

Editorial

Dear IEEJE Readers,

For some individuals, the ability to interact with others in a way that is effective, meaningful, and purposeful is as natural as walking, talking, or breathing. Indeed, those individuals to whom social skills comes naturally, may remain totally unaware that possessing those basic interactive skills may provide a significant advantage in life over those individuals to whom social skills does not come naturally. Social skills deficits may impede behavior, academic performance, relationships, mental health, safety, daily functioning, and adult life outcomes. Therefore, teaching social skills to individuals who struggle in acquiring such skills seems like it would be an apparent educational priority. Unfortunately, however, some educational systems have been slow to recognize the importance of social skills and the development of social competence.

We appealed to several educators, practitioners, and researchers, for submissions to this special edition which highlights the value of social skills. We received several quality submissions from which we selected seven articles to include in this special edition. The authors of these articles share a common passion and a common professional commitment: the belief in the value of social skills. These articles cover a wide range of topics, service delivery modalities, and life domains. Due to the importance of the topic, we have extended the traditional focus of the International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education (IEJEE) to beyond the scope of elementary education. A brief summary of the articles is below:

- The article, "Social Emotional Learning in Virtual Settings: Intervention Strategies" provides strategies to successfully incorporate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into daily virtual lessons.
- The article, "Developing Social Skills and Social Competence in Children with Autism" discusses social development from three perspectives: (a) theories of social development, (b) constructs of social competence, and (c) several evidence-based interventions designed to enhance social skills.
- The article, "School-based social skills programming to increase employment for individuals with ASD" serves to identify soft skills needed for successful employment and ways in which school-based programming can address these skills. In addition, the author provides suggestions for addressing social skills that are key to vocational success.
- The article, "The Importance of Inclusive Spaces in Social Skills Development: Drawing on the LGBTQ Educational and Disability Studies in Education Frameworks" follows the story of Jacob, an individual whose participation in an inclusive social club provided him with much needed acceptance, guidance, and confidence.
- The article, "Using A Functional Play Intervention to Increase Joint Attention of School-aged, Non-Verbal Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)" examines an engaging functional play intervention that significantly increases joint intention for school age children with ASD.
- The article, "Turkish Parents, Teachers, and Faculty Members' Opinions and Experiences on Safety Skills Instruction for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder" highlights the importance and value of teaching safety skills to children with ASD.
- The article, "Adapting an In-person Transdiagnostic Social Skills Program to Online Delivery: Technology to the Rescue" chronicles the transition of the LUNCH Groups® social skills in-person program to a successful online delivery model.

Special Issue Editors

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