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Dear Colleagues and Readers,

I am pleased to present the Journal of Innovative Research in Teacher Education (JIRTE), 2025, Volume 6, Issue 3, to our readers. The three contributions in this issue address a shared need in contemporary teacher education: navigating quickly expanding research areas with confidence, bridging theory and practice, and developing evidence-based tools to support classroom decision-making. Two articles map extensive literatures using bibliometric approaches, while one article proposes a conceptual framework and an illustrative assessment method for identifying giftedness potential in the verbal domain. Together, they create a coherent flow throughout the issue, organized around recognizing the field, diagnosing needs, and strengthening teachers' professional capacity.

The bibliometric review by Değirmenci, Çetin, and İnel on augmented reality (AR) studies in education highlights both the scope and the growth of the field with specific indicators. Based on 7,534 studies collected from five databases, the authors note a significant acceleration after 2016 and report an annual growth rate of 27.04%. The review also indicates that scholarly output is becoming more collaborative, with an average of 4.09 co-authors per paper. From a teacher education perspective, however, the most important contribution is revealing the gap between AR's potential and actual classroom practice. The challenges highlighted by the authors, such as limited device access and insufficient teacher training, suggest that AR should be viewed less as a passing trend and more as a pedagogical design issue. In this context, the findings support the idea that integrating AR into teacher education requires more than technical familiarity; it must be rooted in deliberate decisions about goal alignment, assessment, classroom management, accessibility, and ethical considerations.

Demirel-Dingeç's initial proposal for identifying giftedness potential in the verbal domain introduces a different, yet complementary, avenue for teacher education. The paper reminds us that definitions of giftedness vary across disciplines and contexts, which can weaken consistency in identification practices. By grounding the proposal in the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT), the author advocates for a dynamic understanding where potential and performance are separate, development is influenced by intrapersonal and environmental factors, and chance can affect trajectories. Operationally, the paper highlights the verbal domain and suggests sample items aligned with verbal reasoning, verbal ability, and memory. Editorially, the strength of this work lies in reframing identification as a developmental process rather than a one-time labeling decision; the focus on dynamic assessment strongly aligns with a teacher education goal that emphasizes assessment literacy and instructional responsiveness. This perspective also supports an equity-sensitive approach, since domain-specific identification naturally highlights the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate tools and practices.

The bibliometric analysis by Yazıcı and Yazıcı on teaching controversial issues highlights how teacher education is becoming more linked to social, ethical, and epistemic complexity. Reviewing Scopus-indexed literature from 1993 to 2023, the authors note a clear rise in publications after 2006 and show that a large part of the work focuses on socio-scientific issues within science education. Their science-mapping results reveal nine keyword clusters, with socio-scientific issues, controversial issues, and integration into teacher education being the most prominent themes. The study also describes international collaboration patterns and emphasizes the strong roles of the United States and the United Kingdom, along with contributions from other countries, including Türkiye's notable position in publication and citation counts. From an editorial standpoint, these findings suggest that teaching controversial issues should be seen not just as content knowledge, but as a multifaceted professional skill set that includes evidence evaluation, discourse facilitation, emotional safety, ethical reasoning, and principled pedagogical neutrality. The authors' focus on the field's shift from taboo topics to controversial issues and then to socio-scientific issues offers a strong rationale for why this set of skills has become increasingly central across disciplines.

Taken as a whole, this issue delivers a clear message: the teaching profession is being shaped by complex demands, including designing learning in technology-rich environments, recognizing learner potential in fair and defensible ways, and guiding learning on socially contentious issues in safe and productive classrooms. Therefore, teacher education must shift from a model mainly focused on methods to one that systematically builds evidence-based judgment, assessment literacy, ethical awareness, and flexible professional decision-making. Each article in this issue, from a different perspective, highlights the same need: map the field, identify the constraints, and enhance teachers' ability to act responsibly in uncertain conditions.

Finally, I thank the authors for constructing syntheses that are methodologically careful and professionally consequential, and for providing a discussion platform with clear relevance to classroom practice and policy. I invite our readers to approach these papers not only as reviews of the literature but also as strategic resources for updating teacher education curricula, designing professional development, and generating new research questions for the field.

Dr. Erkan Dinç
Chief Editor

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