crucial these "sliding glass doors" become more frequent (CCBC, 2019b).

The Influence of Children's Books

With current demographic shifts due to the influx of immigrants and refugees (Bigler, 2002), daily needs for cross-cultural understandings may be eased through available and accurate literature. What children read influences how children view themselves, and when children encounter relatable characters, their comprehension and motivation to read improve (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Lind & Thomsen, 2018). When students select books that engender empathy and engagement by including characters of varied cultural backgrounds, children's books can be used as a tool for developing personal identity and challenging stereotypes (Singer & Smith, 2003). At times, teachers appear inadequately prepared to mediate the unique challenges students from different cultural backgrounds daily encounter; Robinson (2013) found that interactive multicultural readings encourage students' critical responses and important identity connections between themselves and characters. More importantly, for the current study, the appeal of series for young children can result in cumulative influences that book upon book within one series can engender (Greenlee, Monson, & Taylor, 1996).

Statement of Purpose and Related Methods

This research intends to examine the representations of protagonists among three popular third grade transitional series. Using equity audits as the analysis measure, researchers describe equity audits as "a review of inequalities within an area or of the coverage of inequality issues in a policy, program, or project, usually with recommendations as to how they can be addressed" (Defined Term, n.d, n.p.). Similar to the equity audit administered by Green and Hopenwasser (2017), this research focused on the first five books of three popular third grade series to compare representations of ethnicities in each book. Gangi (2008) found less than 5% of recommended series were considered multicultural. The audit was compared with current third grade demographics to compile a list of appropriate multicultural transitional series literature to promote positive development for all children. With consultation from *New York Times Best Sellers List* and *Goodreads Must-Have Series for ages 6-12,* three transitional series published across three different time periods were chosen to be audited based on continued popularity and likelihood to be in classroom libraries. From the series in those lists, *The Boxcar Children* series by Gertrude Chandler Warner, *The Bailey School Kids* series by Debbie Dadey, and *Franklin School Friends* series by Claudia Miller were identified to represent the changing demographics (1960-2016). Published from the current decade back to the 1940s, these books also offered comparisons of similar sets of protagonists: *The Boxcar Children* (two boys and two girls), *The Bailey School Kids* (two boys and two girls), and *Franklin School Friends* (two boys and three girls). Each book (of between 80 and 125 pages) contains a new plot or "adventure," whether solving a problem or overcoming a challenge, and focused on one protagonist with all main characters involved in some aspect.

These series were also chosen based on publication dates; the span in which they were written shows the changing demographic and portrayal of racial and ethnic characters. The first five *Boxcar Children* books were published between 1942 and 1960, during a time when segregation between African Americans and Caucasians evidenced a rise. The first five *Bailey School Kids* series books, published between 1991-1992, were written during an ongoing debate of whether genes, environment, or ethnicity caused academic gaps among races. The five *Franklin School Friends* series books were published between 2014-2016 when growing diversity was valued and sought to eradicate ongoing racial stereotypes. These series allowed many comparisons when conducting, comparing, and contrasting equity audits.

Early on, the researchers read and discussed *10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism* (Council for Interracial Books for Children [CIBC], 1998). Also, the authors discussed scores on the *Harvard Implicit Association Tests (IATs)* (Harvard, 2011). This psychological assessment points out implicit bias in our associations. With reported only "slight automatic preferences" for each researcher, these precautions worked to keep the equity audits clear of potential bias.

These equity audits appraised front covers, protagonists, family dynamics, stereotypes, ethnicity, and any secondary characters, the focused queries from CIBC (1998) aide consistent, clear analysis. After reading and analyzing the 15 books (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), the first author carefully recorded details and discussed findings with the second author. Any discrepancies or vague wording were clarified in weekly meetings.

Equity Audit Findings

First, ***The Boxcar Children*** remains in many classroom libraries despite original publication dates of 1942-1960. This is one of the oldest and most popular series found in a third-grade classroom library (Anthony, 2018). Although original *Boxcar Children* (Warner) ended publication in the 1960s, through Scholastic, this series continues to be ghost written in 2018. However, since most third-grade libraries include these books from the original series, the equity audit was conducted, focusing on four brown-haired, Caucasian protagonists. In the first book, *The Boxcar Children,* the orphaned children prove intelligent, scrappy, and self-sufficient by making a new life for themselves in a boxcar in the woods. See Figure 1 for the details of analysis in regard to these four protagonists:□Henry (M/14): Calm, hardworking, very protective of his siblings, Jessie (F/12): Motherly, tidy, organized, Violet (F/10): Sensitive, shy, skilled (at sewing), and Benny (M/6): Energetic, cheerful, loves everyone and everything, especially food.

Figure 1: Compiled data sheet for *The Boxcar Children*

***The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner**					
Book Title:	**Front Cover:**	**Protagonist Traits:**	**Family Dynamics:**	**Stereotype:**	**Ethnicity:**
The Boxcar Children Introduction of Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny Alden, the main protagonists	-Four young, pale-skinned, brown-haired children dressed in clean, brightly colored clothes, looking hurried and scared. -They are climbing into a boxcar	-Henry, the oldest at 14, is calm, hardworking and is very protective of his siblings -Jessie, 12 years old, motherly, tidy, and organized -Violet, 10 years old, sensitive, shy, and skilled at sewing -Benny, 6 years old, loves food, very energetic, and cheerful	-The four children are orphaned and live together for a majority of the book. -They eventually move in with grandfather at the end of the book and live with him for the rest of the series.	-common stereotypes of orphans as resilient and scrappy, something the Alden's are -Their grandfather is also extremely wealthy, another stereotype to orphans	Caucasian
Surprise Island Introduction of the Alden's cousin Joe Alden	-Four young, pale-skinned, brown-haired children dressed in clean summer clothes -They are climbing out of a boat	-Joe Alden is young, adult friendly, very into the outdoors and enjoys spending time with his cousins	The children still live with their grandfather, whom Joe is visiting	N/A	Caucasian
The Yellow House Mystery	-Four pale-skinned, brown-haired children dressed in clean,	-Alice is a kind young woman who marries Joe and	The children still live with their wealthy grandfather	N/A	Caucasian

Introduction of the Alden's cousin Alice, Joe's wife	brightly colored clothes -Henry and Jessie appear older here, while Benny and Violet look the same	becomes the Alden's cousin			
Mystery Ranch Introduction of the Alden's great-aunt Jane Alden	-Depicts an older Jessie and Violet, dressed in sweaters and long pants - Clearly in a western town, driving a horse-drawn carriage	-At first, Aunt Jane is cranky, bossy, and unkind -Her disposition is eventually sweet and smart, and she treats the Alden's well	The children live with their Aunt Jane Alden for a while, as she is sickly and in need of care	N/A	Caucasian
Mike's Mystery	-Five young children dressed in clean clothes appear to be watching two dogs race one another	N/A	The children are once again living with their grandfather	N/A	Caucasian

The Bailey School Kids, the second series (1991-1992), was published at a time emphasizing multicultural education reform (Banks, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This series features a nonstereotypical, African American protagonist and three other Caucasian protagonists who whimsically experience crazy times. Most libraries continue to include this series. Throughout the book series, consistent characteristics of the four protagonists reveal: Liza (F): the timid peacemaker, avoids hurting others; Howard (M): enjoys school, a logical, level-headed, intelligent thinker; Melody (F/AfrAm): brave, competitive, athletic; and Eddie (M): mean-spirited (to non-friends), boisterous, dramatic. Figure 2 provides the analysis for this series.

Figure 2: Data Sheet 2 for *The Bailey School Kids*

***The Bailey School Kids* by Debbie Dadey**					
Book Title:	**Front Cover:**	**Protagonist Traits:**	**Family Dynamics:**	**Stereotype:**	**Ethnicity:**
Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots	- A traditional classroom setting, teacher is pale-skinned, class consists of 8 children, mostly depicted as Caucasian with	- Liza: the peacemaker of the group, doesn't like Eddie's ideas that usually result in hurting others. She's sensitive, scared around strangers, and whimsical	-Liza: Mother, father (plumber), and sister (high school). She also has a grandmother. - Howard (Howie): mom, two sisters, and dad (Aeronautics tech	N/A	Caucasian African-American

	blond, red, or brown hair. - There is one boy and one girl with brown skin and black hair	- Howard (Howie): enjoys school, logical, level-headed and intelligent - Melody: brave, sporty (plays soccer) and extremely competitive - Eddie: comes across as mean, makes fun for believing in monsters. Creates drastic plans to dismiss monsters. *At the beginning of this book, the reader can clearly see Melody/Liza & Howie/Eddie are pairs of best friends.*	station worker) *Parents are divorced* - Melody: Dad (Contractor), Mom (Lawyer), Aunt, great-aunt and cousin live nearby - Eddie: Grandmother, Father, little sister. Mom is deceased. He has an aunt who lives nearby.		
Werewolves Don't Go to Summer Camp	- Four kids and a man are sitting around a campfire under a starry night with full moon. - The man is Caucasian, with brown hair, a full beard, wearing jeans and a T-shirt. - Two kids, a girl and boy, (Liza and Howie) are Caucasian with blond hair. - (Melody), the other girl, is African-American with black hair. - Eddie, the other boy, is Caucasian with red hair. They are all wearing similar clothes to the man.	Same as above Liza: Sensitive about the fact that she can't swim	Same as above	N/A	Caucasian African-American
Santa Claus Doesn't Mop Floors	-A brick hallway with a paperchain decorating the wall. - A man with white beard, muscled legs, and potbelly (like	Same as above	Same as above	N/A	Caucasian African-American

	Santa), mops the floor. -Three kids in winter clothes (Eddie, Howie, and Melody) are watching. - Eddie: red hair, Caucasian -Howie: blond Caucasian -Melody: African-Am., black hair				
Leprechauns Don't Play Basketball	-A basketball court, (or maybe school gym). - A old man with white hair, sideburns, dressed in a green bow tie, red tracksuit, and purple sweater vest is shooting backwards hoops. - Two girls, Melody and Liza, and one boy, Eddie, are watching him Liza: Caucasian, blond hair. - Howie: Caucasian with blond hair - Melody: African-American with black hair	Same as above	Same as above	N/A	Caucasian African-American
Ghosts Don't Eat Potato Chips	An old attic, or upstairs room. An old, transparent looking man with white hair and mustache, dressed in a white shirt, brown suit, red bow tie, and brown hat. Howie, Melody, and Eddie are upstairs, look shocked at Howie's floating potato chips Eddie: red hair, Caucasian	Same as above	Same as above		Caucasian African-American

	- Howie: blond, Caucasian -Melody: African-Am., black hair				

Franklin School Friends (2014-2016), the most recent transitional series analyzed, portrayed five protagonists: three Caucasians, one African American, and one Asian American. Unlike the other two series, each book highlights one protagonist with a specific dilemma. Along with quite distinctive outward appearances, some stereotypical portrayals are included, such as the Asian American excelling academically. Below, Figure 3 presents details of the analyses. The protagonists' distinguishing characteristics are Kelsey Green (F/8): loves reading, dislikes math, extremely competitive; Annika Riz (F/8/Caucasian): Loves math, loyal, caring friend; Izzy Barr (African Am/F/9): Talented athlete, plays softball and runs track, very friendly; Simon Ellis (Asian Am/M/8): Enjoys school, excels in spelling, and wants to fit in; and Cody Harmon (M/9): Polite, enjoys animals, and dislikes school.

Figure 3: Data Sheet for *Franklin School Friends*

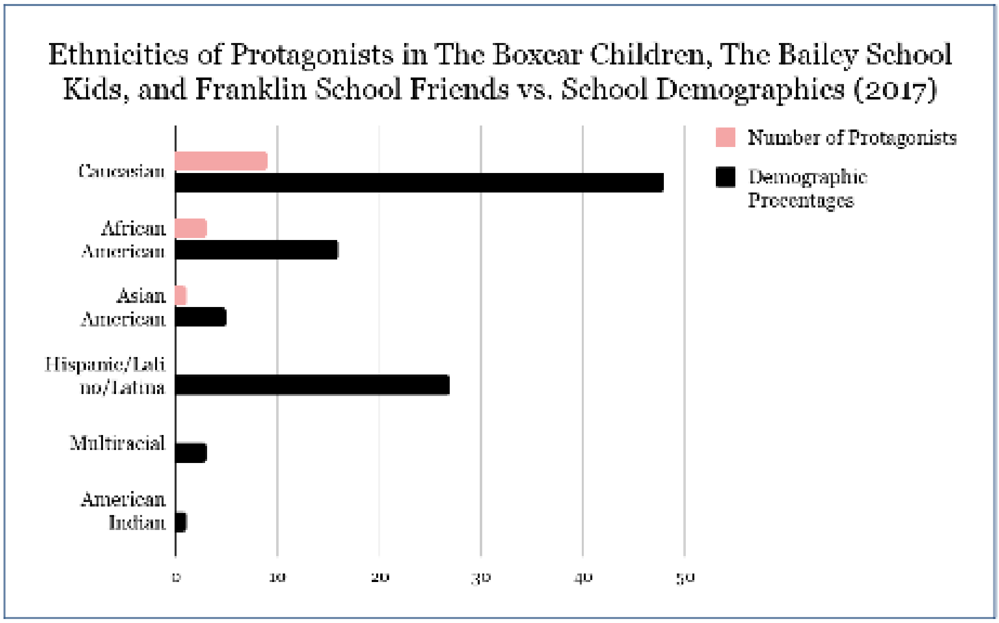
***Franklin School Friends* by Claudia Mills**					
Book Title:	**Front Cover:**	**Protagonist Traits:**	**Family Dynamics:**	**Stereotype:**	**Protagonist Ethnicity:**
Kelsey Green, Reading Queen	Pale skinned girl with brown shoulder-length hair, & her nose in a book	- LOVES reading: reads during math class - Dislikes math -Competitive	Dad, Mom (Stay at Home), Brother (8th Gr), Sister (High School)	N/A	Caucasian
Annika Riz, Math Whiz	Pale skinned girl with blue eyes, & long, blonde braids, filling out a Sudoku page	-LOVES math: will do Sudoku during recess -Will whisper math answers to her friends to help avoid humiliation	Dad (High school math teacher) - family cook Mom (Tax accountant) Prime (Family dog)	Refutes the stereotype: "blonde girls are dumb," as Annika loves math, and is a math genius	Caucasian
Izzy Barr, Running Star	Girl with short, curly, braided brown hair, medium brown skin, & brown eyes; running	-LOVES sports, does track & field and softball,	Dad (Foreman of Factory) Mom (Hospital Nurse)	Enforces the stereotypes that African American girls are better athletes and of absentee African American fathers	African American

		encouraging to others -Hides her feelings about her dad missing her games	Dustin (Older half- brother)		
Simon Ellis, Spelling Bee Champ	Boy with short brown hair, blue eyes, and pale skin; holding a pencil and backpack	-Enjoys all aspects of school, and excels in spelling -Plays the violin -Will do poorly on schoolwork in order to impress his friends -Extremely competitive	Dad (very educated, plays the cello) Mom (also highly educated, is an author)	Enforces the stereotype that Asian American students are smarter and better at school subjects than others	Asian American
Cody Harmon, King of Pets	Pale skinned boy with short brown hair styled in a cowlick, & hugging a dog	-Dislikes school and homework -Enjoys helping dad on their farm -LOVES animals: takes care of all pets and farm animals -Polite: Yes, Sir	Dad (Farmer and truck driver) Mom (Stay at home mom) Rex (pet dog) Mr. Piggins (Cody's Pet Pig)	Enforces stereotype that farm children are poorly educated or dislike school	Caucasian

Comparing equity audits across three series.

Figure 4 compares the equity audits of ethnicities among protagonists in *The Boxcar Children, The Bailey School Kids,* and *Franklin School Friends* in comparison to the reality of school demographics. In *Boxcar Children* (1942)*,* the ink illustrations are depicted as Caucasian, which ignores the segregated worlds of students of color of the past and the present. In *Bailey School Kids*, one of the four protagonists is portrayed non-stereotypically as African-American, while in *Franklin School Friends*, two of the four protagonists are of different ethnicities (Asian American; African American), yet characterized through stereotypes. All these books are available to children, yet the lack of diversity is apparent.

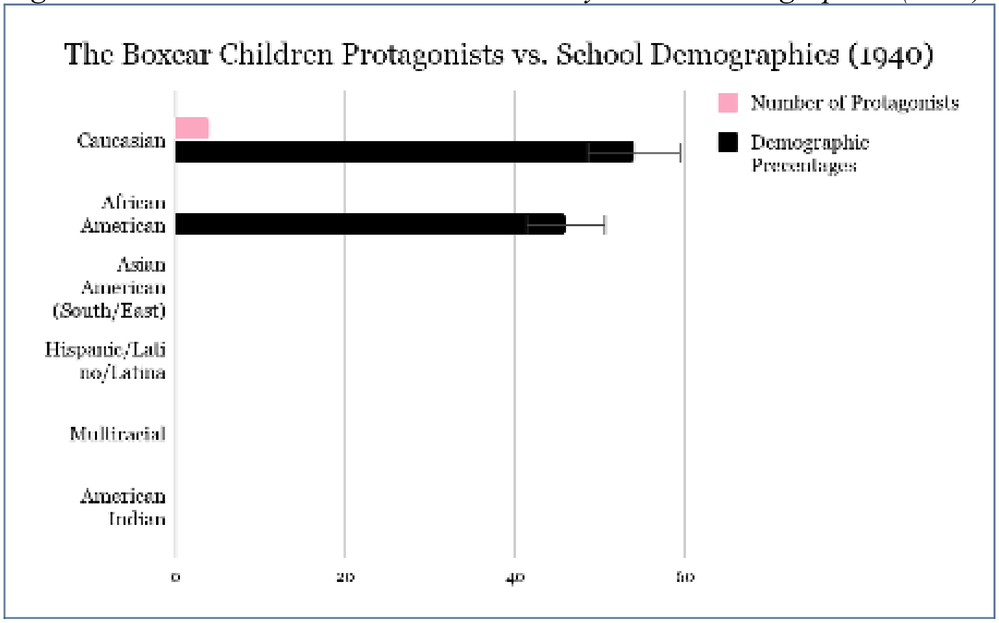
Figure 4: Protagonists and ethnicities across all series and 2017 school demographics



Chronological comparisons

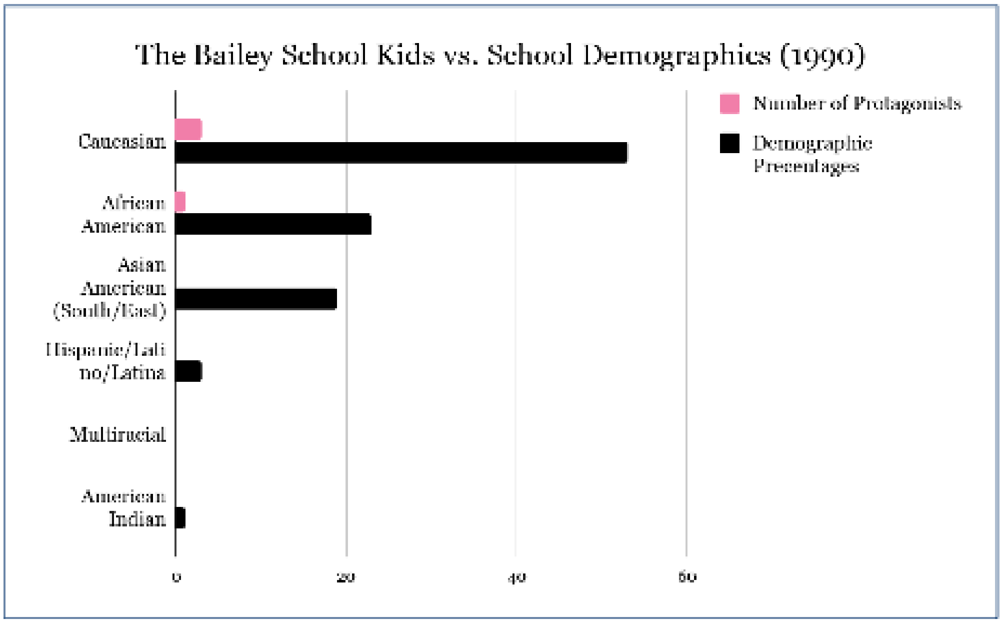
To afford chronological context for these equity audits, the demographics of each publication period is compared to the characters' ethnicities within the series. Clearly, the diversity of protagonists in transitional series does somewhat increase in concert with the reality of diverse school populations. First, Figure 5 shows actual 1940s' elementary school ethnic demographics, with only Caucasian (54%) and African Americans (46%) counted. Students in segregated schools had no exposure in school or in literature to other ethnicities as shown in the *Boxcar (*Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Boxcar Children vs. Elementary School Demographics (1940)



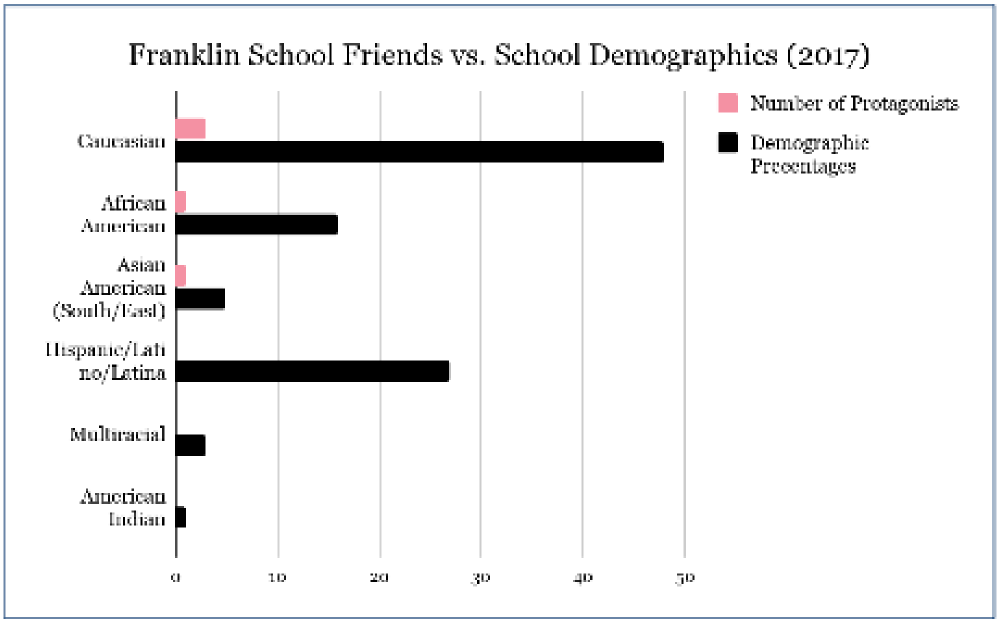
Next, Figure 6 presents elementary school ethnic demographics in the United States in 1990s; at the time of *The Bailey School Kids* series, demographics show Caucasian (53%), African American (23%), Asian/Pacific Islander (19%), and Hispanic (3%). The population slowly shifted to include more minorities. The protagonists of *Bailey School Kids evidence* more diversity than *Boxcar Children,* with one African American protagonist. *The Bailey School Kids* did not include any Asian or Hispanic characters, not in alignment with school demographics.

Figure 6: The Bailey School Kids vs. elementary school demographics (1990)



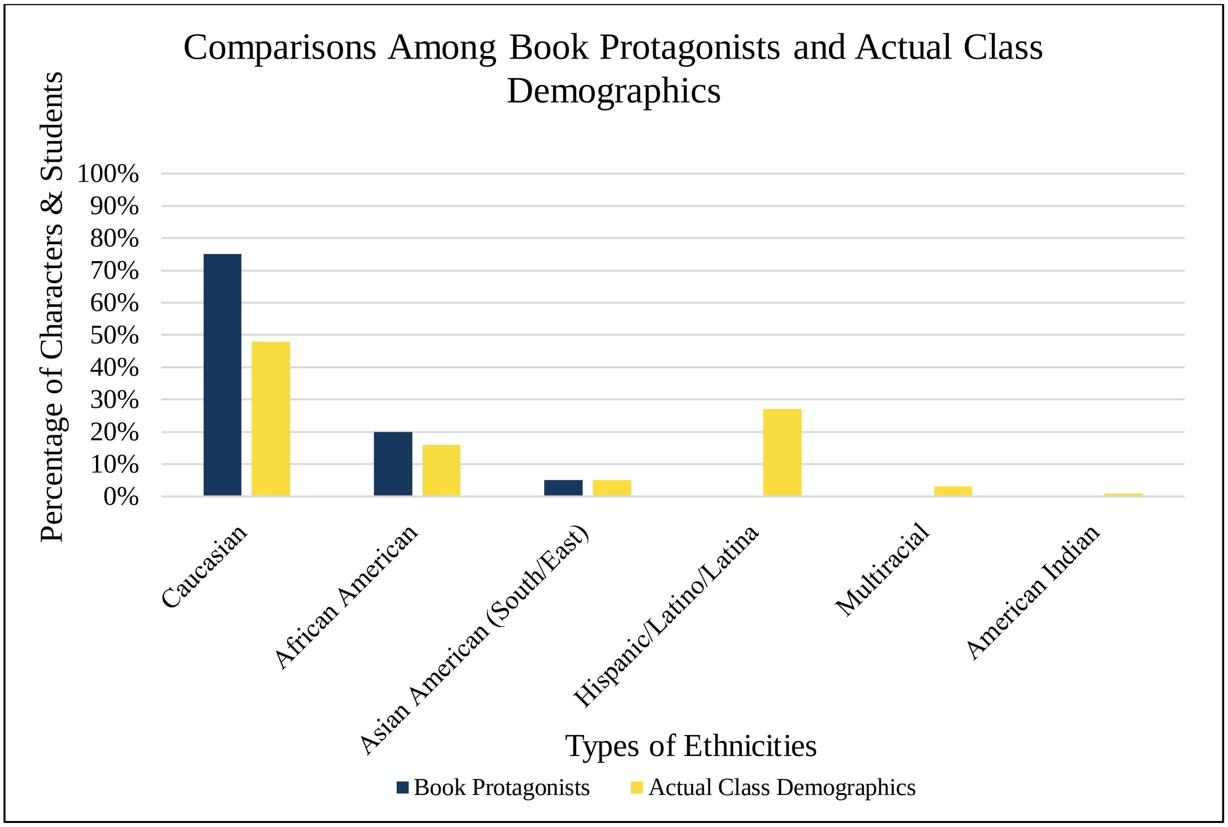
Lastly, Figure 7 offers elementary school ethnic demographics from 2017, at the time of the *Franklin School Friends* series, and shows increased diversity: Caucasian (48%), Hispanic (27%), African American (16%), Asian/Pacific Islander (5%), with multiracial (3%) and American Indian (1%) added. For the first time, five different minorities comprise the majority of U.S. students attending elementary school; Caucasian students become the new minority. African American students no longer represent the largest minority; Hispanic students emerge due to an influx of immigration. The increase from 3% (1990) to 27% (2017) also subsumes larger English Language Learners (ELLs). The introduction of multiracial demographics supports further evidence to include authentic multicultural literature.

Figure 7: Franklin School Friends vs. school demographics (2017)



Both an African American and Asian American character are included in *Franklin School Friends,* yet evidencing stereotypical portrayals. Also, though Hispanic students are the largest minority in reality, no relatable characters were included. *Franklin School Friends* series indicate fun, yet the books are not the most relevant transitional series for sharing with students. Especially considering the shift toward "minority majority," students miss vicarious and relatable opportunities to engage with multicultural characters. Figure 8 compares the protagonists in these three series against the reality of today's diverse demographics.

Figure 8: Comparisons among all book protagonists and actual class demographics



Concluding remarks

As the population in the U.S. continues to diversify and grow, it is essential children's series embrace multicultural literature to include diverse characters; however, a majority of popular elementary series continue to thwart the healthy construction of identity for underrepresented students. Therefore, teachers make strategic efforts to offer series books with realistic images of all ethnicities, families, communities, and cultures in order to meet the needs of today's diverse demographics (Davis, Brown, Liedel-Rice, & Soeder, 2005; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Therefore, Appendix A recommends current transitional series that afford relatable, often multiracial protagonists and characters. With complex, multicultural protagonists ranging from multiracial, Jewish, and Pakistani-American, all students are exposed to windows, mirrors, and sliding doors to compare and contrast cultural awareness, learn to take other perspectives, and build knowledgeable understandings across cultures. Children's books, extrapolated to the cumulative effect of reading and rereading engaging series books with multicultural characters, offer the kind of relatable characters to diverse students in our classes, essential for personal identity (Singer & Smith, 2003; Stephens, 1996), cross-cultural understandings and empathy (Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007; Stephens, 1996), and overall well-being (Lind & Thomsen, 2018; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Tschida et al., 2014). These developmental benefits of utilizing transitional series books are only possible when literature is shared that celebrates our wide range of diversity.

Appendix A

Recent Multicultural Transitional Series for Young Readers

Get Ready for Gabi! (Suitable for ages 7-10) **Protagonist:** A third-grade **mixed Puerto Rican and Jewish girl** who speaks Spanish at home with her family, and English at school with her friends. She speaks Spanglish when upset.

Montes, M. (2003). *A Crazy Mixed-Up Spanglish Day, Get Ready for Gabi!.* Scholastic.
Montes, M. (2003). *Who's That Girl? Get Ready For Gabi!.* Scholastic.
Montes, M. (2004). *No More Spanish! Get Ready For Gabi!.* Scholastic.
Montes, M. (2004) *Please Don't Go! Get Ready For Gabi!.* Scholastic.

Sophie Washington Series (Suitable for ages 7-12)* **Protagonist:** A fifth-grade **African-American girl** from Texas, characterized by two thick black braids sticking out of the side of her head.

Ellis, T. (2013). *Queen of the Bee, Sophie Washington Series*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing.
Ellis, T. (2014). *The Snitch, Sophie Washington Series*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing First Place Purple Dragonfly Book Award Winner.
Ellis, T. (2018). *Things You Didn't Know About Sophie, Sophie Washington Series*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing.
Ellis, T. (2018). *The Gamer, Sophie Washington Series*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing. Ellis, T. (2018). *Hurricane, Sophie Washington Series*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing.
Ellis, T. (2018). *Mission Costa Rica, Sophie Washington Series*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing.

Jaden Toussaint, the Greatest (Suitable for ages 5-10)* **Protagonist:** A five-year old **African-American** boy genius from New Orleans, characterized by his short stature, big brain, and even bigger afro.

Dumas, M. (2015). *Jaden Toussaint the Greatest Episode 1: The Quest for Screen Time*. Plum Street Press.
Dumas, M. (2016). *Jaden Toussaint the Greatest Episode 2: The Ladek Invasion.* Plum Street Press.
Dumas, M. (2016). *Jaden Toussaint the Greatest Episode 3: Muffin Wars*. Plum Street Press.
Dumas, M. (2016). *Jaden Toussaint the Greatest Episode 4: Attack of the Swamp*. Plum Street Press.
Dumas, M. (2017) *Jaden Toussaint the Greatest Episode 5: Mission Star-Power*. Plum Street Press.

Bobby vs. Girls (Suitable for ages 7-10) **Protagonist:** A shy, studious, skateboard-loving **Chinese-English/German/French** boy who enjoys going to school and keeping to himself.

Yee, L. (2010). *Bobby vs. Girls (Accidentally), Bobby vs. Girls Series*. Scholastic Paperbacks.

Yee, L. (2012). *Bobby the Brave (Sometimes), Bobby vs. Girls Series*. Scholastic Paperbacks.

Yasmin Series! (Suitable for ages 5-8) **Protagonist:** A spirited **Pakistani-American** second grader with a BIG imagination who thinks creatively and loves her family's traditions, from her Baba's beard to her Mama's hijab.

Faruqi S. (2018). *Yasmin the Explorer, Yasmin Series*. Picture Window Books.
Faruqi S. (2018). *Yasmin the Fashionista! Yasmin Series*. Picture Window Books.
Faruqi S. (2018). *Yasmin the Painter, Yasmin Series*. Picture Window Books.

Lola Levine Series (Suitable for ages 8-12) **Protagonist:** A **Jewish-Mexican American**, Spanish-speaking soccer player who learns to balance her mixed-up lives at school and at home.

Brown, M., & Dominguez, A. (2016). *Lola Levine Is Not Mean!* Little Brown Books.
Brown, M., & Dominguez, A. (2016). *Lola Levine Drama Queen.* Little Brown Books.
Brown, M., & Dominguez, A. (2016). *Lola Levine and the Ballet Scheme.* Little Brown Books.
Brown, M., & Dominguez, A. (2017). *Lola Levine Meets Jelly and Bean*. Little Brown Books.
Brown, M., & Dominguez, A. (2017). *Lola Levine and the Vacation Dream*. Little Brown Books.
Brown, M., & Dominguez, A. (2016). *Lola Levine Is Not Mean!* Little Brown Books.

Simply Sarah (Suitable for ages 6-8) **Protagonist:** A young **Caucasian** girl who lives on a bustling New York city block and goes on crazy adventures. She meets all sorts of people from **African-American, Chinese, and Mexican** backgrounds.

Naylor, P. (2009) *Anyone Can Eat Squid!, Simply Sarah*. Las Vegas, NV: Two Lions.
Naylor, P. (2010) *Patches and Scratches, Simply Sarah*. Las Vegas, NV: Two Lions.
Naylor, P. (2012) *Cuckoo Feathers, Simply Sarah*. Las Vegas, NV: Two Lions.
Naylor, P. (2013) *Eating Enchiladas, Simply Sarah*. Las Vegas, NV: Two Lions.

Jasmine Toguchi (Suitable for ages 6-9) **Protagonist:** A **Japanese-American** girl who just wants to make mochi with her family, but they have other plans for a third-grader like her.

Florence, D. (2017). *Jasmine, Toguchi, Mochi Queen*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Florence, D. (2017) *Jasmine, Toguchi, Super Sleuth*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Florence, D. (2018) *Jasmine, Toguchi, Drummer Girl*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Florence, D. (2018) *Jasmine, Toguchi, Flamingo Keeper*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

**Denotes transitional series that are ongoing*

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Dating Violence in Adolescent Relationships

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Adolescence

During the adolescent developmental stage, an individual begins to experience various physical, social, and emotional changes. At times, the effect of these various changes can cause an adolescent to become more vulnerable to risk taking behaviors and exposure to violence. Additionally, adolescents also begin to explore relationships outside of their family of origin including developing relationships with peers and pursuing dating relationships. According to Sutherland (2011), one in five adolescents reported having a boyfriend or girlfriend in the fifth grade and more than half of a group of sixth graders surveyed reported having a girlfriend or boyfriend within the last three months. These data reveal a significant number of adolescents become involved in dating relationships. With such a high number of adolescents in dating relationships, it is important to understand how these early dating experiences may influence shaping their views of intimate relationships and their behavior in future adult intimate relationships (Sutherland, 2011).

Dating Violence Defined

Dating violence is an epidemic that is growing exponentially among the adolescent age group. Dating violence is a pattern of coercive behaviors used by adolescents to control their partners.

These coercive behaviors include physical assault, sexual assault, abuse, ascendancy, degradation, intimidation, possessiveness, blaming, and the minimization of feelings (Scheiman & Zeoli, 2003). Moreover, these behaviors can also include emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. Various behaviors demonstrating dating violence include name-calling, bullying, intentional humiliation, and isolation from family and friends. Specific physical assault behaviors can include pinching, hitting, shoving, choking, or kicking. Examples of sexual abuse behaviors can include nonconsensual sex or attempted penetration, unsolicited nonpenetrative sexual contact, and reproductive coercion or sabotage. Lastly, behaviors of dating violence can include noncontact behaviors such as verbal abuse or verbal harassment (Sutherland, 2011).

Prevalence of Adolescent Dating Violence

Within adolescent relationships, statistics describing dating violence vary across age groups and different types of dating violence. According to Taylor and Mumford (2014), 69% of adolescents ages 12-18 reported experiencing some form of intimate partner violence, while 63% reported perpetration. Both in terms of perpetration and victimization, psychological abuse evidenced the highest reported form. Another 18% of adolescents reported being victims of sexual or physical abuse, while 12% reported perpetration. Taylor and Mumford (2014) found no gender differences for victimization rates of any form of dating violence, but their findings indicated perpetration rates of physical dating violence to be different for males and females, with 9% for males and 15% for females, respectively. Additionally, their findings described adolescents aged 15 to 18 evidencing higher rates of both victimization and perpetration regardless of type of violence as compared to adolescents ages 12 to 14. In studying the psychological impact of dating violence in adolescent research, findings indicate 61% of adolescents experienced accusations of flirting, threats to end the relationship, jealous behavior, excessive tracking of victim, hostile tones, or insulting behavior (Taylor & Mumford, 2014). Conversely, 10% reported experiencing serious threats or physical violence. Finally, 20.5% of female adolescents ages 15-18 reported victimization of sexual abuse, while their male counterparts reported 18.2%. These statistics illustrate many adolescents indicate a high risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence in an adolescent dating relationship (Taylor & Mumford, 2014).

Causes of Adolescent Dating Violence

With a growing number of adolescents experiencing dating violence, it is imperative to understand the various causations of this type of violence. Significant reasons related to adolescent dating violence within dating relationships include childhood family violence experiences, social networking sites, and influences from media outlets.

Childhood Family Violence & Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence

A significant risk factor for adolescent dating violence is a history of family violence. Adolescents who experienced family violence during their childhood reflect these experiences in partner relationships in various ways. For both males and females, exposure to intimate partner violence between parents indicates as a predictor of dating violence in future relationships (Latzman, Vivolo-Kantor, Niolon, & Ghazarian, 2015). Additionally, being victims of violence within previous relationships coupled with experiencing aggression and violence from their parents increased the rates of dating violence (Laporte, Jiang, Pepler, & Chamberland, 2011). Another major risk factor for dating violence is if an adolescent experienced callous discipline from both parents. Lastly, for adolescents who grew up in troubled and dysfunctional homes, they may have been provided limited opportunities to learn how to appropriately work through problems within an intimate relationship. By experiencing these various forms of family violence and family chaos, the results can lead to detrimental outcomes for adolescents within dating relationships (Laporte et al., 2011).

Social Networking Sites

The current state of technology within our society indicates tremendous potential to shape how adolescents interact with each other, particularly in dating relationships. Cell phones, texting, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and teenage focused apps such as SnapChat, Kik, and TikTok, allow adolescents several avenues to remain in constant contact with one another. These social networking modalities can potentially provide relationship partners the opportunity to stalk, control, and monitor the social media footprint of their partner. According to a popular social networking sight, 51% of girls reported feeling pressure from boys to send sexual messages or pictures while 18% of adolescent boys reported the same type of pressure from girls (Sutherland, 2011). In another study, Reed, Tolman, and Ward (2017) found that 53.8% of adolescents experienced digital monitoring/controlling behaviors by a partner. Moreover, 46.3% of adolescents experienced “digital direct aggression” behaviors such as being sent a threatening online message. Although, both genders experienced digital dating violence, girls experienced more psychological distress. Finally, Stonard, Bowen, Walker, and Price (2017) also reported monitoring/controlling behaviors among adolescents in relationships. Considering the powerful influence technology exerts among adolescents, it is imperative to understand how social media can impact the behaviors, ideas, and attitudes of adolescents toward relationships and, in doing so, help perpetuate the dating violence so many adolescents experience.

Media

In addition to an adolescent’s history of childhood family violence and the influence of social networking sites, the media outlets also play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of adolescents in partner relationships. Various forms of media specifically target the adolescent age group such as television, movies, and music. For adolescent girls who fantasize about romantic relationships, many look to these media outlets to learn how to love, how to be loved, how to date, and what romantic relationships should look like. Unfortunately, some of the messages about adolescent relationships presented in media outlets endorse a message of love and violence mixed together (Collins & Carmody, 2011). With so many adolescent girls believing violent behaviors is a standard in romantic relationships, they can potentially accept violence as their partner’s love language. With this twisted message being received and accepted by young girls, it is essential to understand the social message adolescents continue to receive from media outlets about dating relationships (Bonomi et al., 2014). For example, movies such as the *Twilight* series and the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series present a love story between adolescents and young adults. Though the main characters fall happily in love together at the end of the movie, the course of the relationship is filled with various forms of violence that the female partner in the relationship accepts in order to appease her partner. For adolescents still developing a sense of self as well as learning how to function in a relationship, the messages received from these movies can severely and negatively impact how they view and behave in dating relationships during their adolescent and adulthood years (Bonomi et al., 2014; Collins & Carmody, 2011).

Outcomes of Adolescent Intimate Partner Violence

For adolescents engaging in dating relationships where violence is present, they experience a higher risk for several negative outcomes. These negative outcomes can include developing poor risk management skills and life-long health consequences (Howard, Debnam, & Wang, 2013). For both males and females, dating violence showed an association with increased depression, suicidal behavior, and substance abuse (Martz, Jameson, & Page, 2016). Additional negative outcomes also included eating disorders, poor academic performance, and injuries requiring medical attention (Wincentak, Connolly, & Card, 2017).

Another harmful outcome of adolescent dating violence is an increase of participation in sexual risky behaviors. This increase of sexual risky behaviors includes participating in intercourse at a very young age, not using a condom or some form of protection during intercourse, and experiencing a high number of sexual partners. Moreover, an increase of sexually risky behaviors could also potentially lead to unplanned pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Alleyne-Green, Grinnell-Davis, Clark, Quinn, & Cryer-Coupet, 2016; Howard et al., 2013; Martz et al., 2016). Dating violence in adolescent dating relationships can also lead to negative emotional states and create a foundation of maladaptive relationship patterns of abuse in future adult intimate relationships (Howard et al., 2013).

Interventions and Preventions

Several programs help to curtail the number of adolescents involved in dating violent relationships. To increase awareness of adolescent dating violence, the 2010 Congress acknowledged February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. The government continues to show support for this issue by using the 17th anniversary of the passage of the Violence Against Women's Act to initiate the "1 is 2 many" campaign. This initiative specifically focuses on organizing youth to help create and identify ways to prevent violence in adolescent dating relationships (Howard et al., 2013).

In addition to the federal government participation, many state governments now require school districts to provide an educational curriculum for violence prevention. As of 2018, 22 states implemented legislation requiring education on adolescent dating violence and another three states incorporated dating violence curriculum into related education programs without having explicit laws passed regarding it (Cascardi, King, Rector, & DelPozzo, 2018). With the majority of adolescents spending a preponderance of their time in the school setting, it is imperative for school personnel to understand the signs, implications, and resources for adolescent dating violence. This includes educating the school personnel on the physical, emotional, social, and academic impact of dating violence and how to recognize these signs. Moreover, it is critical to inform school personnel on how to address imminent danger or concrete threats of danger. Additionally, school administration should consider implementing adolescent dating relationship curriculum such as Safe Dates (Sutherland, 2011) within the health education courses in middle school and in high school. In order to strengthen the efficacy of this curriculum, school districts invite community and advocacy groups along with university research experts that focus on dating violence among adolescents to participate in the design and execution of the curriculum. Partnering with local organizations and universities assists in validating the purpose and rigor of the curriculum within the school district (Howard et al., 2013).

Another major intervention created to help increase the awareness of violence in adolescent relationship is the Choose Respect Campaign. Created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015), this program focuses on adolescents aged 11 to 14 years old and uses various modalities of media to encourage messages of positive relationships. Despite the usefulness and their importance in decreasing the amount of violence within adolescent dating relationships, the very populations they seek to help, frequently overlook the programs (Howard et al., 2013). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2015) also released an online training known as *Dating Matters*, which is designed to identify risk factors and prevent dating violence among teens (Centers for Disease Control Prevention, 2015; Tharp, 2012).

Implications for Counselors

For counselors who work with adolescents involved in violent dating relationships, it is important they screen for a family violence history and assess for current violence in the adolescent's life. It is also critical counselors remain knowledgeable of what to look for when an adolescent is involved in a relationship filled with violence and abuse. Possible signs include somatic complaints, distress when the relationship is discussed, a loss of interest in activities, and making excuses for their partner's behavior (Sutherland, 2011). Lastly, it is essential for counselors to familiarize themselves with community resources such as shelters and employment agencies to help victims of dating violence receive the additional resources, as they need to safely remove themselves from the violent relationship. As adolescents continue to experience dating violence within their relationships, it is imperative for counselors to understand how past family violent histories, the various media outlets, and the numerous intervention programs can help shape the dating and relationship views of adolescents.

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The Potential of Purposeful Play: Using the Lens and Language of Crosscutting Concepts to Enhance the Science and Engineering Practices of Play

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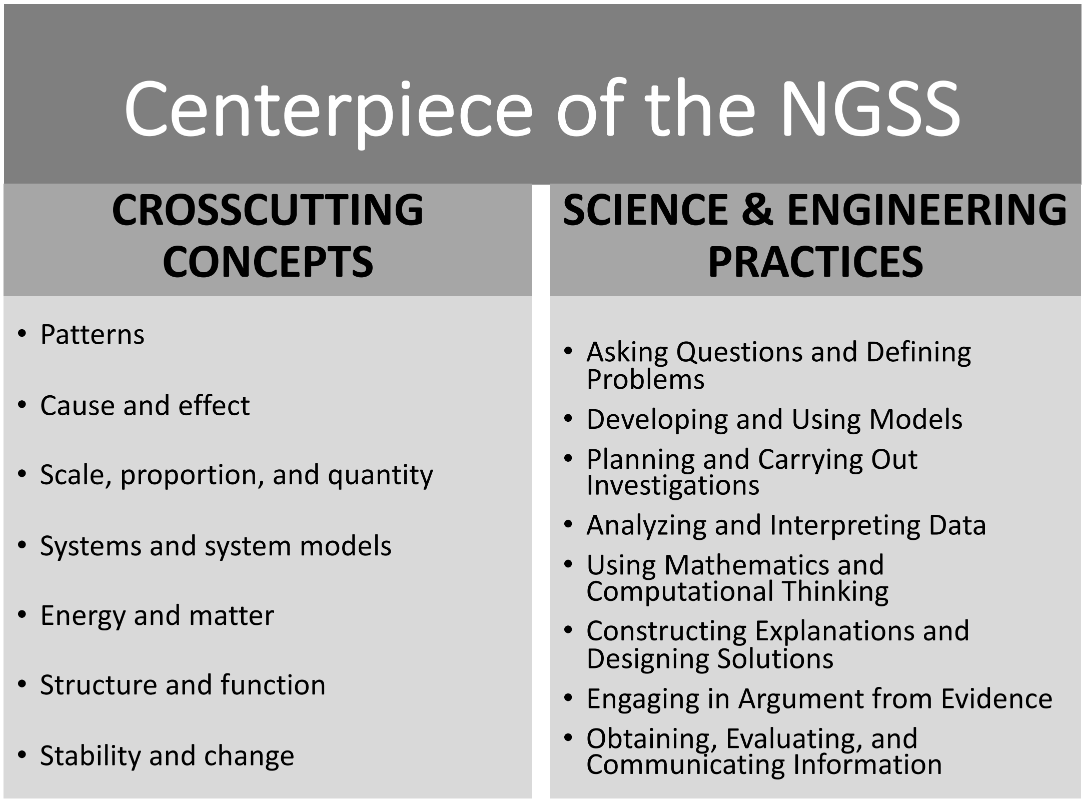
Playing enhances learning. Teachers who recognize and foster the science and engineering practices of playful endeavors push the envelope of children's thinking. Play is purposeful learning, and it serves an important role in human development. Researchers define play as exploratory, process oriented, intrinsically motivating, and freely chosen (Lozon, 2016). The notion of tinkering, often associated with play, has underpinned forward-thinking children's museums and science centers for decades. This creative expression enhances deep learning when supported by intentional guidance (Bevan, Petrich, & Wilkinson, 2015). For the purposes of the current discussion, the authors found that the crosscutting concepts of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS, 2013) provide a powerful lens and language through which to provide the type of guidance that challenges students' thinking and enhances the natural science and engineering practices of children's play.

Playing with Purpose

Play is most often attributed to early childhood, and science and engineering most often associated with secondary education and beyond. Yet, play, science, and engineering are interconnected, essential ingredients of quality educational programs throughout the age span. Here, the authors highlight how teachers can introduce into their pre-school and elementary school classrooms vetted “playful” curriculum that, with teacher scaffolding using crosscutting concepts, fosters the development of students’ science and engineering practices. When educators recognize the role of play, appreciate scientific reasoning, and make room for engineering, we honor the learners’ experiences as they naturally unfold across all subject areas. The Science and Engineering practices and the crosscutting concepts of the NGSS (2013) (see Figure 1), along with the voluminous research on play, inform this article.

Figure 1: Science and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts



Centerpiece of the NGSS

CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS

- Patterns
- Cause and effect
- Scale, proportion, and quantity
- Systems and system models
- Energy and matter
- Structure and function
- Stability and change

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING PRACTICES

- Asking Questions and Defining Problems
- Developing and Using Models
- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
- Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
- Engaging in Argument from Evidence
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

Teachers who look at children’s self-initiated play as engagement in science and engineering practices serve as mentor co-researchers with the children. Teachers who intentionally create playful challenges in their classrooms serve the same role. Play experiences, either child-initiated or teacher-prompted, are times when teachers can use language specific to the crosscutting concepts to narrate what they are observing and pose questions. The following sections describe two examples.

From Problems to Practices

A preschool teacher observed a 4-year old building a creature from plastic blocks using different shades of green from an assorted box of connecting plastic pieces. After the teacher's statement, "I see you built something with different green blocks, tell me about it," the child pointed out the creature's two arms, two legs, torso, and head. "It's a monster." The teacher suggested the child draw the monster so her parents could see what she built, but they had a problem -- there was no green paint.

In a STEM lesson on color matching in a 5th grade class, students have the same problem – no green paint. The teacher in this class also encourages science and engineering practices, and uses cross cutting concepts as the lens and language through which to scaffold children's playful pursuit of the "perfect green." Students begin with a quest to make a solution to match the color of the character of their choice. Pictures of popular, green, animated characters are on the table, and the children try to replicate the different greens. With the red, blue and yellow water available, the children get started on making their paint batches.

Making Green? In preschools and elementary schools everywhere, young children make secondary and tertiary color pigments from primary colors. What is different here? The difference is that the teachers are intentionally and mindfully focusing children's attention on *asking questions* about the shade of green, *defining the problems* of what colors to combine, using the colored water as a *model* of the face or fabric of their chosen character, *carrying out their plan and documenting* how many drops of each color they use, *analyzing* their colors as they compare to the green of the character, using the commutative and associative principles of mathematics in the natural context of drop counting (without using the terms commutative and associative), *building their computational thinking* (totaling their drops), and *showing their evidence* (their batch of green) to classmates to determine if others find their green a "perfect match." The children's efforts mirror science and engineering practices. Students investigate concepts of *scale and quantity* as they add primary color volumes to create their batch of color to match the characters. This is a cross-cutting concept.

These two classrooms are on a similar mission – maintaining the joyfulness and high- energy tone of real learning in structured learning settings with goals, standards, accountability, and evaluation. The authors found that the practices and concepts of NGSS point the way. Play can be deliberate, intentional, replicable, quantifiable science and engineering practice, and NGSS helps us understand the power of play in STEM learning.

Playful Curricular Challenges

Lessons are developed around the core ideas of NGSS, with a particular focus on the practices and concepts of the NGSS by crafting playful curriculum problems that are challenge-based, with design thinking and career awareness at the core. Fifth grade students were engaged in a color matching challenge through science and engineering practices, as they specifically relate to core ideas in chemistry, art and math disciplines.

The following represents the playful challenge: *"You are a color technologist, and your role is to design a formula for the green that matches different animated characters. When the color satisfies the artist in you, hand off your formula, and ask a classmate to make a batch. Does your friend agree that the formula matches the color?"* The careers of technologist and artist are used in this lesson to informally plant seeds that multiple future opportunities exist, and these opportunities tap into STEM interests, passions, and skills in careers that may not routinely be seen. Other careers are used in other lessons, each with varying educational levels required. The task to make a specific color requires the student to engage in design thinking. The approach and procedure for making the batch generates from within the child. Having a friend replicate the formula mimics the scientific enterprise by validating or refuting student's work. Tracking the formula embeds math into science practices as an essential feature of the investigation. STEM practices, in general, are embedded by the design of the challenge.

Responsive Teacher Language

Once the playful curricular challenge is in place, teachers' responsiveness to students enriches children's engagement, interest, actions, reasoning, creativity, and commitment within the challenge. Teacher language using clear targeted questions and statements filtered through the lens of the crosscutting concepts can extend students' current engagement in the curriculum play into intentional science and engineering practices at the leading edge of the students' thinking. The following illustrates teacher language rooted in the crosscutting concepts through examples within the color matching challenge.

- Structure and Function
    - "You thought that adding yellow would make your green brighter. But, you say it didn't. Sounds like the yellow did not function as a brightener. What is your thinking now?"
- Stability and Change
    - "It sounds like you're saying that each drop of a new color changes the old color. Is that right?"
- Energy and Matter
    - "The sample seems to look different to me in different light. Does it to you?"
- Pattern
    - "I see that when you added a drop of yellow to blue, you made green. What do you imagine would happen if you were to add more yellow?"
- Cause and Effect
    - "I see you were surprised when you added the red. What effect did the red have on your green?"
- Scale, Proportion, and Quantity;
    - "I see you are using counting to fill the pipette. Sounds like you are using time as a measure of "how much." I haven't before seen this method. How did you come up with it?"
- Systems and System Models
    - "You said you added too much blue, then I see that you added more yellow to your batch. Getting the right green seems to be a whole system of drops of blue, yellow and red. How are you monitoring your process?"

A Revisit

The authors found that learning to use the crosscutting concepts with ease in a classroom is a journey that requires multiple examples and experiences. Few have participated in learning settings rooted in these big ideas and few have had long term exposure to learning settings that invited engagement in science and engineering practices.

Consider two other examples, both still on the topic of pigment color. In an outdoor class of 4 - 5-year-olds, students were working with multiple planters filled with basil, spinach, tomatoes, and other herbs and vegetables that they planted earlier in the school year. Looking at one of the tomato plants, the children noticed a creature on one of the leaves. The children had not noticed the creature before, but, as one child stated, “The worm is camouflaged.” The teacher asked, “What makes you say that?” The child confidently stated, “the worm is green on green so it’s camouflage.” The teacher speculated with the children how they would draw the creature if it was already green on green. The children wondered how they were going to make two colors of green so they could see the creature in their own drawings.

The children in this class are *self-defining problems* (they want to create a color for the plant they are observing, but also want to create a different color green to represent the caterpillar they found camouflaged on their tomato plant), as they continue *carrying out investigations* (how do they make different greens and how do they draw what they want to draw). Teachers can direct student engagement in further science and engineering practices at potentially more sophisticated levels (looking at the difference between leaves and leaves with creatures on them) by drawing students’ attention to *measurement or quantity*, a crosscutting concept, with questions such as, “Could there be a little tiny bit of another color in the green of the bug?” This sort of question sets the stage for young students’ thinking about *measurement, or quantity* (How many drops of yellow and how many drops of blue and how many drops of another color will make that shade of green?)

In a 4th grade lesson, children are also exploring pigment colors, but adding a new medium, milk, with the colors. Like their younger counterparts with the caterpillars, they are also *defining problems* (in this case, the colors do not mix) and *carrying out investigations* (Why don’t the colors mix). Teachers can direct student engagement in further science and engineering practices at potentially more sophisticated levels (looking at distinctions in different types of milk) by drawing students’ attention to quantity with a statement such as: “Does the % fat in the milk make a difference in the color mixing,” and, “What about almond milk?”

Literacy and Numeracy Development within Design Thinking

Coming back to the example of the green creature on the tomato plant, it looked like a caterpillar, and the children wondered about the kind of bug, how it got on their plant, and what else they could let it eat so it would not eat the tomato plant in their garden. The children were playing. The children were engaged in science. The children were designing their process. The teacher helped them find books about garden creatures to help identify it (research, literacy, language). The children concluded it was a caterpillar, observed it for days, and took notes wondering what would happen next (scientific thinking, literacy, language). They drew pictures on the calendar to show change across time and measured the creature periodically (mathematics, data collecting, and science). Student-led questions turned into investigations, and the investigations naturally included science, art, language, writing, and mathematics.

These types of curriculum problems, either student-generated or teacher-generated, extend and reinforce important concepts across subject domains within a safe and nurturing, yet provocative and demanding learning environment. The approaches described here are based on the pedagogy of constructivism (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Brooks, 2011) and the principles of universal design for learning (Pisha & Coyne, 2001). Both constructs anticipate a wide range and complexity of learner needs, thus, the learning spaces and tasks are flexible by design and accessible for diverse classes. This type of teaching requires a teacher to think *along with* the children.

In Conclusion

Play and learning go hand-in-hand. Play helps us to test and symbolize our knowledge of the world, communicate an understanding, and build toward later academic learning (Saracho, 2012). Teachers who provide intentional opportunities for play enhance children's learning of core ideas, as well as the development of feelings of worthiness and the skills of academic competence. Playful learning with a skillful teacher inherently engages students in meaningful scientific thinking.

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International Journal of the Whole Child
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Page Turners: Books for Children

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Picturebooks

Good Morning Snowplow!

Written by **Deborah Bruss** Art by **Lou Fancher and Steve Johnson**

Arthur A. Levine Books (Scholastic), 2018. ISBN 9781338089493

The hardworking snowplow is the hero of this picture book, quietly working all night long to clear the roads while the snow falls and the cars slide nearby. The illustrations contrast the bright colors of the snowplow against the various shades of blue and white of the winter night landscape. The rhyming text offers a window into the world of the snowplow and its driver, navigating the streets in a way that is both familiar to those of us who live in colder climates, engage those of us who do not, and for all, provide fascination with this winter ritual. Ages 3-6. (MTG)

The Three Little Superpigs: Once Upon a Time

Written and Illustrated by **Claire Evans**

Scholastic Press, 2017. ISBN 97813382454486

Evans' whimsical spin on the classic tale of The Three Little Pigs is sure to engage today's children. In this clever spin, Evans positions the pigs as aspiring superheroes. In their quest to attain this status, they move to Fairyland complete with residents such as Little Red Riding Hood, a cast of grandmothers, Mary and her little lambs and, of course, the Big Bad Wolf. As the classic tale unfolds, the pigs finally attain superhero status by outwitting the wolf and gaining the new title of superpigs! Children will be engaged by the connection to superheroes, the witty text, and the vivid illustrations. This text would be an excellent and lively read loud or bedtime story that would likely be requested again and again. Ages 3-5. (MJS)

Vanishing Colors

Written by **Constance Orbeck-Nilssen** Illustrated by **Akin Duzakin**

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2017. ISBN 9780802855183

Orbeck-Nilssen created a poignant and timely tale of a young girl and her mother who are living in a war-torn town. Alone and afraid, the girl dreams of a protective bird that keeps her and her mother safe at night. The bird supports the girl in remembering how colorful and vibrant her town and life once were. Most importantly, the bird gives her hope that if she and her mother stay together and never give up, there is hope for a better tomorrow and They will indeed persevere. The illustrations support the story by alternating between dark and ominous to vibrant and rich. This text provides an age appropriate gateway into the challenges that are ongoing in the world and that many refugees faced in their home countries. Ages 5-9. (MJS)

Inside Outside

Illustrated by **Anne-Margot Ramstein** and **Matthias Arégui**

Candlewick, 2019. ISBN 9781536205978.

Sometimes perspective makes all the difference! Such is the case in this clever wordless concept book. Each double-page spread features one page with an inside perspective, followed by a second with an outside one. For example, one page shows red ants busily moving about inside their anthill. The next page reveals an expanded view, revealing that they were oblivious to the anteater who is ready to eat them up. In some cases, the differences between the inside/outside perspectives are dramatic; in others they are more subtle. In all cases, the detailed oversized visual sequences invite readers to look again and again. An excellent book for supporting visual literacy, perspective taking, and rich text-based conversation. Ages 4-8. (PAC).

Believe: A Pop-Up Book of Possibilities

Written and illustrated by **Robert Sabuda**

Candlewick, 2019. ISBN 9780763663971.

With sparse text and Sabuda’s characteristic solid white pop-ups, this book invites readers to dream big and set the course to live up to their potential: “When I dream of the future/ I will dream big./ When I build my life/ I will reach high”). Although aimed at a young audience, it is hard to imagine that children and adults of all ages would not enjoy Sabuda’s inspirational words and mesmerizing, complex paper engineering. A good choice to read with children or to share as a giftbook to mark special occasions or milestones. Ages 3-8. (PAC).

Plume

Written and Illustrated by **Isabelle Simler**

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2017 (English version). Originally published in French under the same title in 2012. ISBN 9780802854926

In exquisite detail, Simler created a nearly wordless picture book that takes a close look at the plumage of various birds, ranging from the common chicken to the more exotic ibis. Each page features a full illustration of the bird, the name of the bird, and a close-up illustration of the bird's different feathers. To add whimsy, each page features the tail, paw, or head of a black cat (also featured on the cover) that is clearly intent on the birds. The end of the book brings a charming, and surprising, resolution to the cat's interest in the feathered friends. This text would be useful to teachers looking to link science and nature to literacy, and as a bridge between fictional and nonfictional texts. Ages 5-8. (KBJ)

Where's the Baby? A Spotting Book

Written and Illustrated by **Britta Teckentrup**

Big Picture Press (Candlewick), 2018

Elephants are trumpeting and thundering, while geese are honking and splashing their way through this colorful, engaging picture book for young readers. Bursting with rhyme and sophisticated vocabulary, this spotting book encourages the reader to find the baby animal on each page. Teckentraup has embedded facts about each animal within the rhymes so readers learn while they search the illustrations. This text is one of a series of spotting books by this author and would be a captivating addition to any library for young children. Ages 2-5. (MTG)

Chapter Books

Flights of Fancy: Creative Inspiration from Ten Award-Winning Authors and Illustrators

Written & illustrated by **various noted authors and illustrators**

Walker Books, 2019. ISBN: 9781536205367.

In this profusely illustrated anthology, ten acclaimed creators of children's books explore the inspirations and influences that guide them. Each chapter is written and illustrated by a British Children's Laureate. Prose and illustrations provide inspiring, workable ideas for nurturing the creative potential within each reader. Individual chapters could serve as an excellent mentor texts for budding authors and illustrators, giving readers an opportunity to learn from the likes of Michael Rosen, Anthony Browne, Lauren Child, and many more. Ages 10-14. (PAC).

Poetry

I See the Moon: Rhymes for Bedtime

Compiled and Illustrated by **Rosalind Beardshaw**

Nosy Crow, Candlewick Publishing, 2017. ISBN 9781536205794

With illustrations that (literally) sparkle, this peaceful book provides a collection of short poems on the theme of night and sleep. Ranging from traditional lullabies to poems by authors such as Robert Louis Stevenson, colorful illustrations adorned with silver are sure to catch the ears and eyes of even the youngest readers. This text would be a wonderful addition to a PreK or kindergarten classroom for use during quiet time; it also could provide a strong mentor text for older children on how to pull together a collection of poems around a single theme or concept. Ages 3-8. (KBJ)

Graphic Novels

New Kid

Written by **Jerry Craft**

HarperCollins, 2019. 256 pages. ISBN 978-0062691194

Middle schooler, Jordan Banks longs to attend art school where he can hone his artist abilities and pursue his first love, drawing comics. Unfortunately, his parents have different plans for Jordan. They enroll Jordan in an elite private school in which he is one of the few students of color. The author/illustrator, Jerry Craft, expertly uses humor to introduce challenges such as implicit bias and microaggressions to young adolescents. Craft embeds the topics neatly into the familiar topic of middle school life such as awkward first crushes, making new friends, and striving for good grades. **New Kid,** exemplifies the graphic format using both words and illustrations to tell a compelling story that young adolescents will not only learn from, but as well enjoy. Ages 8-12. (CKM)

To Kill a Mockingbird: A Graphic Novel

Written by **Harper Lee** and **Fred Fordham**

Harper, 2018. 288 pages. ISBN 978-0062798183

Transforming a beloved classic like To Kill a Mockingbird is always a risk. Fortunately, Fred Fordham does an excellent job using the medium to beautifully tell the story. The graphic novel stays true to the original while integrating stunning artwork that enriches the story. Fordham's version will easily satisfy the purest who originally fell in love with the print version while introducing the story to fans of the graphic medium. The graphic novel definitely deserves a place in the English curriculum alongside the original. Ages 12 and up. (CKM)

International Journal of the Whole Child
2019, VOL. 4, NO. 2

IJWC Updates

For the new column, “Emerging Professional,” IJWC did not receive any student submissions for review and possible publication. Again, the IJWC editorial team invites students (undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels) to submit papers including problem resolutions, literature reviews, and research designs (qualitative or quantitative). The topic choices remain broad with the primary focus on how this content supports all children’s holistic learning and development. IJWC editors remain committed to providing student-authors with relevant, productive and concrete feedback. Importantly, a student may identify additional authors; the key factor is for the student to be “first author.”

Why is this particular IJWC feature important? The IJWC mission remains committed to promoting an understanding of holistic learning and development for all children. In particular, IJWC editors believe by supporting student authors with modeling, feedback, and mentoring, IJWC strengthens and extends understanding, recognition, and implementation of “best practices” into the next generation of educational professionals and child advocates.

How to Submit a Student Paper

In order to target the “Emerging Professional” column and to distinguish your paper as a “student submission,” merely identify “Emerging Professional” at the top of your document. In this way, the manuscript will be forwarded to the appropriate editors committed to supporting emerging scholars.

If you have any questions regarding this particular process, contact kburriss@mtsu.edu

See you in the 2020 IJWC spring issue!