**High Leverage Practices That Support Students with and without Disabilities**

By

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# WITTENBERG  UNIVERSITY

## GRADUATE STUDIES IN EDUCATION

## MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

*Valerie Katherine Johnson*

Each member of the following Thesis Committee has read and has found this thesis to be satisfactory.

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## Master of Arts in Education

"I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance."

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**Abstract**

The present study investigated how the implementation of High Leverage Practices related to instruction in the general education classroom impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities. A group of 5 elementary teachers participated in this study in which they were asked to implement one practice in their classroom. Teachers were asked about their confidence and knowledge of High Leverage Practices via a survey. Meetings with teachers were also conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the study. The results showed that there was no significant change in teacher confidence when High Leverage Practices were implemented into the classroom instruction. This study provides valuable information to the field of High Leverage Practices and the impacts on teacher confidence to service students with and without disabilities in the classroom.

**Table of Contents**

**List of Tables**

# List of Figures

**Chapter One**

**Introduction**

Going into my first year of teaching, I thought I knew everything one would need about education and special education to be successful. I soon realized I knew nothing. I had a student on my caseload who was extra difficult because of his learning needs. This was because he started school very late and had very few little social skills. These factors made it difficult for this student to keep up with his peers. Additionally, he lost motivation due to the COVID pandemic impacting his second and third grade years. The COVID-19 pandemic made it very difficult for this student to learn because most of the learning was online. During the 2021-2022 school year, the student did not want to read or complete any of his work. "I don't know how to read" and "this is too hard" were constant phrases this student used daily. Even with these comments I had this student try his best and repeat the mantra, "I am smart, I can do this." No matter the obstacle, I always had this student repeat these phrases. Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, I built a strong relationship with this student because I changed my teaching to fit his individual needs. I realized that I had to be patient and a caretaker before being concerned with the academic demand of teaching the content. Our relationship blossomed and I became the student's biggest supporter. At the end of the school year, this student would willingly try his hardest. He was reading chapter books with ease. This is when I realized that all students may be in the same grade, but their needs are as unique as their personality.

This story is why I focus on making sure all students are receiving the resources needed to be successful. I want to help veteran teachers find their "spark" again, so they too want to make sure students have the resources to be successful. In my experience, I see many teachers just going through the motions. Situations like my story are why most educators become teachers and why they continue to teach. My goal in education is to make a difference and help everyone I work with. One way I think this could be achieved is through teaching my colleagues about using High Leverage Practices with their students.

**Background**

I am an Intervention Specialist at a rural, public-school. I have taught for three years and work with students with and without disabilities. When working with students, I push into the general education teachers' rooms to help students. This makes it easier for the students to be exposed to grade level content but also get the support they need to grow academically. I have consistently heard teacher talk about how education has changed, and it is hard to meet the needs of all students. Therefore, I chose to carry out my research in this district and specific building.

Once approved by the IRB, I conducted a study focused on High Leverage Practices in a rural, public-school district in Midwest Ohio. At the time of the study, the school district was composed of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The district had 2689 students, 125 general education teachers, and 40 intervention specialists. The district's student population consisted of White (80%), Hispanic (15.3%), Multiracial (3.6%), African American (.5%), and Asian (.5%) with 59.5% of those students being economically disadvantaged (Ohio Department of

Education, n.d.). The elementary schools were divided into one Kindergarten through first grade, and then two buildings with second through fifth grade.

The focus of this study was specifically in one second through fifth grade building including three second grade teachers and two third grade teachers who work with students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting. I selected these participants as a convenience sample because I had the chance to work with them daily and provide the supports they needed throughout this study. I was able to do this because I am an Intervention Specialist who works directly with teachers in the general education classrooms when servicing my students.

During this study, I used an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design. This was done by sending out a pre survey, conducting teacher trainings and recording the notes, and then sending out a post survey. A pre- and post-survey were used before and after the implementation of teacher training to measure teacher knowledge of high leverage practices, high leverage practices related to instruction, and teacher confidence. An audio recording of teacher trainings and conversations was also used to measure the change in teacher confidence. I chose mixed methods because it allowed me to answer my research question using two forms of data then comparing those results to see if there had been a change (Bui, 2020).

**Importance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine how the general education teacher can use high leverage practices to support students with and without a disability. Education is changing and students' needs are also changing. Educators are facing enormous challenges. These challenges include having a range of students who have different

ability levels and various needs. Teachers need strategies and practices to support all students (Hammond, 2000). Throughout my first two years as an Intervention Specialist, I had to face many challenges. The most challenging was working with teachers and teaching them new practices that would help all students be successful. A comment I often received when working with veteran teachers is, *I was not trained for inclusion*. Many teachers asked what to do with students who just do not get it. As a second-year Intervention Specialist, this intrigued me. I started to investigate what I could do to make my career easier for me and give teachers tools to use in their classroom for themselves and their students with and without disabilities. Through this study, I focused on training teachers in the classroom to demonstrate how High Leverage Practices related to instruction can be used to support students with and without disabilities.

I focused on these ideas because my goal is to give teachers practices and resources to use in the classroom setting. I also focused on supporting teachers which instills more confidence supporting all students in their classroom regardless of their needs. Many teachers in the field are becoming stressed and stretched thin to keep up with the high demands of teaching. Teachers need practices to help them understand and support all students. Implementing new practices such as High Leverage Practices related to instruction will give teachers research-based practices to use with all students.

**Research Question**

I explored one major question throughout the course of this research:
How does the knowledge and implementation of High Leverage Practices particularly related to instruction impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities in the general education classroom?

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the implementation of High Leverage Practices related to instruction in the general education classroom affects teacher confidence. This study looks at how confident teachers feel servicing students with and without disabilities.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of clarification, the following terms are defined:

- *Disability*- "A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)." (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention., 2020, para 1).

- *General education classroom* – "incorporates academic instruction and learning with typical peers" (Anderson, 2021, p.259).

- *High Leverage Practices* (HLP) - "The HLPs are organized around four aspects of practice: Collaboration, Assessment, Social/emotional/behavioral and Instruction. From these four aspects of practice, there are 22 practices intended to address the most critical practices that every K–12 special education teacher should master and be able to demonstrate. The selected practices are used frequently in classrooms and have been shown to improve student outcomes if successfully implemented" (The Council for Exceptional Children, CEC, 2022, p.9).

- *IDEA* (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) - IDEA is a civil rights-based law that relies upon a nondiscrimination framework designed to assure students with dis/abilities and their caregivers have access to high-quality

educational services and opportunities in schools" (Voulgarides & Barrio, 2021, p.40).

- *IEP* – "an individualized education program (IEP) is developed for each student with a disability. The IEP describes the student's current levels of performance, including strengths and needs, with goals, supports, and services to be provided to address student needs in the least restrictive environment" (Kurth, 2022, p. 245).

- *Inclusion*- "Inclusive education is a framework that lays out an educational arrangement in which all students can learn, participate, and are welcome as valuable members of the institution" (Wijeratne, 2022, p.63).

- *Special education* – "Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including— Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings, and Instruction in physical education. Special education includes each of the following, if the services otherwise meet the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section— Speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under State standards; Travel training; and Vocational education" (U.S Department of Education, 2022, paras.1-5).

- *Teacher confidence*- "feelings of self-efficacy after attending sessions in their education methods classes devoted to inclusive practices" (Strieker, 2013, p.162).

**Summary**

      This research study examined how the implementation of High Leverage Practices in the general education classroom impacted teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities.  The need for this study was to give teachers practices to support all students in the classroom. This study highlights the importance of High Leverage Practices.  The following chapter details a review of literature.

## Chapter Two

## Literature Review

When in the classroom, teachers must wear several hats. Teachers have many students with individual needs and goals. In this chapter, I will review articles and studies related to how the implementation of High Leverage Practices can support teachers in the classroom. In the first section, I define High Leverage Practices. In the second section, I focus on describing special education. Finally, in the third section I focus on research related to teacher confidence with servicing all students' needs in the classroom.

### High Leverage Practices

The Council for Exceptional Children (2022) defines High Leverage Practices (HLP's) as organized around four aspects of practice: Collaboration, Assessment, Social/Emotional/Behavioral and Instruction (p.9). Within these four categories there are 22 practices that can help teachers differentiate instruction for all students.

#### Collaboration

- HLP1 Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.
- HLP2 Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.
- HLP3 Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.

**Assessment**

- HLP4 Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs.

- HLP5 Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs.

- HLP6 Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.

**Social/Emotional/Behavioral**

- HLP7 Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.

- HLP8 Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

- HLP9 Teach social behaviors.

- HLP10 Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans.

**Instruction**

- HLP11 Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals.

- HLP12 Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal.

- HLP13 Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.

- HLP14 Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.

- HLP15 Provide scaffolded supports.

- HLP16 Use explicit instruction.

- HLP17 Use flexible grouping.

- HLP18 Use strategies to promote active student engagement.

- HLP19 Use assistive and instructional technologies.

- HLP20 Provide intensive instruction.

- HLP21 Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.

- HLP22 Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior (The Council for Exceptional Children, 2022).

For example, one of the practices suggested in the collaboration category is collaborating with professionals to increase student success, organize, and facilitate meetings with professionals and families and collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services. The instruction category has practices such as identifying and prioritizing long and short-term learning goals, adapting curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals, teaching cognitive and metacognitive practices to support learning and independence, and providing scaffolded supports. These are just a few of the practices suggested by The Council for Exceptional Children as HLP's to support students. High Leverage Practices provide educators effective techniques to improve student outcomes in the classroom (McCray, 2017).

Davin (2015) conducted research about how high leverage practices were used in a foreign language classroom. The practices used connected vocabulary to prior knowledge, scaffolding, and goal setting. The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of high leverage practices in classrooms and understand how students react to those practices. The study took place in four foreign language classrooms. These classrooms consisted of two middle school teachers and two high school teachers. The

teacher participants were selected from two different universities who implement training and background on High Leverage Practices. During this study the participants were observed to see how they implemented High Leverage Practices into their lesson to support student learning. During the lesson the teachers were rated on 24 descriptors. The highest score that a participant could get was a 12 in each category. On many of the descriptors, the participants scored nine or more. They found that there were only two descriptors that all participants scored low on. These descriptors were teaching the lesson vocabulary and personally meaningful lessons. The research was used to show what needs to be focused more on when teaching high leverage practices and how High Leverage Practices can be used to support students in the classroom. The implementation of High Leverage Practices (HLP) allowed the students to grow and understand the new language concepts. It also gave the participants a better understanding of the student's needs. HLP give the teachers opportunities to reach hard concepts that the students may not fully understand. This study helps further understand the implementation of HLP and how it can be used in the classroom.

High Leverage Practices can be seen to work in classrooms and with professionals in leadership roles. Galloway (2017) who interviewed 40 educational professionals about high leverage practices. In this study, there were 40 experts who served as participants to determine how High Leverage Practices relate to leadership. Twenty-six females and 24 males participated. The group of participants were a mix of cultures and ethnicities. The study started by having the participants complete a round one survey. This survey asked questions about leadership. The participants were asked to agree or disagree with statements given on leadership. After completing the first-round survey, a second-round

survey was given. The second-round survey was focused on high leverage practices, including scaffolding and collaboration. Throughout this study Galloway found that High Leverage practices can offer resources and skills to leadership roles education. Skills such as collaboration, goal setting, and communication help schools.

Teachers can use HLP's in the classroom without having to completely change how they teach "The high leverage practices identified here may offer a unique contribution to leadership preparation, adding to a growing but still nascent body of frameworks and tools focused on developing transformative, race-conscious, culturally-responsive educational and constructionist leadership" (Galloway, 2017, p.26). Using high leverage practices can guide leadership in a district and can support multicultural views.

High Leverage Practices can also be paired with other teaching strategies to better help students. Riccomini (2017), explains how teachers can implement high leverage practices into the classroom while using other well-known practices. In this article five teachers studied specially designed instruction which included high leverage practices, explicit instruction, and intensive intervention. When using all three teaching strategies, especially high leverage practices, students responded better and had a better opportunity for growth. High Leverage Practices can serve as foundational ideas and skills that can lead to instruction that is effective int the classroom. These ideas need to be implemented throughout most of the instructions and not just parts and to all students (Riccomini, 2017).

High leverage practices have been shown to enhance student learning. If they are implemented consistently and effetely. Hurlbut (2020) studied and questioned teachers

about high leverage practices and their effectiveness. The researchers asked 3 teachers and administrators in depth questions via interviews about High Leverage Practices and the implementation of these practices. The researchers found that staff members understood what high leverage practices were and they believed they were enhancing student learning. They also found that the effectiveness of the high leverage practices depended on the previous teaching methods. If students were already exposed to high leverage practices, they did better than a student who were newly exposed to these practices. This study is important because it shows educators that there are benefits of working to better instruction and using successful strategies. The use of HLP can ensure better instruction and also prepare future educators with teaching practices that can help successfully navigate through many years of teaching (Hurlbut, 2020).

These studies show that when High Leverage Practices are implemented into the classroom, students respond well. These practices can also be used in different areas of education such as leadership.  I will use this research to explain how these practices can be used and be purposeful for these teachers.

**Special Education and High Leverage Practices**

When teachers need help with meeting a student's needs, they go to a teacher-based team such as a pre-referral team. This team is there to give ideas to teachers to further help the student. On this team there may be general and special education teachers, school psychologist and counselors. During meetings, these people try to solve problems to help the student become more successful and to show growth (Kauffman. 2002). These meetings entail writing down current interventions, student progress and brain storming solutions. For example, if a student is struggling with spelling, they may

come up with ideas to reduce spelling words and to add a spelling intervention throughout the day. The purpose of this process is to prevent a referral to special education.

Once a teacher has tried everything they can, and a student is not making progress they are referred for special education. This can be a challenging procedure because of documentation. VanDerHeyden (2003) explains that this process can be frustrating: "many are questioning regular education instruction, the accuracy of teacher referrals, and attributing overidentification to a failure of school systems to afford children mandated projections against being labeled, such as documented use of effective pre-referral interventions" (p.2). Family dynamics are changing, and many students are showing high needs for intervention and even special education. There are higher numbers of students being referred for special education. To help with this process teachers can use high leverage practices to support interventions and documentation. High leverage practices encourage teachers to change based on the interventions given and assessments students do. This would help support teachers and give proof when referring a student to special education. When using HLP's in the classroom, it shows that teachers know what they are doing, and they are implementing practices that are research based. These practices are implemented to support students with and without disabilities when integrated into daily instruction. Along with being consistent in the classroom, materials and collaboration is needed to support students, especially with disabilities (Brownell, 2021). It is important to give general and special education teachers resources and models to work together to help students with disabilities.

When a teacher notices a student struggling, they start to incorporate practices to help a student such as differentiating the work given. Roiha (2021) defines differentiation as an approach that helps change how things are taught to match the students and their needs. Teachers change what they are doing and their procedures to help the student and meet the student where they are. Teachers give students work and assessments on the students' level. Differentiation is a component to high leverage practices. When teachers are planning instruction and using high leverage practices, they take into consideration each students needs and goals. One student's needs could be very different from the next. This is where differentiation comes into play. Teachers need to make sure students are met where they are in order to show growth.

Along with using differentiation in the classroom to support different learning styles and students, different teaching models are being used. Parker (2012) explains that doing things such as co-teaching does not by itself address the needs of all students and it does not help all students. Many teachers are not prepared to use collaborative teaching to help the needs of all students. Parker (2012), examined collaborative teacher preparation for working with students with disabilities. For this research Parker (2012) selected fifty-eight pre-service teachers (college) to participate in this study. These participants were put into elementary schools to observe co-teaching. During this study, Parker found that many of the participants had never seen or heard of co-teaching before. After observing co- teaching many of the participants expressed the importance of co-teaching and collaboration and how it helps student performance. Many of the participants even noted the emotional and behavioral needs for the students.

Special Education can be a lengthy process to find practices and resources to help students who are struggling. This research looked at the process of helping students and how those processes align to HLP. This relates to this study because HLP's are being used to help students with disabilities and students who may be struggling in the classroom.

**Teacher Confidence**

As the field of Education continues to change, students' needs change too. Teachers are struggling to accommodate student needs and feel confident doing so (Nichols. 2017). When looking at HLP's social, emotional, and behavioral supports are very important for supporting students and making the students comfortable in their classroom. Studies have shown that teachers do not feel prepared to help students with social emotional problems. Nichols (2017) researched how the social emotional health can help students and teacher relationships in the classrooms. When looking at rural students, Nichols found that educators were more knowledgeable about mental health when they understand student and community issues. Inner city communities and schools struggle to help students in this area because of the little if any trainings. Teachers and administrators feel they are underprepared to support students and feel there are little resources.

As a school system we need to provide teachers with practices that will help them support students. HLP's provide teachers ways to support students without completely changing how they teach and what they teach in the classroom. Howery (2013), studied teachers who worked closely with school psychologists to determine the needs of the students and give teachers the practices to help these students. The research suggests that

collaboration in schools needs to further be developed. This collaboration needs to be constantly focused on. Howery (2013) focused on needing to grow understanding and meeting the needs of all students as well as the teacher. These needs include social emotional needs. In this study they focused on skills related to social emotional, to give to teachers to meet their needs as well as the students' needs. The high demand on student needs takes a toll on the teacher in and outside of the classroom. Howery (2013) and Nichols (2017) conducted research on the effects on social emotional needs of students. They found that many teachers are not confident in this area and admit they do not have the training or knowledge. HLP focuses not only on the student and teacher growth but the importance of social emotional needs. If teachers are given practices to help students, they would feel more confident supporting students throughout the school day.

Studies have also shown that teacher and student relationships influence teacher confidence. Meyer (2018) and Akman (2020) found that when students and their teachers have a positive relationship the teachers have higher confidence. Teachers feel they can meet their students' needs and the students feel their teacher is doing the best they can. Meyer (2018) goes more in depth about understanding students as a whole and who they are in and outside of the classroom. During this research Meyer (2018) focused on how students develop relationships with peers and how their experiences outside of school impact their education. Meyer (2018) found that students and teachers have the same understanding about how important it is to build meaningful relationships. Knowing this information helps teachers understand what their students will react to and understand how they learn best. In the classroom there is an importance of connecting with all students, "teachers' understanding of students' behaviors and their considering students'

thoughts important, their support, respect and affection for students will lead to mutual trust in teacher-student relations and thus will increase devotion to school" (Akman. 2020, p. 335). This study also found that understanding the student as a whole and their behaviors help the overall relationship between the teacher, student, and school. When the teachers understand the student, they become more confident in meeting the needs of their students.

School districts have seen the need for teachers to be confident in their career and what they are doing in the classroom (Fuad, 2019).  Teachers have tried strategies to help themselves and their students be successful in the classroom. Fuad (2019) researched how to use collaborative critical thinking skills to improve teacher confidence in the classroom. In this study the students were taught collaborative critical thinking skills when completing a science lesson in the classroom. Faud (2019) found that when incorporating these practices into the classroom the students performed better and the teacher confidence and student confidence went up. This is similar to the study performed by McNelly (2021) incorporating media into the classroom. McNelly (2021) researched teacher confidence with using media in the classroom. McNelly (2021) found that when teachers use media for literacy, teachers understood little. These teachers needed training to help with using different methods of technology in the classroom. Once training was established and implemented these teachers reported feeling more confident with using media and technology in the classroom (p.120).  This research found that with consistent modeling and training with teaching strategies, teachers can become more effective and confident. Professional development time can be utilized to teach these strategies.

This research sought to determine how confident teachers are in the classroom with meeting the needs of students. Some of these needs may be academic and some social/emotional. When looking at the areas where teachers do not feel confident, HLP's could be used to give teachers practices to boost their confidence in meeting the needs of their students. This relates to this study because it looked at the connection between giving teachers practices and teacher confidence.

**Summary**

The literature suggests there are benefits of High Leverage Practices in the classroom. High Leverage Practices consist of practices to use in the classroom to support students with and without disabilities. These practices have shown to benefit teacher instruction and student education. High Leverage Practices can also help students with disabilities in the classroom. The literature review looks at special education in the classroom and the supports needed for those students. The use of High Leverage Practices can give teachers the strategies to help students with disabilities and students who are struggling in the classroom. Along with High Leverage Practices and Special education the literature review looks at teacher confidence. The research suggests teachers do not feel confident meeting student needs because of the lack of training and knowledge. This suggest that the use of High Leverage Practices could give teachers practices to not only help them support students academically but also socially/emotionally. The following chapter details the methods of my research.

**Chapter Three**

**Methodology**

The focus of this research was to determine how the implementation of High Leverage Practices related to instruction impacted teacher confidence in supporting students with and without disabilities. To do this I used explanatory sequential mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2014). This involved the analysis of a pre- and post-survey as well as audio recordings and transcripts from teacher meetings. Explanatory sequential mixed methods requires both qualitative and quantitative data to be analyzed in research. Creswell (2014) states that using mixed methods provides a strong understanding of the question. I used explanatory sequential mixed methods design because I first collected quantitative data through a survey to inform the implementation of the teacher trainings. This also helped me further understand how confident teachers feel about servicing students with and without disabilities. From there I used qualitative data to identify common themes and topics. Meeting transcripts and audio notes were used to determine if teachers' confidence changed and if their understanding of High Leverage Practices changed.

**Participants**

Out of 11 teachers who work in second and third grade, five of them consented to participate in the research study. Three second grade teachers and two third grade

teachers agreed to this research. All five participants were white and identified as females. The teachers range in age from 25- to 49-year-old. Years of experience for the participating teachers ranged from four years to 35 years. I chose these participants because they are the teachers whom I have had conversations with about needing more support and training when accommodating for the different needs in their classroom. Creswell (2014) describes choosing participants based on their convenience and availability as a convenience sample. Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants 1.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

| Participant number | Age | Experience | Current area of teaching |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher 1 | 25 | 4 years | 3rd grade |
| Teacher 2 | 49 | 21 years | 2nd grade |
| Teacher 3 | 32 | 16 years | 3rd grade |
| Teacher 4 | 47 | 30 years | 2nd grade |
| Teacher 5 | 48 | 26 years | 2nd grade |

**Setting**

The research took place in one elementary school in a rural district within a small town in Midwest, Ohio. There are approximately 5,500 residents in the community. Of those residents, nearly 88% are White; around .2% are African American/Black; more than 13% are Hispanic; nearly 4% is two or more races; and over 22% are in poverty (https://www.census.gov, 2022). These community demographics are representative of

the school in which the research done. The school consisted of nearly 76% White students; 19% Hispanic students; over 3% Multiracial; 18% are students with disabilities; nearly 47% have an economic disadvantage (Ohio Department of Education, 2022).

The teachers who participated in this study completed training over six weeks. The training occurred during three meetings. The training meetings occurred for 30 minutes between the time 8:20 and 8:50 a.m. as this was contracted time before school begins. The trainings took place in each teacher's classroom. Within each classroom there are around 24 student desks, a teacher desk, and an intervention table with five chairs. The tables are in the front or back of the room depending on the teacher. Materials used for the trainings were handouts, videos and laptops. These materials were available to all teachers participating.

The surveys were sent out before the training began and after the training finished. Teachers were able to complete the surveys on their district devices and lasted about five minutes. Teachers were able to complete these surveys at home or during the school day during their plan times. The training meetings occurred on the first, third, and sixth week of the research period. The meetings lasted for 30 minutes and took place during teacher plan time at the beginning of the day. Teachers then implemented the practices discussed in the meetings into their classrooms. Teachers were encouraged to write down what they were working on and how they thought the strategy was working. Teachers had the opportunity to do this before or during the meeting.

**Data Collection**

In this research, exploratory sequential mixed methods approach was used. Exploratory sequential mixed methods approach uses qualitative and qualitative data

"involves a two-phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then uses the results to plan (or build on to) the second, qualitative phase" (Creswell, 2014, p. 224). In this study, I used a pre- survey to understand teachers' knowledge of High Leverage Practices and the teacher's confidence servicing students with and without disabilities. I then used meeting notes and audio recordings to transcribe what was discussed during these individual meetings with teachers and practices implemented in the classroom. After having the final meetings with teachers, I then sent out a post-survey via SurveyMonkey to the teachers. I explain each of these data collection methods in detail in the sections below.

*High Leverage Practices Survey*

The first data collection tool I used collected responses on what teachers' knowledge of High Leverage Practices and their confidence with servicing students with and without disabilities in the classroom. This survey was sent in an email to teachers, and they were given a link to complete the survey online via SurveyMonkey. This survey consisted of items related to teachers' knowledge about High Leverage Practices. It then addressed how comfortable teachers were servicing students with a disability and servicing students without a disability. The items also elicited responses regarding different High Leverage Practices related to instruction and how often the teachers implement these strategies. Teachers answered with regularly, sometimes, rarely, and never. There were 17 questions total on the survey, and it took about five minutes to complete. See Appendix C, Pre- and Post-Survey.

When creating the surveys, I based the questions on instructional practices related to High Leverage Practices and how confident teachers are with servicing students with

and without disabilities. I first created two surveys. One survey was based on teacher confidence and the other was based on general knowledge of High Leverage Practices. I revised this strategy based on feedback from Dr. Libnoch and Dr. McGuffey. After receiving this feedback, I combined the two surveys and focused on one area of High Leverage Practices, instruction.

Revising the survey multiple times helped Increased the validity. The Yale Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d.) explains that "A panel of experts is usually convened to design the table of specifications and review questions, to ensure that they are representative of the field of knowledge being measured" (p.1). This survey was used in a pilot study. After utilizing what was learned from the pilot study and reviewing it with Dr Libnoch, changes were made to the survey. The use of experts in the field ensures the validity of an assessment. The reliability was increased because the same questions were used consistently throughout this study. To establish the consistency of the assessment, I used the same survey items and scoring procedures for the pre and post survey. The pre and post survey were sent to the teachers via email, and they completed them via SurveyMonkey. The participants were also given questions that were worded positive and negative to make sure there was reduced bias when completing the surveys to increase the reliability of the data.

### Teacher Training

Data collection also occurred during teacher trainings. These trainings were done with the teachers individually. During the training sessions with teachers, I filled out a data meeting protocol sheet with prompts including "resources given" "what's going well/successes" and "what needs to improve". See Appendix D for meeting protocol.

This protocol sheet was made to guide conversations during teacher trainings and to make documentations. This sheet was used to note points I thought were important. Along with the meeting protocol sheet, I recorded the meetings on my cell phone. The audio recordings were used to note things I may have missed when I was taking notes on the meeting protocol sheet.

The meeting protocol sheet and audio recordings documented the conversations around the teacher trainings. See Appendix D for meeting protocol sheet.

When creating the meeting protocol sheets, I included talking points such as which High Leverage Practice related to instruction was focused on and what the plan was to implement this strategy. I revised this sheet based on feedback from Dr. Libnoch and Dr. McGuffey. After receiving this feedback, I added talking points such as what is going well, what could be improved, and I noted information such as the meeting date. Revising the sheet with different experts helped the survey become more valid. The Yale Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d.) explains that "A panel of experts is usually convened to design the table of specifications and review questions, to ensure that they are representative of the field of knowledge being measured" ensures the validity of an assessment (p.1). Along with being valid, the meeting protocol sheet was reliable. To establish the consistency of the assessment, I used the same meeting protocol sheet with all teacher participants during every meeting. I used the meeting protocol sheets during every meeting when talking through the teacher trainings. This established consistency with all meetings and ensured all meetings had the same talking points.

**Data Analysis**

To answer my research question, I analyzed the data collected from the survey and teacher trainings separately. I looked at each response for each survey and compared the responses. I then analyzed the teacher trainings. I looked at all meeting protocol sheets and listened to audio notes. Below are how I looked at each data point.

**High Leverage Practices Survey**

After collecting the pre-survey data, I categorized the survey items into three groups and analyzed the data from each group separately. One group included items related to overall knowledge of HLPs. The second group included items related to HLP confidence. The last group included results related to knowledge of HLPs for instruction. This provided me with the baseline on overall knowledge of HLPs, confidence, and knowledge of HLPs related to instruction based on the data. I then used descriptive statistics to find standard deviation between all the responses. I used descriptive statistics to find the mean for individual responses. For example, when looking at overall knowledge for HLP's I could see if a teacher was on average familiar with HLP's. This also gave me the opportunity to look at the mean for confidence and knowledge of HLPs related to instruction. Having this information on individual teachers helped provide a better understanding on where to focus the teacher trainings when related to instruction. I used this same process to analyze the post survey data. This analysis helped to see if changes in instruction and confidence occurred after the teacher trainings were completed as a whole group and individually. After administering the survey, I removed question two from the analysis. I did this because the question was not clear to the teacher

participants and the answers did not align with that was being asked. Therefore, question two data is not included in the pre and post survey data.

To determine the change, I examined all the participants responses to the survey as a group. I drew conclusions after running inferential statistics on the pre and post survey data. I did this by using a dependent t-test (paired-samples $t$ test). A dependent t-test is used to determine if the differences in two groups of scores are statistically significant or if it is due to chance (Bui, 2020). This showed whether there was a significant change in overall knowledge of HLPs, confidence in implementing HLPs, and knowledge of HLPs related to instruction from before the trainings to after the trainings.

**Teacher Trainings**

After having one meeting with the teachers based on their High Leverage Practice strategy, I had an understanding of where the teachers in regard to their knowledge of HLP's and how they felt about supporting students with and without disabilities. I identified and analyzed the common themes and patterns from each meeting.

During the teacher meetings, I filled out the meeting protocol sheets. This entailed the HLP that the teacher was focused on, what was going well, and what needed to improve. After each meeting, I transcribed the audio recordings and coded the notes to capture the responses more clearly. I then used the coded notes to find common themes. This allowed me to identify themes I may have missed when filling out the meeting protocol sheet. I studied the codes over time to see if there were any changes in the types of responses teachers provided after they had been exposed to trainings and had opportunities to implement the practices into their own classrooms. This enabled me to see if the teachers felt more confident with servicing students with and without

disabilities and to see if teachers understood the implementation of High Leverage Practices.

**Procedures**

The study began after I received approval from Wittenberg's Institutional Review Board (IRB), see Appendix A. First, I distributed consent forms to all the teachers who showed interest in this study during an initial meeting. See Appendix B for consent form. The consent forms were distributed to six second grade teachers and five third grade teachers. During this meeting I described the study to participants and overviewed the information provided on the consent form. I did this by describing what the focus of the study was and why and how this study would be implemented. I also explained how I would be collecting the data. I gave the teachers one week to return the signed and dated forms if they chose to participate. After receiving five consent forms, I created a pseudonym for all teachers who agreed to participate. Once this was complete, I sent out an email with a link to the pre-survey via SurveyMonkey and directions for completion. The teachers completed the survey within four days of sending out the original email and used their district devices to complete the survey.

Once all teachers completed the survey, I analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. I looked at the mean for individual teachers' responses. The responses were grouped in three categories – 1. General Knowledge of HLP, 2. Teacher Confidence and 3. Knowledge of HLP Related to Instruction. This gave me an opportunity to see how teachers on average felt about servicing students with and without disabilities in their classroom. I was interested in the identified the standard deviation of scores. I also analyzed where teachers struggle based on the High Leverage Practices given related to
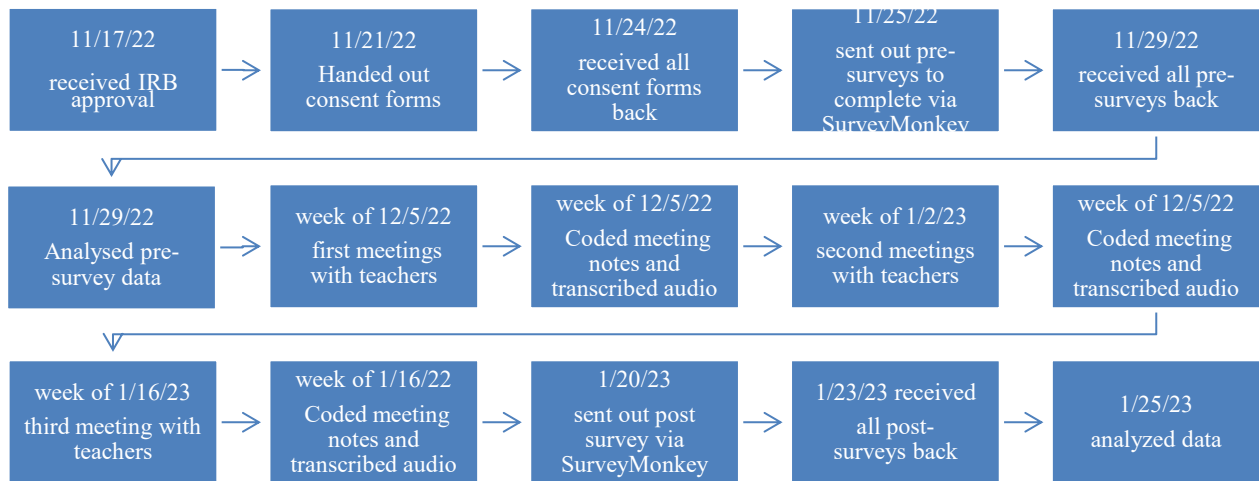
instruction. From these responses I set the focus for each teacher. Once I gave each

teacher a focus related to HLP instruction, I scheduled meetings with each participating

teacher. These meetings were held at the beginning of the day (8:20- 8:50 AM) for 30

minutes. During the first meeting I explained what High Leverage Practices are, why they

are important, how the teacher felt about servicing all students and what strategy they

were focused on related to instruction. I explained the strategy and modeled how it looks

in the classroom. During these meetings I filled out the meeting protocol sheet and

recorded the conversation with my phone. The teacher had two weeks until the next

meeting. After the meeting, I coded the meeting notes. This helped me find common

themes, such as talking about struggling to find resources. I then transcribed the

recording to find themes I may have missed during my note taking. This process repeated

on the first, third and sixth week of the research. Once all meetings were complete, I then

sent out the post survey to the teachers via Survey Monkey. I analyzed post-survey data

using descriptive statistics the same way I did with the pre-survey.

Once the data collection was complete, I used inferential statistics, dependent t-test to

compare pre and post survey results to determine change in the level of teacher

confidence throughout the research process. I revisited the coded notes from each

meeting and compared the teacher training meeting themes from week to week to see if

there was change over time.

Below figure 1, a timeline of the research process.

**Figure 1**

*Research Timeline*



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11/17/22 received IRB approval | 11/21/22 Handed out consent forms | 11/24/22 received all consent forms back | 11/25/22 sent out pre-surveys to complete via SurveyMonkey | 11/29/22 received all pre-surveys back |
| 11/29/22 Analysed pre-survey data | week of 12/5/22 first meetings with teachers | week of 12/5/22 Coded meeting notes and transcribed audio | week of 1/2/23 second meetings with teachers | week of 12/5/22 Coded meeting notes and transcribed audio |
| week of 1/16/23 third meeting with teachers | week of 1/16/22 Coded meeting notes and transcribed audio | 1/20/23 sent out post survey via SurveyMonkey | 1/23/23 received all post-surveys back | 1/25/23 analyzed data |

## Summary

In summary, I used an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design to understand how High Leverage Practices related to instruction can impact teacher confidence servicing students with and without disabilities. The Data collection tools include pre and post surveys (analyzed with inferential statistics and descriptive statistics), meeting protocol sheet and audio recordings (analyzed by coding). Chapter 4 details my research findings.

**Chapter 4**

**Findings**

In this study, I attempted to determine if High Leverage Practices could be used as practices in the classroom to support teachers and students. During this study, I asked teachers to implement one High Leverage Practice in their classroom. As teachers implemented a High Leverage practice related to instruction, I met with teachers to further understand if teachers felt more confident with servicing students with and without disabilities. This then was applied back to the guiding question, How does the knowledge and implementation of High Leverage Practices particularly related to instruction impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities in the general education classroom? In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the study.

**How does the knowledge and implementation of High Leverage Practices particularly related to instruction impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities in the general education classroom?**

Data was collected by using a pre- and post-survey to understand general knowledge of High Leverage Practice, teacher confidence and Knowledge of High Leverage Practices related to instruction. Data was also collected by meeting with teachers to take notes on a meeting protocol sheet as well as audio transcriptions. Each

data collection was from 5 teachers. I first used descriptive statistics to analyze each pre- and post- surveys by individual teacher responses then again to analyze the data as a whole group. I also used inferential statistics to analyze the teacher meeting protocol sheets to find common themes. This helped determine if there was a change in teacher confidence from the implementation of High Leverage Practices.

To determine if there was significant change in teacher confidence from the pre-survey to the post- survey, I ran a dependent samples $t$-test. Data was collected from the pre and post survey questions. The mean of each question was calculated by looking at every survey response for each question. To find the mean, each response needed to have a point value. I did this by giving each response a set number. Teachers could answer two survey questions with extremely familiar (5), very familiar (4), somewhat familiar (3), not so familiar (2), not at all familiar (1). The higher the rating the more points were given to that response. Thirteen questions had the response of regularly (4), sometimes (3), rarely (2), never (1) . Two questions had the option to answer with strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). For the pre- and post-surveys teachers were assigned points for each of their responses then averaged to find the mean. This information is presented on Table 2. When looking at Table 2, note Q refers to the question asked on the survey.

**Table 2**

*Pre and Post Teacher Survey Questions Related to HLPs t-test*

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | *p* Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q1:** I am familiar with high leverage practices in the area of instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3 | 1.41 | 0.091 |
| Post-Survey | 3.6 | 0.24 | |
| **Q3**: I implement High-Leverage practices in my daily instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 2.8 | 1.14 | 0.015 |
| Post-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | |
| **Q4:** I am confident supporting students <u>**with**</u> disabilities in the classroom through my instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.4 | 0.54 | 0.391 |
| Post-Survey | 3.2 | 0.44 | |
| **Q5:** I am confident supporting students without disabilities in the classroom through my instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | 0.391 |
| Post-Survey | 3.4 | 0.54 | |
| **Q6**: I feel unsure about how to support students with disabilities in the classroom. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 2.4 | 0.54 | 0.000 |
| Post-Survey | 2.4 | 0.54 | |
| **Q7:** I identify and prioritize learning goals for all of my students. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.4 | 1.48 | 0.181 |
| Post-Survey | 3.8 | 0.54 | |
| **Q8:** I systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal for all of my students. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 4 | 0 | 0.181 |
| Post-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | |
| **Q9:** I adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.8 | 0.44 | 0.000 |
| Post-Survey | 3.8 | 0.44 | |
| **Q10:** I teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and Independence. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.2 | 0.44 | 0.391 |
| Post-Survey | 2.8 | 0.44 | |
| **Q11:** I provide scaffolded supports during my instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.8 | 0.44 | 0.391 |
| Post-Survey | 4 | 0 | |
| **Q12:** I use flexible grouping during my instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | 0.391 |
| Post-Survey | 3.8 | 0.44 | |
| **Q13:** I use strategies to promote active student engagement during my instruction. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 4 | 0 | 0.181 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Post-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | |
| **Q14:** I use assistive and instructional technologies in my classroom. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.4 | 0.54 | 0.057 |
| Post-Survey | 2.6 | 0.54 | |
| **Q15:** I provide intensive instruction in my classroom. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.4 | 0.54 | 0.057 |
| Post-Survey | 4 | 0 | |
| **Q16:** I teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | 0.000 |
| Post-Survey | 3.6 | 0.54 | |
| **Q17:** I provide positive and constructive feedback to guide student learning and behavior. | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.4 | 0.44 | 0.391 |
| Post-Survey | 4 | 0 | |
| **Overall** | | | |
| Pre-Survey | 3.41 | 0.743 | 0.903 |
| Post-Survey | 3.48 | 0.636 | |

The findings presented in Table 2 show that the pre and post survey questions given to teachers about High Leverage Practices were not significantly different when looking at the overall *p*-value. When looking at all pre and post survey results, the 2-tail *p* value is greater than the error confidence level (0.05). These findings suggest that there was not a statistically significant difference in the means of the overall group respsonses. This means that there is not enough data to support the connection to HLP and teacher confidence when supporting students in the classroom.

Teachers were given a High Leverage Practice to implement in their classroom. During this time of implementation, I met with teachers to talk about what was working well, what could improve and other talking points. Table 3 includes the common themes each teacher talked about during the first meeting.

**Table 3**
*Common Themes: First Teacher Meeting*

|  | Theme(s) |
|---|---|
| **Teacher 1** | lack of time, and resources. |
| **Teacher 2** | struggles with so many educational needs in the classroom. |
| **Teacher 3** | lack of time, different needs in room. |
| **Teacher 4** | Willing to do anything for students. Questioning how to do better for all students and scheduling. |
| **Teacher 5** | Questioning the effectiveness of HLP's, lack of time. |

The findings presented in Table 3, suggest the frustration teachers had with implementing new practices into the classroom. Many of the teachers mentioned during their meeting the lack of time to support all students. When talking to the teachers there was also questions about how to make HLP's related to instruction work in their classroom. At first the teachers were unsure what HLP's were. After explaining what they were and how to implement them within the classroom, teachers were more understanding.

Once teachers were given a High Leverage Practice to implement in their classroom, we met two weeks after to check in about the implementation of their selected HLP related to instruction. During this time of implementation, I met one-on-one with each teacher. To find the common themes throughout these meetings, I filled out the

meeting protocol sheet. Table 5 includes the common themes that emerged by each teacher during the second meeting.

**Table 4**

*Common Themes: Second Teacher Meeting*

|  | Theme |
|---|---|
| **Teacher 1** | Supporting all students, using HLP consistently and throughout all instruction. |
| **Teacher 2** | Supporting all students, lack of interventions and support from admin. |
| **Teacher 3** | Questioning HLP and what other strategies to use. Inconsistent implementation. |
| **Teacher 4** | HLP related to current procedures, helping students who are not struggling. |
| **Teacher 5** | Discussing lack of time, inconsistent implementation. |

Table 4 shows common themes for the second meeting with teachers about the implementation of a HLP related to instruction in their classroom. The purpose of this implementation was to help teachers feel more comfortable servicing all students. During the second meeting, three teachers demonstrated a better understanding on why to implement these practices and how it affected students. Meanwhile, two teachers were still reluctant to fully and consistently implementing these practices. Teacher 5 is an example of this. Common themes for teacher 5 were the lack of time to implement these practices effectively and how HLP's were too hard to complete. Teacher 3 also struggled

with fully understanding how HLP applies in their classroom and expressed how much work it is to implement these practices.  The other 3 teachers, teachers 1, 2, and 4 had positive outlooks. These teachers were trying their best to use HLP to support all students in the classroom and to see the benefits. Teacher 4 was even using these practices with other students who needed extra help.

After six weeks of implementation, I conducted a third and final meetings with the teacher participants. During this meeting, I talked with the teachers about how the implementation of the HLP strategy related to instruction went in the classroom and how they felt about the it. Table 5 shows the final themes identified during the last meeting with teachers.

**Table 5**

*Common Themes: Third Teacher Meeting*

|  | Theme |
|---|---|
| **Teacher 1** | Supporting students, willing to implement other strategies. |
| **Teacher 2** | Struggles of the implementation, benefits to students and them as a teacher. |
| **Teacher 3** | Struggling to implement, unsure of results, inconsistent. |
| **Teacher 4** | Thankful for new strategies. |
| **Teacher 5** | Unsure of results, complaining about workload and no time. |

Table 5 includes common themes for each teacher during the final meeting. During this time there was a split between teachers who were willing to keep HLPs in their classroom and teachers who were unwilling to use these practices. The themes indicate teacher 4 is willing to use these practices in the future, while teacher 5 was inconsistent with using the given practices with students in their classroom. The themes also indicate teachers 1 and 2 were willing to implement HLP's into the classroom because they saw how these strategies can benefit student learning. Meanwhile, teacher 3 was unsure of the results and was not consistent with implementing HLP's into the classroom.

**Summary**

The findings of this study showed there was growth of teacher confidence and knowledge of High Leverage Practices from the beginning of the study to the end. When looking at the overall scores of the pre survey and the post surveys, teachers responded with more understanding and comfortability with servicing all students in the classroom. Common themes from the meetings with teachers show there was a change in some teachers when servicing students.  The final chapter will discuss the results relative to previous research and future studies.

**Chapter 5**

**Discussion**

The focus of this study was to determine if the implementation of High Leverage Practices could be used in the classroom to support students and teachers. I chose this topic to explore if the use of High Leverage practices could help boost teacher confidence when servicing students with and without disabilities. In this chapter I will discuss the findings on the implementation of HLP's related to instruction and change in teacher confidence.

**How does the knowledge and implementation of High Leverage Practices particularly related to instruction impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities in the general education classroom?**

This is the research question that drove this study. I wanted to see if teachers would implement High Leverage Practice's related to instruction in their classroom and if this would help support student learning and teacher confidence. When looking at the data from chapter 4, the findings suggest that working with teachers to incorporate HLP's related to instruction did not have a significant impact on teacher confidence. For the survey, a dependent samples $t$-test was used to compare the pre-survey results to the post survey results. The results showed there was not a statistically significant difference, $p >$ .05. This indicates that there was not a change in the level of teacher confidence from the

beginning to the end of the study. Although when looking at the overall *p*-value for the entire survey suggest there was not a change in the level of teacher confidence, when looking at the individual *p*-value that may not be the case. Question three relates to implementing HLP into daily instruction. The *p*-value of this questions was 0.015. This suggest that there was a significant change. This can be said the same for other questions regarding the implementation of HLP's into the classroom. For example, question fifteen states "I provide intensive instruction in my classroom." There was a change in the mean when analyzing the pre and post survey, going from 3.4 to 4. When looking at the majority of the *p*-value collected from the survey the data suggest there was no significant difference from the pre and post survey responses.

I also analyzed the individual questions of the survey to see if there was a change during the implementation of HLP related to instruction. When looking at the overall survey statistics, the mean was slightly lower on the post survey when compared to the pre-survey. When looking at the individual question mean, some questions had higher post survey means compared to their pre-survey. This indicates teachers became more familiar with HLP and more comfortable using these strategies to help students in the classroom.

Along with the survey, meetings were conducted with the teachers to support the implementation of these practices into the classroom. During this time, I talked with teachers about implementing HLP's related to instruction. Meeting protocol sheets were filled out to ensure common topics were noted and to keep accurate account of what was discussed and how teachers were doing with the implementation. During the first meeting, all teachers expressed their concerns of implementing these practices. Teacher

one, three and five expressed the concern for implementing HLP's while having no time in the classroom. From the meeting notes, it is a common theme the participating teachers felt concerned about how to implement these practices and how it would affect their classroom. At the second meeting teacher one, two and four, felt more comfortable using these practices and were using these practices to support all students. Teacher four implemented tier 4 interventions to help students become more confident on skills they did not understand yet. Teacher 4 expressed she was willing to implement these practices to help all students. Teacher three and five struggled to consistently implement HLP into their classroom procedures. During meeting two, teacher three and five had not consistent implement HLP into their classroom because of lack of time, and daily classroom struggles such as behavior and keeping routines. At the third and last meeting, teacher five was the only teacher who did not feel confident using these new practices. Teacher three was unsure of the results and was struggling to implement these practices into the classroom over the 6-week period. Teacher one, two, and four expressed how the students are being supported and they saw how HLP benefit students in their rooms. During meeting three with teacher two expressed that she felt she could support the students more using these practices without completely changing her classroom procedures. These common themes show how the implementation of HLP related to instruction helps support students and support teachers to feel more confident.

Previous research offers to support the claim that High Leverage Practices can be used to support students in the classroom. Davin (2015) conducted research on the use of HLP in a foreign classroom and found that the use of HLP's help students further understand concepts that they may otherwise struggle with. It is important to note this

observation was also made during this study. During one of the teacher meetings, Teacher 4 stated "I see progress after working one on one with (student). I think it's making a difference, slowly". This teacher was implementing a tier 3 intervention with a student who did not have basic concepts other students did.

During this time of teachers implementing practices into their classroom, some teachers were unsure of the work or why they should do this study. Teacher 5 was not clear on the benefits of implementing HLP into their classroom. Comments such as "but why am I doing this if its for your school" and "aren't you supposed to put the work in?" were made. Galloway (2017) and Riccomini (2017) previously researched HLP and agreed that HLP can be used with current procedures of the classroom and without completely changing what the teacher is used to doing. I used this research to put teachers minds at ease and to show there is a reason for implementing these practices into their classroom. Throughout this study I also had teachers expressing their concern of not having enough time. Teacher one, three, and five expressed during the first meeting they did not have time to focus on specific students and their needs. This was a common theme throughout all the meetings. I found this compelling because Nichols (2017) and Howery (2013) researched teacher confidence and how it impacts students. Nichols (2017) mentioned the struggle of accommodating all students and their needs while feeling confident doing so. During my meetings with teacher five, it was mentioned how hard it is to help all the students. During our second meeting, teacher 5 expressed how she could not focus on just one student because there was a room filled with other students who needed her attention too. Teacher 5 focused on students self-regulating and becoming problem solvers. When the student was self-regulating and doing expected

behavior, they received a sticker on their If and Then chart. Teacher 5 reported there was not much progress on the behavior and self-regulation, and it was also hard to manage.

Previous research offers to support the claim that High Leverage Practices can be used to support students in the classroom while helping teachers feel more confident in supporting these students. This research is important because it shows how the data collected from this research study is significant.

**Reflections and Limitations**

As an Intervention Specialist, I understand how challenging it can be to help students who are struggling while also feeling confident doing so. Throughout my first years of teaching, I have seen many teachers unsure of what to do, even those who have many years of experience. These experiences lead me to study High Leverage Practices and how to successfully implement those practices in the classroom. Although this research was challenging, it was successful and insightful. This study provided me with practices and ideas I can use in my own classroom and HLP's when working closely with other teachers. I learned ways to help teachers when they are unsure of what to do, while helping my own students.

There are several aspects of this study that I would approach differently if I were to do it again. First, I would like to have more participants. The study did show that the implementation of HLP related to instruction helped teachers feel more confident servicing students with and without disabilities, I believe that a bigger group of teacher participants would add additional evidence to this study. I would also like to add a bigger variety of teachers. In this study there are only five teacher participants, from which are three second grade teachers and two third grade teachers. If I were able to gather title one

teachers, fourth grade teachers, fifth grade teachers, and specials teachers there would be more information that supports the idea that HLP can be used with the current classroom procedures across different instructional areas. If the sample size of teachers were to increase and become more diverse, I could increase the validity of this study. I would also like to extend the time and conduct the research at a different time of the year.

A common theme I found during my teacher meetings, was lack of time and too much on the teacher's plate. During one of my first interviews with teacher three comments were made about "how do I have time for this?" and "isn't this your job to do?". These comments made me reflect on why a teacher would feel this way. Our district is changing procedures and curriculum therefore many educators in our district are feeling overwhelmed. I would change the timing of this study to a time where all these big changes were not happening. I would also like to make the study last longer. This would give teachers a chance to make mistakes and learn from them but also receive guidance from me. Finally, I would change how I conducted the teacher meetings. If I had more time, I would have three meetings with the teachers as individuals and three meetings as a group. Having a meeting as a group would give teachers an opportunity to share how these practices are working and give them ideas they may have not tried. The importance of talking as a group and sharing ideas would show teachers it is possible to fit these practices into their current procedures and teaching styles. It would also give teachers inspiration by seeing the practices working in other classrooms.

The results of this study have implications in my classroom, teachers, and my district. My research from this study suggested that the use of High Leverage Practice's related to instruction in the classroom has a positive impact on teacher confidence in

serving students with and without disabilities. These findings can be shared with other teachers in the building and district. This evidence can be used to show the district that implementation of these practices will help them reach their first goal as a district, to close the achievement gap.

Throughout this research study I learned many things. First, I learned the importance of being persistent and open-minded. When starting the teacher meetings to implement HLP's, I was faced with the challenge of teachers not wanting to change their teaching practices. During these meetings I needed to express the importance of this study and how it could help with some of the stressors the teachers are having in the classroom. Some of the stressors that have been mentioned to me are many student needs and being the only person in the classroom. Teachers have also expressed the stress that comes with finding materials and practices to meet the individual needs of each student. I also needed to be open minded about how the study was going and the results. After the first meeting, I was worried about the teacher participants not implementing these practices at all. All teachers mentioned not having time and expressed a lack of confidence in this study and being able to help students who are struggling in their classroom. I often received comments such as "I am only one person" and "I have a whole class I have to worry about". These comments gave me the initial uneasy feeling of this study and if the results would show a change. I reminded myself to keep an open mind and to give the teachers the material and tools needed to be successful. I also reminded myself I am only in control of myself and not others or their teaching.

During this study there were several limitations. First, a limitation was the size of the sample group. For this study, there were five teachers who participated. This limited

the data collected. I believe if there were a bigger sample size with more variety, the validity and reliability would be more prominent. The study would also be more generalizable to a larger population. Timing of this study was also a limitation. During the school year, the district has mandatory training and new curriculum that needs to be implemented. Along with these changes teachers were also facing the daily stressors of being an educator. During individual meetings, teachers expressed their concerns of not having time and the energy to focus on one student. Changing this study to a different time when there were not so many changes would help teacher resilience. The last limitation I noted was the amount of time spent on this study. This study was over a six-week period. This did not give a lot of time to teach, implement and reflect on HLP's in the classroom. During this six-week period I was only able to meet with teachers for 30 minutes for three times during this study. This gave limited time to talk through this process with teachers. If I were to have more time to meet with teachers and conduct this research, I would have more data to analyze and reflect on.

**Summary**

Throughout my first few years of teaching, I noticed teachers not feeling confident servicing students with different ability levels. To explore this problem, I started my research with a question: how does the implementation of High Leverage Practices related to instruction in the general education classroom impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities? Once a question was established, I administered one pre and post survey via SurveyMonkey, to 5 teachers in an elementary school setting. I also conducted three meetings every two weeks to help teachers implement a High Leverage Practice related to instruction in their

classroom. Throughout this six-week study, teachers were asked to learn about a High Leverage Practice related to instruction, then implement that strategy in their classroom. I met with these teachers to talk about what was going well, what could improve, and other resources needed to help them feel more confident servicing the individual student needs in their classroom. The results of the pre and post survey showed that there was a significant change in teacher confidence once implementing these practices in their classroom. I also saw a change during the teacher meetings and themes extracted from those meetings. I found that by the third meeting, four teachers had a positive outlook on implementing HLP's in their classroom. This research taught me to analyze data more intently and evaluate assessments in ways I had not tried. I also learned more about HLP and how these practices could be implemented to help students and teachers.

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# Appendix A
# IRB approval form



**To:**     Dr. Amy McGuffey and Valerie Johnson

**From:**  Dr. Darby Hiller, Associate Provost
**Date:**  11/17/2022

**Re:**     IRB 021-202223

Wittenberg's Institutional Review Board has reviewed your proposal for the project titled **High Leverage Practices that support students with and without disabilities**. Your project is exempt. The reviewer has no further questions or modifications.

Your project is exempt by the Wittenberg IRB.  If any modifications are made to this research proposal please submit a new IRB petition for review.

Please contact me with any questions regarding this document.

*Darby L. Hiller*

Dr. Darby Hiller,
Chairperson IRB
hillerd@wittenberg.edu
937-372-7930

## Appendix B

### Consent for Research Study

Dear Teachers,

I am currently enrolled at Wittenberg University, pursuing my master's degree in educational leadership. One of the requirements of my coursework is to complete a study related to my research question: How does the implementation of High Leverage Practices in the general education classroom impact teacher confidence in meeting the needs of students with and without disabilities?

**The Research and Intervention Procedures:** First, I will ask you to complete a survey to determine your knowledge of High Leverage Practices (HLP) and your confidence with servicing all students in your classroom. I will analyze that data to see which HLP related to instruction you would benefit most from. I will provide you with training based on your survey responses. Over the next 6 weeks, I will ask you to implement an HLP related to instruction in your classroom. During this time, I will meet with you to discuss your implementation, answer any questions you might have, and give you resources. There will be 3 meetings: week one, week three, and week six. These meetings will be no longer than 30 minutes. The meeting will take place before or after school. These meetings will be recorded for analysis purposes. You could be grouped with others focusing on the same strategy. Finally, I will ask you to complete the initial survey again to determine how implementing the HLP related to instruction has impacted your confidence with servicing students with and without disabilities in the general education classroom.

**Time/Duration:** The survey will take no more than 5 minutes to complete. There will be one survey at the beginning of the study, and the same survey will be given at the end of the study. The research will begin in late November and will last until around the end of January (six weeks). You will implement learned strategies related to instruction in your classroom. There will be 3 meetings during the study lasting no longer than 30 minutes per meeting.

**Benefits:** The aim of the study is to help you gain confidence by using HLP related to instruction in the classroom for students with disabilities and students without disabilities. These strategies could be used throughout the school day.

**Confidentiality:** If you agree to participate in this study, I will use your survey answers in my report, which will be shared with colleagues at Wittenberg University. If given the opportunity, I will also use study results for other professional purposes, such as educational conferences. Your name and any other identifiable information will NOT be shared. When I collect and analyze any data, I will keep all names under numbers. These code names will be on a linking document that will be destroyed once the study is completed. When referring to data, I will use "Teacher #".

**Participation:** Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this form or the research study.

Thank you for your consideration,
Valerie Johnson
(937) 508-3507

Johnsonv@wittenberg.edu

For questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research or IRB approval, contact Dr. Darby Hiller, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Institutional Research, IRB Chair, at 937-591-1024, or by email at hillerd@wittenberg.edu.

**Please complete the form on the next page to give or deny consent to participate in the study.**
Please select one of the following options:
- I **grant permission** for my survey responses and meeting audio/notes to be included in the research study.
- I **do NOT grant permission** for my survey responses and meeting audio/notes to be included in the research study.

Participants name : _____

Participants signature : _____

Date: _____

# Appendix C

## Pre and Post survey

**Please answer the questions below. You will be given questions regarding High Leverage Practices. Please answer honestly and to the best of your ability. Remember your name <u>WILL NOT</u> be shared.**

1. I am familiar with high leverage practices in the area of instruction.

   ○ Extremely familiar          ○ Not so familiar

   ○ Very familiar          ○ Not at all familiar

   ○ Somewhat familiar

2. What do you know about High Leverage practices in the area of instruction?

   ○ Extremely familiar          ○ Not so familiar

   ○ Very familiar          ○ Not at all familiar

   ○ Somewhat familiar

3. I implement High-Leverage practices in my daily instruction.

   ○ Regularly          ○ Rarely

   ○ Sometimes          ○ Never

4. I am confident supporting students <u>**with**</u> disabilities in the classroom through my instruction.

   ○ Strongly agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Strongly disagree

5. I am confident supporting students <u>**without**</u> disabilities in the classroom through my instruction.

   ○ Strongly agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Strongly disagree

6. I feel unsure about how to support students with disabilities in the classroom.

   ○ Regularly

   ○ Sometimes

   ○ Rarely

   ○ Never

7. I identify and prioritize learning goals for all of my students.

- ○ Regularly
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

8. I systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal for all of my students.

- ○ Regularly
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

9. I adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.

- ○ Regularly
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

10. I teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and Independence.

- ○ Regularly
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

11. I provide scaffolded supports during my instruction.

- ○ Regularly
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

12. I use flexible grouping during my instruction.

- ○ Regularly
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

13. I use strategies to promote active student engagement during my instruction.

○ Regularly

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

14. I use assistive and instructional technologies in my classroom.

○ Regularly

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

15. I provide intensive instruction in my classroom.

○ Regularly

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

16. I teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.

○ Regularly

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

17. I provide positive and constructive feedback to guide student learning and behavior.

○ Regularly

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

**Appendix D**

# <u>**Meeting Protocol**</u>
Use this protocol to guide each meeting and to document relevant information. The
meeting will also be recorded.

Meeting date:
Attendees:
HLP Instruction focus:


Resources given:
- 

Modeling (if any):
- 

What is going well/successes:
- 

What needs to be worked on/struggles:
- 


Teacher confidence:
- 



Other