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Integrating SEL-Focused Bilingual Activities in Early Childhood Development: An Interdisciplinary Pre-Service Training and Practice Model

Neslihan Keleş, Tuğba Yazıcı Çakiroğlu

Trabzon University, Turkey

Abstract

From a contemporary educational perspective in the 21st-century, early childhood education and development advocates the integration of social-emotional learning (SEL) alongside cognitive and academic development (CASEL, 2020). This study aims to design, implement, and evaluate a pre-service training program that enhances the social-emotional competencies of students studying at early childhood development department, improving their capacity to develop and integrate SEL-focused classroom activities in teaching practicum in preschool classrooms. The designed pre-service training program combines both theoretical input and practical applications to enable participants to design SEL-oriented vocabulary activities both in Turkish and English language. The innovative aspect of the study lies in its assumption that, in the absence of EFL teachers in public preschools in Türkiye, early childhood teachers can pedagogically integrate basic English vocabulary into daily classroom practices to support young learners' emotional awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills. The study adopts a mixed methods research design, in which quantitative data is collected through a pre-test and post-test experimental design using the Social Emotional Learning Scale – Young Adult Form (Karacan-Özdemir ve Büyükçolpan, 2021), while qualitative data is gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted before, during, and after the intervention. The study is expected to contribute to the literature by offering an interdisciplinary model that bridges early childhood education and foreign language education centering on social-emotional learning paradigm. Additionally, it aims to provide empirical evidence on the pedagogical value of bilingual SEL-focused activities in early childhood contexts and to enhance the professional competencies of students majoring in early childhood development through practice-based learning.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education; Foreign Language Learning, Interdisciplinary Research; Pre-Service Training; Social-Emotional Learning