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Table of Contents

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Introduction

Tiffany Wilson, Editor

This Fall issue provides readers with diverse perspectives on a variety of topics including the impact Covid-19 had on pre-service teachers, Korean mothers, and children's social skills. Moreover, this issue discusses how music can be utilized to increase literacy in the classroom, the benefits of structured and unstructured play, and recommended toys for play. The IJWC continues to be committed to promoting holistic learning and the development of the whole child.

Article #1:

Possible Selves of Pre-service Elementary School Teachers in the Time of Covid-19 Pandemic: A Sequential Explanatory Mixed Method Study

Ceyhun Kavrayici

The authors of this study utilized the possible selves theory to examine pre-service elementary school teachers' understanding of their future potential and its effects on their future orientations. Possible selves theory describes a person's understanding of themselves in the future based on an understanding of their past and present self. The findings of this study suggest that pre-service teachers have confidence in the teaching profession (professionalism) and expect a collaborative environment (learning to teach). Additionally, they are not afraid of being an uncaring or boring teacher. However, due to the limitations of online learning, they do worry about classroom management. Continued development of pre-service teacher practicum/ observation as well as support in technology and management is necessary for the development of pre-service teacher skills.

Article #2:

Parenting and Education Involvement of Korean Mothers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Sungok Reina Park, Jeongae Kang

The authors of this study examined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Korean mothers and children who were separated from their spouses during the lockdowns. Data was collected via a three-interview series model conducted over Zoom. The narrative data support previous findings that education is highly valued in Korean households. Many participants experienced an increase in fear and anxiety around single parenthood and racism. There were varying levels of knowledge of computer usage and teachers' abilities to deliver curriculum virtually, which led to varying experiences among participants. The relationship between long-distance spouses had varying impacts on stress and anxiety levels. In the future, it will be important for childcare responsibilities to be shared and for an increase in emotional support in long-distance relationships.

Article #3

Implementing Phonological Awareness in Saudi Arabia Kindergarten

Riham Alsultan

The author provides a review of how to integrate phonological awareness into the classroom to support Arabic language development in kindergarten. The importance of rhymes, rhythms, and syllables are addressed. The author recommends that language instructors should continually be educated in the use and importance of phonological awareness. Additionally, it is important to prioritize a holistic approach that differentiates students' individual needs.

Article #4

Discussion-Based Pedagogy to Promote Socio-emotional and Well-being Among Students in Japan

Yoko Kitami, Lois A. Yamauchi

The authors examine the use of Philosophy for Children to promote socio-emotional learning and well-being in Japan. Philosophy for Children (P4C) focuses on supporting children's search for meaning and their desires for rich and meaningful experiences. Data was collected via the use of emails, analysis of documents, and observations. Educators applied the P4C approach throughout the education system, at the elementary, secondary, and university levels. The findings suggest that P4C addresses the holistic needs of students, as well as the development of strong social and emotional skills and support for those who have experienced trauma. Future research may consider incorporating more synchronous forms of data collection as well as the students' perspectives.

Pictures for Reflection

Recommended Toys for the Playroom

Hannah Robinson

The author provides a recommendation of toys teachers should include their classroom to help children express a range of emotions.

Tech Talk Manuscript

Destination Adventure: Virtual Field Trips that Won't Disappear

Nancy Caukin

The authors explore the use of virtual field trips as a way of engaging students in standards-aligned learning experiences. Virtual field trips utilize technology and augmented and virtual reality to provide students with an opportunity to explore and experience different places and events. Virtual field trips afford students the chance to engage in learning when field trips are not feasible due to logistics, finances, and safety concerns. The benefits of virtual field trips include increased accessibility, exposure to new perspectives, and increased learning outcomes. Finally, the authors provide a list of virtual field trips and notes, including appropriate ages, topics, and supplemental materials.

ETC Manuscript

Music and Middle School Literacy

Sally Busby

The authors provide strategies for the incorporation of music in a middle school English classroom. Some strategies include using music from a variety of genres, connecting it to classroom literature (music review), using it in the background, and using it to support writing assignments. The use of music in the classroom allows students to develop critical thinking skills and make connections through their own interests and personal identity.

ETC Manuscript

Post-Pandemic Teaching in Early Childhood Classroom: Supporting Children's Social Skills to Enhance Play Experiences

Dawnita Gallo

This article provides insight into the use of play in the early childhood classroom. The author discusses social, emotional, and cognitive development associated with play, the use of play as a teaching strategy, as well as the effects post-pandemic. The author provides three scenarios outlining the use of scaffolded play with children in block play, games, and in a mud kitchen. The importance of teachers remaining aware that play belongs to the child, and they should not attempt to control their play but rather on how to gain the necessary skills to play and learn is discussed.

Children & Families: Health and Wellness Manuscript

Adverse Childhood Experiences of Elementary School Students Exacerbated by COVID-19: A Conceptual Framework

Tyreeka Williams, Angel Dowden

The authors of this article discuss child neglect and maltreatment in elementary school students, focusing on ACEs and providing recommendations and implications for practice. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that occur before the age of 18. Through the use of attachment theory, the authors illustrate how an understanding of attachment styles both reflects and relates to one's psychological state. Through a multilevel systems analysis predictors of child neglect and maltreatment are identified. Additionally, the impact of Covid-19 and research trends are examined. Finally, the author discusses the impact of trickle-down policies that focus on systems and infrastructure to provide families in need with support.

STEAM Manuscript

STEAM Education and the Whole Child: Examining Policy and Barriers

Rachael Pearson

The authors examine the policies and barriers that impact the Whole Child STEAM approach. STEAM aligns with the Whole Child approach which recognizes and supports the developmental needs of each child through the tenets of health, safety, engagement, support, and challenge. However, barriers such as funding, curriculum and time restraints, and local and state policies hinder the success of STEAM programs. Addressing these barriers will promote the full

execution of a Whole Child STEAM approach that will support divergent thinking skills, interdisciplinary learning, and excitement in children.

Education by the Numbers

Donald Snead

The data provided by the author in "Education by the Numbers" discusses factors that impact education attainment.

Emerging Professional Manuscript

Let the Games Begin: Why Structured and Unstructured Play Should be Utilized in the Classroom

Carleigh Slater

The authors of this article explore the use of play and gamification at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The importance of free play and the use of play-based and game-based learning are discussed. The use of play and gamification can be used for learning as well as assessment using retrieval play and game practices. Finally, barriers to the implementation of play and gamification in the classroom include financial resources and time availability, as well as resistance from people with a more traditional teaching approach.

Page Turners: Books for Children

Maria Genest, Katrina Bartow Jacobs, Carla K. Meyer, Michelle J. Sobolak, Patricia Crawford

In this article, different children's books are listed with descriptive summaries on each one. The books include: *A Bear Far from Home; If You Live Here; Pow Wow Day; Pretty Perfect Kitty Corn; The Queen of Kindergarten; Remembering Ethan; Keeping the City Going; Laxmi's Mooch; Firekeeper's Daughter; Let's Talk About it: A Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human.*

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Possible Selves of Pre-service Elementary School Teachers in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Method Study

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Abstract

Possible selves theory describes how a person thinks about his or her own future potential. Based on past and present self-images, understanding one's *possible self* can be an incentive for one's future behavior. Social structures, cultures, identities and genders may affect the development of *possible selves*. One can envision a *possible self* that he or she would like to become or is afraid of becoming. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students quickly adapted themselves to a distance teaching and learning process. This transition to an on-line venue may influence pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teacher education and possibly modify their expectations regarding the profession. Within this context, the aim of this study was to examine the *possible selves* of pre-service teachers in order to consider implications for their future orientations. Sequential explanatory mixed-method design with a stratified purposeful sampling technique was used in the study. One hundred eighty-six junior and senior pre-service elementary school teachers constituted the quantitative strand sample of the study and thirteen of the participants were purposefully selected for the qualitative strand. Findings reveal pre-service teachers indicate a high level of *expected possible selves* while demonstrating a low level of *feared possible selves* in the "uncaring teacher" and "uninspired instruction" dimensions. However, pre-service participants expressed fears about the "loss of control" dimension of *feared possible selves*. One of the main reasons for this fear was their on-line teaching practicum course, which provided limited experience of classroom and learning management in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: children, Covid-19 pandemic, elementary education, possible selves, pre-service teachers

Introduction

The integral role of early education on the development of the "whole child" is well-established and this effect on forming children's future is also well-accepted as critically important (Bhardwaj, 2016; Enciso et al., 2017; Zgaga, 2005). In a safe and supportive environment, a holistic perspective nurtures children's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development (Noddings, 2005). Elementary education can provide an arena for safe, challenging, and supportive learning environments. Since elementary education is a crucial phase in a child's life, it provides particular targeted roles such as enabling children to acquire cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills (Bozdogan, 2008), along with cultural-oriented and critical thinking skills.

Elementary education, where-in initial requirements of child development need to be met, serves as an agency in organizing social relationships and promoting independence in the early years of life. Elementary school teachers, who act as facilitators in these initial stages of children's lives, become responsible for preparing children for the future (Sliskovic et al., 2017). It is critically important for teachers to create an innovative and effective learning atmosphere to assist children in discovering who they can become.

Since elementary school teachers become mentors and role models for their students, the teacher education program is significant for schooling systems, and thus, children's learning. The teacher education program refers to procedures and curriculum arranged to equip pre-service candidates with the skills, behaviors, and expectations essential to successfully fulfill their school responsibilities, as well as maintain wider quality educational environments (Ezer et al., 2010). Additionally, teacher education programs focus on nurturing pre-service candidates' professional identity, self-efficacy development, and self-actualization for their future-oriented work-related behaviors.

Literature Review

Possible Selves Theory

Since the 1980's, *possible selves theory* (Markus & Nurius, 1986) presents a central framework for future-oriented tendencies. *Possible selves theory* describes how a person thinks about his or her own future potential. As identified by Markus and Nurius (1986), *possible selves theory* serves as "incentives for future behavior" based on past and present self-images (p. 955). One can envision a *possible self* that he or she would like to become or is afraid of becoming. Generating *possible selves* is an opportunity for individuals to project who they will be in the future (Lee & Oyserman, 2008). Erikson (2007) discusses how "possible selves are conceptions of ourselves in the future, including, at least to some degree, an experience of being an agent in a future situation. Possible selves get vital parts of their meaning in interplay with the self-concept, which they in turn moderate, as well as from their social and cultural context" (p. 356). As also stated by Oyserman and Fryberg (2006), social structures, cultures, identities, and genders affect the development of *possible selves*. The perceived attainability is shaped by standards, interactions, and social norms as well (Erikson, 2019). *Possible selves theory* becomes an important motivational resource and links to provide motivations and imagined futures (Erikson, 2018). *Possible selves* can be regarded as positive since some appear as "expected or hoped for" selves while others can be labelled as negative since they are referred as "avoidant and feared" *possible selves* (Oyserman & James, 2011, p. 128-129). Hoped for or expected selves could

include health, work satisfaction, and happiness; while feared or avoidant selves might include poverty, illness, and loneliness (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001). When *possible selves theory* initially appeared, it represented a concern for social psychology (Markus & Nurius, 1986); however, now this theory is receiving heightened attention in educational settings. As a goal-focused theory, it provides a sense of motivation "in terms of futures to avoid or achieve" (Erikson, 2019, p. 29). With colleges and universities restricting access to on-ground learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid transition from "face to face" to "online" teaching and learning resulted in stress and confusion for stakeholders involved in teacher education (Dilekci & Limon, 2020; Nasri et al., 2020). This instructional delivery transition process could alter pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teacher education programs and may impact their expectations regarding the profession.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Teacher Possible Selves Theory

The COVID-19 pandemic changed much of the social and organizational life throughout the world (Kavrayici & Kesim, 2021). The pandemic impacted teacher education in numerous ways. Although teachers and students quickly adapted themselves to distance teaching and learning processes because of school and university mandates (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Kaya & Dilekci, 2021), stakeholder stress/confusion occurred because of this shift to "online" instruction (Dilekci & Limon, 2020; Nasri et al., 2020). During the pandemic, teacher candidates did not experience access to children and schools; this context of instructional delivery may influence pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teacher education programs and impact expectations regarding the profession.

For example, because teaching practicum courses were implemented via on-line teaching, pre-service teacher-candidates were not exposed to teaching practicum lessons including classroom management applications and practice of teaching strategies. The lack of in-person teaching experiences might be a reason why pre-service teacher-candidates may encounter difficulties later in their careers (Nasri et al., 2020), affecting their identity development and self-actualization in the teaching profession.

In Turkey, pre-service teachers were matched with the on-line learning system of the Ministry of National Education called EBA (Education and Information Network); pre-service candidates attended on-line lessons delivered by teachers in the Ministry of National Education's schools. As a requirement of teacher education in Turkey, teacher-candidates made observations, presentations, and taught a lesson as a student teacher during COVID-19. This on-line instruction may also negatively affect their classroom management competencies and teaching strategies when they later encounter face-to-face classroom interactions.

Since future orientations of pre-service teachers represent a critical role for educational operations, the topic of *possible selves* of pre-service teachers remains one of the most important research trends of teacher education in the past two decades. *Possible selves theory*, in terms of focusing on future selves, provides an appropriate theoretical framework to examine the professional identity development of pre-service teachers; this timing represents the last stage of teacher education - a critical phase from transitioning from a student to a teacher (Hamman et al., 2010).

Pre-service teachers build their future teacher selves through the opportunities they experience during their education (Hong & Greene, 2011). Yuan (2016) states *feared possible selves* of pre-service teachers restrain their prospective actions and sense of agency. *Feared possible selves* of pre-service teachers include avoidances such as becoming a "boring" teacher (Pellikka et al., 2020). However, *positive possible selves* direct pre-service teachers to make plans and develop strategies for the future (Chan, 2006). Expected *possible selves* refers to pre-service teachers striving towards becoming "caring" and "inspiring" (Pellikka et al., 2020). *Possible selves theory* is applied as a compass to understand how pre-service teachers' future expectations, goals, and motivations develop (Hamman et al., 2013). *Possible selves theory* describes how motivated an individual is about their future selves (Oyserman & Markus, 1990), and it is helpful to "understand how efforts to become a certain type of teacher in the future are deeply rooted in the emerging professional identity of the present" (Hamman et al., 2013, p. 308). Pre-service teachers' concerns and expectations about the future may ensure considerable information for professional development of teachers and the curriculum of teacher education. An examination of feared and expected selves of pre-service teachers helps to support positive outcomes for teacher education programs (Hamman et al., 2013). Thus, the emerging *possible selves* of pre-service teachers during COVID-19 become a focus of concern. Moreover, an examination of *possible selves* of pre-service teachers provides insight regarding results of teacher education during the COVID-19 on-line learning environment.

Within this context, the intent of the current study was to describe perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding their own *possible selves*. Therefore, the study focuses on the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of *expected and feared possible selves* perception of pre-service teachers during the COVID-19 learning environment?

2. What are the feelings and thoughts of pre-service elementary school teachers about their *possible selves* during the COVID-19 learning environment?

3. To what extent could the findings of the qualitative data be used to generate a deeper perspective to evaluate *possible selves* of pre-service teachers during the COVID-19 learning environment?

Methodology

Researchers used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design in this study. The intention of the design is to use qualitative data to build upon quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In explanatory sequential design, the qualitative data collection process intends to explain the results of the quantitative data in more detail (Sahin & Ozturk, 2019). The procedure in this design includes initially gathering survey data (rationalistic/quantitative analysis), analyzing the data, and then, conducting interviews and thereby generating narrative data for a qualitative analysis. In this second narrative data collection, the intent is to support the responses gathered in the survey phase (Creswell, 2014).

Participants

The population for this study included two hundred and fifty junior and senior pre-service elementary school teachers in a university in the middle east region of Turkey in the academic years of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Stratified purposeful sampling technique was used in the study. Since *possible selves* is a part of the teaching experience and related to hopes and expectations in the near future, the sample and population were determined according to their classification, selecting those who were closer to entering the profession. Therefore, seniors who experienced both teaching practicum and school observation courses and juniors who participated only in a school observation course were included in the study. From this point of view, classes of pre-service elementary school teachers were regarded as one strand; thus, one hundred, eighty-six junior and senior pre-service elementary school teachers constituted the sample of the quantitative strand of the study. See Table 1, descriptive statistics, describing the participants.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the Participants in Quantitative Strand*

Feature	**Variable**	**F**	**%**
Gender	Female	139	74.7
	Male	47	25.3
Experience of Teaching Practicum Course	Yes	110	59.1
	No	76	40.9
Grade	Junior	74	39.8
	Senior	112	60.2
Total		**186**	**100**

The participants of the qualitative strand of the study were selected using a purposive sampling technique called maximum variation sampling that "reports diverse variations and identifies common patterns" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). This sampling technique includes purposeful choice of participants in a wide range of cases in order to provide variation on dimensions of interest and identify crucial common patterns among variations (Patton, 2007). Hence, a variety of participants in different grades, genders, and ages were provided in the qualitative phase (See Table 2).

Table 2. *Participants of the Qualitative Phase*

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Grade**	**Interview Duration**
P1	Male	22	Junior	27.33
P2	Male	21	Junior	29.04
P3	Male	22	Junior	35.52
P4	Female	24	Senior	33.38
P5	Male	25	Senior	26.34
P6	Female	21	Junior	39.18
P7	Female	22	Senior	22.06
P8	Male	24	Senior	43.49

P9	Female	25	Senior	25.11
P10	Female	22	Junior	34.23
P11	Female	23	Junior	21.47
P12	Female	25	Senior	41.02
P13	Female	23	Senior	52.45

Since the aim of the qualitative phase is to explain the findings in more detail (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), volunteer participants were chosen from those participating in the rationalistic phase of the study. Data saturation, defined as "no new themes and information are expected to be emerged from the data" (Guest et al., 2006, p. 59), determined the number of the participants. For the interview (qualitative) section of the study, thirteen participants met the data saturation criterion which provided maximum outcome for the research problem.

Research Instruments and Procedures

The data in the quantitative phase were gathered via the *Possible Selves Scale* developed by Hamman et al. (2013) and adapted to Turkish by Tatli-Dalioglu and Adiguzel (2015). The *Possible Selves Scale* includes expected and feared possible selves. The *Expected Possible Selves Scale* includes two dimensions, "professionalism" and "learning to teach," while the *Feared Possible Selves Scale* includes three dimensions identified as "uninspired instruction," "loss of control," and "uncaring teacher." The scales represent a six-point Likert type and both of them include nine measures. *Expected Possible Selves Scale* explains 68.5% of total variance and *Feared Possible Selves Scale* explains 75.4% of total variance. Cronbach's alpha values for dimensions of the scales report as follows: professionalism (.79), learning to teach (.68), uninspired instruction (.86), loss of control (.81), and uncaring teacher (.76).

For the qualitative strand of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom on-line meeting software. Semi-structured interviews, a commonly used data collection method, enable information-based interactions between the interviewer and interviewee. Therefore, the researcher prepared fourteen questions generating from the *possible selves* literature and the results of the quantitative strand of the study. Two field experts, academics in educational sciences with a PhD degree, analyzed the fourteen interview questions; one question was eliminated from the initial draft because of irrelevance. A pilot study was conducted with one junior and one senior elementary pre-service teacher in order to determine whether the questions in the draft were useful and comprehensive. Two questions were eliminated since they were difficult to interpret and comprehend. The final interview included eleven questions.

Data Analysis

Surveys created in Google Documents were posted to pre-service elementary teachers in junior and senior grades. One hundred and ninety-four participants completed the on-line form; the researcher extracted the excel form and transferred it to SPSS 22.0 software. Outliers in the data set and the normal distribution were checked to prepare for analysis. Having applied box and whisker plots analysis, eight of the participants were detected as outliers. Then, the kurtosis and skewness values were checked, and the values were within the range of ± 1, indicating normal distribution. The internal consistency coefficients for the dimensions of the scales demonstrated

the reliability: professionalism (α =.82), learning to teach (α = .73); uninspired instruction (α =. 84), loss of control (α = .78), and uncaring teacher (α = .79).

The narrative data in the qualitative strand were organized to illuminate and explain the findings of the quantitative strand by providing more detail. Interviews, implemented via Zoom on-line meeting software, were recorded under the permission of participants after they filled on-line interview consent forms as an ethical requirement. The researcher took notes during the interviews and transcribed the duration of the interviews; interviews ranged from 21.47 to 43.49 minutes. Having transcribed the data, one hundred and seventy-three pages were obtained. The researcher organized, categorized, and coded the transcribed narratives. Another researcher listened, read, and coded the data alternatively. Direct quotations were used to support and enrich the different interpretations of the data. The data of the qualitative strand were analyzed by using template analysis which intends to allow the researcher to evaluate priori themes. Priori themes build on the quantitative findings from the first phase (Hesse-Biber, 2018). Template analysis serves to help scholars to combine quantitative and qualitative data analysis (King, 2004), and can be implemented by using the themes emerging in the quantitative phase (Hesse-Biber, 2018).

Creswell (2013) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify various strategies to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. A number of trustworthiness strategies were utilized within this current study. First, the strategy referred to as *prolonged engagement* was used in which trust with interviewees during the data collection and research process was established. The second strategy was an *external audit,* which means a person, not involved in the research, checks and verifies the collected data and the generated codes (Creswell, 2013). Regarded as participant validation, *member checking* is another strategy employed in this study (Lincoln & Guba,1985). Thereby, each participant was asked to check the accuracy of the transcriptions and the results of the interview. The fourth strategy was an effort to provide *rich and thick descriptions* as well as provide deep information (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, detailed descriptions and purposeful sampling were used to ensure one criteria of trustworthiness, called *transferability*. It is used to ensure generalizability of the qualitative findings (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The results align with the "weaving approach," which includes writing both quantitative and qualitative findings together on a concept-by-concept or theme-by-theme basis (Fetters et al., 2013, p. 2142). Hence, findings and discussion merge together because "the quantitative and qualitative results can easily be compared and contrasted by explaining through narrative" (Hesse-Biber, 2018, p. 291). First, an analysis examined the perceptions of pre-service elementary teachers on their *possible selves* (Research Question 1). Descriptive statistics related to their perceptions are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Pre-service Teachers' Possible Selves*

Measurement Tool	Variables	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Expected Possible Selves (EPS)	Professionalism	186	5.09	0.64	-.812	.918
	Learning to teach	186	5.24	0.50	-.305	-.571
	EPS (Total)	186	5.18	0.48	-.197	-.858
Feared Possible Selves (FPS)	Uninspired instruction	186	3.15	1.53	.192	-.917
	Loss of control	186	3.91	1.22	-.432	-.538
	Uncaring teacher	186	2.74	1.29	.519	-.593
	FPS (Total)	186	3.27	1.14	.180	-.785

As illustrated in Table 3, the arithmetic mean of pre-service elementary teachers' perception on the "professionalism" dimension was $\bar{x} = 5.09$. Items in "professionalism" dimension of the scale were related to success in profession. This finding of the study reveals that professionalism is the factor of *possible selves* that is highly expected by pre-service elementary teachers.

Qualitative findings (Research Question 2) echo identical results and reveal the highly expected professionalism as well. Data highlight pre-service teachers' importance of professionalism and further describe their expectations. Pre-service teachers believe they will be able to help their students develop positive attitudes and they will treat them fairly and equally. They also believe that they will be successful in planning and preparing lessons. Interview data triangulated with numerical data; qualitative analysis building on strand one quantitative analysis supported a priori theme. The narrative quotations about "professionalism" include the following:

> *"First of all, I love people and children. Seeing the light in their eyes makes me cheerful when they learn something new. The idea of being the first to teach many things to prepare them for life… It is a great happiness." (P2)*

> *"I am also fair in my daily life. Even when I am sharing chocolate with my friends, I cut it with a knife in order to be equal and fair. Being fair and equitable {is}inevitable in teaching profession. I will not care about social, cultural and economic background and status of children. They will all be equal in my classroom." (P12)*

> *"University education that we have experienced is already on being planned. Plan, plan, plan! Everything belongs to this magic word. We always plan our teaching practice course and the presentations in other courses at the university." (P6)*

The arithmetic mean for the "learning to teach" dimension ($\bar{x} = 5.24$) was the highest one among the *possible selves'* dimensions. Items in the "learning to teach" dimension include collaborate with colleagues, peers, parents, and willingness to learn new methodologies. The qualitative data

strand also supports the findings of this quantitative dimension revealing that “learning to teach” is particularly important to pre-service teachers. It could be deduced from the narrations that pre-service teachers expect to build collaborative relationships with parents. In addition, data show pre-service teachers would also like to learn and try new methodologies; rather, than to teach with traditional models. Findings in the qualitative analysis shared the same perception. Pre-service elementary teachers expect that they will be willing to learn new “things” from their colleagues, parents and all the shareholders that would contribute to the educational environment. In addition, they understand the need for technology much more than they did in the past, because they experienced on-line learning management systems intensively during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-service teachers’ opinions, regarding the “learning to teach” a priori theme, are as follow:

> *“I think collaboration with parents is the most important. Children spend most of their time with their family. Parents and teachers should proceed accordingly. I think I can achieve this. Some parents can be difficult. However, with strong relationship and cooperation we can overcome these difficulties." (P4)*

> *“I want to be an effective teacher. I think I will achieve this by using different methods since we were imposed to do this during university education. I can teach students by using games effectively.” (P1)*

> *“The idea of learning from peers and experienced colleagues sounds good. I am still doing this by calling my uncle who is an experienced elementary school teacher. I call him sometimes and ask: What would you do for that kind of learning outcome? I prepared this material. Do you think is it appropriate? I can do the same in initial years of the profession.” (P9)*

> *“There is a possibility of hybrid education when the pandemic is over.We have experienced a lot about distance education practices and technological applications during the COVID-19 pandemic. How to make a presentation in online education? How can the materials be adapted for distance education? These experiences would be useful for us in the context of different teaching methods.” (P8)*

The “uncaring teacher” ($\bar{x} = 2.74$) dimension was the one which had the lowest arithmetic mean among the dimensions of *feared possible selves* indicating that pre-service teachers do not have fears about being uncaring in initial years of the profession. Since items in the “uncaring teacher” dimension were related to being an unjust, apathetic teacher, data indicate that pre-service elementary teachers were not afraid of being an uncaring teacher. Findings of the qualitative phase also supported the findings of this dimension indicating pre-service elementary teachers had self-confidence in being a caring teacher. Therefore, findings demonstrate pre-service elementary teachers do not fear their capacity to show care for their students. Opinions of pre-service teachers describing caring or uncaring teachers are as follow:

> *“I think they will take me as a role model. I think I use Turkish properly. Communication is an important factor. I pay attention to my dressing up. I am generally a happy and smiling person. That's why I will become a role model.” (P11)*

> *"I am a happy person in daily life. I love kids so much. My primary school teacher also loved us very much. I am sure that I will love my students and take care of them one by one according to their individual differences. I think my classroom will be a very good family atmosphere." (P8)*

> *"I am a person who gets on very well with children. I think they will love me. I experienced this when I was a volunteer teacher at the Society Volunteers Foundation. I don't want to be a traditional teacher. All the learning process should be implemented with love and intrinsic motivation." (P13)*

"Uninspired instruction" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15) was another dimension which represented a low arithmetic mean among the dimensions of *feared possible selves*. Since items in the dimension reflect boring and ineffective teachers, the low arithmetic mean is positive in that it implies pre-service elementary teachers would inspire their students in the instructional process. Findings from the qualitative strand evidenced similarities with the findings of the first strand. The implication is that the COVID-19 process provided small numbers of advantages in terms of time management and on-line learning programs in contrast to the abundance of disadvantages. Hence, it is possible to deduce that pre-service elementary teachers believe that they will inspire their students in the near future. Opinions of pre-service teachers describing uninspired instruction are as follow:

> *"For example, I took "Intelligence and Mind Games" lesson and "Traditional Games" lesson during the Covid-19 pandemic process as a certificate from "Home and School Association." I realized that I could use even the best-known "blind man's bluff" game for learning outcomes. I think we can make education and learning permanent by combining even the slightest old tradition with games." (P10)*

> *"I don't want to be a boring teacher. I think I will achieve this. When children lose interest in the lesson, I can draw their attention by doing different activities." (P5)*

> *"I grew up in a village, I am the only one who is about to get university degree among 12 siblings. Before me, there wasn't any family member who experienced university education. This story has inspired many people in the village and my family. I know what it is to be successful in difficult conditions. I believe I will impress my students." (P7).*

One of the prominent findings related to "loss of control" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.91) exhibited the highest arithmetic mean among the dimensions of *feared possible selves* indicating that pre-service elementary teachers demonstrate some fears about managing classroom and instruction. Since items in the dimension regarding ineffective classroom and instructional management as well as losing control in managing pupils respectively, a higher arithmetic mean indicates they would experience difficulties in managing a classroom and instruction. Findings of the qualitative strand underpinned the findings of quantitative data as well. According to interviews, the theme participants focused on was "loss of control" which was mainly affected by an on-line education during COVID-19. They believe that experiencing an on-line teaching practicum course will affect their competencies on managing classroom and instruction negatively. Consequently, it is

possible to suggest that pre-service elementary teachers experience doubts in their management strategies. The narrative comments describing their concerns referred to as “loss of control” are as follow:

> *“I'm afraid of classroom management. Virtual classroom management is very difficult in online education as we experienced in teaching practicum course in the time of COVID-19. Duration of the lessons in public schools was limited with 30 minutes. It is also important to know technology. Sometimes I did screen sharing in my online teaching trial. Since, children were better than me in using technology, they drew something on the screen. For example, I could not solve this problem. I do not know how I will be able to manage classroom and instruction in face-to-face education. We will not have experienced face-to-face education when we start the profession." (P4)*

> *“I had fears about classroom management before teaching practicum course experience. However, I observed my teacher very well, during teaching practicum course. If I act like her, I believe that it would be better. Nevertheless, this is the course in online education because of COVID-19 pandemic. I don't know how it will be in face-to-face education. That's why I still have concerns about classroom and instruction management. Because we have never experienced the classroom environment in face-to-face education.” (P5)*

> *“To be honest experiencing online teaching practicum course was not satisfying. We couldn’t feel the warm atmosphere of the classroom. Face-to-face teaching practice could have been better. We could have been more effective in classroom management and teaching methods. I think we will feel the lack of this experience in our professional life. We would like to start the profession with more experience." (P12)*

> *“This is my 3rd year. The idea of experiencing online teaching practicum course in next year is horrible. I would like to have my teaching practicum course face-to-face with lots of interactions with my lovely students. My lessons and presentations will be more effective in face-to-face education and I will be able to overcome my doubts about classroom and instruction management.” (P6)*

Discussion

In answering Research Question 3, the researcher reported the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative results by using a weaving approach and used joint-interpretation to compare results when analyzing the data. There was a convergence of data when comparing feelings of participants towards scores of *possible selves*. Jointly interpreted report of the research represents the participants’ feelings based on each dimension and how they align with quantitative findings. When evaluating the key findings of the mixed-methods data, the researcher discovered numerous points representing various correlations from both the quantitative and the qualitative results. There was a convergence between pre-service teachers’ future expectations and possible fears scores with statements of participants during the interviews.

Jointly interpreting quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal pre-service teachers indicate positive future orientations related to "professionalism" and "learning to teach," as expected *possible selves*. They stated that they expect collaboration with colleagues, peers, parents, and a willingness to learn new methodologies that refer to the "learning to teach" dimension. Another dimension evidencing the positive expectations of pre-service teachers regarding early years of the career was "professionalism" indicating self-confidence in their successful teaching profession. These current findings demonstrate congruence with the existing literature. Pre-service teachers evidence a high level of perception regarding their expected *possible selves* (Tatlı-Dalioglu, 2016; Tavsanli & Sarac, 2016; Olcer, 2019). Findings (Ng, 2019) also reveal teachers who indicate expected selves are more likely to look for a collegial collaboration and dialogue. Qualitative findings highlight high expectations of pre-service teachers on "professionalism" and "learning to teach." They believe that they will be able to build strong and collaborative relationships with parents and colleagues when they begin the profession. They indicate high expectation in their ability to plan and use new approaches in their initial years. Although they feel some personal inadequacies, they describe their experiences with new learning management systems in the time of COVID-19 (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, EBA, Google Classroom) which enabled them to think about more technology-driven educational environment probabilities.

The findings related to *feared possible selves* suggest pre-service teachers demonstrate no concerns about becoming uncaring teachers; this finding indicates a belief in their capacity to interact with future students with sensitivity and fairness. Regarded as an indicator of an inspired teacher, traits associated with "enjoyable and effective" become important in the learning process. Pre-service teachers do not express fears about being boring and ineffective at the beginning of the profession. These current findings are similar to other studies in the existing literature. For example, Babanoglu (2017), Tatlı-Dalioglu (2016), and Olcer (2019) describe how the arithmetic means of the subscales were low, indicating that pre-service teachers do not demonstrate fears regarding their becoming boring and ineffective. Qualitative findings triangulated well with the quantitative data phase by indicating pre-service teachers demonstrated almost no fears of becoming "uncaring teachers" or implementing "uninspired instruction." Pre-service teachers believe they will be "effective and enjoyable" educators that will inspire their students. They think fairness and equality are crucial in order to sustain peaceful learning environments. They also indicate self-confidence in their ability to be a role model for their students with respect to physical appearances, thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes. These current results align with the research of Shoyer and Leshem (2016). Pre-service teachers assumed good teachers should be knowledgeable, sensitive to students' instructional and emotional needs and as well as know how to conduct effective lessons. In sum, findings related to "uninspired instruction" and "uncaring teacher" dimensions of *feared possible selves*, "professionalism" and "learning to teach" dimensions of *expected possible selves* indicate pre-service teachers evidence self-confidence and positive thoughts regarding their initial years in the profession. Similarly, Shoyer and Leshem (2016) found that pre-service teachers expressed more hopes than fears on their future orientation. Their study described how out of 742 statements, 241 statements were related to fears; whereas, 501 statements were associated with hopes (Shoyer & Leshem, 2016).

However, among the *feared possible selves* of pre-service teachers, "loss of control," including classroom and instructional management processes represented the main dimension of focus. As widely known, classrooms are the places where children develop themselves and build their behavior, so effective classroom management is crucial. Hence, doubts and fears of pre-service teachers associated with classroom and instructional management processes regarding their initial career should be considered as integral toward their future successes with children. Findings related to the "loss of control" dimension support the existing literature (Babanoglu, 2017; Dalioglu & Adiguzel, 2016; Olcer, 2019). Existing research describes the fear pre-service teachers express in regard to classroom management in the initial years of the profession. The arithmetic mean of "loss of control" dimension, in this current study, is higher than the arithmetic mean reported in the Babanoglu study (2017) and the Olcer study (2019), indicating a higher level of pre-service teachers' fear with respect to classroom and instructional management. This may be the result of the COVID-19 process, which transferred the face-to-face teacher education program to an on-line teacher education delivery. Pre-service teachers, who experienced all of the courses including teaching practicum as on-line, may have developed more fears about "loss of control" in initial years of the profession. Current qualitative findings emphasize the impact of COVID-19 on teacher education, the process of which affected self-confidence, fears, and expectations of pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers, in the last year of their university education, underscored the differences of experiences between the on-line teaching practicum course and the face-to-face school observation course that they practiced in their third year just before the COVID-19 pandemic. They discussed how their observation course in a real school and within a classroom context was more useful than their teaching practicum course in a virtual teaching context. They believed that they felt the energy of the classroom in a real context. They were able to observe the materials and methodologies used in the lesson in detail. They could understand reactions of teachers and students, and feel the emotional atmosphere in the classroom. Unlike a real context, an on-line teaching practicum was a far cry from providing the emotions and detailed practices. Pre-service teachers determined that having or lacking these in-class experiences as potentially significant in their future classroom practices. These findings remain consistent with the literature indicating that previous experiences of pre-service teachers influence the roles and *possible selves* they imagine for future professional targets (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Moreover, the literature suggests experiences with feedback and close interaction in the classroom assist pre-service teachers to develop ideas to overcome existing fears and support their expectations (Sallı & Osam, 2018).

Recommendations

In the light of existing and current research, the reshaping of teacher education programs, specifically targeting teaching practicum and school observation courses, becomes a priority. Since the connection between theory and practice requires more practice in a real-life context (Flores & Gago, 2020), and teaching practices play a key role in developing pre-service teacher identity (Kavrayici, 2020), quality and density of practicum/observation courses should be developed in teacher education programs. Those pre-service teachers, lacking practicum experiences in a real-life context, may satisfy this genuine disparity by working in a nearby senior teacher's classroom who can provide real experiences with children for the pre-service teacher. In-class experiences for pre-service teachers may occur just before beginning their professional teaching. This in-class experience contributes to their understanding of children's

holistic learning and enhances their professional development. Additionally, teachers require ongoing support in technology tools and management systems in both pre-service education and in-service training.

Limitations

This current study evidences limitations. Sample size was relatively small and focused only on pre-service elementary school teachers. Future studies can be conducted on pre-service teachers enrolled in different programs and include larger samples. Longitudinal studies that may examine changes of pre-service teachers' *possible selves* across time can also be considered for future studies.

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Parenting and Education Involvement of Korean Mothers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly forced us to adapt to a new normal. As schools switched to distance learning, parents experienced increased childcare responsibilities and were thrust into new roles as teachers at home. This unexpected shift to new roles brought extraordinary disruption that becomes more challenging for families living apart, especially Korean families who represent more traditional beliefs. One of these values is to highly regard education. In this study, researchers explore the unique experiences of Korean mothers who were geographically distant from their spouses during the COVID-19 lockdown. Through interviews with the participant mothers with school-age children, researchers explore how the COVID-19 lockdown created changes in childcare and education involvement of Korean mothers.

Introduction

After shutting down for nearly two years because of COVID-19, schools are just beginning to reestablish in-person learning. During the shutdown, parents became full-time caregivers, entertainers, and teachers. This transition from in-person to online schooling dramatically affected parents' mental health because of social isolation, economic challenges, anxiety, and burnout which also often affected child well-being (Lee et al., 2021). In general, these challenges for parents become greatly exacerbated for single parents with sole responsibility for parenting and education of children, family safety and health, and homeschooling (Hertz et al., 2021).

Traditionally, Korean parents evidence strong beliefs in education as the tool that advances their children's social-economic status and predicts future success. After the Korean War, these strong educational beliefs enabled rapid economic and educational development in South Korea (Hyun et al., 2003). Because of this commitment to education, South Korea is currently ranked as one of the high-performing countries in education (OECD, 2017). When Korean married couples choose to live apart for their children's education, it is increasingly typical for mothers to be the primary caregivers in Korean society.

This case study provides insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parenting and educational experiences of Korean mothers with school-age children. Through a series of three interviews, these narrative data examine four Korean mothers' parenting and educational involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

Single Mothers with School-Age Children During a Pandemic

Childcare responsibilities during the pandemic indicate to be especially challenging for single mothers. Family routines and parental roles and responsibilities quickly shifted in response to the social and economic changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Lian &Yoon, 2020). Survey data (n = 833) suggest single mothers were impacted much more negatively by the pandemic than multi-adult households (Hertz et al, 2021). These findings describe how single mothers who lived alone with children expressed extreme difficulty finding time for both childcare and responsibilities of childcare at home.

Education and the Pandemic

The academic achievement gap between single-parent and two-parent families is significantly narrower within Asian as compared with American families (Park, 2007). As discussed above, the high value of educational attainment within Asian society and their dedicated education support may have contributed to this result. For example, a typical South Korean family spends about 16% of their monthly household income on private lessons or their children's education (Yi, 2013).

While various approaches to distance learning rapidly emerged during the last 20 years (Singh & Thurman, 2019), the COVID-19 pandemic aptly demonstrated that a significant gap exists in teacher preparation related to remote teaching (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Wohlfart et al. (2021) described how teachers primarily utilized technology for basic communication rather than productive learning. This challenge contributed to significant parental exhaustion, particularly with mothers, during the pandemic (Marchetti et al., 2020).

Korean females are among the most educated in the world along with Canada and Norway (OECD, 2017; WorldAtlas, 2019). As Curtis et al. (2022) note, Korean parents, especially mothers, place great importance on children's educational success and higher school achievement. However, Korean parents also exhibit higher stress and anxiety because remote learning requires a family's active engagement (Lian & Yoon, 2020). Hong and colleagues

(2021) suggest that social support may significantly decrease the parental stress of Korean immigrant families.

Methods

Research Questions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents of school-age children confronted additional challenges such as increased parenting duties and education responsibilities (Arowoshola, 2020). This current study explores perceptions of changes in parenting duties and educational involvement of Korean mothers with school-age children during the pandemic. The guiding research questions include: (a) how were the experiences of Korean mothers from three countries different during a lockdown? and (b) how has COVID-19 changed the childcare and education involvement of Korean mothers of school-age children?

Participants

Researchers, Dami and Cheri (pseudonyms), met at an online support group for Korean American mothers in academia. During one session, commonly shared anxiety about childcare and parents' educational involvement living apart from spouses while raising children became a major topic. As discussed in the Literature Review, Korean families highly value education, and mothers are often considered the primary caregiver for their children's education. Researchers, Dami and Cheri, questioned how other Korean mothers in similar situations were involved in education during the pandemic. Using purposive sampling (Suri, 2011), researchers recruited Korean mothers of school-aged children who were geographically distant from their spouses. Potential participants were introduced through friends and colleagues. The first author made initial contacts through email with information regarding the study. Finally, additional participants were recruited: Aram from Toronto, Canada, and Bora from Seoul, South Korea. In addition, researchers of this study (Cheri from Illinois [IL], USA, and Dami from Minnesota [MN], USA) consented to participate. Pseudonyms were used to maintain participants' information as unidentifiable. Table 1 below summarizes four participants of this study.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

	Aram	Bora	Cheri	Dami
Residence	Toronto, Canada	Seoul, Korea	IL, USA	MN, USA
Participant Age	38	39	42	42
Child (Age, Grade)	Son (13, Grade 8)	Son (13, Grade 6) Son (9, Grade 2)	Daughter (11, Grade 6)	Daughter (12, Grade 7) Daughter (9, Grade 3)

Marriage (Year)	14	14	15	16
Lengths of Long Distance	2 years	7 years	4 years	12 years

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection began after approval for the study was received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Each participant was invited to participate in Zoom interviews via email containing an IRB approved consent form. Each participant had three Zoom interviews with two researchers. Interview questions were based on Seidman's (1998) *Three-Interview Series* model. Interview 1 focused on life history; the context for each participants' experience was described by asking each participant about herself in the light of the topic. In Interview 2 (the details of experiences), questioning concentrated on the participants' current lives relating to the topic. In Interview 3 (reflection on meaning), the participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of their experiences. Field notes were made during and immediately after each interview. The field notes further contributed to revising interview questions based on participant responses.

Similar/different parenting and education involvement experiences during the pandemic were analyzed. Each interview lasted about an hour, and all interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Researchers independently conducted initial open coding to identify words, concepts, or themes that frequently appeared. Then, researchers reviewed each set of coding together and conducted axial coding to reveal categories and subcategories from the collected data. Codes were organized and represented in interview summary tables.

Results/Findings

Preparedness for Transition to Lockdown

Immediately after the pandemic started, the educational activities of all participants changed to home-based education. All four participant mothers indicated that they quit all in-person extra-curricular activities such as Taekwondo, piano, playdates, and math or English lessons. Aram and Bora kept their children at home. Cheri and Dami both said that they planned to keep their children home, whether distance learning was an option or not. Dami said, "I immediately prepared for homeschooling. I was not surprised when our school was locked down and began offering distance learning." Due to sudden changes, the role of the participant mothers transitioned to full time caregiver and educator.

Fears as a Single Parent During a Pandemic

Challenges of participant mothers agree with Lian et al. (2020)'s statement about high levels of stress and anxiety among Korean parents due to working parents' active involvement in children's distance learning. The challenge most mentioned was "fear" as a single parent without a spouse present or family support. Aram said, "When my son was sick, my mom used to help me when I was in Korea. However, I have no one I can rely on now." Bora expressed, "Knowing that no family help is available, I was quite frustrated with any unexpected challenge." Dami also

said, “I have no family or close friends here who could help in case I get covid.” Cheri’s story shows how serious the anxiety was for her and her daughter. “I thought about what if I was unconscious, who would care for us? If I am sick, our life and family economy would be jeopardized. My daughter worried that her daddy would not be available if I were sick. So, I went over my contacts with her and talked about whose door she would need to knock for an emergency.”

Another unique fear was expressed because of being Asian in foreign countries. Racism against Asians became another politically contrived danger during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lee & Waters, 2021). Aram stated that Toronto is a diverse community and that she never felt uncomfortable as a foreigner until an outbreak of COVID-19. She continued, “When the elevator door opened, people who were already in the elevator often shook hands giving signs of ‘do not board.’ I felt weird.” Dami also shared her uncomfortable experience: “I noticed people were giving extra distance from us at the grocery store. It’s hard to explain but I definitely felt ‘the look.’ I felt intimidated.”

Mothers’ Role as Teachers During Distance Learning

The common challenge all participants indicated was the lack of schools’ readiness for distance learning. Aram stated, “My child never used a computer until the pandemic broke.” Likewise, Bora said, “My children had to learn from starting a computer.” For children to learn content through a computer device, they must rapidly become familiar with using the technology. Because of this, Bora had to stay with her son the whole time during class hours. She stated, “It was not only the technology issues, but more of the teachers’ limited ability to deliver content through technology.” When not clear with the content, Bora helped her son with supplementary materials such as maps, photos, and even YouTube and Google searches. Reactions suggest that there were major differences in the way school districts approached online instruction. According to Aram, “An announcement was sent to families indicating teachers did not have the ability to teach online. All materials were posted on *ClassDojo* in PDF forms. Students downloaded the materials, completed homework, and uploaded their works on *ClassDojo*.” Aram continued, “Students never received instructions on learning nor feedback on homework. My children were not motivated to complete their homework.” The impacts of teachers’ lack in technology skills during online teaching on students’ learning are well documented in previous studies (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011; Ko & Rossen, 2017; Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Watson, 2020).

Transition to distance learning for Dami’s family appeared smoother than Aram and Bora’s transition. Dami described how teachers in her school district were given extensive training in their online platform (*Google Meets*) during extended breaks. In addition, each student was given a Chromebook. Synchronous class meetings were held Monday through Friday for one hour with the classroom teacher. In the afternoon, her daughter had 30-minute small group meetings with the ELL (English Language Learner) teacher and optional small group sessions for math support. The whole group met for Friday Fun Day every Friday for about 40 minutes. Unlike the situations with Aram and Bora, Dami’s children were more comfortable using Chromebooks because they had used the devices as a part of their school curriculum prior to distance learning. Dami further stated, “Although there were a few times my daughter needed help when WiFi got

disconnected, I barely found her or her teacher struggling." Similar to Dami's daughter, Cheri's daughter managed remote learning well. Teachers' readiness for online instruction and student familiarity with technology appeared to be critical variables for student learning (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011; Ko & Rossen, 2017; Watson, 2020; Wohlfart et al., 2021).

Childcare and Education Involvement During Pandemic

As Lian and Yoon (2020) described changes in family routines during the pandemic, the four participant mothers evidenced significantly increasing childcare and educational tasks despite existing responsibilities. Bora shared her challenge, "I had to teach my two children to cook and clean while I still worked from home." Dami also stated, "People think it is easier to work from home but the truth is the opposite. I was working full time and became a 24/7 stay at home mom at the same time." Cheri also said, "There was no clear line between work and home chores. I had to work from home from early morning to late evening while taking care of my daughter." These experiences clearly show how single parents are increasingly challenged in finding time to manage work and home with their school-age children. Other research findings confirm disadvantages for single mothers due to significantly increased childcare and education responsibilities (e.g., Benard & Correll, 2010; Hertz et al., 2021).

While Bora, Cheri, and Dami were in a similar situation having full responsibilities of work, childcare, and education, Aram shared some responsibilities with her sister. She added, "My sister was a teacher in Korea, so she took care of most of the education-related work while I did most of the cooking and house chores."

Challenges and Strategies of Korean Distant Families

Bora seemed to be experiencing the highest stress and anxiety. She indicated she had no support from anyone, which considerably elevated her stress. She said, "I do all by myself-- working remotely, childcare, tutoring my children, and I do all the house chores. I have no support from anyone." She also expressed her regrets, "I wished I continued my full-time job as a teacher. I gave up my career after having a baby. Since then, no one has valued my hardship as a mom and wife." She now has a part-time job working from home. Yet, her family (especially her husband's side) disregards the value of her work. She continued, "I sacrificed myself to become a stay home mom so that my husband could keep his career." She also shared that her husband was the primary decision-maker, even from a distance. "My husband warned us not to go outside during the lockdown. I even gave up seeing my mom and thought about seeing a mental health counselor." Her experience suggests that a single mother may need support in dealing with the pandemic as a perceived disaster while being a single parent in charge of childcare and education without family support.

Unlike Bora, Aram seemed to have a different relationship with her husband, which may have impacted her stress levels. She stated, "We have persistent communication." In response to a question regarding what she usually talks about with her husband, she answered, "Mostly about our daily routines—what we did, what we ate, where we went, and when my son challenges me, I ask my husband to talk to him.'' Aram has been independent since her marriage because her husband has always been away for his military duty which is common in South Korea. She said,

“I got used to this life. However, dealing with emotional difficulties is challenging at times, but I can handle this. I even did fine when my husband served in the GOP (General Out Post: in charge of outside the DMZ).’’ She also showed a growth mindset by saying, “I wasn’t stressed too much thinking it will end soon. Rather, I focused on enjoying playing with my boy, playing soccer, running around, you name it.” Perhaps the main differences between Bora and Aram’s resilience were emotional support from spouses. This was especially found from the contradictory attitude of their spouses; Aram’s spouse was fully supportive by listening and showing empathy, whereas Bora’s spouse was found to be controlling, prioritizing income and disregarding staying home responsibilities.

Cheri and Dami also demonstrated similar resilience regarding parenting during the pandemic. Some common strategies they shared were time management and education involvement of their spouses. They seemed to quickly adapt to handling both full-time jobs and parenting during the lockdown. One strategy included a regular schedule for themselves and their children. For example, all were waking up at the same time every morning and following the daily routines respectively. Their children were capable of working by themselves. Cheri stated, “We plan our schedule together. My daughter follows her schedule to reach goals for the week and complete her work on her own.” Likewise, Dami stated, “My children have their own monthly duty chart. They put up a star when they complete each duty. Duties include: gym, laundry, math, reading, journaling and music.” Another strategy Cheri and Dami shared was to check their children’s work at frequent intervals. Both help their children only when they struggle or need extra support. This contrasts with Bora’s case as she stated, “I always got exhausted after helping with my sons’ study. I tutored English, Math, Science, and History. I even sat with my son when he practiced playing piano.”

Perceptions of Geographical Distance

Participants indicated different perspectives of long-distance parenting when responding to the question, “What family support would help you overcome stress, anxiety, and challenges?” Aram and Bora seem to bear all parenting responsibilities due to physical distance from their spouses and families. For example, Aram said, “Because of the physical distance, I do not expect any help from my husband or other family members.” Bora added, “I really wish that my parents and husband would stay closer to support each other.” In South Korea, the extended family is an important resource for parenting. Bora lived with her parents to receive immediate support from her parents while her husband moved across the country because of his job duties. She was able to pursue her career, and her children did not need to transfer to another school. However, since she could not see her parents for about two years because of the COVID-19 quarantine, she was especially challenged.

On the other hand, Cheri and Dami shared how their spouses are remotely involved in children’s education. Dami said, “He works very hard during the week, so I hope he will talk with them more during the weekend, at least an hour.” She also shared, “I would like to ask my husband to provide more support in math for our daughters.” Cheri said, “I feel I got a pretty decent amount of support from my husband although we are living apart. During our family zoom time every evening, we debrief what happens daily, and my husband helped my daughter with

her homework for about a year and a half. I feel this has given much support to my daughter's academics and also my well-being as a single mom."

Discussion

In this study, four Korean mothers in long-distance marriages participated in a series of three interviews. Participants' experiences suggest common challenges of single parents residing in the US, South Korea, and Canada. How participant mothers changed their daily routines to adapt to unexpected lockdowns and their efforts to be actively involved in childcare and education during lockdowns are described.

The current narrative data adds to our existing knowledge of the growing challenges of parenting and education involvement of families separated by distance. These findings also expand our understanding of the unique challenges of Korean mothers raising children apart from their spouses during a pandemic. The current study also confirms the findings of the previous studies (Park, 2007; Hyun et al., 2003) describing how Korean parents highly value education. Despite unique challenges, all four participant mothers maintained high expectations for their children's development and achievement.

Additionally, this study suggests what *post*-pandemic education might look like for long-distance families. These current data support the conclusions of Singh and Thurman (2019) that suggest distance teaching and learning will increase, and teachers and students will be required to become more familiar with alternate modes of education. Importantly, parents in long-distance relationships need to identify new ways to share childcare responsibilities. Next, Korean mothers' high value in education for their children will continue through their active involvement in childcare and education regardless of the challenges. Finally, this study suggests that educational and parenting challenges brought on by the pandemic can positively affect family dynamics with support from extended family members and communities of long-distance families.

The findings of this investigation provide support for multiple recommendations for post-pandemic education. First, schools and teachers need to continuously improve distance teaching strategies and become more confident in better utilizing technologies. Second, both parents need to share parenting duties and become more involved in education. With the technology, this may become more doable for parents physically distant from their families. Families of Cheri and Dami are positive examples of how families might connect through video calls, reading with children, and even tutoring a child synchronously with devices. Thirdly, shared understanding and emotional support may help reduce mothers' significantly increased responsibilities in long-distance marriages. With these suggestions, long-distant families and communities can make a positive difference in the lives of future global citizens.

Limitations

This qualitative researcher-participant study included two authors as participants. They engaged in dialogue with other participants during each interview. This may have caused an internal power differential where non-researcher participant mothers might not have responded to what

they do rather than what they think is right to do as Korean mothers. The first interview focused on building relationships and trust between participant mothers to avoid this issue. Researchers may also have interpretation bias when analyzing data. This study used the triangulation method that two researchers independently completed open coding and then validated the interpretation.

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Implementing Phonological Awareness in Saudi Arabia Kindergartens

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Abstract

Phonological awareness (PA) is a word that has recently gained currency in the field of early literacy instruction. There is a large corpus of research on how to teach PA to young language learners. In spite of these relevant data, there is a dearth of literacy information on PA in Arabic, especially targeting Saudi students. The focus of this discussion is to describe how to introduce phonological awareness activities into the curriculum to benefit kindergarten-aged Arabic speakers in Saudi Arabia. In addition, this research review describes PA abilities and the significance of rhymes, rhythms, and syllables. Finally, this paper will also provide examples illustrating how Saudi teachers may use the holistic language theory (i.e., whole language approach) to implement PA through the use of games, songs, and storyboards comprised of rhymes, rhythms, and syllables. The implications suggest PA is essential for young Saudi learners' mastery of reading, speaking, and learning Arabic.

Keywords: Arabic phonological awareness, rhythm, syllables, rhymes, kindergarten students, Whole Language Theory, Saudi Arabia literacy skills.

Background

A strong oral tradition serves as the foundation of children's reading and writing abilities (Almehrizi et al., 2020). Phonological awareness (PA) promotes oral heritage and emphasizes the need of providing children with powerful oral experiences. A strong PA foundation is especially significant in the early years of schooling and this importance cannot be overstated. PA is crucial because it equips students with the linguistic foundation essential to read and write fluently. A child's phonological awareness is a basic skill for learning to read. As a result, fostering phonological awareness in young children can help with developing reading proficiency. Literacy development requires a solid understanding of phonology since written

words are identical to their spoken equivalents. The capacities to read or to transform spoken words into written ones depend on the reader's familiarity with the spoken sounds represented by individual letters and by letter combinations (spelling). For long-term retention, listening to speech is essential for learning letter-sound relationships, combining sounds to interpret words, and "mapping" words onto a visual lexicon.

The four stages in the growth of phonological awareness include: phoneme, onset-rime, syllable, and word recognition (Ehri, 2022). Understanding the importance of phonological awareness is congruent with the goals of education; the focus is on improving upon students' linguistic proficiency by developing their phonological awareness. Research into enhancing students' phonological awareness is particularly useful in ensuring positive growth among primary school students (Antonio & Santillan, 2020; Peng et al., 2022). Not only is literacy development supported by phonemic awareness, but according to Antonio and Santillan (2020), a stronger sense of self-worth results from children's ability to talk, read, and write which phonological awareness facilitates.

Throughout the Arab world, the reading skills of Arabic students become a matter of concern for educators and parents (Shendy, 2019). In order to impact their students' reading levels, teachers understand the potential of phonological awareness through the delivery of high-quality reading instruction, which includes the use of PA. Current research focuses on the importance of developing phonological awareness and phoneme separation in young Arabic speakers (Almehrizi et al., 2020; Asadi & Abu-Rabia, 2019; Layes et al., 2019).

Some of the Arabic findings describe how detecting the beginning sound of a word and spotting rhyme oddity were significantly simpler for youngsters to do than phoneme segmentation and deletion of syllables in Arabic words. The results from Arabic studies are corroborated by those from data of the English language, showing that longer syllables remain easier to learn compared to shorter ones. For example, the word 'BANANA' is relatively easier for children to learn as compared to 'VERY' even though it has a longer number of syllables.

Issues surrounding PA become even more difficult for Arabic speaking kindergarten children in Saudi Arabia. According to (Shendy, 2019), Arabic is a dialect that is defined by diglossia, which renders a challenge for beginning readers. The term "diglossia" describes a situation in which two distinct forms of the same dialect coexist within a given speech community. Typically, one variety is the prestigious form of the literary language, while the other is the everyday language used by the majority of the people. There is a significant linguistic difference between the two forms of the language. This disparity makes it difficult for new learners to grasp certain components of the language such as writing, reading, vocabulary and most importantly, PA (Shendy, 2019). As a consequence of diglossia, implementing phonological awareness among kindergarten students in Saudi Arabia remains a challenge.

Thus, this discussion explores the importance of phonological awareness and how to teach PA through the use of rhythm, rhyme, and syllables in Saudi Arabia. According to holistic language theory, classrooms represent places where each student is regarded as a unique individual; teachers and students both actively participate in the learning process (Clay, 2015; Doyle, 2018; Morrow, 2011; Piaget, 1950; Sriastuti & Masing, 2022). Many advocates of holistic

language learning argue fluency in a dialect develops organically in the course of daily life. The use of rhythm, rhymes and syllables provide this natural learning context (Sayakhan & Bradley, 2019). The Whole Language approach also supports the use of rhythm, rhymes and syllables in implementing phonological awareness and is an example of holistic language and literacy learning (Geekie et al., 1999; Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998).

Targeted questions

The following questions constitute the particular inquiry to which this discussion responds. These questions remain crucial to a systematic review of the literature and aid in providing kindergarten teachers with strategies for best PA classroom practices.

- What is phonological awareness?
- How can one use phonological awareness in Saudi kindergarten classrooms, specifically in the Arabic language?
- What are phonological awareness skills?

Rationale

This discussion supports the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education and Saudi Arabian teachers in implementing phonological awareness in kindergarten. Despite the abundance of instruments testing phonological awareness in other languages, there remains a paucity of research concerning how to implement PA in Arabic, the native language of almost 401 million people. Teaching how to speak a language begins with building, growing, and strengthening the learner's sound system before introducing other aspects of the language such as letters. Consequently, the primary objective of teachers working with young children in the early stages of language development is to enable students to actively manage the various sounds of the language by rhyming, merging, segmenting, inserting, and removing syllables. Successful teachers of Arabic with young children in Saudi demonstrate the ability to effectively employ phonetic awareness strategies to support children’s emerging reading and spelling proficiency.

What is Phonological Awareness?

Many people believe that decoding phonemes is the first step in the reading process. However, children become reading-ready well before they have a firm grasp on the idea that letters represent sounds. Learning phonological awareness is the first step in developing a fluent lexicon or word list (Ciesielski & Creaghead, 2020). The capacity to detect and alter the spoken components of words and phrases is what we refer to as phonological awareness. Some examples of such abilities include recognizing rhyming words, playing with alliteration, breaking down a phrase into component parts, distinguishing syllables, and mixing and splitting onset-rimes. Phonemic awareness is the highest level, yet it is also the one that takes the longest to develop. Phonemic awareness is the capacity to recognize, consider, and manipulate independent sounds (phonemes) of spoken words (Ehri, 2022). This includes activities such as fusing sounds together to form new words, breaking down words into their component sounds, and omitting and rearranging linguistic elements.

Phonological awareness (PA) is a sequence of abilities that progress across time and remain essential for both spelling and reading proficiency given that they are fundamental for learning to interpret and pronounce written words (Antonio & Santillan, 2020). Phonological Awareness (PA) becomes extremely important during the first few years of school, particularly in kindergarten. This method of language acquisition, along with other forms of linguistic development such as stories, rhymes, and songs, is typically incorporated into the curriculum of early childhood settings on a daily basis. Children will eventually develop the ability to generate rhythms on their own. Additionally, they learn to break phrases into their component sounds, and then, into their syllables. PA is an understanding that can be quickly and easily attained by the majority of children.

Before starting kindergarten, approximately 75% of children have already developed strong pre-reading and pre-writing skills (Dimova et al., 2020). However, the 25% of children across all demographics who demonstrate difficulty mastering these skills require explicit instruction in order to improve their ability to do so. Students who demonstrate a strong understanding of phonology are significantly more likely to develop into proficient readers, whereas students who do not evidence this level of understanding indicate greater difficulty with the reading process (Dimova et al., 2020).

Literacy outcomes may be predicted with greater accuracy with PA than with other factors such as intelligence, socioeconomic background, and vocabulary awareness (Ciesielski & Creaghead, 2020). Children who struggle with PA may have a reading disability such as dyslexia. Children who have dyslexia may benefit from specialized instruction in phonemic awareness and word-building (Dimova et al., 2020). Many children who struggle to read later in life might benefit greatly from more explicit instruction in PA during these developmental years. PA training assists with problematic decoders of any grade, particularly those who show signs of difficulty mixing or segregating phonemes (Dimova et al., 2020).

How Can One Use Phonological Awareness in Saudi Kindergarten Classrooms, specifically in the Arabic Language?

Several ways exist to use or implement phonological awareness in Arabic speaking Saudi kindergartens. The holistic learning theory (Geekie et al., 1997; Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998) is recommended to Saudi teachers when implementing PA while teaching the language of Arabic to kindergarteners. In the whole language approach (Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998), language is not learned by rehearsing its individual elements; rather, real-life and relevant use and application are recommended (Riyanton et al., 2021). Many who advocate for the whole language approach to learning PA stress the importance of the term "natural" in regard to delivering the concept (Geekie et al., 1997; Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998). Literacy, in their view, is learned in a similar way as spoken language (Geekie et al., 1997; Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998). Those who support the use of holistic learning theory believe it is most effective when classroom instruction reinforces organic interactions and mastery of the native tongue. Educators highlight students' achievements while, at the same time, document students' expanding progress in literacy skills. Holistic language educators believe learning is a communal activity from which all children may

benefit (Riyanton et al., 2021). Additionally, teachers consider themselves similar to their students as they also continue to learn.

Borrowing from the theoretical frameworks of whole language theory (Geekie et al., 1997; Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998), PA can be used in Saudi kindergarten classrooms through the use of natural concepts relatable to the children. Examples include the use of storyboards, rhythms, and rhymes (Ehri, 2022). For example, young readers learn best through images and other visuals. Storyboards are a group of pictures that tell a short story. Storyboards promote children's PA development as educators devise a wide range of visually engaging pictures. Rhyming songs such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" help children identify syllabic patterns in words (Morrow, 2011). Poetry, such as "Humpty Dumpty," introduces children not only to language but also to rhyme as well.

Holistic learning affords flexibility and creativity in the classroom. Teachers can create rhyming songs and poetry. It is important the songs be sung in Arabic and also be fun and rich with Saudi culture. When the kindergarten children recite these songs, they naturally construct phonological awareness as the whole language theory describes (Geekie et al., 1997; Goodman, 1997, 2014). When teaching youngsters Arabic in Saudi Arabia, games involving clapping along with the "rhythm" helps with syllable identification. Encouraging children to jump or bounce on each syllable also invites participation.

What Are Phonological Awareness Skills?

Phonological awareness refers to a wide range of skills and understandings about the building blocks of language and the phonetic symbols that comprise words (Almehrizi et al., 2020). It seems sensible to start with phonological awareness practices and conclude with phonemic awareness. Phonemic aware students can separate out particular sounds in speech, mix and combine them, and manipulate them in various ways. Phonological awareness is honed and refined to become phonemic awareness. It is simpler to retain new information if it can be related to what the student already knows. In order to develop phonological awareness, it is important for students to focus on the relationship between written letters and their corresponding phonemes. When children become able to "sound out" each word using only the letters they see, they are well on their way to becoming proficient readers. If a particular student attains this understanding of self-awareness, they indicate a solid starting point for developing their reading and vocabulary comprehension. The primary skills within an understanding of phonological awareness include: syllabification, onset-rime, rhymes, and alliteration, and phonemic awareness.

i. Onset-rime

There are two elements to an onset rime. An onset is the first audible sound in a word that is made when a word is spoken out loud. When the beginning is taken out of a word, what's left is called the rime. Onset-rime segmentation refers to the process of dividing the phrase into its constituent parts. The letter "A" in the word "Akbar" serves as the onset, while the letters "bar" serves as the rime. Understanding word families through onset and rime instruction provides a solid groundwork for beginning readers. It is critical for students to comprehend onset and rime

as they read in order to effectively decode words. If children can learn to read with the aid of chunking and blending, comprehending what they read will become easier if it is also embedded within the context of using “meaning” to guide their reading endeavors; reading is the act of “making meaning” not simply the act of decoding words (Geekie et al.,1997; Goodman, 1997, 2014; Turbill & Cambourne, 1998).

ii. Syllabification

The ability to syllabify means that one is able to count the number of syllables contained in a word while spoken aloud. In order to assist students in remembering the syllables that make the word, teachers instruct children to "clap out" after each syllable of a word as it is spoken aloud. Combining syllables, as well as adding, removing, and replacing them, are all part of the process of syllabification. This is in addition to the process of breaking down words into their individual syllables. Reading fluency and spelling accuracy are both impacted by students' ability to decipher words quickly, which can be facilitated by teaching students how to break words down into syllables. Teaching students how to break words down into syllables can help students improve their reading fluency and spelling accuracy (Wells, 2019).

iii. Rhymes and Alliteration

In order to develop phonological awareness, the first and most important step is to learn to recognize phonological patterns. Some examples of these patterns include word combinations that rhyme or share an ending. Alliteration, on the other hand, is the term used to describe a situation in which two or more words share the same beginning sound. Take, for instance, the words 'CAT,' 'CART,' and 'KHAT.' Reading to children and listening to them recite well-known nursery rhymes and fairytales is an excellent way to demonstrate the efficacy of the strategy of using repetition of simple sounds to help develop phonological awareness in children (Sayakhan & Bradley, 2019).

iv. Phonemic Awareness

The two concepts, phonemic awareness and phonological awareness, frequently become confused. Understanding phonemes, the smallest component of speech (Duncan, 2018), is the focus of phonemic awareness. Understanding the phonetics of language is a process that occurs in several steps. It all begins with the child learning to identify one sound among all the others in a word. After this initial step, children begin combining distinct phonemes into a unified whole. Assuming mastery of the prerequisite skills, the student will be able to alter phonemes. Students can create new words by modifying existing ones by adding, removing, or exchanging their sounds. Typically, the first two years of school are devoted to teaching students skills for phonemic awareness (mostly first grade and kindergarten). Rhyming, sound matching, and word mixing are some of the common types of simple oral activities in which kindergarteners participate. During the first grade, students participate in activities that require a higher level of phonemic awareness. These activities place an emphasis on the blending of sounds, such as mixing sounds like "bbb-aaaa-dddd," or separating the sounds contained within a word. It also involves rearranging phonemes, such as changing the sound that comes at the beginning of a word to another. All of these are instances of manipulating phonemes. For example, in the word

‘BANANA,’ children can isolate the first sound /B/ and add sounds /A/ and /D/ to it to come up with the word ‘BAD.’

Conclusion

This discussion describes implications for future research and practice as it sheds light on the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of Arabic language kindergarten school teachers with respect to PA. Contributing to the expanding body of literature analyzing the implementation of PA on Saudi kindergarten readers' proficiency in Arabic, this discussion provides significant and practical relevance for fostering the necessary PA skills in order for teachers to support students' literacy levels in Arabic. In particular, the content stresses the need to continuously educate and train Arabic language instructors in the field of PA.

Additionally, this review highlights the need for Arabic education to prioritize providing teachers with the time and flexibility to individualize students' unique learning styles by including more holistic learning experiences that build students' competency in PA abilities. Finally, it is important to create Arabic-language PA assessment tools through an understanding of holistic learning theory; then, teachers can monitor and support each child’s PA development. Assessments include observations, individual conferences, anecdotal notes, and portfolios. In contrast with traditional forms, these assessments serve to collect a range of individual and relevant data to support children’s ongoing literacy development. In congruence with the natural context of PA within holistic learning theory, it is critical assessments as well be relevant, natural, and holistic.

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Discussion-Based Pedagogy to Promote to Socioemotional Learning and Well-Being Among Students in Japan

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Abstract

The Japanese educational system is highly competitive and applies high stakes standardized admission testing. As this approach has led to student stress and a narrow instructional focus, the Japanese Government revised educational goals toward more holistic development of well-rounded citizens who are healthy, independent, creative, and work collaboratively with others. However, many teachers did not know how to promote these new goals. This study investigated Japanese educators’ application of Philosophy for Children, a discussion-based inquiry approach that has been used to promote socioemotional learning and well-being. Methods included email communications with 29 educators, analysis of Japanese language documents related to the approach in Japan, and observations of meetings of educators who used the method. Educators applied the approach to elementary, secondary, and university settings. The approach was used to promote socioemotional learning and critical thinking among Japanese children. Some have used the approach to facilitate children's healing after the Tōhoku earthquake and other trauma. Facilitators applied the approach outside of the classroom in public settings like train stations to promote everyday citizens’ expression and understanding. The results suggest that Philosophy for Children has the potential to promote holistic goals for children and adults.

Background and Rationale

The Japanese educational system is competitive and uses standardized tests to determine secondary school placement, which in turn determines students' college and career options (Kuramoto & Koizumi, 2018). Such an approach is limiting and excludes broader goals of well-being and development (Ng & Wong, 2020). High-stakes testing is associated with students' stress and high suicide rates in Japan, where suicide is the primary cause of death for individuals beginning at age 10 (Kawabe et al., 2016).

More than 20 years ago, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, ([MEXT], 1998) expressed concern about the education system's emotional toll:

> Excessive examination competition has emerged as educational aspirations have risen, and the problems of bullying, school refusal, and juvenile crime have become extremely serious. It cannot be denied that to date in Japan, education has tended to fall into the trap of cramming knowledge into children, while neglecting the ability to learn and think for oneself (para 8).

MEXT acknowledged the existence of *hikikomori*, a phenomenon where students quit going to school and shut themselves in their rooms to avoid school-related pressure. The Japanese government reported that 541,000 people aged 15-39 withdrew from society, staying at home for more than six months (Tajan et al., 2017). In response, the government revised its educational objectives to develop more holistic goals including: (a) creativity, independence, and responsibility; (b) collaboration, mutual respect, and contributions to local and global communities; and (c) positive attitudes toward learning, health, justice, the environment, Japanese culture, and world peace (MEXT, 2009).

However, policy makers provided little guidance to teachers who generally did not know how to implement these goals (Ono, 2014). Although teachers had flexibility to design their own lessons, many were unsure about how to promote these more holistic goals, particularly because they still needed to prepare students for admissions testing (Ikesako & Miyamoto, 2015).

Socioemotional Learning

Much of the curricula for socioemotional learning (SEL) in Japan generated from the US. Koizumi (2005) translated into Japanese what the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) published about SEL. CASEL defines SEL as processes through which students "acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Elias et al., 1997, p. 5).

Some Japanese educators have used *Philosophy for Children* (P4C), a discussion-based inquiry approach designed to promote logical thinking and students' SEL (Brandt 1998; Sharp et al., 1992). The purpose of this paper is to describe how Japanese elementary, secondary, and university educators have used P4C and its effects.

Philosophy for Children

One of the key features of P4C is children's search for meaning because like everyone else, children desire a life of rich and meaningful experiences (Lipman et al., 1980). Rather than using textbooks to tell children what to think, P4C activities are meaning-laden: stories, games, discussions, and relationship-building. Lipman created P4C after noticing that college students often lacked adequate reasoning skills. He thought that philosophical education for children could remedy this and wrote instructional novels that depicted characters discovering philosophical principles (Brandt, 1998).

P4C transforms the classroom environment into a community of inquiry that is logic-based, open to evidence, and assumes these processes become reflective habits (Lipman et al., 1980). Prerequisite conditions include participants' mutual respect for each other, readiness to reason together, and absence of indoctrination. P4C involves discovering new possibilities by listening to and discussing issues with those who have different backgrounds and perspectives. P4C establishes a community of inquiry, encourages participation, and reduces competition. For more than 50 years, authors have published thousands of books and articles on P4C in different countries (Gregory, 2011); however, most literature on P4C in Japan is written in the Japanese language and has not been accessible to those unable to read Japanese texts.

Educators have adapted P4C to fit their specific needs and contexts. For example, Jackson (2012) developed P4C Hawai'i, distinguishing between the "Big P" of traditional academic philosophy and the "little p" of everyday philosophy. The latter reflects everyone's natural capacity for wonder as they engage in philosophical inquiry (Makaiau & Miller, 2012). The P4C Hawai'i approach does not use Lipman's P4C novels. Instead, children sit in a large circle, nominate topics that they are interested in discussing, and vote on what they want to discuss. The P4C facilitators emphasize intellectual and emotional safety (Leng, 2020).

Dewey's Approach

The current study was framed by Dewey's (1915) approach which emphasizes the significance of experience in learning and argued that schools should not just teach content, but also engage students in activities to learn how to live in society. Dewey's conceptualization of education focused on meaningful activity in learning and participation in a classroom democracy. Dewey asserted that the school community should promote shared interests among peers. P4C connects with Dewey's (1938) ideas by emphasizing students' investment in learning, active participation and complex understanding of subjects. The current study examined the perspectives of Japanese educators and Japanese language texts regarding how Japanese educators have used P4C. Our research questions were: (a) How have Japanese educators applied P4C? and (b) What were the effects of its application on students in these settings?

Methods

Participants

Participants included 29 elementary and middle school teachers and professors. The educators implemented P4C across Japan.

Data Sources

The first author corresponded with participants through email about P4C in Japan, their purposes in conducting P4C, their specific approaches, and outcomes related to its use. These email communications were conducted in Japanese. In addition, we examined 103 Japanese journal articles, 14 Japanese books, an unpublished dissertation on P4C (Tsuchiya, 2018), manuscripts submitted for publication (Toyoda, 2021), 12 Japanese websites, a P4C newsletter, meeting minutes of a Japanese P4C organization, and a teacher's notes about implementing the practices. In 2016 and 2017, the first author observed and took field notes at two meetings of P4C Japan, an organization of educators who used the P4C Hawai‘i approach.

Data Analysis

The first author coded the data regarding: (a) early historical influences of P4C in Japan, (b) the approaches used, (c) who participated in the activities, (d) goals for using P4C, and (d) its effects. We triangulated results across different data sources.

Results

Introduction of P4C in Japan

P4C in Japan originated in 1993, when Ando and Watanabe suggested that philosophy programs for children could improve social studies and English education in Japan (Tsuchiya, 2018; Sakai, 2013). In 1998, Osaka University (2010) established a laboratory to study philosophical education for teachers, nurses, and other community members. Matsumoto (2004) and colleagues at Hyogo University developed a curriculum for fifth grade students in Miyazaki prefecture and used Lipman's novel, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, to promote and assess children's inferential skills.

Influences of p4c Hawai‘i

Jackson's work on P4C Hawai‘i appeared to be especially influential in shaping the direction of Japanese philosophical inquiry with children. With funding from the Uehiro Foundation, Jackson and colleagues at the University of Hawai‘i hosted and participated in exchanges of educators from Hawai‘i, Japan, and other countries, to share ideas about P4C (University of Hawai‘i Uehiro Academy, 2013).

Toyoda coordinated the P4C Japan-Hawai‘i Exchange Program that provided biannual activities for teachers from Japan and Hawai‘i to learn about P4C Hawai‘i (Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education, 2004). Toyoda learned about P4C while she was a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i (Toyoda, interview). In 2005, she introduced the P4C Hawai‘i approach to Japanese audiences at a workshop and began holding P4C workshops at elementary schools throughout Japan. In 2010, she introduced the P4C Hawai‘i approach at universities in Japan. In

2013, Toyoda introduced P4C to an elementary school in Miyagi prefecture and facilitated a monthly P4C Hawai‘i study group.

Godo (2013) observed P4C as a graduate student in Hawai‘i. Upon returning to Japan, she was a tutor in a philosophy camp for high school students. Godo was amazed that students were so honest, considered others’ questions seriously, and felt accepted. She noted that "in such a way, a camp where people are connected and freely grow through philosophy felt like a utopia to me" (Godo, 2013, p. 68).

Formal Education

A group of K-12 and higher education teachers from institutions mostly in Osaka created “P4C Japan.” This group studied and promoted P4C Hawai‘i methods by writing articles, and sharing lesson plans and other materials (P4C Japan, 2018). At a 2016 meeting, a teacher shared a lesson plan and questions that it generated from students, while attendees offered feedback. As of 2019, the group discontinued their activities; however, their website remains as a resource. Another group of educators created P4C in Schools KANSAI-JAPAN (2020), an organization that introduces and uses P4C in schools.

Educators at Ochasho University Elementary School applied a P4C approach for Grades 3-6 students (Tanaka, 2017). The Japanese government designated Ochasho and several other schools as sites to investigate the integration of critical thinking and humanities education. Ochasho educators chose P4C Hawai‘i as their approach.

A study of P4C Hawai‘i in a Japanese middle school found that it positively influenced middle school students’ SEL (Author). A Japanese language teacher applied the approach weekly, and results indicated that students learned about themselves and classmates and developed interpersonal and decision-making skills.

Emphasis on Healing

Some educators used P4C in Japan to facilitate healing after trauma. “Clinical Philosophy,” developed by Washida, addresses suffering in fields including education and medicine, and promotes philosophical reflection about events in people’s lives (Osaka University, 2010). In 1998, Washida and colleagues initiated a course in clinical philosophy on “caring” for teachers, nurses, and other professionals. As a result, graduate students studied reclusive *hikikomori* students and applied P4C with high schoolers.

Educators used the P4C Hawai’i approach to address trauma after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami. They conducted P4C Hawai‘i in an elementary school in Sendai, a region affected by the disaster, and students demonstrated social and emotional expression to a degree not usually seen in other classrooms (Shoji & Horikoshi, 2015). One of the students whose turn it was to speak did not say anything; and yet, he did not want to pass his turn. After 30 seconds, he started expressing his thoughts. A girl with family issues who did not usually express her feelings became talkative. One student who had refused to come to school returned and participated in P4C. He told others that he enjoyed the discussion and wanted to do it again.

Tabata (2016) explained that P4C had a counseling-like effect for students. Those who participated in the sessions felt close to each other and demonstrated prosocial behaviors. An elementary school teacher shared that through P4C, she could hear the students' "real voices" and better know how to support them.

Located in Miyagi prefecture, another site of the 2011 earthquake, P4C Miyagi aimed to help children affected by natural disasters. The group worked to implement school goals, resolve regional, school, and classroom problems, and build a learning community among educators (Miyagi University, 2018). They modeled their activities on the P4C Hawai'i approach introduced by Toyoda (Tabata, 2016).

Community Outreach

Some Japanese educators have used P4C in non-school contexts. The University of Tokyo promoted "Philosophy for Everyone." They collaborated with schools and other organizations to hold events for people of different ages and backgrounds in locations throughout Japan (Kajitani, 2016). Café Philo (2016) sponsored philosophical conversations about everyday life among community participants. Since 2005, the group has operated the Philosophy Café, which offered P4C discussions in public locations, such as neighborhood cafes and train stations. Upon request, Café Philo dispatched a facilitator to create a customized dialogue for participants. For example, after viewing a movie, participants discussed their impressions of the film and the issues raised.

Founded in 2015, the Japanese Association for Philosophical Practice (2022) promoted practices that fostered intellectual exchange. Ardacoda, a nonprofit organization in Tokyo, offered workshops for children and adults interested in philosophical dialogue. Its members held discussion-events in public venues, businesses, and the media. According to Deputy Director Kono (2014), Ardacoda's P4C was flexible, but generally applied Lipman's approach, using a book to stimulate dialogue.

Discussion

In revising their nation's educational goals, the Japanese government focused on more holistic goals for students (Japanese Prime Minister's Office, 2015). Key educational objectives include developing students' abilities to question and problem solve, understand themselves and others, demonstrate leadership and communication skills, and participate in global communities that include diverse values and viewpoints. In order to accomplish these goals, the Government stated that teachers should hold high expectations for all children and promote their self-esteem and aspirations. These statements indicated that policy makers recognize that education requires the development of SEL that is not assessed by standardized tests (MEXT, 2011). Japanese policymakers were concerned about *hikkikomori* and high youth suicide rates (MEXT, 1998; Tajan et al., 2017) and recognized the role that schools play in developing SEL (MEXT, 2015).

In this study, we found that Japanese educators have used P4C to address these holistic goals. P4C outcomes reported in this study were similar to previous research indicating that the approach can improve SEL. Siddiqui et al. (2019) studied students in 16 elementary schools in England whose teachers received P4C professional development. Compared to other peers,

students whose teachers used P4C had stronger social and emotional skills, particularly when the children lived in poverty. Madrid (2008) also found that P4C was effective in engaging children and adults who lived in extreme poverty in Mexico. P4C may provide a space for self-expression and sharing among those who are traumatized. Using P4C with such individuals in Japan may promote positive mental health in a country where such issues are often stigmatized (Ando et al., 2013).

Ibasho and Kizuna

Ibasho is an everyday concept with cultural nuances that has been applied to educational and clinical fields (Fujiwara, 2010; Obata & Ito, 2001). Nakamura (1998) defined *ibasho* as the physical and psychological space that serves as the basis of everyday activities and the creation of interpersonal relationships. It is the place where one can feel safe (Toyota & Okamura, 2001) and "be as one is" (Ishimoto, 2009, p.7). In the current study, educators described how P4C created *ibasho* in the classroom by creating emotionally and intellectually safe environments for students to express their ideas and even disagree, without fear of failure or repudiation. Nurturing *ibasho* through P4C may influence students to be more creative, productive, and happier. This is important, given that a comparison across 20 different countries found that Japanese adolescents were the least happy (Varkey Foundation, 2017). Only 28% of Japanese youth, ages 15-21 reported being happy, compared to 59% across all countries.

The Japanese concept of *kizuna* (social ties) is also relevant. P4C emphasizes intellectual, social, and emotional engagement (Jackson, 2019) and has the potential to build *kizuna* in an increasingly isolated and depersonalized Japan (MEXT, 2018). Jones (2012) suggested that schools should provide students with opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings and learn to work with others constructively. The results of this study suggest that P4C may create and maintain *kizuna* in a society where so many people feel isolated and also choose *hikikomori* and suicide in response to unhappiness.

Reflections on Dewey

Dewey (1916) believed that schools should promote shared interests among peers and open communication. In his view, the ideal school was a miniature democracy in which children learned how to live in society (Dewey, 1915). The results of the current study were consistent with these ideas. Although we began this study focused on K-12 education, we were surprised to find examples of educators applying P4C in creative ways outside of the classroom in everyday settings like train stations (Kajitani, 2016). We assume that those who participated in these community events did not experience P4C as students. That these community members were interested in participating in P4C suggests that students who experience P4C in school may be in ideal positions to use P4C throughout their lives.

Applying P4C in the classroom, teachers help students to think independently and critically, understand themselves and others, and work collaboratively toward mutual goals. In discussing their feelings and ideas, students listen to others who have different opinions. All of these skills are related to Dewey's goal of students' acquiring the skills needed to comprehend what it means to be valued members of a social group. Dewey (1933) believed that individuals should be able

to explore new ideas without judgment or bias and doing so would cultivate their interests in learning. Dewey (1938) claimed that educators should encourage students to choose what they learn and explore the consequences of their actions. Educators in the current study moved away from the traditional model of education, in which students passively learn what the teacher instructs. Instead, students played freely with ideas among their peers and teachers without assumptions and preconceptions.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited by review of Japanese publications and websites and relatively short email correspondence with participants. Using email correspondence is different from face-to-face, video, or phone interviews. Email is asynchronous, so we could not follow up on participants' responses immediately or probe in ways that are possible through synchronous communication. Rather, respondents had more time to reflect on our questions before they wrote back, perhaps phrasing what they wrote in ways that were socially desirable or reflecting what they thought we wanted to hear. Overall, we were able to achieve a broad sketch of the ways that Japanese educators were using P4C in and outside of K-12 Japanese classrooms, but were limited in the amount of detail we received about particular programs and classroom interventions.

Finally, the information we gathered about P4C in Japan was mostly from the perspectives of those who facilitated or observed the P4C sessions, rather than from the students' and other participants. Future research can contribute to this literature by focusing on Japanese students' and other participants' perspectives of their P4C experiences and outcomes. We also suggest longitudinal studies of the effects of P4C in Japan and further investigation of applications in non-school settings.

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Pictures for Reflection
Recommended Toys for the Playroom

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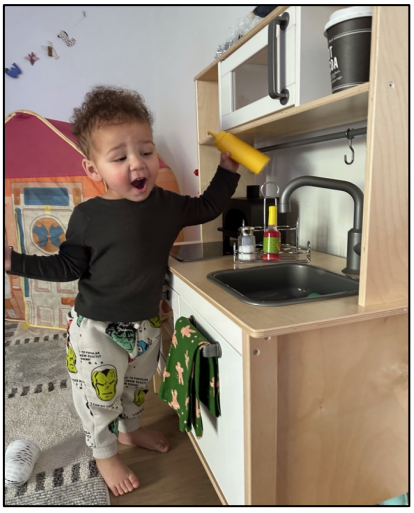
When working with children in counseling, it is often difficult to decide which toys to include in the playroom. Landreth (2012) recommends that toys be intentionally selected instead of collected. Play is a child's universal language and toys are their words; therefore; each and every toy should be purposeful (Landreth, 2012). The carefully chosen toys allow children an ability to express a full range of emotions, with toy categories including the following: real-life toys, acting-out aggressive-release toys, and toys for reactive expression and emotional release. Real-life toys may include toys that can represent figures and materials in the child's life such as puppets, dolls, vehicles, a play kitchen, a cash register, and food. Acting-out aggressive release toys include toys such as a bop bag, play guns, and a shark. Finally, toys for reactive expression and emotional release may include paints, sand, and Play Doh. With these toys in the playroom, the therapist is able to establish a positive relationship with the child in which the child can express a wide range of feelings, explore real-life experiences, test limits, develop a positive self-image, develop self-understanding, and develop self-control (Landreth, 2012). Further recommendations for specific toys to include in your playroom as well as detailed information regarding structuring your playroom can be found in Landreth (2012).



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Tech Talk
Destination Adventure: Virtual Field Trips that Won't Disappoint!

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Abstract

Who doesn't love going on an adventure, seeing new sights, observing rare occurrences, talking to people from far away, and experiencing new things? Imagine the thrill students can have with doing things not before possible, all while deeply engaged and mastering academic standards. What about taking a trip to the Louvre in France, learning about corals in the Caribbean Sea, investigating ecosystems in Colorado, or learning about engineering by visiting an Amazon fulfillment center? Even if these may seem out of reach, each of these are possible via a virtual field trip. A virtual field trip (VFT) can be a great way to provide unique, one-of-a-kind experiences that will captivate students and provide meaningful, standards-aligned learning activities.

VFT Defined

So, what is a virtual field trip (VFT)? Han (2021) describes it as a computer simulation of an actual field trip. VFTs involve using a computer or digital device to explore locations, events, or real-life situations represented by images, videos, and audio. Some involve augmented or virtual reality, while others utilize synchronous meetings with experts (Duong, Telemeco, Dean, & Hansen. 2022). VFTs can be a live virtual tour with a guide or a video recording of a past event. Some VFTs were in place before the COVID pandemic; however, many were developed during the pandemic as a temporary measure to engage students. Many VFTs are continuing to reach a larger audience and fulfill their organization's mission of increasing awareness and educating the public (Han, 2021).

Why VFT

There are many reasons why a virtual field trip makes sense. Sometimes taking students on an actual field trip is not feasible because of logistical barriers (Krawkowka, 2012). The travel, expenses, and complexities can prevent teachers from the adventure they want their students to have. VFTs tend to be more cost effective - especially when they are free (Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2011; Duskin; 2021; Lukes, 2014), they tend to be more accessible because physical boundaries and obstacles are not present, and there are fewer safety concerns (Han, 2021; Krawkowka, 2012).

Benefits

There are benefits VFTs afford students beyond overcoming boundaries and obstacles. VFTs are shown to increase students' exposure to new perspectives (Duskin, 2021; Hampshire, 2021; Ross, 2021); are more accessible for rural students (Duskin, 2021); and can increase students' learning outcomes (Galas & Ketelhut, 2006; Merchant et al., 2014).

Learning during a VFT can be embedded in project-based and/or problem-based learning experiences (Krawkowka, 2012). Imagine students presented with a real-world problem that requires them to consult a scientist in the field, one they can ask questions virtually. Imagine students then creating innovative solutions to the real-world problem and presenting that to an audience that is either meeting in person or virtually. With the use of VFTs, cross-curricular connections can be made while aligning with academic standards, boosting content knowledge, sparking curiosity and interest in new things and places, connecting curriculum to real-world experiences, and improving vocabulary acquisition (Lester, 2012).

Keep in Mind

When planning a virtual field trip, there are a few things to keep in mind. It is important to engage students' senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling) to enhance the experience (Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2011). Don't forget to identify curricular goals and connections to the standards (Blachowicz & Obrochta, 2011; Lester, 2012). Be sure to investigate resources/websites to meet the goals and standards and that will ignite student engagement and curiosity (Lester, 2012). Plan the progression to ensure enough time, space, and interest. Be sure that the curricular goals can be accomplished (Lester, 2012; Hampshire, 2021). Don't forget to debrief the VFT and allow time for student reflection of the learning. Then determine the level of effectiveness of the experience and make notes of how to improve the experience for future VFTs (Lester, 2012).

Even though the field trip is virtual, you can make it feel like going on a real field trip by doing a few simple things, like getting permission slips, requesting bagged lunches, going over expectations, and moving to different rooms to represent different locations (Lester, 2012)
Many VFTs are free, and some come with a cost. Below is a table with hyperlinks to VFTs that have options like narrated videos; live, virtual guides; on-demand options, and self-guided virtual tours. Included in the table are descriptions of the offerings, the costs, and notes identifying resources, age ranges, and any requirements.

Table 1: List of virtual field trips with explanations for each

Virtual Field Trip Link	Type	Costs	Notes
The Nature Conservancy	Narrated videos	Free	Teacher guides are available with alignment to the Next Generation Science Standards. All age groups.
National Park Service	Live programs, webcams, virtual tours, narrated videos, photo gallery	Free	Multimedia options, activities for different age groups, teacher portal, games and challenges. All age groups.
National Museum of Natural History	Archived video webinars, Ask Science How, Scientist Spotlight, live online school webinars	Free. Registration required for live online school programs.	Teaching resources available for many programs, Do-it-Yourself exhibits (must apply for access), multiple languages available for many programs. All age groups
Walking Mountain Science Center	Videos, activities, crafts		Teacher resources with lessons and videos. Early childhood - middle school
Discovery Education	Live and on-demand field trips	Free	Elementary - high school. Comes with companion guide, aligned to standards, and hands-on learning activities
Center for interactive Learning and Collaboration	Register for programs	Free to fees - depending on program	Programs for K-12. Disciplines such as music, world languages, science, social studies, the arts, and more. Aligned to standards. Free membership.
Ellis Island Interactive Tour	Self-paced tour with text, images, and video	Free	Explores Immigration through Ellis Island with an option to explore immigration from 1492 to current times
Museum of the Revolutionary War	Self-paced tour with text, images, and	Free	Classroom kit and resources for grades 2-8

	video		
Google Maps Treks	Content provided in text, images, video, and Google map images	Free	Many locations around the world to choose to explore.
360 Schools	Images that can be viewed in VR or normally	Free	Thousands of panorama images to choose from. A couple of guided tours and how to create guided tours included.
Airpano	Video and images	Free for some options	360 degree videos and images from around the world
Virtual Field Trips	On-demand videos and activities	$6-10 for single video, $45/year for single class, $350/year schoolwide	Videos, activities, quizzes and worksheets for K-9 social studies, geography, life sciences, and ancient civilization lessons.
World Awareness Children's Museum	Virtual and interactive led by museum educator	Free	For preschool - 6th grade. Activity to complete during or after the event. Aligned NYS Next Generation Learning Standards. 60 minutes long for up to 30 students.
San Diego Zoo live cams Watch and Learn Video San Diego Zoo Arts and Crafts Activities	Live cams and recorded videos. Activities	Free	Watch various animals live in the zoo setting or recorded videos of animal interactions. Free activities associated with zoo animals.
Oregon Zoo	Narrated videos	Free	Lesson linked to English language arts, physical education and science.
The Louvre	Self-guided virtual tour	Free	Access to several Petite Galleries.
Louvre Kids	Animated stories	Free	Short video stories about different art pieces
Google Arts &	Images & text	Free	Options include artists, mediums,

Culture	and 360 narrated videos		art movements, historic events, historical figures, etc.
Amazon Fulfillment	Scheduled virtual tour	Free	Behind the scenes one hour tour using live streaming, videos, 360 degree footage and real-time Q&A. Registration required
Amazon Future Engineer Tour	Scheduled virtual tour	Free	Registration required. Downloadable teacher toolkit provided. Aligned to CSTA K-12 computer science standards

These are but a few of the many virtual field trips to choose from to help enhance instruction and meet curricular needs. Virtual field trips are a great way to let students experience new and exciting places, people, and animals. While it takes work on the front end to design a virtual field trip that aligns to standards, sparks curiosity and wonder, and has front-loading and debriefing activities, it can be well worth the effort!

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Music and Middle School Literacy

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Abstract

This article provides beneficial strategies for using music in the middle school English classroom. Despite research describing the positive effects of using music to enhance learning, there is minimal discussion on specific ways of incorporating music into lessons. Music is a meaningful alternative allowing middle school students to connect with their world and, in doing so, create their own unique identities. This discussion identifies strategies whereby English teachers build upon students' interest in music to frame engagement in critical thinking about a text including the events and characters, themes, and motifs. Students learn complex literacy skills within an environment of personal motivation and multimodal approaches.

Keywords: music in the classroom, multimodal, literature study, critical literacy

Introduction

Middle school is a unique time in the emerging lives and identities of 12-14 year-olds. The current discussion provides an introduction to not only using music as a positive learning strategy, but as well explores ways to implement music to support students' developing identities. The following examples of popular culture vignettes during the 2007-2008 school year focus on teacher insight and student relevance.

2007-2008, the Year of "Crank That (Soulja Boy)": A Series of Vignettes

The bell rings, and students file out of my 7th-grade English classroom. Hundreds of students move through the hallways, stop at lockers or talk for a minute. And then one student yells out, "Watch me crank it!"

A few other students laugh and respond, "Watch me roll!"
"Yua!" even more call out.

Soulja Boy released his single in September and by October, this became a daily call and response in the hallways.

***

I have a baby and toddler and tons of single baby socks, broken toys, and other pieces of trash. I decide to gather hundreds of these little items and ask the students to create commercials for an object of "trash" using a propaganda technique.

I have five classes, between 27 and 35 students per class. The students work in pairs or trios for the project, and in each class, at least two groups use the tune of "Crank That" to write the lyrics to their catchy commercial hit.

***

Soulja Boy's dance for his hit song is just as catchy and becomes a part of several afterschool, hour-long dance events. Jumping to the right, jumping to the left, arms outstretched and flying forward, the students move to the lyrics.

During my class students review vocabulary words using an activity I call "paper bag dramatics." Each group selects a paper bag containing a random assortment of "props" that they incorporate into their skit using the week's vocabulary words. At least one skit in each paper bag dramatics day includes an eight count of Soulja Boy's dance. This relevant music is an easy way to hype/engage their audience of peers.

The preceding vignettes illustrate middle schoolers' organic connections between music, learning, and identity. Students work to join their interests and identity in the classroom community. A teacher's role is to honor this work and help support the ways students share their identity while learning.

Relevance: Self-Identity and Music

As children move into their early teenage years, they look for ways to create a unique identity. Often this identity connects to their love of particular genres of music and specific artists. My daughter, the baby of my vignettes, is now fifteen and spends at least a half an hour every evening walking around the backyard while listening to her music. It is a ritual that is just as important to her as baths or eating. Music also becomes an important part of middle school students' lives.

Middle school students strive to connect their music to identity, self, and other. As a middle school English teacher, I often hear students playing songs in the hallway, either on their phones or singing. Some songs connect all students as "Crank That" did for my students over ten years ago. Many schools identify the significance of music with middle schoolers and play music throughout the intercom during the passing from class to class instead of using bells. However, classroom instructional strategies appear to use music merely as a way to transition to a different activity or in some instances, eliminate music all together. In order to learn within a classroom community, the current discussion proposes middle school English teachers invite students' relevant and personal musical choices into the classroom.

Using Music in Supporting Student Identity and Literacy Learning

Middle school students perceive music as a means to connect to other students their age and create unique parts of their own identity. “Human beings and their social worlds are inseparable” (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 31). As well, the social worlds in which we reside help us create our evolving and fluid identity. As students interact with others in the community of learners through shared and unique interests, their individual identities form where the “identities reside on a sea of stuff and experience” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 8). Palmer (1998) views identity as “an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute life converge in the mystery of the self” (p. 13). The concept of self strongly connects to identity and the work of reflecting on one’s fluid identity. Philosophers identify self as a key feature of identity.

For instance, while enacting identity work, Foucault (1988) views the self as an imperative part of identity where he focuses on the theme of care for self and “examining [one’s] soul” (p. 26). He explains the word self can be used to “convey the notion of identity” (p. 25); therefore, the care of “self” highlights the focused action of searching for the answer to the question, “What is the plateau on which I shall find my identity?” (Foucault, 1988, p.25). The concept of a plateau for personal identity work indicates the understanding of figurative travel and climbing throughout one’s life. Students learn through their struggles and climbs while using this movement to rest in temporary ease while building the pieces of their identity. An effort to focus on the discovery of self can inform teachers’ praxis. Teachers use students’ interests in music as part of their emerging identities; for example, to encourage literacy.

Identity, though somewhat stable, is on a spectrum of individual fluidity. This fluid movement connects to learning within the discourses of groups and the connection of self to others. Part of an individual's identity involves defining characteristics such as the role of a student or interests such as specific songs or music. During the middle school years, students use music to demonstrate pieces of their identity based on connections to songs. Often students will find commonality with other students based on music, and those branches of shared identity through a collective interest in particular lyrics, singers, or songs which help to define an individual student’s identity.

Music also provides a vehicle to connect page literacy to musical literacy. Allowing students to learn the modes of music and the layers of musical analysis such as tone, rhythm, lyric, and melody, support a multimodal framework within the classroom.

Language Arts, the Middle School Student Identity, and Learning

Successful middle school English teachers understand several significant truths regarding their students. For example, engagement is not associated with their writing abilities or their average reading levels. Learning is not about grammar or academic rigor or grit. Rather, the community the teacher creates frames students’ success. Insightful educators understand that before students can reciprocate with respect, their teachers must demonstrate respect for them. Students need a tribe; it is critical they be part of a group. They must feel loved and cherished. It is only then that middle school students can share their introspective thoughts and their emerging identities. It is then, they can explain why a particular book wrought tears or describe their difficulty in writing a paragraph. With a feeling of community support, students are less apt to become vulnerable. The community support, however, cannot end at the conclusion of a one-hour class. It is critical

students experience the connections among peers, interests, and teachers beyond the school walls. This means, as well, this understanding of community extends beyond traditional classroom time constraints.

The work in these shared third spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008) nurtures the outside group connections while adding to the funds of shared knowledge. In this way, this expansive understanding of community creates abundant opportunities for students to learn and develop (Moll et al., 1992; Banegas, 2020). Through an understanding of this relevant and personal learning community, teachers build upon students' diverse choices, experiences, and interests (ie. funds of pedagogies) (Zipin, 2009; Hedges, 2012). In order to learn within an effective classroom community, the communication among students and teachers in the "constructions of social identities" (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 9) supports the work individuals do to use fluid funds of identity (Cutri et al., 2011; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Subero et al., 2016). As Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) note, "the term identity is used to invoke the interactively developed self that is multiple, fragments, and fluctuating" (p. 73). Teachers harness the identities of their students while finding ways to connect academics to their interests. Students' interests in music and the connections with music relate to student identity. This relationship offers an authentic way for teachers to honor the interests and identities of students. When teachers demonstrate an understanding of personal and relevant interests, this provides a way for them to create a safe learning community for all students to engage.

Finding the Music

When considering the links among music, identity, and literacy learning, researchers describe the correlations between music instruction and students' increased reading prowess (Bolden & Beach, 2021; Eccles et al., 2020; Powell & Somerville, 2020; Rautenberg, 2015). Additionally, data support connecting musical instruction with gains in reading ability of children with special needs (Flaugnacco, et al., 2015; Schwartzberg & Silverman, 2016).

Researchers also consider background music in the classroom. Mohan and Thomas (2020) discuss a positive correlation between using students' preferred music as background music and its connection to reading comprehension, while Su et al. (2017) specifically describe using Mozart as background music to decrease students' anxiety associated with learning and reading.

Most of the research intends to connect the positive effects of using either researcher-selected music or musical instruction with younger students, particularly pre-kindergarten to second-graders. Yoon (2018) discusses the use of popular culture within a kindergarten classroom, including songs such as "The Imperial March" from Star Wars, and the specific strategy to employ popular culture in literacy instruction instead of bracketing popular culture into only a playtime activity. The researchers targeting older students explore connecting middle school and high school students' interest in music to literature. Whatley et al. (2020) highlight using political music as a means to teach critical literacy while Kelly (2019) connects the study of hip-hop music to literature.

Using All Music

Utilizing a wide variety of music genres in the middle school English classroom provides teachers with options to demonstrate their desire to connect with individual students' identities. The concept of identity is more expansive than merely the middle school classroom; this concept helps to inform the choices made by teachers to reach students by offering connections to a wide range of music. This variety of music indicates the teacher and classroom community prioritize individual student identity (Brown, 2006; Kelly, 2019; Mohan & Thomas, 2020).

Music as a Scaffold

Research suggests that students enjoy the most success in classrooms where teachers prioritize the passions of their students (Moje et al., 2011; Subero et al., 2016). Using music to teach literacy concepts is a means to honor students' interests and fluid identity work within the English classroom. Since music is a common way that students define their interests, teachers can use music as a way to connect interest and identity to literary analysis, making the analysis of text more personal for each student.

Teachers incorporate familiar and novel songs to assist when introducing something more complex, such as using line-by-line analysis in readings, finding proof from the text to support a thesis, comparing two modes of literacy, and synthesizing the literary devices of a text. Integrating music in the study of a text is a strategy to challenge students with a complex comparison of two different modes of literacy. The following example provides a robust strategy to support the multimodal forms of literacy, synthesis, and flexible thinking within the classroom.

Using Music to Support Student Literacy

I taught 7th-grade English in a K-8 school with approximately 1200 students within a large urban district. The majority of students read close to or at grade level. Between 16 and 20 students enrolled in each of my classes. The length of study/read time for each book was between four and six weeks. In order to support students' literacy learning, my instructional strategies ensured opportunities for them to connect the relevance of the music with the identified reading. The instructional strategies included music review, visual analysis, and free-write projects.

Music Review

At least one day during the unit, a music connection day occurred. During this class period, the students and I worked together through a series of procedures to connect many genres of music to the text. The students and I called this activity "Music Review."

Prior to the day of the "music review," I created a playlist of twenty songs for the text. I intentionally included a wide variety of genres, tempos, instruments, lyrics, and familiarity of the songs while considering the events and characters, themes, motifs, and prior discussions we engaged as a class while reading.

On the day of the music review, the students created a list of as many possible characters, events, motifs, and themes related to the identified literature. Additionally, students listed their opinions

about the text. Some students created this list throughout the unit; others waited until the day of the music review to brainstorm recalled items. The students who chose to do the latter explained that it was a way to test their memory regarding the assigned reading. After providing adequate time to compile their list, students then numbered the second sheet of paper from one to twenty, skipping five lines between each number. At this time, I played the first 60 seconds of the first song. The students could focus on any element(s) of the song including lyrics, tempo, melody, specific musical instruments, rhythm, tone, or mood to explain how this element(s) connects to one part of the text the class read. Often students were able to understand this somewhat abstract assignment, at least in the beginning of the year, by my suggestion to think of this exercise as creating a movie soundtrack. After the first 60-seconds of a song-play, I ask the question, "Where do you think the music would fit in a movie version of the book?"

For instance, the playlist for William Shakespeare's (2004) Midsummer Night's Dream included Usher's (2004) song "Yeah." Students might identify the high-pitched ringing bells as a reminder of the fairies or they could consider the boisterous "club music" feel of the song which might suggest to them Bottom's interaction with Titania. Another example is the Police's (1983) production of "Every Breath You Take." Students may connect the lyrics, "Every breath you take/Every move you make/Every bond you break/Every step you take/I'll be watching you" to Helena's love for Demetrius in Act I.

Students discovered dozens of different ways to connect one song to the text. They used their personal experience, literary understanding, and musical literacy to make their connections. They would explain their reasons first on paper and later in conversation with other students. This provided a way for students to experience what would later be identified as textual proof. They used examples from both texts to connect these literacies (book/literature, music/lyrics) together.

Every year I used this strategy, my list of songs associated with each book's playlist became longer because students began to connect songs to the books they were reading on their own. I left a pad of Post-it notes on my desk specifically for students to share new song titles. Examples include: "Busby, you should check out Akon's (2007) 'Sorry, Blame It on Me'. It reminds me of Anthony Marston in *And Then There Were None* (Christie, 2003) because he isn't sorry about ANYTHING. And maybe if you really think about it as Akon being real, then maybe Walter Jr. in *Raisin in the Sun* (Hansberry, 1994) would fit?"

I include an example playlist for *Midsummer Night's Dream.* However, these playlists often change because of student-generated suggestions or newly created productions.

Table 1
Playlist for Midsummer Night's Dream

Song title	Artist	Two ideas for possible connections
The Girl from Ipanema	Amy Winehouse	The beginning tune or mood sounds like a wedding reception song which connects to the 3 couples' wedding party./ Based on the time period of the text, the lyrics could connect to Helena or Hermia based on how Lysander and Demetrius fall in love with each of them.

Wake Up	Arcade Fire	The beginning rhythm of the song could connect to Puck's race to get the special herb for Oberon./ The song sounds joyous which is the way Theseus feels about marrying Hippolyta.
Se Fue	Bebe	The chords being played in the beginning sounds like practice which is like when Bottom and the other actors practiced the play./ The singing sounds like the fairies singing to Titania.
Beautiful Liar	Shakira & Beyonce	The beginning sound sounds like a Bergomask dance that Bottom and the other actors offer after their play./ The two women singing about the man as a "beautiful liar" could be Helena and/or Hermia about Demetrius and Lysander's fickle love interests.
One Way or Another	Blondie	The tempo of the song reflects Puck's directing of Bottom throughout the play. (Could be several scenes.)/ The lyrics about obsession indicate all four of the lovers as well as Titania's feelings about Bottom and Theseus's feelings about Hippolyta.
Chan Chan	Buena Vista Social Club	The song's mood is stealthy which is how Puck acted as he spied on the lovers./ The drum beats are rhythmic like the feelings Hippolyta has about the continual progression of time to her eventual wedding day.
The Rake's Song	The Decemberists	The lyrics begin with "I had entered into a marriage" which connects to the three couples who marry at the end of the play./ The singer does not sound thrilled to be married which might connect to Oberon since he and Titania argue during most of the play.
Headlines	Drake	The singer notes he receives a lot of compliments and might be changed by the number of compliments. This could be many of the characters including: any of the four lovers, Puck, or Bottom./ The rhythm in the background sounds like a drum beat which could connect to a soldier's march and Hippolyta's fighting.
Beautiful	Eminem	"Lately I've been hard to reach" could focus on Bottom when his friends were looking for him and couldn't find him./ Lysander is very sad in Act I Scene i that he cannot marry Hermia.
Dance, Dance	Fall Out Boy	"She says she's no good with words" could connect to Helena's confusion at Hermia's anger. They both struggle to understand the other./ The intensity and chaotic energy of the song could remind a listener of the chase that ensues when Puck is directing the four lovers away from each other.
Ain't Worried about Nothin	French Montana	Oberon, though amused and annoyed at times, does not seem concerned about how things will eventually work out. He is confident he will be able to correct the wrongs and make Titania love him again./ The high-pitched sounds in the

		background of the song can remind a listener of the lullaby sung by the fairies for Titania.
Back to the Middle	India Arie	The lyrics describing a girl who is afraid of speaking "her mind" connects to Helena's feelings in the first act./ The theme of the song focuses on the theme of love within the play and the fact that both Helena and Hermia remained true to their loves.
Rise Up with Fists!!	Jenny Lewis	"What are you changing? Who do you think you're changing?" begins the lyrics of this song and connects to the actual donkey head Puck attaches to Bottom's head. It could also identify the changes in loves./ Her repetition of the lines "You can wake up" focuses on the theme of dreams that happen within the play.
Fade into You	Mazzy Star	This sounds like a song Titania would sing for Bottom while she was in love with him./ This could be the song that Pyramus and Thisbe whisper to each other on either side of the wall.
You Can't Touch This	M.C. Hammer	These lyrics could be for either of the male lovers in response to the female lovers that they were not in love with at the time./ This could also be Bottom's theme song. He thinks very highly of himself.
Black Tables	Other Lives	The somber piano music could connect to Hippolyta's feelings at the beginning of the play or the way the other actors feel when they cannot find Bottom./ The lyrics "it's good to see you back home" could refer to how Theseus feels when the lovers, particularly his daughter Hermia, return.
Fields of Gold	Sting	The emphasis in the lyrics of the words "remember" and "forget" can connect to the following characters: Titania, Bottom, the four lovers, and Hippolyta./ This is a love song which relates to the theme of love within the play.
Marry Me	Train	The lyric "love has surely shifted" focuses on the motif of change and the theme of love in the play./ The singer is asking someone to marry him which relates to all four of the couples.
The Kids Don't Stand a Chance	Vampire Weekend	"The kids don't stand a chance" focuses on the four lovers and their experience in the forest./ The mood of the song seems magical which connects the motif of magic in the play.
Soul Finger	The Bar-Keys	The excited response reminds a listener of how, after their confusion had passed, the four lovers were thrilled to return to town so that they could participate in the wedding./ The excitement and trumpet trill could also imitate the excitement of Bottom and his friends when they heard Theseus had selected their play.

Visual Analysis. "Music review" is not the only place to use music in the classroom. For instance, the students also wrote a visual analysis of a favorite music video where we studied film techniques such as camera angle and movement, lighting, and transition. Then, students applied these different vocabulary words and the meanings behind the film to the lyrics of the song. The students provided an analysis of the music video by referencing the cinematic choices made and the possible reasons for these choices in connection to the lyrics and other layers of musical literacy.

Each class also creates a class soundtrack including both a representation of each student as well as songs indicating traits identified as important by a particular classroom of learners. Incorporated as part of their final class video, students often shared with other classes as a way to demonstrate their unique attributes.

Free-Write Projects. I also use songs as a catalyst for some free writing activities. Here, instead of playing only the first minute of the song, I would play an entire song, at least one time, and sometimes more than once while students take notes. These notes, doodles, or just attentive listening graduated into a "free write" assignment. Students write for 10 minutes. Sometimes I would offer a suggestion of genre, but more often, the students responded in a way that made personal sense to individuals. In order to expand an initial project, students used these free writes for later writing assignments as a starting point.

Conclusion

Middle school English educators experience pressure to teach reading and writing standards in traditional ways that mimic formal state-mandated tests. However, by incorporating music within the English classroom, students learn complex literacy skills within the context of interest-driven and multimodal learning activities. Music harnesses another piece of student engagement as well as student identity to support literacy and emphasize the importance of the unique students within a classroom.

While using a "music review" to provide a close analysis of a text, students experience ownership of not only the interpretation of the lyrics, tone, and melody, but also exhibit the ability to connect other songs to the texts read in class. The visual analysis project offers a way for students to investigate relationships between imagery and song, noting the multimodal aspects of literacy while focusing on a song directly related to their identity and interests. A teacher can continue to honor student identity and help students connect in the classroom community when creating a group playlist. Finally, when a teacher uses music to support student writing, students not only have an immediate connection to the assignment because of the incorporation of music, but students also find the task of writing more comfortable.

Using music to highlight the individuality of middle school students allows teachers to hone in on the importance of student identity and its relationship to literacy and learning within a classroom community. Multimodal assignments incorporate music and thereby, allow students to learn through interest-driven connections and personal identity while, at the same time, helping to develop students' critical thinking.

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Post-Pandemic Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom: Supporting Children's Social Skills to Enhance Play Experiences

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Abstract

Some or most preschool-age children experienced 15-20 months isolated from others due to the Covid pandemic. The isolation has not allowed young children the opportunity to participate in a group care setting with similarly aged peers. While the isolation was prudent to maintain the health of young children, it has not allowed children to gain the skills necessary to play with one another. Children learn by doing, and they have not been able to participate in play-based interactions with others. In this article, I pose three scenarios demonstrating how teachers can intentionally scaffold young children's interactions, thereby, furthering their social skills.

Introduction

Comments are uttered repeatedly in early childhood classrooms about how young children today do not know how to interact with one another; forgotten how to play; or simply, cannot get along in group settings. Today, more than in the past, this is the reality of working with young children. The majority of children, three to five years of age, experienced some or most of 15-20 months isolated from others due to the Covid pandemic. They lacked the typical social skills building opportunities (visiting for play dates, attending pre-school events, shopping, eating out, interacting during sports activities, and participating at birthday parties for family members and peers) otherwise familiar for children previous to Covid-19 shut-downs.

As early childhood practitioners, it is time to bring back the basics of high-quality early care and education: play-based learning with a specific emphasis on supporting growth and development of children's social skills. Teachers frequently say, "these children just do not play with one another." The reality is, for two years, young children lacked opportunities to practice play behaviors such as entering, maintaining, and exiting a play event; rehearsing verbal and nonverbal social cues to approximate collaboration; and negotiating issues associated with conflict and/or compromise. Without the advantage of a group setting to play with peers,

children may require additional support from observing, caring, and understanding early childhood educators. Children play naturally; however, in this post pandemic era, some children may need additional support to achieve successful social interactions. The need for children to gain social skills requires teachers to tenuously balance supporting play experiences with the act of becoming intrusive which undermines the child's capacity to experience genuine quality play. In order to ensure adults do not dominate play and further subvert children's abilities to cooperate, create, and imagine, a review of the theoretical underpinnings for the potential of play becomes relevant.

Defining Play: A Theoretical Framework

Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky are theorists who believe play is how young children naturally and effectively learn (Mooney, 2000). Extensive research studies underscore the significant importance of play (Essame, 2020; Karlsdottir et al., 2019; Whitebread et al., 2009). Yet, defining play is ambiguous; even the Webster Dictionary states a plethora of ways to define this phenomenon that is commonly discussed in regards to children (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Critically, play is defined as active, dynamic, constructive, and important to the overall growth and development of young children (Csikszentmihalyi & Bennett, 1971; Haight et al., 1999; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). Play incorporates the use of objects, often referred to simply as toys (Haight et al., 1999). Play is referred to as purposeless in nature and an activity voluntarily engaged in by the child (Brown, 2009; Smith & Pellegrini, 2013-2015). Others describe play as purposeful because children master necessary skills through their playful actions and interactions (Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008).

Eberle (2014) states these activities exist for the sake of playing. Play is not sought out by individuals, rather it is a spontaneous, though not random, act that does not discredit the power the child has, while still acknowledging rule making and breaking. Eberle also cautions readers to not forget that a person cannot remove the where, when, and with whom that had previously been identified as part of the definition. Eberle went on to identify six elements that make up the basis for play:

- Anticipation: meaning that play begins with a tension, which is pleasurable, as an original storyline is created in a predictable way.
- Surprise: which is characterized by the sounds of laughter when an incongruity occurs in the play.
- Curiosity: the anticipation leads an individual to wonder, which leads to discovery of something new or novel.
- Pleasure: not only an incentive to begin or continue to play, but also is a defining element that must be present for the act to be defined as play.
- Understanding: which leads to an increased capacity for one to express empathy and insight into another person's emotions or motives. These understandings ultimately lead to the development of "theory of mind" (the developed ability to understand how one generates their thoughts).
- Strength: within our minds and our bodies, by improving physical abilities, increases our mental capacities, and deepens one's understanding of the social world around them.

- Poise: or a sense of balance, in which the child displays grace, self-assurance, ease, fun, achievement, and whim.

Smith and Pellegrini (2013-2015) indicate that the *process* of play is far more beneficial to the child's learning than is the end point of that play. Additionally, they explain that flexibility in the use and combination of tools must be present and the act must be filled with laughter and positivity on behalf of the children, for the act to be called play. Bodrova and Leong (2007) share how according to Vygotsky (1967), play involves an imaginary situation, during which the child acts out a role, which follows a set of predetermined rules for those roles, and incorporates social interaction with others.

Learning Through Play

The connection between play and learning is supported and emphasized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which has long espoused the belief that children learn through play, using the statement, "Early years are learning years" (NAEYC, n.d., para 1) as its registered trademark. In 2009, NAEYC issued a position statement emphasizing the importance of play and its connection to learning stating, "Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 14). Play describes the work conducted by children. In 2020, NAEYC released the fourth edition of the *Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs* in which the six principles of play are outlined. The third principle states, "Play promotes joyful learning that fosters self-regulation, language, cognitive and social competencies as well as content knowledge across disciplines" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2020, p. xxxiii). This same document indicates that play includes the following types of interaction: self-directed, guided, solitary, parallel, social, cooperative, onlooker, object, fantasy, physical, constructive, and games with rules.

Research demonstrates all mammals engage in spontaneous acts of play (Brown, 2009; Smith & Pellegrini, 2013-2015). Brown found, while observing animals in their natural habitat, that many engaged in playful behaviors with one another. They shared an example about witnessing a grizzly bear, exhibiting signs of malnourishment, who playfully interacted with a sled dog rather than satisfying his hunger. The physical characteristics exhibited by both animals identified the actions as play. This playful interaction occurred for a length of time each day and through the course of several days.

Upon examining the brains of mammals engaged in playful behavior, researchers found them to be structurally different from brains of mammals not engaged in playful interactions (Brown, 2009). For instance, the brains of mammals engaged in frequent and ongoing instances of play were physically larger than mammals not engaged in frequent play. Particular areas of the brain that showed significant differences included the amygdala (which allows expression of emotion), cerebellum (which allows for control in movement and balance), and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (which allows for faster decision-making abilities). Additionally, in higher functioning animals, play led to the development of secondary emotions (e.g., empathy or sympathy) and a greater ability to participate in complex social interactions (Brown, 2009).

Research demonstrates play impacts all areas of a child's growth and development. Playful behavior begins with a young infant using solitary actions (i.e., shaking a rattle) and progresses to a child playing alongside another child with increasing levels of interaction and cooperation (Ahn & Filipenko, 2007; Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2012; Hoffman & Russ, 2012; Piaget, 1959; Russ & Kaugars, 2001; Saltz et al., 1977; Vygotsky, 1967).

By the end of the preschool years (children who have not entered kindergarten), typically developing children are interacting with one another, collaboratively creating elaborate play schemes leading to themes (Fromberg, 2002). This elaborate play scheme is evident as children choose a play theme (such as playing restaurant). Together, children determine the necessary props (i.e., table, chairs, menu, dishes, food, etc.) and go on to create a storyline (for instance, two moms taking their children out to eat pizza). The children work together to assign roles to one another and gather the necessary tools (toys). Finally, the children play out the story line.

Each of these steps involves the children practicing specific skills. The children must remember what was involved when they went on a recent trip to a restaurant. They will use letters and numbers as they create a menu. The children need to problem-solve and use conflict resolution skills as they negotiate various decisions. Language and communication skills become necessary as they carry out a back-and-forth conversation during planning and play. Finally, storytelling skills are important so the child's story has a beginning, middle, and end. The children will use these and a number of other skills as their story unfolds, which will lead to successful learning. Each time they engage in any type of play, various skills become stronger.

Isenberg and Quisenberry (2002) found children's play increased the neural connections within their brains. They reported that the more active a child's brain, the more neural connections found within that brain, and those connections become permanent more quickly in active brains. Brown (2009) reported that when children used more than one piece of information (coming from separate neural connectors in the brain), new ideas or solutions resulted, along with new neural connectors. This describes how learning occurs.

Play is the primary source of development in young children (Vygotsky, 1967). Isenberg and Quisenberry (2002) discuss how no teacher- or parent-planned activity could substitute for the learning that occurs during child-led play. Samuelsson and Carlsson (2008) describe how learning occurs simultaneously with play. Hedges (2014) concludes children must be active in their learning and describes how children learned to understand their world most effectively by their active participation in play.

The simple act of playing allows children to practice challenges while risking minimal consequences (Brown, 2009). Tahmores (2011) stated children seek solutions to help them overcome difficulties during instances of play. Almon (2013), cofounder of the Alliance for Childhood, reports children express themselves best through play experiences when they practice new roles or work through incidents encountered in their everyday routine.

Vygotsky believes play promotes growth and learning specifically in the areas of cognitive, social, and emotional development (Scharer, 2017). Piaget (1976) describes how children, during interaction with objects and others, construct new knowledge. Piaget referred to

assimilation and accommodation to explain this constructive phenomena, i.e., when children encounter new information, objects, or situations they assimilate the new information into existing understandings and thereby, construct new meaning. This constant interaction with objects and diverse others ensures growth in the child's learning. Thus, play is any activity in which a child voluntarily engages, which leads to learning new information or furthering the development of skills.

Bodrova and Leong (2007) describe how Piaget and Vygotsky believe children gain skills and knowledge by their active participation in their own learning. They describe how children construct an understanding of various principles and concepts by interacting (i.e., playing) with equipment, materials, and/or individuals in their environment. Piaget (1959) and Vygotsky (1967) describe how children further construct their knowledge by continued active involvement with objects and others.

Several studies examined the topic of what children learn through play. Interestingly, when describing their own play, children in kindergarten do not separate the act of play from the learning that occurs (Samuelsson & Carlsson, 2008). Children discuss what they learn from their play as they talk about their play scheme, but they do not attribute learning new skills or knowledge to the act of playing itself (Samuelsson & Carlsson, 2008). Leong and Bodrova (2012) report improvement in all areas of development when a child is actively engaged in well-developed play.

Cognitive Learning/Language Development

Piaget (1959) defines cognitive development as children's ability to learn new skills, knowledge, and/or abilities. He describes how children make these particular types of gains by testing rules, concepts, and experimenting in their environment. Language development is an important part of cognitive learning because it is often through language that children can gain new knowledge as they interact with materials, equipment, and people in their environment.

Play allows a child to test rules and properties that may seem illogical or irrational (Csikszentmihalyi & Bennett, 1971; Hurwitz, 2002). Bruner (1972) describes how children play to test ideas and rules with minimal consequences. Children use play to help them learn to live responsibly in the world around them (Tahmores, 2011).

Pretend Play

Saracho (2002a; 2002b) reports that pretend play leads to increased cognitive skills. As children become preschoolers, they use instances of pretend play to help them learn to group and categorize objects (Saracho, 2002a; Saracho, 2002b). Additionally, Sutherland and Friedman (2013) report that as children engage in pretend play utilizing toy dogs, they begin to categorize the dogs based on similarities and differences in size and color.

Hoffman and Russ (2012) conclude pretend play leads children to exhibit increased instances of divergent thinking. They also describe children who display a wide range of emotions during

their pretend play are better able to generate more solutions when they encounter problems in their play than children who do not demonstrate as many emotions.

Saltz et al. (1977) provided disadvantaged preschool-age children with opportunities to engage in pretend play activities based on everyday experiences or field trips (e.g., going to a grocery store or a doctor's visit) or on special outings (e.g., field trips to a fire station or zoo). Saltz et al. (1977) describe how these children's IQ test scores increased following their play experiences. The children could sequence events and identify reality from fiction more accurately, control their impulsive behaviors, and show an increase in empathetic behaviors toward their peers following their play experiences (Saltz et al., 1977).

Theory of Mind/Metacognition

One important component of cognitive learning is the development of theory of mind. Theory of mind encompasses the understanding of how one's own mind works, how learning occurs, and how gaining new skills and abilities affect one's behaviors and beliefs (Feldman, 2012). Pretend play indicates a significant impact on the development of a child's theory of mind (Leslie, 1987; Lillard, 1993; Smith & Pellegrini, 2013-2015).

Leslie (1987) describes one aspect of theory of mind as children's growing understanding that other people think, feel, and believe differently than they themselves do. Pretend play is the start of a child developing theory of mind (Leslie, 1987). Additionally, Leslie (1987) discusses the importance of a child understanding some individuals may believe or feel differently than themselves, represent a different opinion on any given topic, indicate a different perspective on an issue, or a desire to play in a different way. Children must have developed this aspect of theory of mind before they are able to engage in acts of pretend play (Leslie, 1987).

Additionally, as children continue to engage in acts of pretend play, further enhancing the development of their theory of mind, they expand their ability to understand that their own behaviors affect others around them. This allows a child to understand another person's perspective and distinguishes fact from fiction (Friend, 2011). Using pre- and post-test established measures, Burns and Brainerd (1979) show that even short-term engagement in pretend play scenarios improves a preschooler's ability to accept the perspective of another individual.

Initially, a young child needs realistic props in their play. As a child's brain is developing and learning occurs, the child develops an ability to use less realistic props to represent an actual object. For instance, a very young child will most likely need a plastic apple to represent a real one. However, by the time a child reaches preschool, the ability to use a block to represent an apple will have likely developed. Based on how a pretend object is used, teachers can surmise that a child understands it is not a real apple. A child shows this understanding by holding a block like an apple and saying, "I am going to eat this delicious apple," but then takes a pretend bite from it. According to Lillard (1993), these types of pretend scenarios show that children are able to hold in their brain the image of an apple and the properties of a block at the same time. It is through this type of play, with a variety of objects, that children gain the ability to pretend and

engage in play activities with less realistic objects, which in turn leads to further development and learning.

Sutherland and Friedman (2013), using quantitative assessment measures, found that children use play – particularly pretend play – as a way to learn about the world around them and tend to answer questions using information gained during their play. As pretend play skills increase, due to playing with a variety of materials, preschool-age children begin to explore more play topics leading to learning more about the world around them. Noteworthy from Sutherland and Friedman's (2013) study, is that children were selective about their take-away knowledge, particularly if information learned was contradictory to previously acquired knowledge. For instance, children given fictional information, via a puppet show about what a cat would eat, did not alter their prior knowledge of what cats really ate.

Burns and Brainerd (1979), using a pre- and post-test measure, allowed a group of children to engage in a structured play activity of counting blocks with the goal of learning a skill. Another group practiced drawing a picture with a pencil to reinforce proper grasp of a writing tool. Through the analysis of these test measures, they found that the children's performance improved on the desired skills (i.e., counting, or holding a pencil correctly).

Ilgaz and Aksu-Koç (2005) used qualitative analysis of three- and five-year-old children's narratives explaining their play. They found that children with more practice playing were able to provide a structured and detailed narrative account of their experiences. The five-year-old participants provided a more deliberate explanation of their play experiences than those who were three-years-old (Ilgaz & Aksu-Koç, 2005).

Howe et al. (2005) used quantitative measures to analyze play interactions of kindergarten-age children who had an older or younger sibling. They found that children with siblings were more skilled at playing with others and better able to build a narrative of their play than children with no siblings. This finding was particularly true with kindergarten-age children with an older sibling. This finding appears to indicate that children provided with many opportunities to engage in play activities with older siblings become more highly skilled narrators. They learn to tell a more detailed story.

Baumer et al. (2005) implemented a teacher-directed pretend play intervention strategy that included using children's books, discussions, and free play events with a group of children between the ages of five- and seven-years-old. They found through a post-test analysis that the narrative comprehension abilities of children who received a pretend play intervention strategy were higher than for children who did not receive an intervention. Children receiving a pretend play intervention provided longer, more coherent narrative explanations of their experiences than children who did not receive an intervention (Baumer et al., 2005). This is further evidence that children with strong play skills demonstrate an ability to share their perceptions of play and learning.

Fantuzzo et al. (2004) studied children in an urban Head Start classroom who were described by teachers as demonstrating strong play skills (i.e., abilities to interact with other children in a give-and- take manner and use materials with the same general purpose or goal as others). They

found these children evidenced significantly larger vocabularies than peers described as having limited play skills. Playing with blocks, in particular, indicated significant positive impacts on language development (Dansky, 1980; Dansky & Silverman, 1973; Saracho & Spodek, 1998), especially in children from middle and low-socioeconomic homes (Christakis et al., 2007).

Bulotsky-Shearer et al. (2012) utilized quantitative measures and reported that children participating in a Head Start program who had positive play interactions with their peers achieved higher learning outcomes by the end of the school year than children who did not. Additionally, children who indicated problem behaviors in the fall and were not able to interact positively with peers demonstrated lower learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and math (Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2012).

Sacha and Russ (2006), utilizing a quantitative methodology, found that when play was incorporated into the introduction of dance instruction, children were better able to recall the skills necessary to complete dance steps than children taught in a more traditional teacher-demonstrated format of dance lessons. Children in a play-centered environment took longer to recall dance steps in the second week of instruction, but by the third week, they recalled dance steps quickly and required less direct instruction from their dance teacher. Children taught dance steps through play activities were more attentive during the first and third weeks of instruction. Additionally, this same group responded more positively to their dance activity during the third week of instruction than children from the more traditional teacher-demonstrated instruction group.

Social/Emotional Development

Children learn to manage their feelings in socially acceptable ways through the safe expression of conflicting emotions (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). Brown (2009) found that play energizes and enlivens its participants, as well as renews their optimism; play helps a child see new possibilities and allows children's temperaments to become apparent, thereby enhancing their sense of self. Tahmores (2011) found children use play as a means to display a variety of emotions (e.g., kindness, anger, insecurities). Tahmores also showed that during their play, children were able to express a wide range of emotions, which helps them to achieve a sense of emotional calmness.

Craft et al. (2012) describe how through repeated play experiences, children generate new ideas and scenarios, leading to more play possibilities, which then creates more play experiences, which leads to new learning. Increased play experiences help children learn to maintain focus and the interest of all participants, which leads to extended experiences and a continued play cycle. Playing leads to increased social skills, which in turn extends to an increase in play activities (Craft et al., 2012).

Kindergarten-aged children expressed through narrative descriptions that they learned how to get along effectively with one another when playing with peers (Ahn & Filipenko, 2007). Brown (2009) reports that children discover their world and learn how to develop and maintain friendships through play opportunities. As children gain play skills, they learn to work

collaboratively with one another; children often ask, “what if” questions or make “as if” statements, which help them generate new possibilities for their play (Craft et al., 2012).

Children, highly skilled at playing with peers, exhibit more persistence and motivation than children less skilled; children skilled at play also exhibit a more positive attitude toward learning than children who are less skilled than their age-mates (Coolahan et al., 2000). Coolahan et al. also describe children who are disconnected from play or disruptive during play interactions display increased behavioral problems and decreased levels of motivation to learn across time. This understanding indicates children who enjoy playing also enjoy learning. It appears there is a significant link between children's developing social and emotional skills and their cognitive abilities.

Fantuzzo et al. (2004) report preschool-age children who are more skilled at playing with their peers become better able to regulate their emotions during conflict, exhibiting higher incidents of prosocial behaviors (e.g., turn taking and sharing), and are less disruptive in their urban Head Start classrooms than children less skilled at play. These play-competent children are more likely to invite their peers to participate in an activity and show more initiative, autonomy, and creativity in their play.

Assessment data (Fantuzzo et al., 2004) describe children who exhibit competence in play interactions are less aggressive, shy, or withdrawn at the end of their preschool education. Play-competent preschool-age children, more skilled in peer relationships at the beginning of their Head Start year, show significantly higher gains in cognitive, social, and motor skills by the end of the academic year than their lesser skilled peers. Bulotsky-Shearer et al. (2012) discuss this to be true for children who exhibit externalized problem behaviors (e.g., aggressive types of behaviors), as well as children with internalized behaviors (e.g., introverted or shy children).

Russ and Kaugars (2001) demonstrate that the type of play a child engages in significantly impacts the affect or emotional impact displayed by the child. For instance, when teachers asked children to use puppets to act out a play scenario that included angry characters, the children involved in the play more often report feeling angry when they finished playing, while children engaged in acting out a scene involving happiness indicate feeling happy. These findings indicate children’s emotions become impacted by the type of play in which they engage.

Through analysis of kindergarten-age children’s narrative descriptions of their imaginative play and visual depictions through artwork, Ahn and Filipenko (2007) found that children establish their gender, moral, social, and cultural self through play. The children in Ahn and Filipenko’s study built hypotheses about their own world and self. Ahn and Filipenko further showed that the children were struggling with abstract questions involving science, philosophy, and moral issues. During later episodes of play, these kindergarten-age children often went back to their earlier questions, and through modifications in their play, continued to work through their feelings as they developed a sense of their own identity (Ahn & Filipenko, 2007).

Researchers describe infants, engaged in mimicking play with their parents, as more persistent and motivated when attempting to engage that parent in a later encounter (Fawcett & Liszkowski, 2012). However, this persistence and motivation did not transfer to other adults.

While infants were unable to repeat the exact mimicked behavior later, they were able to successfully encourage a social interaction with their parents (Fawcett & Liszkowski, 2012).

Connolly and Doyle (1984) report teachers describe children who engage in pretend play activities as more socially competent than their peers who engage in fewer instances of pretend play. Connelly and Doyle characterize children who engage in pretend play as more activity-oriented in the classroom and more popular with peers. Findings by O'Connor and Stagnitti (2011) describe children engaged in complex pretend play as highly capable of sustaining play with others for longer periods of time than children engaged in more simple pretend play. Children in O'Connor and Stagnitti's study also show more affect in their play when they assume a variety of roles. These children demonstrate improved social interaction skills, less disruptive behaviors, and remain more connected to themes and storylines of their play than less involved children (O'Connor & Stagnitti, 2011).

Children will interact in a playful way with their peers, parents, or adults in their early education setting leading to more refined and elevated social interactions with one another. One important outcome of this type of socially interactive play is a growth in a child's language skills, including making more intricate speech sounds as the child grows and learns; a significant increase in the semantics of language, using more complex words; improved grammar; and using the newfound language skills in social interactions with others (Smith & Pellegrini, 2013-2015). Sociodramatic play increases a child's pre-literacy skills primarily by being structured, especially through instances of guided play, much like a story is written: with a beginning, middle, and end. Smith and Pellegrini (2013-2015) also make a connection between pretend play and an increase in a child's ability to work through difficult emotions. The acts of play can help a child to understand their own anxieties and lead to a resolution of them.

Guided Play as a Teaching Strategy

Teachers can guide socio-dramatic play by providing materials that lend themselves to telling a story. For instance, a teacher may read a book about taking a pet to the veterinarian. Then set up a veterinarian clinic complete with the doctor's tools, stuffed animals, clipboards/paper to chart notes, etc. During the play, the teacher could inquire about the symptoms of the animal to the owner, guiding them through telling the pet's story to the veterinarian. Then, the teacher may ask the veterinarian about the diagnosis process which leads the child through communicating with the pet owner. If the teacher determines the children involved are highly skilled in social interactions, they can step back and allow the play to unfold. If, however, the teacher notes the children are not continuing to interact with one another, teachers could ask additional probing questions to re-engage the children in the play scenario.

While children naturally engage in play, it involves a process and set of skills, which require practice, rehearsal, and approximation. Children, depending on past experiences, require different levels of adult support in learning how to effectively play with others. Zosh et. al. (2018) indicates play is on a spectrum. Self-Directed play, sometimes referred to as free play, which is child-directed and - initiated activity without an explicitly stated learning goal is at one end of the play spectrum. The teacher purposefully prepares the environment to allow children

an opportunity to freely explore the materials it contains. Self-Directed play leads to improvements in social skills, problem solving, and motor skills (Zosh et al., 2018).

Zosh et al. (2018) describe Guided Play as next on the spectrum, which involves learning experiences purposefully and intentionally planned by the teacher. The experiences are teacher-initiated, in that it is the teacher who makes the materials available in an inviting way for children. The teacher deliberately chooses materials that will allow the child to learn and grow in a specific domain of development. The child may then choose to interact with the materials, in their own way; thus, directing their own play. Games (adult initiated/child directed), co-opted play (child initiated/adult directed) and playful distractions (adult initiated/adult directed) are the final three aspects of Zosh et al. (2018) spectrum of play.

Guided play activities require the child to be mentally active and engaged as they manipulate and process information in a way to make new decisions (Zosh et al., 2018). The child should not be acting as a passive learner in these situations; rather, the child actively engages mentally with the play in which he or she is embedded and leading or co-leading with a peer.

Guided play requires that children be actively engaged, meaning not only is their mind active and focused on the play itself, but as well, the child's brain remains engaged in that play (Zosh et al., 2018). The child is able to avoid distractions and "getting lost" in their play. Avoiding distractions and remaining mentally engaged lead to an increase in self-regulation skills.

Another important component of guided play is that it must involve meaningful information, which is currently relevant to the child's life, connected to a familiar item or event, and the child must be able to transfer that information to other situations or events (Zosh et al., 2018). Meaningful learning leads to achievement of skills and gains in knowledge more effectively than rote learning or memorization. Therefore, the teacher's role is to guide/scaffold the child past the surface learning that can occur while they play to a deeper level of knowledge and understanding of the knowledge and skills. Practicing essential skills at a time when the child is actively engaged in play makes the knowledge meaningful and lends itself to a deeper understanding of the 'how' and 'why' the skill is necessary; it allows for the new skills and knowledge to be transferable to other similar situations; and helps to scaffold the child's learning to the next level.

Guided play can lead to growth in specific developmental domains, skills, and content knowledge. In guided play the child is clearly the leader of the play; the teacher only guides the play to a higher level by asking intentional questions or making purposeful statements. As described next, guided play allows educators to scaffold children's social skills without taking control of the play away from them.

For the purposes of this paper, guided play is considered as a means to help grow children's social skills. Social development was one area of development impacted for many young children due to pandemic-imposed isolation. In setting up guided play learning experiences, teachers purposefully arrange the environment with the intention of guiding children through various social situations allowing them to grow their skills. The child directs and is in control of all aspects of their play; however, the teacher initiates the play through the intentionally chosen materials in the environment or purposeful and intentional questions and/or statements. While

the adult targets specific goals for the child, sets up the materials, and works to maintain the child's focus in the play; it is critical for the child to be engaging in self-discovery by directing the play itself (Weisberg et al., 2013). It is important for the child to direct their own play; otherwise, the play will be co-opted by the adult and the benefits of the play will be lost. Weisberg et al. (2013) argue that the teacher may guide the play by commenting on discoveries the child makes; being an active participant in the child's play; posing open-ended higher-level thinking questions; and even exploring the materials in their own way alongside the child. The child, however, must be directing and in control of the play at all times. Another hallmark of guided play is that the child is an active team player seeking new discoveries, rather than a passive receiver of information (Weisberg et al., 2013). Weisberg et al. (2016) further exemplifies the need for the play to be directed by the child by referring to the teacher's role as keeping the learning goal as his or her focal point, as he or she acts as a mentor in the experience. Mentor is defined as "a trusted counselor or guide; a tutor" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); lending their role to not be directing or even guiding the play but following the child's lead in the act.

Zosh et al. (2018) cautions teachers to not interfere in the play and allow the child to continue to lead the play in which they are actively engaged, but to pose questions that may further the child's learning. It is necessary that the primary characteristics of play (i.e., the child's mind is active and engaged, the activity is meaningful to the child, and social interactivity with the environment not be disrupted (Zosh et al., 2018). Additionally, there is an emphasis on the importance of teachers not interfering with the joy or iteration that is fundamental to a child's play. The joy that a child may experience while playing, according to Zosh et al. (2018), acts to reinforce the learning gains for the child; while the learning reinforces the child's desire to seek out the joy in the play.

Children' Growth and Learning Post-Pandemic

The isolation caused by the Covid pandemic severely interrupted children's ability to interact with other individuals and thereby, undermined children's capacity to construct understandings of how to interact with one another. In other words, because of the social isolation during the pandemic, some children may lack prior opportunities to engage socially through play with peers of the same or mixed age, which negatively influenced their social development. The children remain deficient in the necessary skills to effectively engage in play with others. It is critical that educators complete focused observations on the young children to determine what, if any, social skills need additional support.

Vygotsky (1967) describes using *scaffolding* to intentionally build on a child's current skills to grow them. In this instance a teacher would be scaffolding (building) the child's social skills by providing a small amount of support, via modeling or asking a probing question, and then, stepping back to observe the social interactions between the children to determine if they are able to continue the play on their own or need additional support.

Verenikina (2008) outlines three steps for teachers to follow when scaffolding a child's learning: using dialogue to allow for a co-construction of knowledge; planning an appropriate activity; and the using of artifacts to be able to show the knowledge growth. By providing support to a child

who is playing with other children allows the child to build his or her social skills. When using guided play with preschool age children, the teacher uses questions or statements allowing the child to co-construct the knowledge by demonstrating and providing concrete examples of what the child is to say to peers. The child then practices by actually saying the words to a peer; as contrasted with merely agreeing with the teacher's summary. For some children, there may be times when the teacher may want to sit in close proximity to the children who are engaged in the social interaction and play event. It is imperative teachers do not interrupt the children's play with suggestions for possible scenarios or compel specific use of materials not selected by the child.

For instance, a teacher is observing Jamal and Lucas as they build with blocks, when Lucas grabs the long block out of Jamal's grasp. Jamal, understandably, gets upset with Lucas. The teacher may intervene saying, "*Jamal, say to Lucas, 'I am using that block.*" and then wait patiently for Jamal to say the words. Using their prior knowledge of Jamal and Lucas's social skills will help the teacher decide how close to be to Jamal and Lucas (i.e., at the edge of the carpet if they are highly skilled or next to them with a hand on both of their backs if they are initially building their social skills).

If the play resumes, the teacher may return to observing the social interaction. If, on the other hand, Lucas continues to pull on the block, it would be appropriate for the teacher to continue intervening by offering further conflict resolution skills. It would not be appropriate for the teacher to interrupt Lucas and Jamal's play suggesting to Lucas that he could create a structure alongside Jamal's. This action would take control away from Jamal and Lucas by altering the social interactions occurring in the play. During young children's social interactions (play), there remain specific and essential skills necessary for collaborative social play to be effective. In this instance, an observant teacher may be supportive but must strive to not co-opt the play.

Verenikina (2008) explains the amount of support provided depends on the child's current social skill level or *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). The less mature the child's skill level, the more scaffolding (i.e., support) a teacher provides to meet the child at his or her individual ZPD, resulting in the child building his or her skills with limited frustration. Additionally, it is important for teachers to be strategic in their interactions when scaffolding children's learning – especially during play. When preparing the environment for play, teachers may want to consider reflecting on the ZPD of individual children; going beyond what the child *should* be able to do based on knowledge of typical child development and consider each child's unique and true exhibited abilities. During the planning phase, teachers may want to postulate situations that may arise and create an intentional plan to scaffold individual children's learning through the interactions that may occur. It is crucial to be cognizant of the delicate balance between teacher's support to further a child's growth and learning and co-opting the play. Supporting a child, only to the level necessary for success, will enhance a child's social interaction skills; whereas co-opting the play will stunt growth. It is necessary to intentionally consider the least amount of support offered while allowing the child to grow and develop their own skills. When is some support too much? When is providing children with words most appropriate? What may it look like when a teacher is supporting a child's understanding of another's perspective? These questions and others are important for a teacher to intentionally consider when planning for children to interact socially with one another. It is the teacher's duty to protect the integrity and

importance of children's control of their play and determine when and where to balance scaffolding a children's social skills before and after play.

It is recommended that teachers intentionally and purposefully plan activities which include guided play opportunities. In guided play, the educator sits on the edge of the play, but does not direct nor assume a leadership role. The educator is using his or her vast knowledge of child development combined with specific knowledge of the individual child's developmental abilities, and comments on or asks questions about what the child is doing while playing. The teacher is guiding the child, within the parameters of his or her own play, to increase knowledge or abilities. In many ways, this support opportunity might be regarded as scaffolding, as described by Vygotsky (1967). The questions posed should guide the child to think about something in a deeper way or encourage the child to practice a new skill.

Scenarios

In the following three common play scenarios, social interactions in which a child lacks the necessary skills and needs support to successfully play with another child will be explored. The teacher will scaffold each child differently, based on a child's individual skill level, during the social interactions.

Block Play Scenario

Teacher Rippi is a veteran teacher in a preschool classroom. She is watching Jason build a barn that he recently observed while visiting the petting area of the local zoo. Teacher Rippi listens to Jason as he uses self-talk to guide the construction of the barn from his memory. Teacher Rippi notices Olivia is watching Jason build and listening to his self-talk. Suddenly, Olivia runs over and plops herself down, right next to Jason; unintentionally knocking Jason's barn wall over with a crash. Jason scrunches up his face, draws in a deep breath, opens his mouth, and screams, "get out of here" at Olivia. Olivia looks sad.

Teacher Rippi could use her teacher voice to sternly tell Jason to use an inside voice; she could walk over, pick Olivia up, carrying her over to sit down in the calm down area and tell her to think about why she knocked over Jason's barn; or use the incident as a teachable moment to further Jason and Olivia's social skills by scaffolding their learning and teaching them play skills with intentionality. Teacher Rippi knows neither Jason nor Olivia possesses much experience in a group care setting. She also reflects on how Olivia has been really trying to play cooperatively with other children and yet, several of these situations resulted in frustration and tears. Jason has been somewhat more successful in his attempts to socially interact with others, although he still prefers solitary play. Based on this knowledge of the children, Teacher Rippi decides this could be an opportunity to build both Jason and Olivia's skills. This might look like:

Rippi: *Oh, dear, it looks like the barn got knocked down and it sounds like this caused feelings of anger* (intentionally not placing blame on either child).

Jason: *Yeah, Olivia ran over and she… she kicked down my barn. On purpose.*

Olivia: *I didn't mean to do that. It was an accident.*

Rippi: *Olivia, can you tell me why you stood up from your play over there and sat down over here?*

Olivia: *I liked the barn.*

Rippi: *Hmmm, are you saying that you liked the barn Jason was building and you wanted to help?*

Olivia: *mm-hmm*

Rippi: *It is a nice-looking barn and Jason looked like he was having fun building it.*

Jason: *I was, and then she kicked it down and wrecked it.*

Rippi: *I did not see Olivia's feet kick it or her hands hit it. I saw the barn fall when Olivia sat down. Why do you think Olivia sat down so close to you and your barn?*

Jason: *So, she could knock it down!*

Olivia: *No!*

Rippi: *Olivia, you liked the barn and sat down really close to Jason and the barn. Did you want to help him build the barn?*

Olivia: *yeah*

Rippi: *Ok, so Jason, Olivia wanted to help build the barn. If she had asked you if she could help before she sat down, what would you have said?*

Jason: *I would have said "sure". I like to play.*

Rippi: *Let's do a re-do and see if this can turn out differently. Olivia, I want you to go and sit over there where you were playing. Jason, I want you to sit here and build with your blocks.*

Give time for the children to get into their places.

Rippi: *Now, Olivia, stand up just like you did before and quickly walk over here, but this time, where do you think there is a better spot to sit?* Allow Olivia to approximate where to sit. *Now that you have a safe spot, say, 'Jason, can I build with you?'*

Olivia (looking at Jason): *Jason, can I build with you?*

Jason looks at Teacher Rippi.

Rippi: *Jason, Olivia is asking to build with you. Is that ok?*

Jason looks at Teacher Rippi and then at Olivia.

Jason: *Sure, you can help me.*

Olivia sits down, carefully, beside Jason, and they begin the repairs on the barn. After they have been building for about five minutes, Teacher Rippi, who is sitting beside them this whole time, but not interrupting their interactions or play, says *"You are working so hard to build that barn."* Then, Teacher Rippi moves away from Jason and Olivia allowing them to script the rest of their interactions to continue their play. She continues to observe from a distance to be available if they need additional support.

Based on Teacher Rippi's knowledge about Jason and Olivia's desire to play cooperatively and their lack of prior collaborative experience, Teacher Rippi strategically planned to be near them while they played, but only as an observer, in the event they needed additional support. Teacher Rippi scaffolded their social skills during play by providing each child specific guidance, the appropriate words to say, and staying close to them as they engaged in the social interactions. Due to Jason and Olivia's lack of experience in social play interactions, Teacher Rippi needed to intervene; however, she was careful to not make suggestions about the play, only offer the needed level of support and she withdrew as soon as possible to allow the play to continue to unfold.

This scenario was not an isolated incident. Every day the children in this classroom saw and heard Teacher Rippi scaffolding the social learning of children in their classroom in the dress up area, with the manipulatives, while they created works of art, outside, at mealtime, and throughout their day-to-day experiences. Teacher Rippi knew it would take much practice for the children to successfully ask one another before barging in on the play; therefore, she planned several activities throughout the classroom that provided children a natural opportunity to practice socially interacting with one another.

Mud Kitchen Scenario

Teacher Michael intentionally creates play experiences that encourage the children in the classroom to play with one another. He documents their growth in social and emotional development. Lately, he notes some children need more practice.

Teacher Michael is outside with a group of preschool-age children. Samara is pretending to make mud pie soup in the outdoor kitchen area. Teacher Michael, is digging in the large mud planter beside three other children. Out of the corner of his eye, Teacher Michael notices Jamie running towards the mud kitchen area. Teacher Michael watches and is ready to offer support to Samara or Jamie, if necessary. Jamie's social skills for cooperative play have greatly improved; however, Teacher Michael knows that Jamie still struggles and becomes frustrated easily and quickly. Teacher Michael sees Jamie run up to Samara and stop just a few feet away from her. Jamie stands and looks at Samara and at the mud pie soup on the counter. Jamie smiles at Samara and says "*hi*", Samara is intently focused on writing 'MOM' with dry sand on top of the mud pie

soup and does not hear Jamie. Teacher Michael starts to walk over to offer support just as Jamie reaches out one hand and taps the edge of the mud pie soup, causing it to fall to the ground; splattering mud all over the ground and Samara's legs.

Samara, looking Jamie right in the eye: *Hey, knock it off. I worked hard on that.*

Jamie: *Yeah, well, you were ignoring me.*

Samara: *No, I wasn't. I was making mud pie soup for my mom.*

Teacher Michael arrives just as Jamie was lifting her hands up and pushing them toward Samara.

Teacher Michael: *Whoa, what's going on here?*

Samara, pointing to the mud pie soup all over the ground and her legs: *Jamie hit my mud pie soup and it fell on the ground and broke all over.*

Teacher Michael, looking at Jamie: *Tell me about this*.

Jamie: *I wanted to help make it pretty and it, well, it just sort of fell down. I didn't mean it. Really!*

Michael: *Are you saying you wanted to play with Samara?* Jamie nods. *Did you ask Samara if you could play?*

Jamie looks down and quietly says: *I said "hi" to her.*

Michael: *Hmmm, Samara did you know that when Jamie said "hi" she was asking to play with you?*

Samara: *No, I didn't even hear her.*

Teacher Michael: *Jamie, Samara says she didn't know that when you said "hi" it meant you wanted to play. We have been practicing how to ask someone to play. If you were to walk over here again, what would you say differently?*

Jamie: *Samara, could I help you make the mud pie soup pretty for your mom?*

Teacher Michael: *Samara, what would you have said?*

Samara: *Yeah, you can help make one for my mom and we will make one for your auntie.*

Teacher Michael steps back and allows Samara and Jamie to continue to engage socially with one another.

In this instance, the teacher scaffolded Jamie's social skills, offering a minimal amount of support. Due to the prior observations the teacher knew to watch and be prepared to intervene. Teacher Michael waited to see if Jamie was able to enter the play on his own, but when it was clear they would not be successful, the teacher intervened with minimal support. Notice, the teacher did not directly comment on the play or either child's actions, so as not to disrupt or change the play. Teacher Michael did support Jamie, which led Jamie to successfully enter the play and continue to enhance her own social development.

Game Area Scenario

For months, Teacher Janna intentionally guides the social aspects of the children's cooperative play efforts and frames ways to support their ability to form friendships. It is late in the day and the class has just finished hearing a story. Teacher Janna tells the children they can choose to play a game, put together a puzzle, or read a book until they go home. Henry has enjoyed the many play scenarios involving puppets practicing their play skills with one another. Last night Henry's grandparents arrived from France and he was up past his bedtime. When playing today, he become\easily frustrated and struggles to engage socially with friends. Henry picks up his favorite game and walks up to Maya. Henry drops the game on the table beside Maya. Just then Teacher Janna caught Henry's attention and smiled at him.

Henry draws in a deep breath and says: *Hey, Maya, wanna play the game with me?*

Maya: *Yeah, this is your favorite game and I love it, too.*

Teacher Janna smiled and patted Henry on the back as she walked behind him. After school, when Henry is picked up, Teacher Janna makes a point of saying that even though he had had a tough day, he remembered how to ask someone to play and together Henry and a friend enjoyed a game. Later that day, the teacher made a note about how Henry successfully entered a social encounter all on his own.

Concluding Thoughts

Children deserve a teacher who understands how to guide them socially to be successful players. Learning how to effectively engage in social interaction to enter play with others and then, to sustain the play allows children opportunities to practice behaviors, develop skills, and negotiate a range of emotions and situations. Today, more than ever, our young children need teachers who are willing to take the time to support their learning social skills necessary to successfully interact with one another. The key is for teachers to balance the effort of supporting children through various social interactions to grow their skills as needed, while being cognizant of not interfering with the play itself. It is crucial for teachers to remember play belongs to the child. Teachers may scaffold learning through support, but they must know and understand the unique social development needs of each individual child and only offer the support needed. Children learn so much through their play interactions; they do not need or want teachers to control their play, only help them gain the necessary social skills to play successfully and then allow the learning to occur.

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Adverse Childhood Experiences of Elementary School Students Exacerbated by Covid-19: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 44% of elementary-aged students reported experiencing adverse childhood experiences, while 13% reported experiencing three or more (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents faced many hardships such as economic and health disparities. This resulted in an influx of reported and presumably unreported adverse childhood experiences. The most reported experience included child neglect and psychological maltreatment (Sonu et al., 2021). While not seen as popular in the media and literature, the impact of psychological maltreatment is more severe than any other form of abuse (Hines, 2020). This paper will discuss the current conceptual findings, legal definitions,

theoretical underpinnings, policy and practice implications as it relates to child neglect and psychological maltreatment of elementary-aged children.

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACES) are defined as any traumatic event that occurs to a child before the age of 18 (Gilgoff, 2020). More specifically, this encompasses any event ranging in severity that disrupts the child's physical, emotional, mental, or psychological development (Kalmakis and Chandler, 2014). Adverse childhood experiences may include but are not limited to parental divorce or separation, exposure to violence and domestic abuse in the child's place of residence, or exposure to alcohol and drug abuse. During the pandemic, there was a reported 54% increase in child neglect and psychological maltreatment of elementary-aged children compared to other adverse childhood experiences discussed (Rapp et al., 2021).

Child neglect is legally recognized as "parental failure to meet a child's basic needs" (Hines, 2020). Child neglect can be displayed in many different facets of the child's life including but not limited to physical, psychological, medical, mental health, and educational neglect. While child neglect has a stand-alone definition that is legally recognized, psychological maltreatment does not (Baker et al., 2021). Psychological maltreatment lacks a clear and concise definition due to diverse meanings and understandings held across state lines. Additionally, it is not uncommon for people to only pay attention to immediate visualized consequences such as wounds from physical abuse. However, due to the short and long-term impact of child psychological maltreatment in today's society, states are now just beginning to concentrate on a focused definition. For now, the literature recognizes child psychological maltreatment as the following: "repeated pattern or extreme incident of caretaker behavior that thwarts the child's basic psychological needs and convey a child is worthless, defective, damaged goods, unloved, unwanted, endangered, primarily useful in meeting another's needs, and/or expendable (Bernet, 2017).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Attachment theory is the theoretical underpinning that provides an understanding of adverse childhood experiences (Grady et al., 2017). Bowlby (1953) outlined that how parents provide, support, and care for their children largely depicts their attachment style and impacts their ability to sustain and withhold both friendships and romantic relationships later in life. The four attachment styles recognized are secure, anxious ambivalent, disorganized and avoidant (Bowlby, 1988).

Attachment style is largely developed from infancy through the first year of life. Secure attachment style is the healthiest of the four known attachment styles, leading to healthy relationships long-term; both romantic and platonic (Levy et al., 2011). The child is aware that he/she is loved, secured, and supported appropriately and healthily. Anxious ambivalent attachment style insinuates an unhealthy relationship established with parents where the parents were not very attentive to the child and potentially demonstrated neglectful behaviors (Meyer et al., 2001). Neglectful behaviors during childhood may lead to lower self-esteem, decreased sense of self-worth, contributing to complexities in romantic relationships later on in life such as

validation seeking behavior. Disorganized attachment style is a result of parents not being consistent in the child's life whether it's consistent in discipline, love, security, and support (Baer & Martinez, 2006). This could result in the child developing fear that their partner or friend may leave the relationship. Lastly, avoidant attachment is considered the least healthiest form of attachment. Avoidant attachment occurs when parents simply provide the bare minimum for their children such as housing and food; however, the parents ultimately avoid their children after basic needs are met. This form of attachment style leads to relationship misunderstanding that can result in a lack of value in maintaining significant relationships. "Attachment styles provide the cognitive schemas, or working models, through which individuals perceive and relate to their worlds" (Shorey & Snyder, 2006). It is critical to understand that attachment style directly reflects and relates to the psychological state of functioning both in short term and long term.

Predictors of Child Neglect

Historically, the predictors of child neglect have been difficult to conceptualize. To establish a foundation for understanding, an ecological approach to exploring the macro, meso and microlevels of child neglect was introduced. Uri Bronfenbrenner (Ryan, 2001) introduced an ecological (now referred to as bioecological) systems approach which highlights various systems that contribute to a child's development. This theory emphasized the complex layers that are involved with a child's development to including but not limited to: family, religion, school, community, culture, and more (Ryan, 2001). The layers are classified into systems that influence the child, for example the biological makeup of a child is in the microsystem and community is a part of the larger exosystem. Economic insecurity and poverty are the largest contributors of child neglect (Hines, 2020). When parents are struggling financially to survive, a child can become a secondary or even third focus depending on the circumstance. From a macro level, substance abuse is another large contributing factor in child neglect (Ondersma, 2002).

A meso level assessment of the child neglect problem gleans light on the predictors of child neglect to include lack of social engagement and positive interaction of social groups. Additional challenges from a meso level include the inability for children to have positive outlets which lead to increased exposure to community violence and dangerous behavior. On the other hand, microlevel assessment predictors explores the child themselves. For example, if the child is diagnosed with a mental, intellectual, or physical health disorder, unfortunately they are more prone to experiencing child neglect (Cruden, 2019). Given these levels, it is essential to understand that when considering child neglect, key predictors might include poverty, lack of social interaction, substance abuse, and physical, mental, and intellectual diagnoses.

Predictors of Child Psychological Maltreatment

Child psychological maltreatment is similar to child neglect in that it encompasses a wide range of emotional, physical, and mental maltreatment. From a macro lens, in comparison to child neglect, a lack of education and low socioeconomic status also are major predictors of child psychological maltreatment (Arslan et al., 2022). From an exo lens, family isolation and lack of a familial support system largely impact the mental development of a child (Baker et al., 2019).

Additionally, from a micro lens a child experiencing child psychological maltreatment is likely to experience a high level of irritability/fussy behavior (Hines, 2020).

Consequences

Child neglect and psychological maltreatment provide significant consequences to the overall well-being of children. Specifically, two pivotal studies were analyzed to conclusively highlight these impacts. First, Hecker et al., (2019) conducted a study in Tanzania on primary school students who suffered consequences from child maltreatment. The conceptual findings concluded that the association between neglect and internalizing problems showed a large and significant effect (Hecker et al., 2019). The study also affirmed previous study findings that children suffering from consequences of child neglect have an increased risk of experiencing "depressive systems, peer problems, and inferior emotional regulation skills" (Hecker et al., 2019).

Next, Mwakanyamale and Ndomondo (2019) conducted a study on students in both Tanzania and China to assess the relationship between psychological maltreatment and stress on their self-esteem. The study concluded that there is a significant effect and confirmed that psychological maltreatment not only impacts students in the moment but has an everlasting impact on the overall functioning and well-being of primary school-aged students. As they navigate the most important developmental stages of their lives, it is imperative for children to receive counseling services to excel socio-emotionally and academically.

Impact of Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly contributed to the increase in both unreported and reported child neglect and psychological maltreatment cases. Hines (2020) highlighted income loss and unemployment as contributing factors to both child neglect and psychological maltreatment. When a parent is frustrated financially and is not meeting their basic Tier 1 needs of Maslow's hierarchy, sometimes they will unintentionally or intentionally let their emotions out onto their children. The COVID-19 pandemic has truly changed the landscape of the workforce. Millions of people worldwide lost their jobs and subsequently millions were forced to work remotely and/or experienced reduced hours/income. This type of significant and sudden shift impacts the family dynamic, specifically during COVID-19 when children were forced to remain home and complete school virtually.

Berube et al., (2020) assessed the fears associated with the COVID-19 transition. Parents immediately felt a sense of isolation and were afraid for their children to be in the house with a lack of social engagement, connectedness, loss of learning, and other consequences as a result. In addition to their fear for their children, parents fear having to navigate parenting and the social reaction to the pandemic. Parents feared raising their voice, scolding or yelling at their child, and having less patience" (Berube et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic persists, and parents have expressed significant exhaustion and parental burnout due to being the sole caretakers and providers for their children, which has the potential to lead to child neglect and psychological maltreatment.

Lawson et al., (2020) conducted two regressional analyses to assess the relationship between job loss and increased psychological maltreatment for children. The results supported the hypothesis noting that parents who dealt with strife from sudden job and income loss were more likely to physically abuse or psychologically maltreat their children. In opposition, families with positive reframing coping skills were more prone to decrease this type of treatment. It is now more imperative than ever to focus on psychoeducation surrounding topics such as parental burnout during this time.

Ray et al., (2020) conducted a correlational study assessing the consequential effect of the increase in ACES experienced by children during COVID-19. N=58 students ranging in ages 5-12 were recruited from a local elementary school to take a questionnaire regarding their social/emotional health. The findings revealed that students who reported experiencing one or more adverse childhood experiences were more likely to have a decrease in social/emotional health and an increase in behavior problems.

Current Trends in Research

Self-reported cases of child neglect and psychological maltreatment decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elementary-aged students were secluded in the house with no external outlet to share any traumatic events experienced in the home. As a result, elementary-aged students returned to the school building with a myriad of mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and more (Doom et al., 2021).

It has been documented that Covid-19 had a significant impact on child neglect and psychological maltreatment; however, research currently points to a decrease in referrals, largely due to children not having educational personnel involved in their home life and an inability to report. Bullinger et al., (2021) highlights the drastic shift that parents were challenged with since March 2020. This implies that if child physical abuse increased as much as many child advocates warned, then it is going largely undetected by child protective services (Bullinger et al., 2021). This trend in research leads to future policy implications regarding how to navigate child abuse and neglect in the case of a future pandemic or world events that forces children to be home.

Policy Implications

Several policy implications could help target child abuse/neglect victims and families that display this behavior. However, instead of directing the attention towards families, it is salient to pay attention to bigger picture items such as structure, infrastructure, and systemic policy that have a trickle-down effect on how parents operate within their household. Economically insecure children experience three to nine times more maltreatment than economically secure children (Conrad-Hiebner & Byram, 2020). If unemployment, income loss, and low socioeconomic status are the leading predictors of both child neglect and psychological maltreatment, perhaps society should look at what is hindering families from achieving quality education to secure sufficient employment. Infrastructure policies should be analyzed to put issues such as redlining in perspective, housing, and separation of quality education for those who are less fortunate. Ultimately, a top-down approach to improving outcomes that are implications for child neglect and abuse are essential to curtailing the problem.

Practice Implications

Two paramount implications for improving the problem include psychoeducation and trauma informed care. Psychoeducation surrounding the topic of child neglect and psychological maltreatment will be largely beneficial for targeted groups such as first-time parents. First-time parents are without a doubt at higher risk for this behavior due to their overall lack of knowledge. If counselors want to take effort in prevention strategies, the first step would be to provide the appropriate education to those who are unaware such as first-time parents ages ranging from 20-28. Another practice implication would be the use of trauma-informed-care with multicultural considerations when working with children who are victims of neglect and psychological maltreatment. This requires all staff of clinical practices to be trained as well as school stakeholders in the principles of trauma informed care. More so, school counselors and mental health clinicians must consider cultural backgrounds when working with client/student victims to provide the best suitable interventions and treatment plans.

Recommendations

Many studies focused on the impact of COVID-19 to child neglect and psychological maltreatment were conducted in the beginning of the pandemic. It is recommended that future studies examine how statistics surrounding child victims have either decreased or increased and measure parental burnout (Griffith, 2020). Additionally, it is imperative for future research to explore the implications of COVID-19 as it relates to child psychological maltreatment and neglect and how other contextual factors such as exposure to substance abuse, income loss or social isolation increase the likelihood of maltreatment for elementary-aged children. Lastly, salient to the impact of adverse childhood experiences, it is important to examine the consequences of this influx on the long-term mental health of primary school-aged children (Kathirvel, 2020).

Conclusion

Child neglect and psychological maltreatment are two leading forces of child abuse; but tend to be the least reported. From the attachment style theoretical framework, these subjects are large predictors of how an elementary-aged child will be able to form substantial and significant relationships as they matriculate into and throughout adulthood. Socio-economic status, mental health disorders, and family history of abuse/neglect are all significant predictors of child neglect and psychological maltreatment. There are several policy and practice implications stemming from the current COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of referrals reported. Future research recommendations should focus on COVID-19 policy implications.

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STEAM
STEAM Education and the Whole Child: Examining Policy and Barriers

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Abstract

Whole Child education nurtures five tenets of the child to ensure they are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged during their time at school. STEAM programs coincide with the Whole Child approach as it allows them to expand their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, build their social-emotional needs, and be prepared for the 21st century workforce. STEAM programs are designed to emphasize inquiry and an interdisciplinary approach that reflects the tenets of the Whole Child paradigm. Much of the research that has been done in STEAM and Whole Child education pushes for further implementation of high-quality programs in schools so students can learn in a way that best fits their needs. However, there are many barriers and funding issues that preclude schools from the full implementation of high-quality, Whole Child STEAM programs that foster equity and accessibility especially for marginalized populations. These barriers and suggestions for overcoming them are discussed through a policy lens so curriculum can be flexible and more interdisciplinary and so that students have multiple opportunities to be nurtured in their creativity.

Keywords: STEAM, STEM, play, inquiry, policy, whole child

Introduction

STEAM programs have taken off in the past few years and have gained popularity due to the cross-curricular nature and hands-on experiences provided to students. In return, students are learning 21st century skills that are equipping and preparing them for the future, which would include increased engagement and employment in STEM fields. Students' passions and interests

can be fostered when they are meaningfully engaged in STEAM education, and elements of the Whole Child are nurtured if the implementation of STEAM instruction is of high-quality. Numerous benefits arise when students can actively explore their own interests rather than passively receiving content that is required through a narrow, isolated, discrete and non-contextualized curriculum. Skills include problem solving, empathy, critical thinking, persistence, and confidence. Teachers can become a facilitator and guide students in their learning. When these traits are woven together with content areas and learning is situated "within a context that is authentic to student questions" (Schumacher, 1995, p. 76), students will build on their competencies and skills.

The purpose of this work is to explore Whole Child STEAM programs through a policy lens and to expose any barriers that prevent STEAM education from being used to its fullest extent in schools. Furthermore, practical strategies are provided to promote high-quality STEAM education that can be implemented with confidence due to the numerous benefits it provides to children. Policymakers and educators see the importance of STEAM education, especially as it relates to elements of the Whole Child, but state and federal funding barriers often preclude schools from adopting these types of programs. Substantial evidence from the literature supports the many, and varied benefits that children develop through meaningful STEAM engagement, but the path to accessibility and training teachers is paramount so all children regardless of socio-economic status can have the opportunity to participate in an inquiry-based environment.

Relevant Background and Literature

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) evolved from the STEM framework which has similar benefits and continues to increase in its usage across the United States. STEAM education was created so students could meet the needs of a 21st century economy and skillset after graduation (STE(A)M Truck, 2020). Despite quality STEAM program development, the traditional education system is lagging and has not evolved for the better over many decades even with educators and policymakers advocating for reform efforts to better serve students. This is especially true for students of color who have been historically underrepresented in STEAM fields and have not had the same access as their white counterparts in schools across the country.

The research literature clearly provides evidence for the importance of STEAM education and its various benefits. When students are exposed to STEAM from an early age, they are more likely to enter a STEAM field during college (STE(A)M Truck, 2020). STEAM allows for integration "in multiple disciplines in ways that preserve their individual integrity" (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 2). Through an interdisciplinary approach, teachers can allow students to explore and inquire while still meeting learning goals and state standards. In a study where literacy and math were integrated, the results showed a positive impact on cognitive development with an increase in skills in both subject areas (The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM, 2022). Students can reflect meaningfully on collaborating with their peers and the work produced which simultaneously requires them to reflect "through new experiences and perspectives" (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 2).

Children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills increase dramatically through meaningful, integrated STEAM programs. Students are afforded the opportunities to be able to see different viewpoints, think divergently, and relate their learning to real-world contexts. In other words, STEAM programs improve students' abilities to innovate, think and operate independently, and connect their knowledge through daily activities (Widya, 2019, p. 1). STEAM programs also foster problem-solving when students utilize the scientific or engineering design process. Furthermore, students use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to prioritize tasks and demonstrate understanding through various means. Creativity also increases and knowledge is gained through real-world situations when students apply problem-solving skills when there are multiple solutions. STEAM education also expands on skills students already have such as social-emotional learning (SEL). Students collaborate and are able to build empathy, motivation, engagement, perseverance, and regulate emotions. This all helps students adjust their emotions in relation to others' actions and feelings (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 2) which are needed for 21st century workplaces.

All these STEAM skills are built through high-quality instruction and planning that is authentic and relevant to students. Students are the ones who are identifying the problems that will "occur at the natural intersections between the arts and STEM fields" (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 2). Through this, the National Art Education Association (2022) asserts in their position statement that "STEAM education encourages creativity and innovation and problem-solving" (2022). The STEAM framework was based on the premise of preparing children for the job market and to close the gender gap even between ethnic groups. It is apparent that STEAM education benefits the child for years to come, but the paucity of implementation in schools due to barriers and funding demonstrates that these benefits to the Whole Child are severely lacking.

STEAM History

STEM education was introduced to place a greater emphasis on math and science education in the United States in the 1980s (Breiner et al., 2012, p. 4). After *A Nation at Risk* was released, the American Association for the Advancement of Science intended to help students become more literate in math, science, and technology. More programs proceeded, but in 2001 the National Science Foundation (NSF) created SMET which eventually changed names to STEM. The nation adopted this program at various levels as it became a "focus for educational reform and renewed global competitiveness for the United States" (Breiner et al., 2012, p. 4). The focus of STEM was to draw attention to the respective fields and to retain people working in those fields to continue research and innovation for the 21st century. STEM jobs will continue to play a crucial role in helping the economy grow and be competitive with other industries in the future (STE(A)M Truck, 2020).

When *Race to the Top* was introduced in 2011, more federal funds were invested into STEM education as the government was increasing accountability efforts for schools to invest in helping students achieve 21st century skills. Four years later in 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama so educators could "create hands-on learning experiences with a focus on higher-order thinking skills" (Chandler, 2018, p. 21). This new direction was to establish a well-rounded educational experience for students. STEAM began earlier in 2006 as the brainchild of Georgette Yakman (Flocchini, 2022), but it began

increasing in popularity through the mid 2000s and leading up to the passing of ESSA. An arts integration in the program allows educators to help students be creative and see connections across discipline areas through hands-on experiences. The arts can include music, dance, drama, and visual art. Some would also argue that the arts include the humanities as well, which could provide real-world contexts for STEM explorations. Arts education enhances a child's learning and not only makes learning more enjoyable, but their engagement is higher.

STEAM education is implemented through an interdisciplinary approach so that subjects are no longer taught in isolation and connections can be made. High quality programs can improve educational outcomes for students and prepare them for their future in a workplace that requires 21st century skills (STE(A)M Truck, 2020). Students with STEAM experience will have better preparedness once they graduate high school and will have many opportunities to apply their knowledge in higher education and through their career.

STEAM Benefits on the Whole Child

STEAM education has numerous benefits on Whole Child education; however, the current educational system doesn't recognize nor prioritize the importance these connections have on child development. Whole Child education places a child's developmental needs at the forefront so that "every child reaches their fullest potential" (Learning Policy Institute, 2022) in and outside of school by deepening their educational experiences. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that when students are engaged in STEAM education, it is the job of the educator to ensure that they "design thinking as a means for individual learning, social responsibility, and creative problem solving" (Rolling, 2016, p. 4) so that students can utilize their critical thinking and problem-solving skills while taking initiative in their learning when engaged with an engineering design process.

The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 2022) has five tenets that reflect the Whole Child approach to promote development in all children, including: healthiness, safety, engagement, support, and ensuring that children are challenged. Each of these tenets will be analyzed in how it best supports STEAM education in the Whole Child.

Healthy

ASCD (2022) defines *healthy* as students going to school each day healthy and learning how to live healthy lifestyles. At first glance, it may appear that STEAM education does not tie directly to this tenet. However, both physical and mental health can be interwoven with the STEAM framework. Perhaps students could undertake scientific investigations into health-related issues that directly benefit them. Furthermore, children need social-emotional support and opportunities for healthy development. Providing STEAM education in a Whole Child approach in conjunction with social-emotional learning (SEL) has significant value for students. Since STEAM utilizes an active approach, teachers can aid students by building SEL into their STEAM experiences. These may include collaboration, reworking problem-solving approaches, and managing processes (Larmand, 2022). Additionally, teachers can "promote students developing character traits" as students are developing empathy and building relationships with peers (Larmand, 2022) while learning how to be effective communicators.

STEAM education also links to promoting a growth mindset in children, which is "based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts" (Dweck, 2021). This approach is also taught to children as "The Power of YET!" which teaches children that "you're on a learning curve" (Dweck, 2021). By adding the word 'yet,' it gives children more confidence and shows them how to persevere through difficult tasks while simultaneously shifting their mindset. When children participate in STEAM, they are pushed outside of their comfort zone and will become resilient when positive praise is used. Children are also taught soft skills such as the importance of failure in the process of learning and how to try again, which can cause a shift in their mindset and abilities. Self-confidence is another important trait that can be taught through STEAM education and is applicable in any curricular environment while setting students up for success. The experiences children are given in STEAM build upon and enhance their SEL while simultaneously caring for their mental health.

Safe

ASCD (2022) explains *safe* as students who are physically and emotionally ready to learn in a safe environment. Most of the characteristics of this tenet from the Whole Child approach also apply to the tenet of being healthy. In a STEAM classroom, it is imperative that children feel safe not only physically, but also emotionally and mentally. STEAM is designed in a way that children will encounter mistakes and make errors that require them to try again. Even the "perfect" child will fear failure, but it is the job of the teacher to create a space for children to practice trial and error; otherwise, they may "not take the academic risks necessary for lifelong learning" (Aglio et al., 2019). A STEAM classroom allows for students to experience failure as a part of the learning process, but also allows them to take risks in a safe environment. Furthermore, STEAM programs can and should adjust for the child's individual learning needs based on what the child is experiencing in an inquiry-based environment.

STEAM allows different groups of students to be able to work together across various skill levels which brings out their individual strengths and "challeng[es] them in a non-threatening environment to meet higher levels of critical thinking" (Overby, 2011, p. 109). This helps students feel safe to make mistakes and trust their peers in the inquiry process if they are collaborating in a group. When student collaboration takes place, it "emphasizes students' self-governance of their interactions" and helps "articulate their ideas and engage in a disciplined social process of inquiry" (Pederson & Liu, 2003, p. 59), which aligns with the Whole Child and constructivist approaches to education. Lastly, as teachers build relationships with students, they are also building trust which will allow students to feel more comfortable talking to their teacher about anything. By providing a safe and welcoming learning environment that is student-centered, students will thrive in their learning.

Engaged

ASCD (2022) defines the third tenant, *engaged*, as actively learning, and connecting that learning to the school and the greater community. "Traditional" educational systems have operated by forcing students to passively receive information using worksheets, lectures, and assessments which correspond with lower engagement. According to Bloom's taxonomy, this

would be considered a lower level of thinking that requires students to regurgitate their often-memorized knowledge. Conversely, STEAM education allows for authentic engagement as students can develop their own perspectives and views while being supported in them (The Institute for Arts, 2022).

To create a learner-centered, engaging learning environment, teachers need to create a curriculum that is integrated across subject areas and disciplines. However, this curriculum needs to be thoughtfully constructed while utilizing student questions and interests. It must also be relevant to today's world. The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM (2022) suggests that when students are engaged in STEAM learning in an authentic manner, "students must be allotted the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways," which will help them utilize higher order thinking skills on Bloom's taxonomy as well. Students can be more engaged in STEAM programs through a variety of products or materials, allowing diverse perspectives, role-playing, and creating games or competitions (The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM, 2022). When students have autonomy over their learning and can follow their interests, not only are they more engaged, but they are also asked to "think and learn on their own" while also "link[ing]… content with real life" (Hong, 2017, p. 96).

STEAM education also expands students' views to encompass current problems and may encourage them to take action to find a resolution. This in turn, "invites students to seek deeper learning by connecting students and their lives to local communities and communities around the world through educational experiences in the sciences and arts" (Chandler, 2018, p. 24). This will help children become problem solvers and critical thinkers at an early age while providing them with a drive to learn, and it will help them create relationships with community members.

Supported

The fifth tenant of ASCD (2022) acts to ensure children feel *supported* and can access their own learning through adults who are caring and qualified. This tenant includes crossover with other tenants including a child feeling safe and engaged in their learning.

Since STEAM education is inquiry-based and child-centered, it is imperative the child feels supported in their learning through the personalized curriculum that is implemented by teachers. For this to be successful, STEAM education must move "the teacher from the center of learning to the role of facilitator" (Chandler, 2018, p. 25). When the learning environment is student-centered, the teacher can deepen student knowledge through inquiry solely from the child's interests and experiences. The teacher can then guide the student in exploring the current topic(s) further and finding similar ones as well. Whether STEAM education takes place through free play or during a more structured time, it promotes and builds social-emotional learning skills. During free play time, a child will make discoveries that will prompt further investigations and/or find relationships between topics (Teacher Time, 2022).

However, it is essential that teachers help students understand what they are learning by scaffolding content. By doing so, a child will feel safe to make mistakes in their learning but also realize the teacher is there to help guide them. When teachers prompt children in their learning and ask questions, model, or give examples, they are helping children "develop their own

understanding of the world," and are helping "walk [them] through increasingly complex ways of thinking" (Teacher Time, 2022). Teachers help children reinforce previously held knowledge and correct any misconceptions they may have which lets students learn more than they would on their own. Scaffolding can also include individualizing instruction, materials, defining vocabulary, or reducing the number of steps in a task so all children can participate at their level.

Challenged

The last tenant of ASCD (2022) is for a child to be *challenged* academically so they are prepared for a future career and are also able to apply critical thinking skills. STEAM education provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of a topic in various ways rather than sitting down for a traditional paper and pencil assessment. Some of these assessments include observations, projects, presentations, reflections and more. Assessments such as these "enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in ways that are authentic, meaningful, and appropriately challenging" (Chandler, 2018, p. 26). Again, students will feel challenged as they make connections to solve real world problems when they are engaged and feel supported in their learning.

Not only are students challenged in demonstrating their knowledge, but STEAM education also prepares students for 21st century skills. STEAM education helps children build their skills in technology and media, literacy, productivity, flexibility, social skills, and communication (National Inventors, 2022). Skills such as these "are transferable to other real-life contexts, such as post-secondary education and the workforce" (Bertrand and Namukasa, 2020, pg. 46). Students can take the skills they learned in one grade level and apply it to the next grade or in another context. STEAM also prepares students for careers in science, technology, engineering, arts, or math. Teachers must recognize the importance and benefits that STEAM education provides. These benefits would include students' learned skills that can be applied to real-life situations since "learning is best conceived as a process" (Bertrand and Namukasa, 2020, p. 54).

Policy Barriers & Practical Solutions to STEAM

STEAM education aligns with the Whole Child approach as it provides students with numerous benefits and skills. Policymakers have pushed for STEAM to be implemented in education due to its importance. However, schools must overcome challenges to implementing high quality STEAM programs including a lack of funding and prohibitive local and state policies. Three major barriers to incorporating STEAM education and to making learning more student-centered are described below.

Funding STEAM Programs

STEAM programs are now funded through the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. The language in this law was reworded to include the arts and music and not just the core subject areas. This ensures funding is "used to support educational opportunities through a variety of subjects" (The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM, 2022). Funding for art and music education comes under Title I, II, and IV as well as grants. The bill also includes programs such as the Assistance for Arts Education which provides funding for disadvantaged students as well

as professional development and training for teachers. States have also provided funding for STEAM programs by either designating this in their per pupil formula or funding a certain number of positions. States have also set up grant programs to be used toward STEAM implementation. Other organizations also have grant programs available for schools and educators to apply for funding.

Despite these main funding sources, there still is not enough to go around and fully support STEAM education. Policymakers and stakeholders need to urge the states to clarify and increase funding pathways regarding the use of funds and how they can be used for STEAM activities (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 9). This can help Title I schools expand educational opportunities for disadvantaged students and allow these students to have access to the effectiveness of STEAM programs (Success story, 2017).

Curriculum and Time Restraints

Many schools are bound to teach to the state standards as well as the curriculum that is adopted by the district. Little to no flexibility is given and teachers often find themselves teaching to a scripted curriculum and teaching to the tests. States and districts may not be fully implementing STEAM education due to the lack of clarity on how the national arts, science, and math standards can be integrated in STEAM. Additionally, there is no common assessment on STEAM education which limits or prevents schools from using instructional time in this area (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 7). Schools also run short on time and the capacity to run STEAM programs in an effective manner. If STEAM is utilized in school, the benefits won't be reaped immediately as "STEAM skills are hard to acquire with just one experience and require ongoing exposure" (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 7). STEAM requires teachers to collaborate and plan amongst subject areas and grade levels. Any open times that teachers must plan are usually taken by other professional development opportunities or meetings.

Key stakeholders who interact with policy need to advocate for supporting teachers and students by producing higher-quality instruction. Educational leaders will need to examine the instructional minutes set forth by the district and allot proper planning time for teachers and instructional time for students to engage in projects. Furthermore, state and school leaders can create a framework that allows for assessments and schedule adjustments to ensure there is adequate planning across content areas and grade levels (Dell'Erba, 2019, p. 8). Scripted curriculum programs also need to be analyzed to allow for more student-centered learning that aligns with students' interests and is also developmentally appropriate. If curriculum is unable to be adjusted, policymakers need to advocate for units to be aligned to real-life scenarios and include projects that can expand across other curricular areas. This will allow for students to still benefit from building problem-solving, critical thinking, and divergent thinking skills to be a global thinker.

Lack of STEAM Preparation for Teachers

Teachers often feel a need to keep up with new practices and those who have been in the field for a while may not know how beneficial STEAM is for children. With many acronyms in education, STEAM is one more to learn, but there is not a shared definition or language of what

it entails. Teachers also may not be aware of the benefits that STEAM provides to students or how to implement the program effectively through science, technology, engineering, arts, or music integration across other subject areas. Dell'Erba (2019) also discusses how a lack of STEAM implementation is more common amongst elementary educators as teacher preparation programs don't widely include arts integrated practices (p. 9). States and districts also struggle to find time to inform teachers of new content in professional development meetings which undermines student learning. This leads to teachers' feelings of self-confidence and self-efficacy dropping as teachers tend to continue teaching in their usual ways and find it hard to adopt new practices.

To better support teachers, policymakers and educational leaders will need to create time for highly effective professional development surrounding STEAM education. Implementation will need to be carried out over a long time so that teachers have the confidence to begin and continue the program on their own. Teachers will be changing their pedagogy, attitudes, and fidelity to the program when utilizing arts integration which contributes in a positive way to student outcomes (Dell'Erba, 2022, p. 6). Universities will need to examine their teacher preparation programs to include STEAM classes for preservice teachers to build the prerequisite knowledge and skills to teach STEAM. States will also need to analyze their teacher licensure requirements to require teachers to have either a STEAM certification, arts integration class, or professional development encompassing a STEAM field. By updating policies, states and districts will show their commitment to STEAM education and ensure qualified teachers are carrying out the program with the support they need.

Even with the plethora of research on the benefits of STEAM education, policymakers and educational leaders are still finding themselves pushing for change so that students are well-prepared for the 21st century. More research on STEAM education needs to be conducted so the data collected can be used to inform program evaluation and allocate more funding to STEAM in the future.

Manageable Solutions to Start

Policies at the district, state, and local level will take time before they can be changed. However, there are current solutions that teachers can implement until STEAM education becomes a priority including carrying out small scale projects in the classroom. When teachers start small with STEAM and are consistent in allowing students to explore, a grass-roots movement could allow STEAM to be more widely accepted in schools. Teachers can use materials they have in their classrooms, ask for donations from families or outside businesses or organizations, and continue to make a list of needed items during the school year. If teachers are unsure of where to start with STEAM, they can invite professionals in the field to speak to the students and provide a hands-on activity for them. Even just by using STEAM vocabulary and reading literacy books, it will help expose students to various topics (Teacher Time, 2022). One of the most positive things teachers can do is to ask students what they want to learn. From here, teachers can plan around student interests and let them take control. Engagement will increase and the teacher can fully dive into shifting their pedagogy and practice.

Conclusion

STEAM education and the Whole Child approach complement each other in promoting healthy development for the child. Both approaches advocate for developmentally appropriate practices for the child in an inquiry-based environment where curiosity and essential cognitive skills are developed through cross-curricular disciplines. Furthermore, STEAM engages with the five tenets of the Whole Child to ensure they are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Not only do students benefit from STEAM, but teachers also learn from them, and a trusting relationship is built between both parties. Policies and barriers may hamper schools from adopting STEAM, but the evidence is clear that students benefit greatly from exploring new possibilities in other discipline areas while using divergent thinking skills. When students are participating in STEAM education they become “wide-awake” to possibilities and problems around them, and that excitement will carry with them as they go through life (Greene, 1995).

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Education by the Numbers

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Education Attainment

Education is one of the dominant factors in determining how developed a country is. Education is essential in ending poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and protecting the planet (Schmidt, 2018). Approximately 90% of Americans over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, 34% have a bachelor's degree, and 13% have an advanced degree [(master's professional, doctorate or combination), NCES, 2021].

In the United States, education attainment is strongly correlated with income. Moreover, income is often directly correlated with education attainment (World Population Review, 2022). Those with a high school diploma and without a high school diploma had an average median income of $32,250. Those with a Bachelor's ($67,300) or advanced degree ($95,200) had an average median income of $81,250. This equates to a 40% greater income than those without a post-secondary education experience (NCES, 2022).

Higher education is struggling to enroll and retain students to graduate within five years of enrollment (NCES, 2022). There are multiple factors and obstacles that determine a student's successful completion of a higher education degree within six years of enrollment. However, parental characteristics is a strong indicator for students who enroll (transition) and remain (persistence) in a higher education institution beyond the end of their first-year enrollment. These factors or obstacles may include socio-economic status, student location, tuition cost, lack of access to affordable options, family, personal difficulties, lack of time and poor higher education experience. Parental characteristics is a strong indicator of the number of students entering college and remaining in college beyond the end of their first college enrollment (Fabina, 2022).

Figure 1: Transition Rate to College and Parental Education

Transition Rate	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's degree or higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
	50%	70%	61%	80%	50%	78%	60%	80%	50%	70%	60%	80%
	>$50,000		≤ $50,000		>$20,000		≤ $20,000		>$6000		<$6000	
	Parental Net Worth				Parental Housing Equity				Parental Monthly Income			

Transition rate (rate at which students start college enrollment)

Figure 2: Persistence in College and Parental Education

Persistence Rate	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's degree or higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or Higher	Less Than a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
	78%	75%	79%	93%	77%	77%	80%	93%	80%	79%	77%	91%
	>$50,000		≤ $50,000		>$20,000		≤ $20,000		>$6000		<$6000	
	Parental Net Worth				Parental Housing Equity				Parental Monthly Income			

Persistence (Rate at which students report college enrollment beyond first year enrollment)

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Emerging Professional
Let the Games Begin: Why Structured and Unstructured Play Should be Utilized in the Classroom

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Abstract

The role of school has drastically changed over the past several decades. Standards and added subjects lead to a challenging and narrow view of education. The consequences of added pressure undermine the role of play throughout K-12 school systems. Research studies continue to describe play as vital for the success of children's development and subsequent academic achievement, not only for younger children, but older children as well. This article explores how play and gamification utilized within all classrooms, including intermediate, middle school and high school classrooms, can provide a comprehensive approach to support both students' academic content understanding and social and emotional development. Play-based and game-based learning reinforces intrinsic motivators which lead to children's lifelong learning mindset and allows for students to take a more participatory role in their education.

Introduction

Research demonstrates play-based learning promotes and improves learning more than direct instruction for elementary students (Wickstrom et al., 2019). In addition to improving social skills, play-based education indicates a positive influence on language abilities and problem-solving skills (Ahmad et al., 2016). While these studies represent the pre-primary and primary grade levels, many arguments remain to support the need for pedagogical approaches for play-based learning in the upper educational classroom as well.

Educators and administrators argue against play-based learning for upper primary, intermediate, and secondary classrooms because of the amount of curriculum and standards required to be taught during a school day, and that play-based learning would not be an efficient use of limited

instructional time. Most facets in the educational system view direct instruction as an easier and more concrete way to educate students, especially those in the upper grades or with students who need intensive support based on grade-level benchmarks. Direct instruction is scripted, holds fewer variables for error, and is controlled by the teacher rather than the students, making direct instruction a preferred approach. Through a review of the research, consideration of applicable theories, and an examination of relevant examples, the current discussion provides a rationale for utilizing play-based and game-based learning experiences in the intermediate and higher school grades. The goal for this discussion is to persuade educators and administrators to incorporate more play-based experiences, not only for children's learning, but also as a means for authentic retrieval practices to assess learning instead of implementing paper/pencil assessments.

Direct Instruction Mindset

With the focus departing from play beginning in second grade and all but disappearing by sixth grade, this issue of incorporating play in learning becomes an increasingly poignant topic among teachers and district leaders. The essentialist mindset of American school systems indicates a preference students receive and retrieve information via direct instruction and lecture (Rosenshine, 2008). Direct instruction and a lecture format suggest more control and consequently, provide the capacity to increase content in a particular class period (Rosenshine, 2008). The many interpretations of the meaning of direct instruction could be argued extensively; however, it is agreed upon that this instructional framework does provide an outline for teachers to guide and support their students in an explicit manner (Rosenshine, 2008). While this mindset systemically prevails, some educators continue to challenge and confront direct instruction with a rationale for unstructured play and structured gamification**.**

Importance of Free Play

The rise in mental health issues in children between eight through twelve years can be marked by the limitations of play found in the classroom and in general (Gray, 2011). Play, referred to here, is the fostering of the creative imagination or free thought that is often allowed in primary grades and with preprimary-aged children (Gray, 2011). While data show the need for free play and teaching social-emotional learning in the primary school day, minimal attention for older students, who suffer socially and emotionally during a critical intersection of their lives, continues. Importantly, older children, navigating and developing into the individuals they want to become, need as well to be supported by allowing them to still act as children and receive time in their school day to play freely.

Across the country, educators continue struggling with increased content, regulations, and evolving expectations. Past educators, teaching core content, represented expertise in the areas of their endorsements. Currently, educators teach a variety of subjects (or sub-subjects). This pressure on educators is daunting and debilitating for many. In typical passive, direct, and prescriptive instruction settings, teachers remain challenged to reach their students in engaging ways as well as to maintain quality peer interaction and nurture proactive social norms. While many teachers realize direct instruction is not the most effective way to engage students; planning and maintaining interactive lessons become formidable. This current discussion

provides stakeholders with an opportunity to reimagine play as a means to differentiate learning, prioritize standards, and support the social-emotional needs of all students.

Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning refers to the concept that children learn and grow to understand the world around them through social experiences and active unstructured exploration. This type of learning can be solitary or social and can represent many forms. Play-based learning is commonly associated with young children in the pre-primary to primary years. However, an understanding of play-based learning and the potential benefit are becoming more widely accepted as reflected through different forms as children age into intermediate and higher-level schooling.

The origins of play-based learning can be traced significantly back to the works of Froebel (1887) and Piaget (1971). Both theorists advocate for the child's right to self-discovery (Curtis, 2021). Froebel, founder of the kindergarten, believed that children's understanding of the world is developed through their personal experiences (Curtis, 2021; Froebel, 1887). Developmental goals become realized through play when time is provided to young children to pursue their own self-interests (Curtis, 2021). According to Froebel (1887), an individual's potential originates through a child's range of interactions with people and materials. With extended exposure and greater freedom to explore, children realize enriched learning and enhanced development (Curtis, 2021).

The principles posited by Jean Piaget (1971) remain significant in the debate regarding play (Babakr et al., 2019). Piaget's research describing play led to his theory of the four stages of development: sensorimotor (birth to two years), pre-operational (two to seven years), concrete operational (seven to 11 years) and formal operational (12 years and beyond) (Babakr et al., 2019). Analogous to Froebel's argument for free play, Piaget supported young children's need for both sensory and unstructured play (Ahmad et al., 2016). However, significant to the current discussion, Piaget furthered the importance of the idea of playing into a more concrete and advanced state with his final two phases for advancement of learning (Gardner, 1993). In the final stages of development, Piaget (Ahmad et al., 2016; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) argues that in the concrete operational and formal operational stages of development, learning departs from free exploration and, instead, bases understanding on past experiences learned in the sensory and pre-operational stages (Ahmad et al., 2016; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). In these final stages, learning becomes more dynamic and consistent (Ahmad et al., 2016; McLeod, 2018). The individual child/player draws upon past experiences and knowledge and begins to synthesize input into output and generates thought (Ahmad et al., 2016). It is in these final stages of development that children and adults employ their ability to access knowledge, skills, and concepts and apply them suitably in new situations (Gardner, 1993; McLeod, 2018).

If educators consider the research of Froebel and Piaget important for their own teaching and, consequently, for children's learning, why is it then some teachers assume that suddenly at the age of approximately eight years old, children achieve peak development and knowledge and no longer require instructional strategies and interactive experiences through free play? Why does the instruction shift drastically away from exploration and unstructured curiosity to that of direct

instruction? Is it that the benefits of play no longer exist or is it that managing this type of interactive learning is overly challenging at this age? Through a study of Froebel and Piaget, an understanding clearly demonstrates that children and adults alike grow through play; play provides beneficial skill development that left unnurtured or ignored could be detrimental both cognitively and socially (Gray, 2011).

If indeed, educators want to employ play into their classrooms, it is then beneficial to provide examples of such strategies. To begin to understand the overall ways in which to instruct and guide students of all ages through free play and game-based learning, it is critical to start with a reframed mindset of scaffolding and the meaning therein.

Reframing Play as a Scaffold

Scaffolding and differentiating for students become the supports in place to both initially help students learn the material and as well retain the knowledge gained (Rosenshine, 2008). Typically, scaffolding is a mixture of strategies and consists of traditional methods such as note taking, mnemonic devices and songs, pre-teaching, and visual aids like graphic organizers (Agarwal & Bain, 2019).

Traditionally, play is not included in the mixture of scaffolding strategies; yet, play is another means to scaffold. Many teachers use a variety of scaffolding techniques in their teaching, but not play. However, to incorporate play into the class is as straightforward as providing any scaffold. For example, all effective instruction begins by describing each child's stage of cognitive development.

Understanding how each child learns allows a teacher to meet individual needs with appropriate materials, relevant goals, and meaningful instruction. For primary-aged students, a quick free play activity is coloring or building with blocks. For older students this may be an advanced art design, independent problem-solving project, science experiment, or a free choice writing activity. These activities allow children to explore their own thoughts, play with ideas, and cement their ideas into tangible items.

Observing and/or conferring with students during free play provides teachers with insight into their understanding of the content as well as their world view. Within all phases and ages, allowing children to discover ways in which to construct their thoughts and ideas is a key component of free-play and of cognitive development (Piaget, 1971). By offering a constructive, unstructured learning environment, teachers create expectations without conformity or constraint, where students become playful with their own ideas.

Game-Based Learning

Gamification or game-based learning is the advanced play of children who represent a higher cognitive developmental stage (Kapp, 2012). In game-based learning, children evidence the stage in which they exhibit the capacity to follow directions, rules, and social norms to complete a task (Kapp, 2012). Within an understanding of play, this task does not refer to a worksheet or an essay/project; instead, as a process, it is a focused and engaged game in which the person grows,

shows, and advances his or her knowledge on a topic through individual, peer, or group game styles. This interaction provides new knowledge or involves a review of an academic skill (Kapp, 2012).

Some examples of such games include the modifications of classic games such as Chutes and Ladders, SORRY, and Jeopardy. Board games of many types can be modified to include educational content such as math problems or reading comprehension questions simply by covering game board spaces with sticky notes or printing blank paper copies that can be distributed to students. These games implement multiple standards and strategies by using a commonly known board and set of directions and can be differentiated for challenge. Not only do students engage academically, but as well socially; thereby, students advance their internalization of both moral convictions and logico-knowledge capacities (Kamii et al., 2004). Further, in order to incorporate a less prescriptive and more flexible and free-play dynamic, teachers may offer blank board game templates for older children (eight -14 years) to design/construct their own games and pass these games along to share with peers.

In order to practice retrieval, typically, game-based learning is implemented with intermediate and middle school students (8-14 years). Agarwal and Bain (2019) explain retrieval practice is the act of remembering what you previously learned. This skill is completed in many ways, but the most effective involves intentional and engaging activities that target not only assessment, but further learning. The games may support prior learning and/or retrieval practice; importantly, games may also provide opportunities for children to learn and advance their knowledge on a new topic as well (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). These topics can be an array of standards found within math, science, social studies, and other subjects. For a quality game-based learning environment, students learn as much or more than in what would be called a direct instruction model (Kapp, 2012). Additionally, working as a small group nurtures students' higher-order thinking as they collaborate to generate questions.

Games and Retrieval

Some of the most applicable ways of implementation of retrieval practice are found in the form of a game or playful activity. Educators may use some retrieval practices for remembering previous information with online platforms such as Kahoot and GimKit or pen and paper "quiz games" conducted at the beginning, middle or end of a unit or lesson. Educational content such as math facts, historical dates, or summaries of events within literature are only a few examples of what students can play to recall and/or further expand their learning when participating in retrieval activities. For example, a game comprised of planet information might include facts (How many moons circle planets in this solar system?), planet comparisons (Identify the planets with the hottest and coldest temperatures and provide the range.), and for challenge, analyses questions (How long will it take an astronaut to travel between Venus and Neptune?). Games targeting the ocean, pollution, economics, or finances will prove interesting and engaging for older students.

Importantly, the difference between a traditional assessment and the type of retrieval strategy discussed here in a "game" is all students outwardly participate and then, receive immediate feedback on their responses/interactions; therefore, the "game" not only provides immediate

feedback, but also supports students further learning in their content knowledge (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). Critically, these "game-like" quizzes are not provided for a letter or point-based grade, but as an enjoyable learning strategy. There are no consequences; this is not a test. Instead, there is student buy-in to play the game and student self-confidence improves as the capacity to experience fun during the game abounds (Agarwal & Bain, 2019).

Rationale for Implementation

Educational standards and the ways in which children learn show drastic shifts through the last 10 to 20 years (Gray, 2011). Utilizing play, free-play, or gamification, not only enhances the social environment in the classroom, but also motivates students and maintains engagement in their learning (Kapp, 2012). Recent data describing Learner-Centered Practices indicate that when students intentionally perform and apply meaning to subject matter, they can create coherent representational knowledge (McCombs, 2010). Thus, learning can be employed within a system of retrieval practices where gamification can be swiftly adapted into a daily schedule for all intermediate to high school learners and classroom settings. For example, students can play quiz-like games to retrieve or remember information on any topic of current study. Using entry tasks or exit tickets is a form of retrieval practice and can set the tone and expectations for the entire day. An entry task is any task that is given prior to new explicit instruction and is primarily used to gauge the students' understanding of previous material or a future topic. An exit ticket is a task taking place at the conclusion of instruction. At this time, the students' new levels of understanding or reflections become challenged. Both entry and exit tickets can take many forms but most consist of a brief question-answer format that interacts with the current study taking place. In traditional assessment, these tasks are quick and consist of open-ended questions or forced-choice answers. Instead of traditional assessments, games provide students with interesting, engaging, and playful alternatives. Games can be introduced at any point in the year and can be built into the daily schedule as entry and exit tasks or offered as needed for cognitive relief while still utilizing all class time.

Another key aspect introduced within Learner-Centered practice is the understanding that learners of all ages engage in different strategies and experience a range of constraints (McCombs, 2010). Learning is most effective when experiences become differentiated across focus areas and develop using physical, intellectual, and social domains (McCombs, 2010). By combining different subjects and task completion methods, students become exposed to more content in a variety of ways. Games, as a multidiscipline approach, help build metacognition and enable long-term retention. For example, students participating in a word game or song where they are clapping and following a beat can support syllable and word mapping within literacy learning. A combination of physical and verbal cues as well as melodical components solidify the learning by providing greater ease and longer retention.

Teachers' expectations evolve and change with time; contributing to this transition is an acknowledgement of the holistic needs of children and the importance of planning for students' differentiated learning (Karl, 2017). For teachers to effectively use and implement game-based or play-based learning, they will need to create resources and develop a routine that balances an individual student's learning within the curriculum and through meaningful connections (Agarwal & Bain, 2019).

Barriers to Play and Game-Based Learning

Several barriers undermining teachers' implementation of game-based or play-based learning do exist. For example, teachers do not always have the financial ability to purchase games, the time to research and create resources, or the supplies and knowledge needed to support this system of learning (Karl, 2017). In other words, teachers who may want to use play-based and game-based learning in their classrooms often find it difficult to balance time and resources (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). Recalling the earlier example describing students creating games for their peers, becomes notable. In order for a group of students to create a game, they must not only demonstrate accurate content knowledge, but will also need time and materials to develop the game.

Additionally, teachers who want to instruct through play and games may meet with difficulty if other teachers use traditional pedagogies such as tests and worksheets instead of play and games for evidence of learning (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). In the next section, examples and substitutions provide support for teachers' implementation of play-based and gamification-based learning.

Transitioning to Play-Based and Gamification-Based Learning

While game-based learning opportunities suggest a profound impact on students' intrinsic growth, there is evidence that game-playing can also initiate a positive influence on academic learning and retention as well (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). A system of game- or play-based learning can substitute as a formative assessment in monitoring students' on-going progress. Teachers employ overt and covert types of retrieval practices (finding out what students know and understand) (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). Overt retrieval practice is a deliberate pre-learning or post-learning activity that can be observed by the teacher such as a quiz or test; in contrast, covert retrieval practice is not directly observable as it is metacognitive and is not outwardly expressed (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). For example, a covert activity does not evidence any student output (i.e., written, or verbal responses); students' internal thoughts/metacognitive processes remain within each individual. This learning is an internalized mental process and not outwardly disclosed, but may serve as a stimulus for overt responses.

The more traditional style of assessment is an overt test which is when a student is simply relaying information about a certain subject by way of writing, answering multiple choice questions or verbally explaining a topic. Data demonstrates that students can learn as much from covert reflections as they would from overt responding (Smith et al., 2013). In other words, the act of thinking about the information is just as critical to learning and retention as it is to produce it outwardly. Therefore, playing a game as an individual or with peers is an example of covert learning and retrieval which represents the student's internal thinking and overt response to that thinking.

To implement play- and game-based learning into a routine that does not overwhelm the stakeholders involved (i.e., the teacher and students), it is critical to substitute retrieval practices through play or games in place of formative assessments such as a quiz. Play and game retrieval practices are simple and effective ways to solidify knowledge of students and serve as well as a formative assessment for teachers to gauge the effectiveness of student learning (Agarwal &

Bain, 2019). This process of playing takes place overtly or covertly, as pre-learning entry tasks, post-learning exit tickets, individual or group reflections, and student-teacher conferring sessions (Agarwal & Bain, 2019).

For example, instead of creating, administering, collecting, and grading formative assessments in the form of quizzes or worksheets, a teacher quickly distinguishes which students understand the material through their retrieval play and game practices. It is simpler and highly time efficient to gauge the students' understanding through a brief consultation or observation than using traditional formative assessment types.

A further advantage for this type of formative assessment, in contrast with traditional ways of monitoring student progress, is that it takes place in a low stakes' environment with a tone of inclusion and positivity (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). The positive outcomes attained from game and play-based retrieval practices afford educators knowledge and insight regarding students' learning and the effectiveness of lessons (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). Observing a quiz-like game such as Kahoot or Jeopardy quickly communicates to the teacher what areas of the subject knowledge remain lacking and additionally, what other learning gaps students may demonstrate. Consequently, students become more motivated in their learning and remain longer engaged as a participant (Agarwal & Bain, 2019).

Vannsteenkiste, Lens, and Deci (2006) describe how students with intrinsic not extrinsic motivational goals could recall and retain more information about a related topic. When students participate in low stakes, highly engaging forms of retrieval practice and Learner Centered games and play, they are more likely to feel motivated to learn because, simply put, it is fun. This intrinsic motivator lends itself to a lifelong learning mindset and allows for the student to take a more participatory role in their education.

Conclusion

The implementation of play-based and gamification learning as forms of instruction and assessment in classrooms positively supports the academic and developmental opportunities of all students, including intermediate, middle school and high school learners. It has been argued here that play, both structured and unstructured, clearly improves the learning ability and retention of content in contrast with other techniques and pedagogies.

Most teachers are knowledgeable about the research and studies conducted on play-based learning and understand the developmental positives that students show when games and play are implemented in the classroom; yet, many educators do not utilize such techniques. Lack of support remains a primary obstacle for teachers implementing play-based and gamification-based learning (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). It is time teachers receive assistance in this regard, but are also encouraged to use play-based and gamification as a tool for retrieval practice. Play and games become fun tools for helping teachers to identify student progress. Not only do play and game-based learning benefit students' covert and overt learning abilities, but efficiently supplement and substitute for traditional formative assessments as well.

Play and gamification support student development in a holistic way (Karl, 2017). Play supports physical activity as well as mental engagement. Play is a learning alternative affording a more inclusive means to engage students no matter the age. Furthermore, the teamwork associated with play and game-based learning allows students to grow in their social-emotional development and become not only adept at social cues**,** but also in their own perceptions of self (Ahmad et al., 2016). In a society that pressures students to be socially and academically confident, it is critical educators support and foster students' play-based learning opportunities. The benefits of intrinsic motivation provided through play and games remain vital for students' engagement and overall development in both academic and social-emotional health (McCombs**,** 2010). Play allows for several functions in creating and fostering healthy social and academic skills and is a key motivator for students. It follows that incorporating and implementing play- and game-based learning into the classroom and educational settings is critical and beneficial to all students in all age groups.

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Page Turners: Books for Children

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A Bear Far from Home
Written by **Susan Fletcher**
Illustrated by **Rebecca Green**
Anne Schwartz Books, 2022
ISBN 978-0-593-18189-8

A snowy white polar bear lives joyfully and moves freely in frigid Norway. . . until the day that everything changes. Suddenly, the bear's days of romping through snow and swimming in icy waters are over. The bear is trapped, caged, and shipped off to a foreign land; presented as a gift from the King of Norway to the King of England. Based on historical documents from 13th century Europe, this beautifully illustrated picture book introduces young readers to the menagerie of animals, creatures from all corners of the world, that were kept at the Tower of London. The poignant text points to the sad captivity faced by one bear, but fortunately, also leaves readers with a sense of hopefulness, when the King of England orders that the bear be allowed to swim and fish in the river each day. This compelling storyline has historical moorings and could serve as a powerful tool for learning about animal rights and humane education. Ages 4-8.

If You Live Here
Written by **Kate Gardner**
Illustrated by **Christopher Silas Neal**
Balzer + Bray, 2022
ISBN 978-0-06-286532-8

"If you live on a train, you know everything changes." Gardner's simple, yet beautifully written text explores what it might be like to live in many different homes, including on a train, a farm, or a submarine. Readers will want to closely examine Neal's intricately detailed and amusing illustrations on each 2-page spread. The carefully chosen vocabulary invites discussion around each idea, developing knowledge of the world–why would living in a garden require patience? This picture book is enjoyable as a stand-alone text and could also launch instruction on habitats and communities. Ages 4-8.

Pow Wow Day
Written by **Traci Sorell**
Illustrated by **Madelyn Goodnight**
Charlesbridge, 2022
ISBN 978-1-580-89948-2

The author, Sorell, and illustrator, Goodnight, are members of two different Native American tribes and have created texts and illustrations that show contemporary Native Americans. This text meets that goal by allowing the reader to explore the beauty and meaning of a yearly pow wow while telling the story of the main character, River, who is battling an illness that keeps her from dancing this year. While she is disappointed, she remembers that the pow wow is to honor the Creator, to pray for the continuance of the language and culture and also as a way to pray for healing for those like River who need it. With the support of family and friends she looks towards a brighter future when she will again play an active role in the beauty of the pow wow. This is a story of hope and perseverance set in a magnificent cultural context. Ages 4-8.

Pretty Perfect Kitty Corn
Written by **Shannon Hale**
Illustrated by **LeUyen Pham**
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2022
ISBN 978-1-4197-5093-9

Unicorn's friends think he is positively perfect. However, perfection is hard to maintain even for a beautiful unicorn. In this new tale by the author and illustrator team of Hale and Pham, young readers learn about true friendship and how the gift of that friendship allows us to be loved even when we are not perfect. This story is full of descriptive vocabulary and vibrant and colorful illustrations that stand out on white pages. This book would be an excellent read aloud for classrooms and families alike as it reinforces an important life lesson: no one is perfect! Ages 4-8.

The Queen of Kindergarten
Written by **Derrick Barnes**
Illustrated by **Vanessa Brantley-Newton**
Nancy Paulsen Books, 2022
ISBN 978-0-593-11142-0

MJ is excited to start kindergarten and has everything in place: Hair freshly washed and braided? Check! First day of school outfit? Check! Up on time and ready to go? Check! Momma tells her that she needs one more thing. As she places a tiara on MJ's head, she dubs her the Queen of Kindergarten and explains about all the kind, caring, and helpful things that queens do. MJ embraces the challenge and goes to school ready to be an engaged learner, a classroom helper, and the thoughtful friend that her classmates need. This is a joyful book, with words and pictures that point to the power of relationships in children's lives–on the first day of school and beyond. Readers may also want to check out *The King of Kindergarten*, an equally celebratory companion text by the same author-illustrator duo. Ages 4-8.

Remembering Ethan
Written by **Lesléa Newman**
Illustrated by **Tracy Nishimura Bishop**
Magination Press, 2020
ISBN 978-1-433-83113-3

This touching book on the loss of a family member captures the complexity of grief as well as the importance of celebrating the life of a loved one who has died. Sarah misses her big brother Ethan and wants to talk about him and remember how he ducked his head to enter the door and carried her and the cat, Buttons, under one arm like "big bags of groceries." She doesn't understand why she and her parents can't talk about Ethan. The engaging text and delicate illustrations of a family's memories explores how Sarah's family navigates grief and how healing can come from connection and love—and is a worthy book for any family in a similar circumstance. Ages 4-8.

Keeping the City Going
Written and illustrated by **Brian Floca**
Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2021
ISBN: 978-1534493773

Despite those of us from cities living in close proximity, the Covid-19 pandemic isolated us all in ways none of us could have imagined. In spring of 2020, we learned to work, learn, and live almost exclusively from home. Yet for some workers, staying home was simply not a possibility. This book by Caldecott-winning Brian Floca is a heartfelt and beautiful appreciation to the essential workers who kept New York City running in the most critical ways. Focused on how we can support one another even when kept apart, this book offers a way for young children to reflect on and make sense of the isolation that the pandemic created. However, it also shows the power of kindness, bravery, and appreciation for strangers and friends who put their lives on the line to keep us all going. With vibrant colors and simple, almost poetic writing, this book serves as a loving memory - a thank you note - to those we watched through our windows. Ages 4-8.

Laxmi's Mooch
Written by **Shelly Anand**
Illustrated by **Nabi H. Ali**
Kokila Press, 2021
ISBN: 978-1984815651

Young Laxmi is having fun playing pretend with her friends at preschool when they suggest she should play a cat because of her "whiskers", pointing to the hair on her upper lip. Suddenly self-conscious of her facial hair, she comes home concerned about why she is different from her friends. Her family talks to her about being proud of her Indian American heritage, with her mother sharing the legacy of women with "mooches" - the playful word they use for the hair on the upper lip. In this body-positive text for young readers, Laxmi reminds us all to be proud of our heritage and the unique and beautiful bodies we all have. As Laxmi reminds the reader, "It's ok, you can look". *Laxmi's Mooch* is a gentle and loving reminder that what makes us unique

also makes us beautiful. Parents and teachers of young children will appreciate this story of self-acceptance, family heritage, and celebrating ourselves for who we are. Ages 4-8.

Books for Young Adults

Firekeeper's Daughter
Written by **Angeline Boulley**
Henry Holt and Company, 2021
ISBN: 978-1250766564

In her stunning debut novel, Angeline Boulley tells the story of Daunis Fontaine, an 18-year-old young woman. As a biracial unregistered member of the Ojibwe tribe, Daunis does not feel as if she fits in her hometown or in the nearby Ojibwe reservation. Putting her dreamed about fresh start at college on hold to care for her fragile mother, Daunis finds herself navigating a secret life as an FBI informant in an investigation of a lethal new drug. The author, Angelina Boulley successfully writes a story that will keep younger adult readers on the edge of their seat as the heroine learns what it means to be a strong Ojibwe woman. The novels provide young adult readers to learn about social justice, modern Native American issues and personal growth. Ages 14 and up.

Let's Talk About It: A Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human
Written by **Erika Moen** and **Mathew Nolan**
Random House Graphic, 2021
ISBN: 978-1984893147

Erika Moen and Mathew Noal take on a challenging yet essential topic in their graphic novel, *Let's Talk About It: A Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human.* The book includes critical topics such as gender, consent, sexting, rejection, and more. The graphics include detailed illustrations of human genitals which may deter some readers and their adults, but this graphic novel provides much needed critical information. Some readers may question the way certain concepts are covered (i.e., sexting, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.); however, with the right guidance and support from the adults in their lives, the graphic novel could serve as an important conversation starter for topics that may otherwise not be addressed. Ages 14 and up.

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Updates

Thank you for your continued support of the International Journal of the Whole Child and our commitment to holistic learning and to the development of the whole child. To improve the efficiency of the journal, we have updated our submission and publication dates. The submission deadline for Spring 2023 is February 28th. The submission deadline for the Fall 2023 will be September 30th. The Spring issue will be published in May and the Fall issue will be published in December. Thank you again for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you in Spring 2023.