

# Looking Back, Looking Forward: A Review of Publications in JISNE

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## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: A REVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS IN JISNE

The *Journal of International Special Needs Education* (JISNE) is a bi-annual, peer reviewed, multi-disciplinary journal for the Council of Exceptional Children: Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES) members and members of the international scientific community. The journal features information that reflects the field of special education around the world. Readers represent a broad range of ethnic, cultural and primary language backgrounds, who are interested in diverse research perspectives.

The purpose of this article is to present information describing articles that have been published in JISNE between 2012 and 2016. Forty-one articles, published in Issues 15(1) through 19(2) and available on the JISNE website ([www.jisne.org](http://www.jisne.org)), were reviewed to better understand the following questions: (a) Based on the aims and scope of JISNE, what types of articles are featured in JISNE? (b) What topics of special needs education have been included in articles published in JISNE? (c) To what extent are regions and sub-regions of the world represented in published JISNE articles? (d) To what extent does JISNE feature articles written by authors from different countries around the world?

### TYPES OF ARTICLES FEATURED IN JISNE

The author guidelines for JISNE describe three types of articles with fall under the *aim and scope* of the journal. These include:

- *Original research, e.g. group, single subject, quantitative and qualitative or mixed methods designs*

- *Literature reviews, position and policy papers that inform the theoretical discussion of special education and the understanding of exceptionality on a global level*
- *Case studies outlining interesting local initiatives or comparative studies that readers can generalize to historical, social and global trends*

Figure 1 shows the extent to which each of these three manuscript types are represented in the 41 articles published in JISNE over five years. While articles published in JISNE may fall into multiple overlapping categories, this figure shows the areas which best describes the manuscript.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION TOPICS COVERED BY JISNE ARTICLES

As JISNE focuses on special education topics internationally, the articles contained in each issue represent a variety of areas within the field. The thematic analysis of the topics covered in 41 articles revealed 10 broad areas. Table 1 lists the most frequently covered topics in the published JISNE articles. Due to the nature of the content covered in specific articles, some single articles may account for multiple topics (e.g. an article might have focused on both *learning disabilities* and *teacher training*).

The large number of articles focusing on inclusion perhaps represents the extent to which countries around the world struggle with promoting inclusive practices in schools. This struggle to provide youth with disabilities opportunities to learn alongside peers without disabilities is a struggle that goes beyond the borders of any one country. Additionally, the large number of articles focusing on the training of teachers perhaps represents a global sense of eagerness to provide the best possible instruction for students with disabilities.

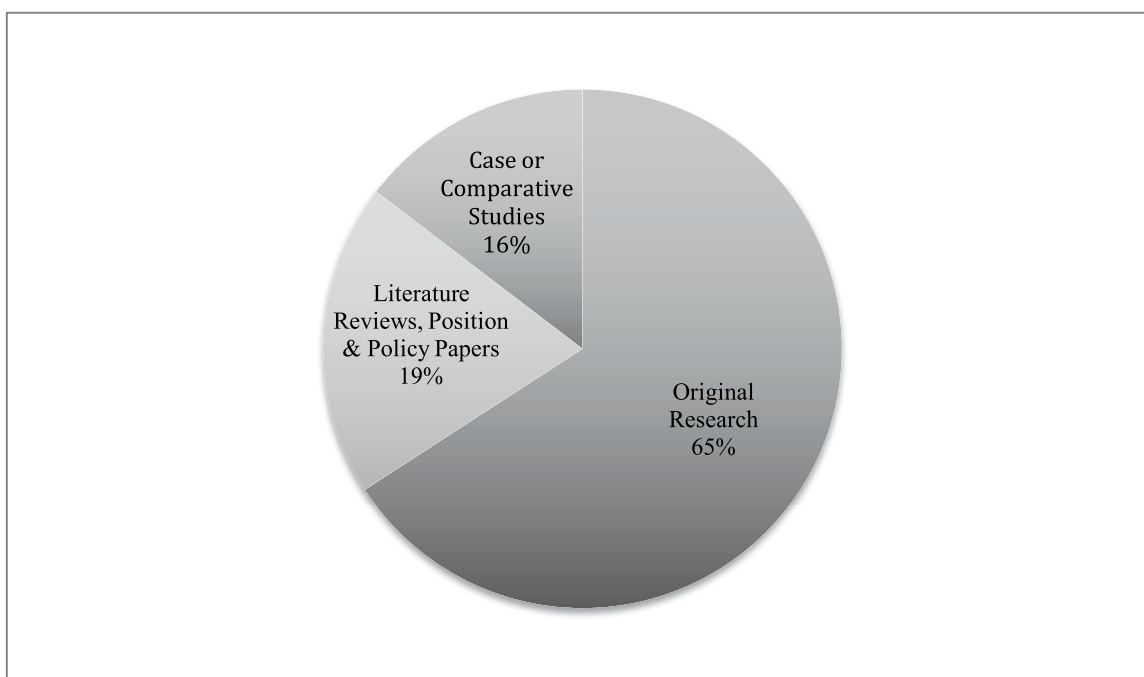


Figure 1: *Types of Articles Included in the 41 JISNE Articles (Published 2012-2016)*

**REGIONS REPRESENTED BY THE JISNE ARTICLES**

The United Nations (UN) has divided the world into six regions (United Nations, 2016), each of which has been represented in a JISNE manuscript. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of articles represented by each region. These six regions have been further divided into 21 sub-regions by the UN. JISNE has included articles that feature 15 of the sub-region, with the exceptions being Middle Africa, Caribbean, Central America, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Table 2 lists the sub regions and the frequency of representation in JISNE.

While the overwhelming majority of articles published in JISNE focus on one individual region (78% of articles,  $n=32$ ), 17% ( $n=7$ ) feature partnerships, collaborations, or comparison studies from two or more geographically diverse regions. Another two works, accounting for 4.9% of articles, focus solely on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD; United Nations, 2006) rather than specific countries.

**COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN AUTHORS FROM MULTIPLE COUNTRIES**

One of the objectives of DISES is to, “engage in international projects and partnerships that join people from various societies and cultures in working toward common goals” (Division of International Special Education and Services, 2012, p. 72)). One way in which these multi-national collaborations can become realized is through co-authorships in JISNE.

As individuals from varying countries are employed by educational institutions around the globe, it is difficult to pinpoint precisely how many of the 41 published JISNE articles are multi-national collaborations. Thirteen articles (31.7%) were co-authored by individuals who represent institutions or organizations from multiple countries. Of these 13 articles, ten have corresponding authors who work in the U.S. In addition, all but one of these 13 articles with multi-national authorship have at least one author who

Table 1  
*Special Education Topics Represented in 41 JISNE Articles (Published 2012-2016)*

Topic	Number of articles	Percent of total articles
Inclusion	15	36.6%
Teacher Training	12	29.2%
Assistive Technology	6	14.6%
Early Intervention	5	12.2%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	4	9.8%
Learning Disabilities	4	9.8%
Literacy	4	9.8%
Low-Incidence Disabilities	3	7.3%
Parents and Family	3	7.3%
UN CRPD*	3	7.3%

*Note.* Topics that were represented by fewer than three articles were not included in this table

\*UN CRPD = United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

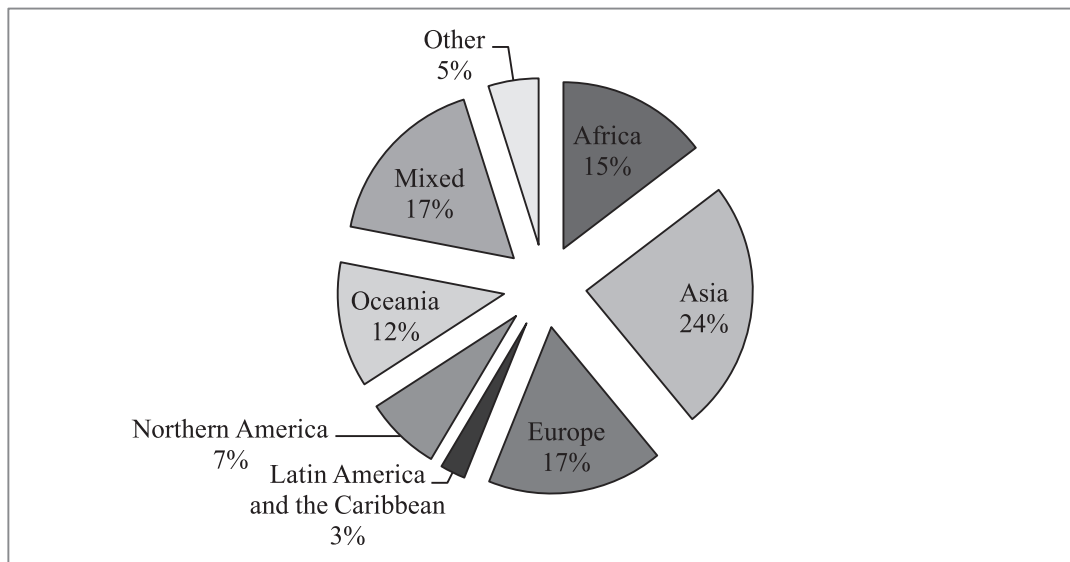


Figure 2: United Nations Regions Represented in the 41 JISNE Articles (Published 2012-2016)

works in the United States. While the U.S. is well-represented in these international collaborations, co-authors represent a wide variety of countries. These include: Australia, Canada, China, Croatia, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Malawi, New Zealand, Poland, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. Further, as discussed above, these collaborations also take the form of cross-country partnerships and collaboration of research and professional development activities.

### LOOKING FORWARD

JISNE is one of the few international special education journals that is fulfilling the mission of disseminating research and information about special education around

the globe. While some regions are better represented than others, JISNE has included articles representing each continent, with the exception of Antarctica.

While the U.S. is well-represented with authorship in JISNE, other countries in the Americas are not. For example, in the five years of articles that were included in this review, no articles with authors from Caribbean or Central America have been published in JISNE. In addition, only one manuscript from South America (Brazil) has been published in the 41 articles of JISNE published between 2012 and 2016. Authors from these regions are encouraged to submit articles to JISNE in order to address this under-representation. Other sub-regions not represented in JISNE articles from the last five years include Middle Africa,

Table 2  
Regions and Sub-Regions Represented in the 41 JISNE Articles (Published 2012-2016)

Region	Sub-Region	Number of articles	Percent of total articles
Africa	Western Africa	2	4.9%
	Eastern Africa	2	4.9%
	Northern Africa	1	2.4%
	Southern Africa	1	2.4%
Asia	Western Asia	4	9.8%
	Eastern Asia	4	9.8%
	South-Central Asia	1	2.4%
	South-Eastern Asia	1	2.4%
Europe	Southern Europe	4	9.8%
	Northern Europe	3	7.3%
Latin America and the Caribbean	South America	1	2.4%
Northern America	Northern America	3	7.3%
Oceania	Australia-New Zealand	5	12.2%

Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. This is perhaps a similar trend in other international journals.

Some low income countries have scarce resources to devote to training, conducting, and implementing high quality research and knowledge innovations. University professors in some countries often see their role as instructors rather than researchers. Furthermore, wider dissemination of research and information through publications in journals may not be as valued in non-western countries. All these factors lead to imperfect knowledge about the use of evidence-based practices around the world.

In order to represent a truly global perspective, JISNE and other international journals will need to continue to encourage submission of articles representing these diverse authorship or content by actively encouraging submissions through venues such as international conferences. Replication of published research in different cultural and geographic context is another way to expand research and advance scientific knowledge. Cross country collaborations can mitigate this know-to-how gap. Finally, journals whose vision and scope include dissemination of information across the globe will need to play an active role in supporting and mentoring authors unfamiliar with academic writing.

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