LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CO-TEACHERS WITH HIGH-LEVERAGE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AT SECONDARY TITLE I CAMPUS: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Aaron Matthew Logan

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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APPROVED BY:

Rebecca L. Dilling, Ed.D. Committee Chair

Sandra Battige, Ph.D. Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. The central research question of this study was how special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe their lived experiences with high-leverage instructional practices. Bandura's social cognitive theory guided this study. In particular, the triadic reciprocal causation defined in social cognitive theory guides the study's questions and analysis. Triadic reciprocal causation influences how people communicate, work through tasks, and conduct daily activities related to personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. The social cognitive theory was an optimal theoretical lens for investigating special education co-teachers' experiences and perceptions of implementing high-leverage instructional practices. The hermeneutical phenomenological approach was selected for this study because it was based on the reflection of human experiences. This study investigated the experiences of 10 participants from five different Title I schools in the fifth-largest school district in the southern United States. Data for this study was collected using individual interviews, document analysis, and a questionnaire. The collected data was coded and moved from a single codes-to-theory using first and second-cycle coding.

Keywords: High-leverage practices, high-leverage instructional practices, lived experiences of co-teachers, Title I campuses.

Copyright Page

Dedication

First, I would like to dedicate this to my wife of 24 years, Carrie, and our two children, Brennan and Ashleigh. Second, I would like to dedicate this to my mother, Diane, for always believing in her dyslexic son.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my chair, Rebecca L. Dilling, Ed. D., and Sandra Battige, Ph.D., for their assistance and guidance. Lastly, I acknowledge my dear friend David Johnston for being my constant sounding board during this process.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

High-leverage Practices (HLP)

High-leverage instructional practices (HLIPs)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Triadic Reciprocal Causation (TRC)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Due to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) provision of special education law, most students with a learning disability receive instruction in an inclusion setting, and educators face many challenges associated with inclusive classrooms (Savolainen et al., 2020). Co-teaching has become a prevalent model to support the needs of students with disabilities in the inclusion setting and to address these challenges (Van Mieghem et al., 2020). One of the most significant efforts to support co-teaching is the research by McLeskey et al. (2017) and the development of 22 high-leverage practices (HLP). Since the development of the HLPs, research has focused on two main areas: their effectiveness in improving student performance and integrating HLPs into special education teacher training programs. Despite this research, it is uncertain whether special education co-teachers provide instruction based on HLPs (Donohoo et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2021).

To understand what occurs in co-teaching classrooms, it is imperative to acknowledge special education co-teachers' lived experiences with HLPs. Understanding special education co-teachers' lived experiences and adding to empirical research is critical for future decision-making for both researchers and practitioners (Mitchell et al., 2019). Currently, no research exists that examines these experiences, and research was needed to understand special education co-teachers' knowledge, the associated challenges, and their success using HLPs in their classrooms (Firestone et al., 2021). The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology was to investigate special education co-teachers' experiences with high-leverage instructional practices (HLIP) at secondary Title I campuses. Chapter One contains a background pertinent to the problem through a historical, social, and theoretical context, a statement of the problem, the significance and

purpose of the study, and a list of guiding research questions. Chapter One concludes with a list of relevant terms, definitions, and a chapter summary.

Background

Co-teachers have a complex role in the education of students with disabilities and need to use scientifically based practices to meet the many varying needs of their students (Nelson et al., 2021). Specialized instructional practices drive academic improvement for students classified as having a disability (Firestone et al., 2021). Additionally, special education co-teachers adhere to the requirements outlined by federal regulations. Research has developed a core set of 22 HLPs to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities and support the complex needs of special education teachers (O'Flaherty & Beal, 2018). This section will review the historical development of HLPs driven by federal regulations and the social and theoretical context around this development.

Historical Context

Understanding special education reform and the development of HLPs is critical to understanding the historical contexts for special education co-teachers' experiences instructing students with disabilities. Legal reform created the need to develop HLPs and has created a set of practices that novice special education teachers can implement with fidelity in their classrooms (Nelson, 2021). The historical context related to this study is driven by special education reform and the development of HLPs.

Special Education Reform

Federal legislation has attempted to address the achievement gap for students with disabilities through changes in public law over the last 50 years. These laws have ensured that students with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and

experience equitable educational opportunities (Bolourian et al., 2020; Russo, 2019; Barnes & Gaines, 2017). The introduction of FAPE ensures that the rights of students with disabilities are protected, and that local school districts and state departments of education provide accommodations for students with disabilities (Bolourian et al., 2020; Russo, 2019). FAPE was first enacted in 1975 with Public Law (P.L.) 94-142, which later became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 and was reauthorized in 1997. In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2002) required that students with a disability receive their education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) alongside their non-disabled peers. In 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLC. ESSA states that everyone should have equal access to the general education curriculum (Marita & Hord, 2017) and gives each state department of education control and power to plan their education systems instead of the Federal Department of Education. The states now have more power over major issues such as accountability (Gross & Hill, 2016).

The Development of High-Leverage Practices

The gap between the practices that educators use in their classrooms with fidelity and the strategies developed and supported by empirical research is known as the research-to-practice gap. Despite researchers identifying effective solutions to instructional problems, teachers often struggle to adapt these practices to the classroom. Given the unique role of co-teachers and the requirements outlined by the IDEA to incorporate evidence-based practices as part of the inclusive classroom, researchers have identified a set of standard practices to help improve co-teacher effectiveness (Kenndey et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2021). Additionally, the research-to-practice gap and the achievement gap between special education students and their non-disabled peers made it necessary for research to establish practices supporting improved student outcomes

for students who struggle to succeed due to learning and behavior disabilities (McLeskey et al., 2017; McLeskey et al., 2019).

In response to the need to improve the ability of special education co-teachers to provide quality instruction to students with disabilities, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) approved a committee of researchers to develop a set of HLPs in 2014. In 2017, the CEC board published the 22 HLPs based on the research of McLeskey et al. (2017). The organization of the HLPs centers around four aspects of special education practice: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral practices, and instruction. Unlike evidence-based practices that are population specific, the HLPs provide practices for special education teachers across K-12 settings regardless of population (McLeskey et al., 2017; McLeskey et al., 2019; Riccimini et al., 2017; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021).

High–Leverage Instructional Practices

The 22 HLPs outlined by McLeskey et al. (2017) focus on four areas that impact special education. These four areas are collaboration, assessment, social-emotional/behavioral, and instruction. Appendix H outlines the 22 HLP developed by McLeskey et al. (2017), organized by their associated HLP number and category. High-leverage instructional practices (HLIPs) in special education are HLPs 11-22 that focus on instruction. Appendix I provides the description McLeskey et al. (2017) provided of each of the 12 HLIPs

Social Context

The number of students who receive special education services continues to make up a large portion of students in the public education system in the United States. In 2020-21, 7.2 million students aged 3 to 21 received services under the IDEA, equaling 15% of all public-school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Under the special education

umbrella, a variety of conditions are covered, including speech and language impairments (SLIs), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disabilities, specific learning disabilities (SLDs), developmental delay, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sensory disorders, emotional disorders, and physical disabilities (Elder et al., 2021). Historically, students with a disability show lower than-average achievement and slower academic growth than students without disabilities. This slower growth rate by students with disabilities creates an achievement gap between them and their non-disabled peers (Schulte et al., 2015).

Achievement gaps occur when one group of students outperforms another, and the difference between the two groups' average scores is statistically significant (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). For example, data from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (2014) showed that students with disabilities scored more than one standard deviation below their peers without disabilities in reading and more than one standard deviation below their peers in mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The gap increased from Grade 4 to Grades 8 and 12 before narrowing again. Not only do students with disabilities fall behind, but as they move through each grade, the gap increases, putting them at a higher risk of not graduating from high school than their peers who do not have those designations (Malette et al., 2022).

Theoretical Context

Investigating the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs at secondary Title I campuses addressed three major gaps in understanding how special education co-teachers use practices like HLIPs supported by research. First, there was a gap in the HLPs research identifying teachers' experiences with HLPs, specifically, special education co-teachers' knowledge and how effective teachers use these practices in the classroom (Firestone et al.,

2021). Second, most research measuring the effectiveness of HLPs includes participants from elementary school, leaving a need to study their impact on secondary school students (Nelson et al., 2021). Lastly, there is a minimal amount of research investigating Title I campuses, and prior to this study, there was no research that investigated research-based instructional practices like HLIPs in co-teach classrooms at Title I campuses. This study contributes to the gaps in research by providing the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs at secondary Title I campuses. The results of this study provide valuable information on co-teachers experiences and perspectives. The results also provide insight into these experiences by capturing special education co-teachers' knowledge, challenges, success, and exposure to the HLIPs. Future research might use these experiences to better design pre-service and in-service training, address the challenges outlined by this research, and, in turn, help improve how special education co-teachers understand and implement HLIPs (Mitchell et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

The problem was that despite advances in research on implementing practices for improving the performance of students with disabilities (Grima-Farrell, 2018; Nelson et al., 2021), a substantial gap separated the practices supported by research from everyday practices in schools (Brock et al., 2020; Chi, 2021; Grima-Farrell, 2018; McGann et al., 2020). There was a lack of research on whether special education co-teachers supporting students with disabilities provided instruction based on the best available research on HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021; Donohoo et al., 2018). Understanding special education co-teachers' lived experiences and perceptions may provide some insight into this gap since their experiences and perceptions affect their willingness to work with and support students with disabilities (Hind et al., 2019).

Researchers must pay attention to their experiences with the phenomenon being studied, and these experiences help the researcher better understand and interpret the phenomenon (van Manen, 2016). By investigating the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs, this study identified ways to improve teachers' knowledge and use of the instructional HLPs and, in turn, improve the academic performance of students with learning disabilities. In addition, it is important to understand the experiences of the special education co-teachers serving students at the secondary campus (Nelson et al., 2021). This research study contributes to the field of knowledge; it narrows the gap in research and literature around special education co-teachers' lived experiences with HLIPs at secondary Title I campuses.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. This study defined HLIPs in special education as the 12 HLPs that focused on instruction outlined by the research of McLeskey et al. (2017) completed for the CEC. A secondary campus included middle and high schools, and a Title I campus was defined as having children from low-income families make up at least 40% of their enrollment (Texas Education Agency). The theory guiding this research was the social cognitive theory (SCT) developed by Bandura (1986). In particular, the triadic reciprocal causation (TRC) defined in SCT. TRC influences how people communicate, work through tasks, and conduct daily activities related to their personal, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Significance of the Study

This study holds theoretical, empirical, and practical significance and contributes to the body of research in both co-teaching and HLPs. More specifically, this study contributes to the

lack of knowledge and provides some insight into whether special education co-teachers supporting students with disabilities are providing instruction based on the best available HLP research (Nelson et al., 2021; Donohoo et al., 2018) and what challenges they face with implementing these practices.

Theoretical Significance

SCT has impacted many fields, including psychology, education, health care, public health, public policy, organizational behavior, media, law, computer science, and international studies (Bandura, 1986; Ozer, 2022). This study contributes to the body of SCT research in the field of education. It is theoretically significant because, according to the TRC, an individual's actions have a TRC relationship between personal, behavior, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986; 2001). This TRC relationship may affect teacher efficacy (Lazarides & Warner, 2020) and attitudes toward using practices supported by research in the classroom. A special education co-teachers previous experiences impact their attitude more than other variables (Hind et al., 2019). Investigating special education co-teachers' experiences with HLIPs provides insight into their knowledge, associated challenges, successes, and previous exposure to HLIPs. Using SCT and TRC allowed this study to categorize these insights as part of the TRC relationship of personal, behavior, and environmental factors.

Empirical Significance

Empirical studies of HLPs focus on the benefits of impacting student learning and behavior (Nelson et al., 2021) and incorporating HLPs in pre-service and in-service training programs (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022). There was a gap in the research that highlighted special education co-teachers' knowledge, the associated challenges, and their success using HLPs in their classrooms (Firestone et al., 2021). This study

contributes to empirical research by investigating co-teachers' experiences implementing HLIPs in the classroom. It helps highlight the challenges, their understanding, use, and exposure to HLIPs. Also, since elementary school students dominate the populations used in HLP research, and as a model in general, co-teaching is still considered understudied (Alnasser, 2021), this study narrowed its focus to co-teachers at secondary schools. Focusing this study on co-teachers at secondary campuses added to the body of knowledge about HLP's effectiveness at secondary campuses and co-teachers' experiences. Lastly, this study used a phenomenological research design approach that offered a "deeper understanding of nature" (van Manen, 1990, p.9). The depth of meaning gained by this design has led to discoveries that serve as the foundation for future research involving co-teachers using HLPs at the secondary level.

Practical Significance

The participants in this study were co-teachers from Title I secondary schools in the fifth-largest district in Texas. The participants work at one of the district's ten Title I secondary campuses. The practical significance of capturing the experiences of these participants was the potential for the use of the findings by the campuses within the district, as well as by surrounding districts. There was a lack of research on whether special education co-teachers supporting students with disabilities provide instruction based on the best available research on HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021; Donohoo et al., 2018). There was a need for a greater understanding of special education co-teachers' knowledge, the associated challenges, their success using HLPs in their classrooms (Firestone et al., 2021), and the effectiveness of these practices at secondary schools (Nelson et al., 2021). This hermeneutic phenomenological study provided greater insight into the barriers co-teachers at the participating schools faced when using HLIPs. Locally, the

information obtained from the thematic analysis helps develop and find programs that support a co-teacher's ability to improve student performance through HLIPs.

Research Questions

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. The research questions guided the direction of the study (Creswell, 2018). The central question and sub-questions for this study were as follows:

Central Research Question

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe their experiences with high-leverage instructional practices?

The central question of this study investigated the participant's past experiences with HLIPs. Special education co-teachers' previous experiences impact their attitude more than other variables (Hind et al., 2019). According to Bandura (1986), a participant's experiences are based on TRC. Past experiences impact personal beliefs, learned behavior, and personal philosophies (Bandura, 1999; Lazarides et al., 2020), and once established, these factors continue to develop (Lazarides et al., 2020). Understanding the participant's past experiences was necessary because, according to Bandura (1986), these experiences affect new behavior through their interactions based on TRC relationships. Once completed, these new experiences become past experiences and will continue contributing to an ongoing cycle of actions based on this TRC relationship.

For this reason, when investigating special education teachers' previous experiences, TRC classifies them as a personal factor. According to Bandura (1999), special education co-teachers' experiences also directly affect their belief in their ability to act as agents of influence. If they do not believe they can produce the desired outcome using HLIPs because of their past

experiences, they are less likely to proceed with the effort required to use them (An & Meaney, 2015)

Sub-Question One

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe the challenges of implementing high-leverage instructional practices in their classroom?

Challenges directly relate to understanding the previous experiences that special education co-teachers have with HLIPs. TRC classifies previous challenges as a personal factor when considering their role in future experiences (Bandura, 1986). However, these challenges experienced previously may have originated from any combination of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Sub-Question Two

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe their success with implementing high-leverage instructional practices in their classroom?

As with challenges, according to Bandura (1999), special education co-teachers' experiences with success also directly affect their belief in their ability to be agents of influence and affect outcomes in the future. Additionally, this sub-question addressed the gap in research on the understanding of special education co-teachers' successes with HLIPs (Firestone et al., 2021). Bandura's (1986) TRC classifies previous successful experiences as a personal factor when considering their role in future experiences.

Definitions

1. *Co-teaching* - a teaching model is defined by the collaboration of two certified teachers to support a diverse group of students (Campbell & Jeter-Iles, 2017).

2. *Evidence-based practices* - teaching practices research has found effective for meaningfully improving student outcomes. Meaningful, high-quality evidence shows that EBPs positively impact student learning (Cook et al., 2015).
3. *High-leverage practices* - approaches that teachers can apply to instruct different types of content and learners. HLPs help students learn important content across subject areas, grades, and contexts and support students' social and emotional development. HLPs are high leverage because they affect student learning and contribute to advancing teaching skills (Brownell et al., 2021).
4. *High-leverage instructional practices* - in special education are HLPs 11-22 that focus on instruction.
5. *Inclusion* - the legal perversion that services provided to students with disabilities with typically developing peers is educationally and socially beneficial (McKenna et al., 2021a; Lanterman et al., 2021).
6. *Least Restrictive Environment* - is outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and is intended to describe the maximum extent of provision of services possible or appropriate alongside typically developing peers (Yell et al., 2020; Lanterman et al., 2021).

Summary

The available research failed to address the problem that despite advances in research on implementing practices for improving the performance of students with disabilities (Grima-Farrell, 2018; Nelson et al., 2021); a substantial gap separated the practices supported by research from everyday practices in schools (Brock et al., 2020; Chi, 2021; Grima-Farrell, 2018; McGann et al., 2020). The HLPs developed by McLeskey et al. (2017) serve as a core set of

practices that guide teachers in servicing students with disabilities (Nelson et al., 2021). There was a lack of research that captured special education co-teachers' knowledge, the associated challenges, and their success using HLPs in their classrooms (Firestone et al., 2021). In addition, most research focused on elementary school students, leaving a gap in understanding of the effectiveness of HLPs at the secondary level (Nelson et al., 2021). These gaps in the research highlighted a need to investigate special education co-teachers' experiences with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Recent research supporting inclusion instruction focuses on implementing effective instructional practices that support all students and provide students with disabilities with the least restrictive environment. Co-teaching is an accepted model to enhance effective practices within inclusion education by adding a second professional in the classroom (Van Mieghem et al., 2020). To increase co-teachers' ability to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) approved the development of a set of High-leverage practices (HLP) for special education teachers (McLeskey et al., 2017). A systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore the problem that despite advances in research on implementing practices for improving the performance of students with disabilities (Grima-Farrell, 2018; Nelson et al., 2021), a substantial gap separates the practices supported by research from everyday practices in schools (Brock et al., 2020; Chi, 2021; Grima-Farrell, 2018; McGann et al., 2020). This chapter reviews the current literature related to the topic of study. First, Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory is discussed as a theoretical framework for these factors. This section is followed by a synthesis of recent literature that includes a review of special education reform, inclusive education, the co-teaching model, approaches for implementing co-teaching, perceptions of co-teaching, the development of HLPs, improving knowledge of HLPs, HLIPs, and the research-to-practice gap. Finally, the need for the current study is established by identifying multiple gaps in the literature regarding the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the hermeneutic phenomenology approach and investigated the structure of consciousness and meanings hidden in lived experiences with daily educational practices (van Manen, 2016b). Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT) was the theoretical framework that guided this phenomenological investigation. SCT provided an optimal construct to investigate teachers' experiences and perceptions surrounding implementing inclusive instructional practices (An & Meaney, 2015) such as HLPs. In particular, Bandura's (1986) TRC, defined in social cognitive theory, guided the study's questions and analysis. Triadic reciprocal causation (TRC) influences how people communicate, work through tasks, and conduct daily activities related to personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. This section will first review the historical development of SCT, followed by a review of the principles of SCT, and will conclude the section by outlining how SCT relates to the present study.

Development of Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura was a clinical psychologist influenced by Miller and Dollard's (1941) work, *Social Learning and Imitation* (Ozer, 2022; Schunk, 2020). Bandura (1977) made his mark in psychology when he published a book called *Social Learning Theory* (Ozer, 2022). Bandura continued to develop these ideas and used the theory as a foundation for social cognitive theory (SCT), which he outlined in his 1986 book *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. SCT makes assumptions about learning, performance, and experience through triadic reciprocal causation (TRC) focused on influential processes between the individual, their behavior, and their environment (Ozer, 2022; Schink, 2020). In 1997, Bandura continued to develop the components of SCT in his book *"Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*." In this

work, Bandura outlines the impact of self-efficacy on our functioning, motivation, cognition, and decisional processes.

Bandura's works started in the 1950s with his research on social behaviors, and he continued to be a prolific writer, publishing his final book in 2016 (Ozer, 2022; Schink, 2020). The concepts in SCT, such as reciprocal interactions, agency, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and modeling, have made him one of the most frequently cited psychologists. His influence is comparable to that of Skinner, Freud, and Piaget. Bandura's works have impacted many fields, including psychology, education, health care, public health, public policy, organizational behavior, media, law, computer science, and international studies (Ozer, 2022).

Social Cognitive Theory

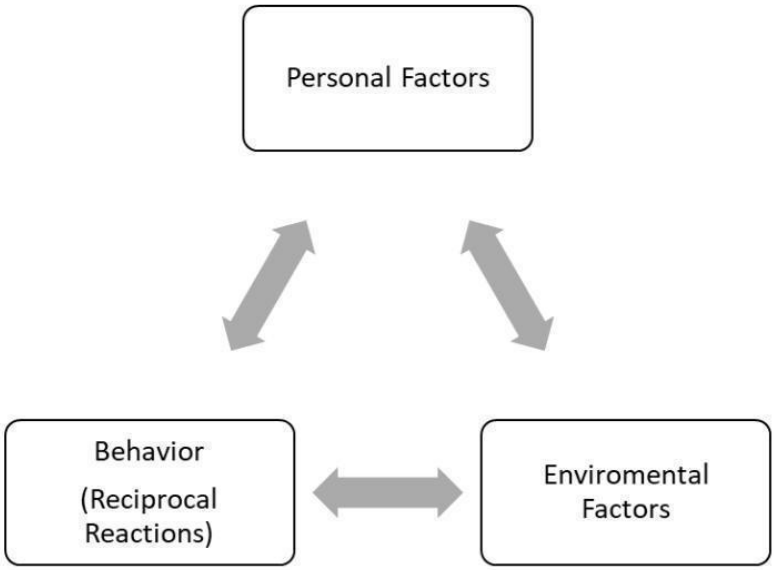
SCT focuses on human experiences, interactions, and functioning, where personal factors, behavior in response to stimuli, and the environment influence an individual's actions (Bandura, 2012; Morris et al., 2017). SCT explains that people contribute to their experiences as active agents in a TRC relationship between *reciprocal causation* (Bandura, 1986). Bandura explains that an individual's actions are impacted by their past experiences (Bandura, 2012; Lazarides et al., 2020; Morris et al., 2017) and that people are not driven solely by internal motivation, nor are they shaped just by external forces of their environment (Bandura, 1986). Instead, a person's set of learned characteristics, how they react to stimuli, and the social environment influence their actions (Bandura, 1999). Additionally, a person's ability to act as an agent of influence and attribute to their experiences affects their *self-efficacy*. Bandura (1986,2001) defined *self-efficacy* as the belief in one's ability to organize the actions necessary to be successful in a given situation. The following subsections will focus on the two primary constructs of SCT, TRC and agent of influence.

Triadic Reciprocal Causation

According to Bandura (1986), a person's actions result from interactions between personal factors, such as knowledge, learned behavior, and self-efficacy; behavioral factors, such as reciprocal reactions based on the behavior of others; and environmental factors, such as their home, workplace, or school (An & Meaney, 2015). This interactive process is called triadic reciprocal causation (TRC). The interconnected TRC relationships are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Causation



Note: A triadic relationship that shows how personal, behavioral, and environmental factors reciprocally interact with each other.

Bandura (1986) used the TRC relationship to describe the interdependence between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Each part of the TRC relationship plays an equal role in the actions taken by the individual. The components are interconnected, and each part affects the others in the TRC relationship. According to Bandura (1986), actions are based on this TRC and make up an individual's past experiences. Past experiences impact personal beliefs, learned behavior, and personal philosophies (Bandura, 1999; Lazarides et al., 2020), and

once established, these factors continue to develop (Lazarides et al., 2020). These past experiences affect new behavior through their interactions and interconnection with behavior based on reciprocal relationships and environmental factors during new experiences. Once completed, these new experiences become past experiences and will continue contributing to an ongoing cycle of actions based on this TRC relationship.

Agent of Influence

Individuals affect and contribute to their experiences and learning and are not just a product of the circumstances that impact them. An Individual's belief that they are an agent of influence is a key component of their motivation in how they act, learn, well-being, and sense of accomplishment (Bandura, 1999). For example, if teachers do not believe they can produce the desired outcome using an instructional strategy, they are less likely to proceed with the effort required to use that strategy (An & Meaney, 2015). Regardless of all the other factors, the core driver of motivation is the belief that one's actions impact the outcome (Bandura, 2001). SCT recognizes three different models of agency found in the belief in the capacity to effect change. The three models included individual, proxy, and collective agency (Bandura, 1986, 2001).

Relation to Study

SCT and TRC influence how people communicate, work through tasks, and conduct daily activities (Bandura, 2012). It was the optimal theoretical lens to investigate teachers' experiences and perceptions surrounding implementing inclusive instructional practices such as HLIPs (An & Meaney, 2015). This study used SCT as a theoretical lens for both the study's design and analysis of participant data. Special education co-teachers' knowledge relates directly to personal factors in the TRC relationship. Participant challenges, successes, and previous exposure to HLIPs relate to all three TRC relationships.

Related Literature

The related literature section reviews the body of research around the factors, the impact of the research purpose, and the questions. This section reviews special education reform and the achievement gap, the research-to-practice gap, Title I secondary campuses, incision education, the co-teaching model for inclusion, and the research around HLPs and HLIPs**.**

Special Education Reform and the Achievement Gap

To close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, federal relations in the United States have focused on changing how we educate and the rights of students with learning disabilities. Over the years, the services for students with disabilities have advanced significantly regarding policies and research (Barrio et al., 2022). This concept of using legislation to aid a group of underperforming students was seen in the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), endorsed by President Johnson. ESEC focused on closing the academic gap between economically disadvantaged students and advantaged peers (Wood et al., 2016). Legislative changes for students with disabilities started in 1975 when the United States Congress passed Public Law (P.L.) 94-142. Referred to as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), P.L. 94-142 ensured that students with disabilities would experience the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers (Bolourian et al., 2020; Russo, 2019; Gaines & Barnes, 2017). The foundation for this law is Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and it accomplished three things. First, it ensures that the rights of students with disabilities are protected. Second, it ensures that students with disabilities receive free appropriate public education, and third, it ensures that local school districts and state departments of education provide accommodations for students with disabilities (Bolourian et al., 2020; Russo, 2019). In 1990, P.L. 94-142 became the Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and in 1997, IDEA was reauthorized and strengthened the rights of a student with learning disabilities.

In 2002, a federal mandate called the No Child Left Behind Act (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2002) required students with learning disabilities to receive education alongside their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms. The law states that schools must include "access for [all] children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies and challenging academic content." (NCLB Act of 2001: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, 2004). The interpretation of this law is known as the least restrictive environment. The updating of the IDEA Act in 2004 aligned with the NCLB mandates. These mandates require that students with disabilities receive accommodations to meet their individual needs and align them for success in their post-secondary endeavors in three areas: education, employment, and independent living (Gaines & Barnes, 2017; Bolourian et al., 2020).
The NCLB Act was ratified in 2011 and included updated language regarding evaluating students with disabilities. The updated NCLB Act required schools to use the same standardized testing instruments used to evaluate students with no disabilities (Polikoff, 2012).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB in December 2015. ESSA states everyone should have equal access to the general education curriculum (Marita & Hord, 2017). ESSA is different from NCLB in that it gives each state department of education control and power to plan their education systems instead of the Federal Department of Education. The states now have more power over major issues such as accountability (Gross & Hill, 2016). ESSA requires that each state employ standards for language arts, mathematics, and sciences but does not allow the U.S. Secretary of Education to decree those standards (Bruno, 2020). In addition, the power shift to the state government allows for more experimentation with innovative ideas to

improve student outcomes that impact school accountability issues by the state and local educational agencies (Gross & Hill, 2016).

Federal legislation has attempted to address the achievement gap for students with disabilities but has also changed the way we track achievement for these students. Special education teachers faced a novel pressure: to radically narrow the achievement gap between their students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities (Bolourian et al., 2020; Mintrop & Zane, 2017) and because of acts such as the NCLB, IDEA, and ESSA, how teachers track the success of students with learning disabilities changed. Before these acts, teachers would measure students with disability's achievement based on the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Under the NCLB and IDEA Act, teachers assess students using the same standards as their non-disabled peers, and only a tiny percentage of students qualify for alternative assessments. However, under ESSA, states now have greater flexibility in enforcing standards (Mintrop & Zane, 2017).

Current Special Education Reform

In the United States, two sets of legislation, the ESSA and the IDEA, outline the education rights of students with disabilities. The rights outlined in both laws directly impact the expectations for special education teachers in their classrooms. This section will review the key points of ESSA and IDEA that impact instruction and instructional settings, as both laws provide the foundation for modern special education. Additionally, this section concludes with a review of the big ideas of special education based on federal legislation.

Impact of ESSA on Special Education

Replacing the NCLB Act, the ESSA built on prior shifts in accountability policy at the state level, focusing attention and resources on building school leadership capacities (Kim et al.,

2022). Each state's government and local education agencies must create and carry out statewide education plans because of the shirt created by the ESSA (2015). Thanks to that change, states and school districts could interpret the U.S. Department of Education's guidance differently (Kim et al., 2022; Al Otaiba et al., 2019). Despite this shift, ESSA (2014) preserves the annual standardized testing associated with the NCLB Act by requiring the U.S. Department of Education to approve the state's accountability plans (Kim et al., 2022). In addition, the ESSA (2015) requires reporting achievement measures by subgroups (McCabe & Nye-Lengerman, 2021). Additionally, the ESSA (2015) promotes equity by upholding crucial safeguards for the underprivileged and neediest students, holds all students to high achievement standards that will help them succeed in college, supports local innovations, such as evidence-based interventions created by educators, and keeps the expectation of accountability for the lowest-performing schools.

Impact of IDEA on Special Education

The IDEA ensures that students with disabilities receive free, appropriate public education (Kors, 2022; Underwood, 2020; IDEA, 2004) and emphasizes services designed to meet the student's unique needs of the student with a disability in the least restrictive environment (IDEA, 2004). The student's individualized education program (IEP) documents the school district's educational plan for each student who qualifies for special education (Kors, 2022). Additionally, the IEP documents goals for students for post-secondary life in education, employment, and independent living and provides teachers and parents with the necessary tools to improve the education of students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). The school's creation of an IEP is not the end of its responsibility. Schools are held accountable for the student's IEP and validate the IEP implementation through data collection (Kors, 2022).

Specially designed instruction (SDI) is another significant component of the IDEA. Originally defined as part of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, IDEA reauthorized SDI in 2000 and 2004. IDEA defines special education as SDI at no cost to the parents or guardians that meets the unique needs of the students. Overall, SDI is a general term that characterizes the instruction students with disabilities need to receive. In general terms, SDI is the legal mandate to adjust and modify content, methodology, delivery, and instruction to address the individual needs of students with a disability (Riccomini et al., 2017).

Creation of Title I, Part A

The U.S. Department of Education (2022) states that to prevent the overidentification and disproportionate representation of a race or ethnicity in the students identified as qualifying for special education services. The IDEA requires that the design of school district practices prevent disproportionality. Disproportionality is an over or under-representation of racially, ethnically, culturally, or linguistically diverse students in special education or a restrictive learning environment (Barrio et al., 2022). Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA), supplies financial allowance to schools with high percentages of children from low-income families. Title I funds help ensure all children meet challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education). A Title I campus in Texas is defined as having children from low-income families comprise at least 40% of their enrollment (Texas Education Agency).

Big Ideas in Special Education

Driven by the development of the current federal regulators outlined by ESSA and IDEA, four big ideas in special education stand out. First is the requirement that students with a disability receive free appropriate public education (Kors, 2022; Underwood, 2020; IDEA,

2004). Second, students with a disability receive their education in the LRE (IDEA, 2004). Third is that students with a disability receive instruction tailored to their needs, known as SDI (Riccomini et al., 2017). Lastly, school districts must develop an IEP for a student with a disability that outlines the educational plan for the student (Kors, 2022). These four big ideas are the focal point of practitioners and the focus of empirical research.

Inclusive Education

Federal legislation, in particular, IDEA, has created a movement in education toward the education of all students in a mainstream classroom. This movement for an inclusive education system is one of the most significant school reforms in countries worldwide. Inclusion is an equitable approach to education that is defined as having a shared space, opportunities, and resources (Pugach et al., 2020; Sellers, 2021) where students with disabilities receive instruction in mainstream classrooms (Calabrese Barton & Tan, 2020; Krischler et al., 2019; Savolainen et al., 2020). The purpose of this section is to review the research findings around inclusive education as related to teacher experiences and show their importance and impact on inclusive education. To clearly understand the experiences of inclusion teachers, a foundational understanding of the purpose of inclusion is appropriate. First, this section provides foundational knowledge about inclusion by defining the purpose of inclusion based on the available research. The review of recent research on teachers' perspectives of inclusion, including values, attitudes, and beliefs, will follow.

Purpose of Inclusion

The term inclusion includes accounts for students with special needs, low academic ability, cultural barriers, and language barriers (Mintz et al., 2020). Historically, these students may have been marginalized or excluded, but in the inclusive model, they are equally valued and

able to participate regardless of their individual needs (Cook & Ogedn, 2022; Mintz et al., 2020). Inclusion aims to go beyond the student's deficits in learning and develop classrooms based on Human rights (San Martin et al., 2021) by inducing all students into the general education classroom (Krischler et al., 2019). In doing so, belonging, nurturing, dignity, equity, and justice, and educating all students regardless of their needs become the tenets of the inclusive classroom (Krischler et al., 2019; San Martin et al., 2020). Inclusion strives to improve the outcomes of all students in the classroom by designing lessons that allow them to access the general education curriculum (Farmer et al., 2019). Schools may accomplish this by providing positive support systems to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to learn and achieve high academic achievement, positive relationships, and improvement opportunities (Farmer et al., 2019; Szumski et al., 2022).

Teacher's Perspectives on Inclusion

Each student's needs vary and are continuously changing. Understanding the teachers' perspectives that serve these students is imperative to improving the outcomes of inclusive education (Deepika, 2017; Keppens et al., 2021). Teacher perspectives are essential for researchers and school leaders when examining the impact of inclusion. This sub-section focuses on the research about teachers' perspectives, including attitudes, values, and beliefs about inclusion.

Extensive research in the field of inclusion focuses on teacher attitudes, values, self-confidence, and beliefs. The major findings support a correction between the teacher's attitudes, values (Miesera et al., 2019; Van Mieghem et al., 2020; Weiss et al., 2019), and self-confidence (Bas, 2022; Chao et al., 2018) play a significant role in their effectiveness as inclusion educators. Research shows that several variables influenced by the teacher, students, and school-related

variables impact teachers' perspectives on inclusion (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021). Teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions make up the complex attitudes toward inclusion; the cognitive reflects teachers' beliefs about inclusion, the affective identifies associated emotions, and the behavioral reflects teachers' intentions to act in a certain way (Werner et al., 2021).

From a cognitive standpoint, teachers' belief in their ability to control the expected outcomes impacts their attitude toward inclusion. In turn, teachers are more likely to have a positive outlook on inclusion if they believe their behavior will lead to the desired outcome (Mintz et al., 2020). Because of this, teachers need to be aware of their beliefs, have the self-confidence to understand their student's learning needs, and have the resources available to support them (Bas, 2022). School leadership needs to be aware of the variables that impact teachers' emotions, such as class sizes, the number of resources, parent involvement, and lack of funding (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021), as well as the extent to which teachers must modify instructional practices and the number of accommodations needed to support students (Desombre et al., 2019). Other factors impacting teacher perception of inclusion include the amount of experience (Miesera et al., 2019) and political, social, cultural, and educational environments (Kiel et al., 2020; Woodcock & Jones, 2020). Research shows that teachers with more experience in an inclusive setting generally have a positive attitude toward inclusion (Miesera et al., 2019). Positive teacher attitudes and beliefs impact the effectiveness of teaching strategies and the classroom environment (Emmer et al., 2020). A review of the research on inclusion in secondary schools shows that teachers generally agree that inclusive education supports social justice. However, they doubt their ability to support students with learning disabilities in their classrooms (Cook & Ogden, 2022). Secondary teachers see over 100 students daily, making

inclusion that accounts for all students' needs challenging (Ismailos et al., 2022; Subban et al., 2018; Woodcock & Jones, 2020). Inclusion teachers at secondary campuses also report feeling mostly negative about inclusion due to working conditions, institutional tools (Weiss et al., 2021), and a lack of administrative support (Ismailos et al., 2022).

Co-Teaching a Model for Inclusive Education

Since the development of federal regulations that promote inclusive education and that students receive instruction in the least restrictive environment, co-teaching, also known as collaborative or cooperative teaching, has become a standard model to support this effort (Mofield, 2020; Van Mieghem et al., 2020). The co-teaching model allows two certified teachers in the same classroom to work together to provide specialized instruction in a general education classroom and is a resource for inclusive classes (Jurkowski et al., 2020). Typically, one teacher is certified in the content area, and the other is a special education professional (Bettini et al., 2021; Friend, 2016; Jurkowski et al., 2020; McKenna et al., 2021a; Pizana, 2022). In a co-teaching classroom, students who receive special education services learn alongside their peers, take the same assessments, and complete the same activities (Hedin et al., 2020).

Co-teachers have a complex role in educating students with learning disabilities (Nelson et al., 2021), and there is a constant balance between the relationship of both teachers. In this relationship, typically, the general educator brings content expertise (King-Sears et al., 2019) and adopts a sense of ownership over the classroom, curriculum, content, and most of the students since co-teaching typically happens in the general educator's classroom (Hackett et al., 2021). In contrast, the special education professional is accountable for implementing the student's IEP, delivering SDI, and tracking the student's goals. Due to their knowledge of the student's needs and understanding of the curriculum modifications required by the IEP (King-Sears et al., 2019),

special education professional is more likely to develop a strong relationship with the students with disabilities in their classroom (Hirsch et al., 2021; Nelson et al., 2021). Despite the potential issues with balancing this collaborative relationship, students with disabilities benefit from interacting with both teachers in the classroom (Gilmour, 2020; Walker et al., 2021), and limited research supports the link between student success and the teacher's certification type (Gilmour, 2020). Since the development of the co-teach model, researchers and practitioners have debated its effectiveness. This research has included the development of different approaches for co-teaching and practitioners' perceptions as well as student perceptions about co-teaching. Despite this research, the co-teach model still needs to be studied more and a new concept (Alnasser, 2021). However, despite its newness, research validates the importance of co-teaching as a resource for inclusive education (Jurkowski et al., 2020) as well as the continuation of future research in the field of co-teaching (Alnasser, 2021; Jurkowski et al., 2020).

Approaches for Implementing Co-Teaching

The departure from the traditional one-teacher, one-classroom model requires significant modification to implement a co-teaching model (Weiss et al., 2020). Since the inception of the co-teaching model, researchers have developed different approaches to improve the effectiveness of the collaboration between both teachers. In most cases, the description of the co-teaching uses a six-approach structure (Weiss et al., 2020) outlined by Friend et al. (2010). This six-approach structure includes:

1. One teaches the class while the other one observes.
2. One teacher leads the instruction in class while the other one assists.
3. The teachers instruct the students at different stations.
4. Each teacher instructs half the class.

5. One teaches most students, while the other works with a smaller group.
6. Both teachers lead the instruction in class collaboratively.

The different approaches to co-teaching allow the teachers to have the flexibility and improve their ability to meet the needs of their students and federal regulations. The roles of both teachers may be fluid, and collaboration between the general education teacher and the special education teacher varies depending on the approach used (Kokko et al., 2021). The collaboration between co-teachers extends past the delivery of the instructional content in the classroom. This collaboration included lesson planning, evaluation of lessons, parental work, curriculum implementation, diagnosis of special needs, or planning individualized support (Jurkowski et al., 2020). Research shows that the most effective strategies in co-teaching focus on grouping students in teaching, station teaching, or alternative teaching. Despite the support for their effectiveness, the most used approach for co-teaching is the one-teach-one assist. This approach does not reflect the best practices for co-teaching supported by current research (Bettini et al., 2021; Weiss & Glaser, 2021).

The co-teaching model generally receives positive support from educators (Alnasser, 2021; Jurkowski & Muller, 2018; Weiss et al., 2020). Research findings do report that co-teachers struggle with concerns of lack of planning time, lack of resources, training, and administrative support (Alnasser, 2021; Jurkowski & Muller, 2018), as well as confusion about co-teaching roles, and the fact that the special education teacher often played a subordinate role in planning and instruction due to the lack of content knowledge (Weiss et al., 2020). Additional difficulties arise between collaborative teachers due to the different experience levels and when the two educators have different pedagogical beliefs (Rabin, 2020)—creating a power struggle between the collaborating teachers (Kokko et al., 2021; Rabin, 2020). Other factors related to

teachers struggling with the co-teaching model included a clash in personalities that hinders collaboration, unclear expectations, limited shared vision, and ineffective collaboration (Kokko et al., 2021; Pesone et al., 2021). Co-teachers report that their ability to collaborate and build the necessary relationship with their collaborative partner is directly impacted by a lack of time given to them by their educational institution (Rabin, 2020).

Perceptions of Co-Teaching

Research shows special and general education teachers generally have a natural-to-positive perception of co-teaching. Special and general education teachers indicated that they benefited professionally by co-teaching (Chatzigeorgiadou & Barouta, 2021b); Jurkowski et al., 2020), that co-teaching improved their ability to provide students with a disability the needed services in an inclusive setting, and they perceived co-teaching as having a positive effect on the outcomes of their student's academic and social-emotional learning (Jurkowski et al., 2020). Exploring the perceptions and experiences of the teachers and students involved in co-teaching classrooms is imperative for the future success of the practitioners (Harrison et al., 2019). This section reviews the current research on special and general education teachers' perceptions of co-teaching. The current research focuses on several areas that impact perceptions of co-teaching. These areas include the factors that impact teacher perceptions of co-teaching, perceived challenges with co-teaching, and practices that promote positive co-teaching experiences.

Factors that Impact Teacher Perceptions About Co-Teaching

Several factors affect teachers' perceptions and attitudes using the co-teaching model (Chatzigeorgiadou & Barouta, 2021; Jurkowski et al., 2020). Jurkowski et al. (2020) outline the research by Lutje-Klose et al. (2016) that grouped these factors using a three-level system organizing the factors at the (1) institutional level, (2) interactional level, and (3) individual

level. This subsection will review the current findings around these factors and their impact on special education and general education teachers' perceptions about their ability to teach all students using the co-teach model effectively.

At the institutional level, teachers noted their most significant need as scheduled opportunities to collaborate with their co-teaching partner (Berry, 2021; Jurkowski et al., 2020; Krammer et al., 2018; Lindacher, 2020; Meadows & Caniglia, 2018) and the need for administrative support (Jurkowski et al., 2020). Additional factors provided by special education and general education teachers were the need for materials, equipment, specialized personnel, and an appropriate student-staff-ratio structure (Jurkowski et al., 2020). Collaboration is a major factor at the institutional level that impacts teacher perceptions of a positive co-teaching experience. Recent research indicates that special education and general education teachers wish to collaborate effectively and perceive it as one of the most important factors of effective co-teaching (Chatzigeorgiadou & Barouta, 2021b; Ghedin & Aquario, 2020; Jortveit & Kovac, 2021; Tumkaya & Miller, 2020). A teacher's ability to participate in such activities as cooperative planning with colleagues (Tumkaya & Miller, 2020) through brief formal meetings (Chatzigeorgiadou & Barouta, 2021b) improves the teacher's mindset about co-teaching and their belief in their ability to teach all students (Chatzigeorgiadou & Barouta, 2021b; Tumkaya & Miller, 2020). Successful collaboration also improves the co-teaching partner's ability to recognize student diversity and work together to implement an appropriate solution (Weiss et al., 2019).

Administrative support is another vital factor at the institutional level. It predominantly refers to the special and general education teachers' planned opportunities for professional development and common planning times by the school's principal (Jurkowski et al., 2020).

Campus support from administrators, colleagues, and parents positively impacts teachers' perceptions and beliefs about their ability to operate effectively in a co-teaching model (Jurkowski et al., 2020; Saloviita, 2019). A review of the research indicates that special education teachers and general education teachers view support within the school from the principal and their peers as a requirement to prepare them to effectively co-teach.

The quality of co-teaching professional development is a sub-factor under administrative support (Jurkowski et al., 2020) and is a factor supported by empirical research (Weinberg et al., 2020). In particular, the quality of per-service co-teacher training impacts special education and general education teachers' belief in their ability to impact the learning outcomes of all students (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021). Teachers' perceptions of co-teaching relate to their preservice training experiences (Alsarawi & Sukonthaman, 2021). Similar to building a strong co-teaching partnership between special education and general education teachers, communication between team members during preservice training improved teachers' perceptions about their ability to improve student academic performance through co-teaching (Kokko et al., 2021; Pesonen et al., 2021; Rytivaara et al., 2019). In addition to preservice training, research supports the need for practical in-service training for teachers using the co-teaching model. Like in-service teacher training and building a robust co-teaching partnership, the collaboration between the co-teacher partners improved the perceived effectiveness of the teacher's ability to teach all students (Weinberg et al., 2020).

At the interactional level, special education and general education teachers indicated a need to negotiate their principles about teaching and learning while complementing each other concerning their different expertise (Jurkowski et al., 2020). Special education and general education teachers indicated a need to negotiate their principles about teaching and learning

while complementing each other concerning their diverse expertise. The need to negotiate these principles is tied to developing the co-teacher relationship. The co-teacher relationship has a significant impact on how teachers view the success or failure of co-teaching (Gomez-Najarro, 2020; Hester et al., 2020; Kirkpatrick et al., 2020; Rytivaara et al., 2019; Schwab & Alnahdi, 2020). Research findings indicate that co-teachers' ability to express their concerns, share their experiences, and learn from each other impact how teachers perceive co-teaching (Kokko et al., 2021; Pesonen et al., 2021; Rytivaara et al., 2019). Additionally, the development of this relationship between special education and general education teachers allows them to navigate better the challenges associated with the shared relationship the longer the co-teacher team is together (Kokko et al., 2021) by negotiating a shared understanding of expectations (Pesonen et al., 2021; Rytivaara et al., 2019; Weiss et al., 2019) and negotiating task assignments (Jurkowski et al., 2020) associated with co-teaching.

Teachers reported the need for communication and building relationships at the individual level. The individual level shares the need for collaboration with the institutional level and the development of a positive relationship between co-teaching and the interactional level (Jurkowski et al., 2020). A benefit of collaboration between co-teaching partners at the individual level is that the collaboration between the two improves the special education teacher's content knowledge. The special education teachers' improved content knowledge improves their ability to teach students specific content and increases their ability to take on a larger instructional role in the classroom (Bilican et al., 2020). The general education teacher improves their ability to teach students with a disability through collaboration with the special education teacher. The combined knowledge gained by the co-teaching pair through

collaboration has a positive impact on students with disabilities and students without a disability (Lindacher, 2020).

Developing the co-teacher relationship is the other sub-factor at the individual level. Research indicates that a positive relationship between co-teaching partners includes mutual respect and understanding (Pesonen et al., 2021; Weiss et al., 2019) and improves the teacher's sense of belonging (Pesonen et al., 2021). Conversely, a poor relationship between co-teaching partners leads to a lack of trust and negatively impacts the teacher's perception of co-teaching (Kokko et al., 2021; Pesonen et al., 2021; Rytivaara et al., 2019).

Perceived Challenges with Co-Teaching

Lutje-Klose et al. (2016) three-level system of institutional level, interactional level, and individual level may be used to clarify the understanding of what research identifies as the perceived challenges with co-teaching. Current research on teacher perceptions of challenges associated with co-teaching identified five major factors: (a) a lack of planning time (Jurkowski et al., 2020; Mihajlovic, 2020), (b) inconsistent collaboration (Meadows & Canigula, 2018), (c) inconsistent instructional intents between co-teachers (Lindacher, 2020), (d) a lack of a meaningful role for the special education teacher (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020), and (e) inadequate professional development (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020).

Looking at the five major factors through the lens of the three-level system (Lutje-Kolse et al., 2016) reveals that these factors move across levels and are interconnected. A review of the first four factors of a lack of planning time (Jurkowski et al., 2020; Mihajlovic, 2020), inconsistent collaboration (Meadows & Canigula, 2018), inconsistent instructional intent between co-teachers (Lindacher, 2020), and a lack of a meaningful role for the special education

teacher (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020), reveals that the first factor of lack of planning time is a driver for inconsistent collaboration. Due to the lack of collaboration, the special and general education teachers have less time to solidify their instructional intent, and the special education teacher is likely to have a subordinate role.

The classification of these challenges reveals that more planning time is at the institutional level, inconsistent collaboration and inconsistent instructional intent between co-teachers are at the interactional level, and lack of a meaningful role for the special education teacher at the individual level. Even though all four of these facts operate under different system classifications, they impact the three levels due to their cause-and-effect relationships. The final factor identified by the research is inadequate professional development (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020). Many in-service special and general teachers need more training to co-teach adequately (Basckin et al., 2021; Takala et al., 2020). Two challenges that researchers believe may be addressed through professional development are the clarification of the roles of the special general education teachers and the exposure to best practices by the special and general education teachers (Takala et al., 2020).

Practices that Promote Positive Co-Teaching Experiences

Just as with the outlining the challenges of co-teaching, the research of Lutje-Klose et al. (2016) grouped the factors outlined by empirical research that impacted teacher perceptions of co-teaching using a three-level system of (a) institutional level, (b) interactional level, and (c) individual level may be used to help identify practices that promote positive co-teaching experiences. Based on a review of the research in this three-level system, four recommended practices allow school leaders to implement practices that promote a positive co-teaching experience. The four recommendations address the five challenges lack of planning time

(Jurkowski et al., 2020; Mihajlovic, 2020), inconsistent collaboration (Meadows & Canigula, 2018), inconsistent instructional intents between co-teachers (Lindacher, 2020), a lack of meaningful role for the special education teacher (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020), and inadequate professional development (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020) outlined by research.

The first practice operates at the institutional level by providing co-teaching partners a scheduled time to work together. Providing the co-teaching pairs with scheduled time to work together will allow them to develop a shared understanding of co-teaching expectations (Pesonen et al., 2021; Rytivaara et al., 2019; Weiss et al., 2019). The first recommendation directly addresses the challenge of lack of planning time (Jurkowski et al., 2020; Mihajlovic, 2020) and indirectly addresses the challenges of inconsistent collaboration (Meadows & Canigula, 2018), inconsistent instructional intents between co-teachers (Lindacher, 2020), a lack of a meaningful role for the special education teacher (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020). The second recommendation is an agreement on teacher roles and responsibilities based on task ownership (Jurkowski et al., 2020). This recommendation is at the interactional level and is an essential consideration in addressing the challenge of a lack of a meaningful role for the special education teacher (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020). The third recommendation is to have co-teaching partners stay together for a significant amount of time so that they can develop trust and respect (Kokko et al., 2021). The third recommendation operates at the institutional level; it addresses the challenges of inconsistent collaboration (Meadows & Canigula, 2018), inconsistent instructional intents between co-teachers (Lindacher, 2020), a lack of a meaningful role for the special education teacher (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020) by allowing to co-teaching partners to address these challenges over time. The

fourth and final recommendation operates again at the institutional level and recommends that schools provide collaborative professional development opportunities where the co-teaching partners may further develop their understanding of the co-teaching craft and understanding of best practices (Takala et al., 2020) and build their relationship with each other (Jurkowski et al., 2023; Weinberg et al., 2020). This final recommendation addresses inadequate professional development (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020).

Co-Teaching at Secondary Title I Campuses

The most recent data on participation in the Title I program was from the 2015-16 school year. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), during the 2015-16 school year, Title I served more than 26 million children, with approximately 40% at a secondary campus. There is very little research surrounding Title I campuses. The few existing studies focused on teacher attrition rates, qualities of effective novice teachers (Michalec & Wilson, 2021), and high-performing Title I schools (Padilla et al., 2020). An older longitudinal study of elementary students and teachers investigated teachers' instructional focus and the professional development teachers provided to teachers (Desimone et al., 2013). As a group, special education co-teachers at secondary campuses were unexplored by research. No research in the current body of literature investigates special education co-teachers' experiences with effective instructional practices, the challenges they experience, the successful practices, or the professional development they receive at Title I campuses.

Development of HLPs for Special Education Teachers

In the United States, special education legislation requires that teachers use scientifically based practices to support the instruction of students with learning disabilities and as a guide for special education teachers (Nelson et al., 2021). Because of these requirements, the evolution

and complexity of the role and practices of special education teachers have increased. Increasingly diverse groups of students further support a national effort to improve teachers' abilities to support students with learning disabilities by developing specific practices. Empirical research has established practices supporting improved student outcomes for students who struggle to succeed due to learning and behavior disabilities (McLeskey et al., 2017, 2019).

In response to this growing need, and due to the amount of research supporting the positive effects of HLPs for students with disabilities, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) approved a committee of researchers to develop a set of HLPs for special education teachers in 2014. The CEC partnered with the University of Florida to sponsor the project. A 12-member team drafted a list of HLPs based on a synthesis of research on effective instruction. The group took this information to form a set of practices and received initial feedback from focus groups. In 2016, this group presented 22 HLPs to the CEC board, received additional feedback, and published the approved 22 HLPs in 2017.

The organization of the HLPs centers around four aspects of special education practice: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral practices, and instruction. Unlike evidence-based practices that are population-specific, the HLPs provide practices for special education teachers across K 12 settings regardless of population (McLeskey et al., 2017, 2019; Riccimini et al., 2017; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). For special education teachers to be effective, they only need to implement some HLPs. The knowledge of the 22 HLPs serves as a foundation for teachers when serving students with learning disabilities. To respond to the unpredictable nature of inclusive classrooms, effective teachers pick and choose the practices that best address the needs of the students in their classroom (McLeskey et al., 2019).

The HLPs are a starting point for teachers who support students with learning disabilities. Learning when to use HLPs is a critical skill for effective teachers. In addition, teachers need to consider how the HLPs function with other effective practices, such as evidence-based and culturally responsive practices (McLeskey et al., 2017; McLeskey et al., 2019). To fully understand the development of HLPs and their importance, it is imperative to understand them compared to other practices supported by empirical research, such as evidence-based practices (EBPs) in special education. In addition, since this research focuses on inclusion through co-teaching, the study also needs to consider how to incorporate these HLPs within an inclusive co-teaching structure.

Improving Teacher Knowledge of HLPs

After the approval of the HLPs by the CEC, several researchers, state departments, teachers, and higher education institutions looked for a way to feature the HLPs as part of teacher training programs (Nelson et al., 2021). By including the HLPs within a training program, these researchers looked to improve teacher knowledge and the application of HLPs. Most of the development of this training focused on best practices for preservice teacher training programs. Preservice teacher training is the training teachers receive as part of their studies at a university or teacher preparation program before they work on campus as certified teachers. To assist special education teachers currently on campus, a smaller amount of research focuses on teaching these practices through in-service training. Further synthesis of these studies shows universal best practices for improving teachers' knowledge of high-leverage practices regardless of setting. This section organizes the review of these best practices: universal best practices for teacher training, best practices for preservice teacher training, and best practices for in-service teacher training.

Universal Best Practices for Teacher Training

Research shows two universal best practices for including high-leverage practices in teacher training regardless of the setting. The first and the most frequent best practice is incorporating a practice-based model as a part of teachers' training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022). A practice-based model encourages strategies that give the participant real-world experience using HLPs, including practice with real students (Brownell et al., 2019; Maheady et al., 2019; McKown et al., 2022; McLeskey et al., 2019; O'Flaherty et al., 2018; Windschitl et al., 2019) or peer-to-peer practices (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022). Another practice identified to improve knowledge of high-leverage practices is including modeling and coaching as part of a teacher training program (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019; Brownell et al., 2019; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; Maheady et al., 2019; Windschitl et al., 2019). Coaches use modeling to improve the participant's understanding of high-leverage practices. Coaching may occur in real-world or simulated teaching, and coaching may also be peer-to-peer. Peer coaching involves observing each other and providing feedback (Ackerman et al., 2022; Brownell et al., 2019).

Best Practices Preservice Teacher Training

Regarding the use of HLPs, researchers explained that HLPs could provide coherence within coursework in teacher preparation and preservice preparation programs (Nelson et al., 2021). Preservice training aims to improve beginning teachers' knowledge of the HLPs to provide better student service. Teacher training programs utilize both a practice-based model (Brownell et al., 2019; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; Maheady et al., 2019; McKown et al., 2022; O'Flaherty et al., 2018; Windschitl, 2019) and coaching (Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022; Windschitl et al., 2019) to improve aspiring teachers' knowledge of high-leverage

practices and accomplish this goal. This clinical experience provides aspiring teachers with authentic and realistic practice before entering the classroom (Brownell et al., 2019; Maheady et al., 2019; McKown et al., 2022). A best practice that supports clinical practice is focusing on a small number of high-leverage practices (McLeskey et al., 2019; Windschitl et al., 2019) by prioritizing them based on their effectiveness and how difficult they are to learn (Brownell et al., 2019; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; Maheady et al., 2019; Windschitl et al., 2019). In addition, some university programs and K-12 schools form partnerships to provide aspiring teachers with the needed in-class experience (Maheady et al., 2019; Windschitl et al., 2019).

Research supports teacher coaching through mentor teachers to improve the effectiveness of preservice training programs. These mentor teachers use modeling, conferencing, and feedback to help aspiring teachers adopt high-leverage practices (Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; Maheady et al., 2019). Another effective coaching practice is peer coaching. Peer coaches collaborate to plan the implementation of high-leverage practices, observe each other, conference, and provide feedback (Brownell et al., 2019). Additionally, some programs found mixed reality simulation effective at improving the teacher candidate's knowledge of high-leverage practices (McKown et al., 2022). These different types of coaching best practices allow instructors to simulate the strategies they are trying to teach in different ways (Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; Maheady et al., 2019).

Best Practices for In-Service Teacher Training Programs

In-service teacher training programs must go beyond the one-day campus professional development to be effective. Several methods are outlined in the research to support a practice-based model as a part of in-service teacher training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019; Clausen et al., 2022). In contrast to preservice teacher training, in-class experiences occur

on campus and do not rely on simulation (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019). Additional supports for a practice-based model include coaching, mentoring (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019), goal setting, feedback (Billingsley et al., 2019), the scaffolding of high-leverage practices, providing resources, and progress monitoring (Clausen et al., 2022). Other effective practices that support in-service training are using high-leverage practices as a framework for teacher induction (Billingsley et al., 2019) and campus professional development (Clausen et al., 2022). Research showed that using high-leverage practices as a framework provides special education teachers with a clear, coherent vision of effective instruction for special education students (Billingsley et al., 2019; Clausen et al., 2022). In addition, it gives instructional leaders a rubric for effective special education instruction (Billingsley et al., 2019).

Differentiating HLPs from Evidence-Based Practices

Teachers may find it overwhelming when considering what practices to use in their classrooms due to similar terms. For this reason, it is important to define the difference between HLPs and EBPs. Based on the initial development of HLPs, the CEC set out criteria for their definition. First, HLPs are simple enough that novice teachers may master them and are a practice that occurs frequently. Second, HLPs are practices supported by research that demonstrate improved student outcomes for special education teachers across K-12 settings regardless of population or subject matter (McLeskey et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2021). EBPs for special education are strategies backed by research and professional expertise that support student behavior and learning. The research identified EBPs related to specific content areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, and behavior. In contrast to HLPs, EPBs focus on specific subjects and populations within a special education classroom.

For the skilled teacher, HLPs and EPB have a working relationship—HLPs as a structure for their classroom, EBPs for content-specific strategies. For example, a teacher supporting students with learning disabilities may first consider an effective HLP, such as using flexible grouping (HLP17), and then consider the EBP for the subject for these groups. If this teacher was teaching writing, this might include the EBP of teaching outlining (McCray et al., 2017).

High-Leverage Instructional Practices

A review of the literature on HLPs shows that a large amount of research focuses on the effectiveness of HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021) and improving teacher knowledge of HLPs through incorporating the HLPs in both preservice and in-service teacher training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022). The research focusing on the effectiveness of HLPs includes research in each of the four categories: collaboration, assessment, social-emotional/behavioral, and instructional HLPs.

The distribution of the research in the four different areas of HLPs is unbalanced, with most of the research focusing on institutional practices. Intensive instruction (HLP 20), explicit instruction (HLP 16), and systematically designed instruction (HLP 12) should be provided. In addition, most of the research included participants from elementary schools and showed a need for further research that included students in secondary schools (Nelson et al., 2021). Research around HLPs and teacher training shows that most of the research focuses on preservice training and developing best practices for including high-leverage practices as part of a practice-based model as a part of teachers' training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022). A smaller amount of research includes in-service teacher training programs that focus beyond the one-day campus professional development (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019; Clausen et al., 2022).

Research-to-Practice Gap in Education

Several comprehensive literature reviews have attempted to outline the factors contributing to the research-to-practice gap (Chi, 2021; Grima-Ferrell, 2018; Grima-Ferrell et al., 2011). In addition to summating the relevant research, other researchers have developed theoretical models to help raise awareness of ways to sustain and implement research-based practices in the classroom to maximize student engagement (Grima-Ferrell, 2018). A review of studies identifies several factors that keep researchers and educators in disjunction (Chi, 2021). These practical constraints included a limited time for a teacher to research outside their classroom (See et al., 2016), research-based practices are often costly (McGannet al., 2020), and research material is often theoretical and addresses irrelevant issues. In contrast, practical knowledge is needed for teachers (Chi, 2021). Additionally, research findings must be communicated in readily available formats that teachers use. Lastly, teachers need more time to read research findings and determine ways to use them in their classrooms (Chi, 2021; Joyce & Cartwright, 2020). The best way to summarize the current situation is that it is the teacher's responsibility to find relevant research, figure out how the research relates to the classroom and content, and work out any issues (McGannet et al., 2020).

Research-to-Practice Gap Related to EBP and HLPs in Special Education

There continues to be a significant gap between our accumulated knowledge of what works in classrooms and the implementation of EBPs and HLPs in special education classrooms. Limited efforts in the field of special education have attempted to investigate the research-to-practices gap as it relates to special education teachers' use of EBPs (Brock et al., 2020; McKenna et al., 2019) and HLPs (Firestone et al., 2021). Three recent significant studies attempt to understand the research-to-practice gap around teachers' current practices to support students

with a disability and the practices supported by research. Two studies investigated EBPs (Brock et al., 2020; McKenna et al., 2019), and only one investigated HLPs (Firestone et al., 2021). Brock et al. (2020) invested in the teacher's instructional practices used for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and measured how those practices aligned with the EBP for students with ASD identified by the research of Wong et al. (2015). This study found that only half of the participants reported using the recommended EPB for their students with ASD. Another study by McKenna et al. (2019) investigated the EBPs special education teachers used to support students in special education who qualify for services as students with emotional disturbance. Firestone et al. (2021) constructed an instrument to measure special educators' knowledge of HLP and provided the initial validity evidence for instrument use. Additionally, this study identified that future research was needed to investigate special education teachers' knowledge, the associated challenges, and their success using HLPs in their classrooms.

A review of the research shows that only a few studies have investigated special education teachers' actual experiences with EBPs, and one study investigates HLPs. Several gaps related to our understanding of how co-teachers use practices supported by research need to be addressed. First, the study conducted by Firestone et al. (2021) focused on all 22 HLPs. There was a need to understand how the different HLPs functioned independently. No current research existed, just focusing on the 12 HLIPs that focused on the instruction in the classroom. Next, the study by Firestone et al. (2021) focused on special education teachers in inclusive and non-inclusive settings. There was a need to understand how the different HLPs and HLIPs functioned in different settings. Lastly, the lack of research revealed a need to investigate how special education co-teachers use HLIPs, understood HLIPs, and document the challenges, successes, and exposure co-teachers had with HLIPs.

Summary

This chapter provided information regarding Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory as a framework for this study. The literature review identified several gaps in the research in the three main areas of understanding how co-teachers use HLIPs and co-teaching at secondary and Title I campuses. A review of the literature on HLPs showed that a large amount of research focuses on the effectiveness of HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021) and improving teacher knowledge of HLPs through incorporating the HLPs in both preservice and in-service teacher training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022), leaving several gaps related to our understanding of how co-teachers use practices supported by research need to be addressed. First, there was a need to understand how the different HLPs function independently. No current research has focused on the 12 HLIPs that focus on instruction in the classroom. Next, the lack of research established a need to understand how HLIPs function in inclusive and non-inclusive settings. Lastly, Firestone et al. (2021) outline the need to investigate how special education co-teachers use HLIPs, understand HLIPs, and document the challenges, successes, and exposure co-teachers have with HLIPs.

The next area of need was investigating the effectiveness of research-based instructional practices like HLIPs in secondary-education co-teaching classrooms. Most of the research measuring the effectiveness of research-based instructional practices like HLIPs in co-teaching classrooms includes participants from elementary school (Nelson et al., 2021), leaving a gap in our knowledge about these practices at secondary campuses. The last major gap identified was the minimal amount of research investigating Title I campuses, and there was currently no research that investigated research-based instructional practices like HLIPs in co-teach classrooms at Title I campuses. This study contributes to addressing these three gaps in research

by investigating the lived experiences of co-teachers when implementing HLIPs at secondary Title I campuses. The results of this study provide valuable information on co-teachers' experiences and perspectives. The results also provide insight into these experiences by capturing co-teachers' challenges, knowledge, and previous exposure to the HLIPs. Understanding lived experiences and adding to empirical research is critical for future decision-making (Mitchell et al., 2019). Future research may use these experiences to better design preservice and in-service training, address the challenges outlined by this research, and, in turn, help improve how co-teachers understand and implement HLIPs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This hermeneutic phenomenological study investigated special education co-teachers' experiences with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. HLIPs in special education are defined as the 12 HLPs that focus on instruction outlined by the research of McLeskey et al. (2017) completed for the CEC. A secondary campus includes middle and high schools, and a Title I campus was defined as having children from low-income families make up at least 40% of their enrollment (Texas Education Agency). In this chapter, I present the method and design used in this qualitative study, including the setting, participants, the role of the researcher, approaches used for data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative method to investigate the participants in their natural settings. Theoretical framework and assumptions guided this qualitative study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The theoretical framework for this study was Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and this framework guided the research questions. In particular, the triadic reciprocal causation (TRC) relationship may affect teacher efficacy (Lazarides & Warner, 2020) and attitudes toward using practices supported by research in the classroom. According to the SCT, teachers' actions are related to their learned characteristics, behavior in response to stimuli, and the social environment (Bandura, 1986; 2001).

The phenomenological approach was chosen for this qualitative study because it describes the common meaning of several individuals' experiences with a phenomenon. Furthermore, this study used hermeneutical phenomenology to describe the participants' lived

experiences and interpret the meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Van Manen (2014) outlines hermeneutic phenomenology as an approach based on the reflection of Human lived experiences. In his method, he states that the researchers should pay attention to their experiences with the phenomenon being studied. These experiences help the researcher better understand and interpret the phenomenon. Using the hermeneutical phenomenological approach allowed me to utilize my knowledge of co-teaching, special education, and high-leverage practices to analyze and interpret the participant's responses to the research questions. I have spent the last 12 years as a co-teacher and an instructional leader, coaching co-teachers and providing campus-level professional development for co-teachers. This background and experience allowed me to interpret and extract meaning from the participants and code and interrupt their responses to the research questions.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs in their classrooms at Title I campuses. Research questions guided the direction of the study (Creswell, 2018). The central question and sub-questions for this study were as follows:

Central Research Question

How do special education special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe their lived experiences with high-leverage instructional practices?

Sub-Question One

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe the challenges of implementing high-leverage instructional practices in their classroom?

Sub-Question Two

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe their success with implementing high-leverage instructional practices in their classroom?

Setting and Participants

This study focused on special education co-teachers' experiences with HLIPs on secondary Title I campuses. To protect the privacy of the selected school district, the pseudonym of Central School District (CSD) was used throughout the study. During this study, CSD was the fifth-largest school district in a southern state. There were 103,151 students who were enrolled in CSD's 124 schools. At the time of this study, CSD had a minority enrollment of 82% and a graduation rate of 94% (National Center for Education Statistics, TX Dept. of Education). Criterion was the first sampling strategy used to elect CSD, meaning CSD had 10 campuses classified as Title I campuses. At the time of this study, CSD has 2 High School campuses and eight middle school campuses that meet the Title I requirement.

Meeting the study requirements was a critical factor, as a phenomenological study must involve individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and can articulate the experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These 10 schools were the sites from which participants were recruited for this study. CSD provides this study with diverse campuses to recruit participants from 10 secondary schools. In addition, the district served many minority students, and 13.5% of CSD students receive disability services compared to the 11.1% state average (Northside ISD Public Schools, 2022). Another factor that made CSD a good candidate for this study was the fact that despite having a higher rate of students receiving special education compared to the state, CSD ranked in the top 50% of the schools in the selected southern state (National Center for Education Statistics, Tx Dept. of Education).

Sites

Two high schools and eight middle schools qualified as Title I campuses in CSD at the time of this study. The high schools were identified using the pseudonyms Farris High School and Hamilton High School, and the middle schools were identified using the pseudonyms Woodbridge Middle School, Miller Middle School, Bryant Middle School, Johnston Middle School, Harris Middle School, Madison Middle School, Longfellow Middle School, and Churchill Middle School.

High School Sites

Farris and Hamilton High School qualified as Title I campuses at the time of this study. 78.3% of the students at Farris High School are economically disadvantaged, and 54.3 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students received special education services. At Hamilton High School, 78.9 % of the students are economically disadvantaged, and 61.1 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students receive special education services (*Northside ISD (Public Schools)*, 2022). At the time of this study, the principals for both campuses were hired into their positions within the last four years. In addition to the principal, both camps had an associate principal, an academic dean, and four assistant principals—Title I high school campuses were also given an admin intern. In addition, both campuses had a special education campus coordinator and a special education department coordinator. To meet the needs of the students receiving special education services on campus, both schools utilize co-teaching to provide these students with the necessary services.

Middle School Sites

Eight middle schools in CSD meet the study's criteria for a possible site. The eight middle schools served families in a wide geographical area in the state. In 2022, Woodbridge Middle School had a 67.1% population of economically disadvantaged, a 53% population of at-

risk students, 13.5% population of special education students, and the campus rating was a B. At Miller Middle School, 83.9% of the population was economically disadvantaged, 72.7% were at-risk students, and 16.2% were special education students. The campus rating was a D. At Bryant Middle School, the population of economically disadvantaged students is 77.4%, at-risk students are 64.2%, special education is 7.6%, and the campus rating was a B. Johnston Middle School had a campus rating of a C with 75.1% of the students reported as economically disadvantaged, 58.7% of the students were at-risk, and 15.1% of the students received special education services.

Harris Middle School reported 82.9% of its students as economically disadvantaged, 60.3% as at-risk, 17.9 % as special education, and a C-campus rating. Madison Middle School reported a B rating, with 83.2% of its students classified as economically disadvantaged, 66.4% at-risk, and 14.5 % receiving special education services. Longfellow Middle School showed a 72.9% population of economically disadvantaged students, 58.6% of students were at-risk, 15.3% received special education services, and the campus accountability rating was a C. Churchill Middle School received a rating of C, with a student population of 71.3% economically disadvantaged, 47.6% at-risk, and 16.3% receiving special education services (Northside ISD Public Schools, 2022).

Since each middle school qualified as a Title I campus during this study, it had a principal, associate principal, academic dean, assistant principal, and admin intern. In addition, each campus had a special education campus coordinator responsible for the special education department. All eight campuses utilized the co-teaching model to provide the appropriate services to their students.

Participants

The participants for this study were a mixture of special education co-teachers teaching at Title I high school and middle school campuses. This mixture of participants provided a rich data set. The study experienced a balance of participants from both high school and middle school, as well as a representation of male and female participants. Despite the mixture of participants, they all were special education co-teachers from a Title I campus. This was a crucial factor in collecting meaningful data. Increased variation in the types of participants made it more difficult for the researcher to connect meaning and find shared experiences and themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study recruited special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses.

Researcher Positionality

As a former special education co-teacher, I have witnessed students with IEPs struggle. As a special education co-teacher, I found the HLIPs very effective in the classroom. As I advanced in my career and studies, I became very interested in how other special education co-teachers used HLIPs to help their students. As I started researching HLIPs, I realized that special education co-teachers' understanding and use of HLIPs could directly affect how well students with IEPs learn in the classroom. Furthermore, we do not understand how well these HLIPs are used in the classroom. The results of this research help provide a clear picture of the current reality of special education co-teachers' understanding and use of HLIPs. Understanding this reality is imperative to future efforts to improve our special education co-teachers' classroom effectiveness and ability to impact students with IEP learning positively.

Interpretive Framework

This hermeneutic phenomenological study used an interpretive framework of social constructivism. Social constructivism seeks to understand the world in which we work and live. As part of this framework, I acknowledge that a person's experiences allow them to gain an

understanding and meaning of their environment and the world they live in (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). This study describes the experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs at Title I campus. Cresswell and Poth (2018) indicated that participants' views had been affected by their experiences with the phenomenon. The framework of this study recognizes that the participants' views on HLIPs were impacted by their previous experience or lack of experience with each of the HLIPs. Additionally, the participants' views differed between HLIPs. As the human instrument for this study, I interpreted how participants create meaning in their experience with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

This section addresses three philosophical assumptions related to this study: ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Ontological Assumption

As a Christian man, I recognize one singular truth of our Lord. As a hermeneutic phenomenological researcher, I acknowledge that individuals perceive realities differently based on past experiences. I believe it is beneficial to investigate the multiple realities the participants perceive to understand a phenomenon. Each participant who has experienced the phenomena will have experienced it from different perspectives based on their interactions with others and their environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, I recognize that humans perceive truth differently based on their past experiences. Personal traits or factors affect these experiences; their behavior is based on the actions of others, and environmental factors are also a factor (Bandura, 2001). A person's perception of the truth and reality is socially constructed and relative to them (Spencer et al., 2014). Creswell & Poth (2018) advised that to capture the participant's perceived reality, the researcher must gather a significant amount of subjective data

from each individual. I accomplished this by meeting the study participants early on and staying in contact with them throughout the study. In addition, the triangulation of data allowed for multiple interactions with the participants. Lastly, I would like to state that although I recognize that the participants had multiple perceptions of reality, I believe these realities make up and are part of the one actual reality of our Lord God.

Epistemological Assumption

Through the epistemological lens, this hermeneutic phenomenological study showed that the knowledge of the phenomenon's reality was co-constructed between the participants and the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study's design has been constructed to foster this collaboration through the closeness between the participants and the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To construct the knowledge around special education co-teachers related to HLIPs, I positioned myself as close to the participants as possible to understand better the context in which their perceptions were formed (Spencer et al., 2014).

Axiological Assumption

My values come from my faith and are evident in my personal purpose statement. I aim to experience the joy of empowering others to improve and grow through love, kindness, and positive energy. This purpose drives my educational belief that schools should eliminate student learning barriers by proactively and deliberately planning instruction so that all students may access the curriculum. I am aware that my education beliefs, my beliefs in the effectiveness of HLIPs, and my values could create a bias toward the topic or any of the data collected. To help elevate this, I recorded any of these biases in my researcher's journal, and in this journal, I recorded my thoughts, my research positions, and any bias toward the settings and context (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher's Role

As the human investment for this study, I collected data from 10 special education co-teachers at different Title I campuses in CSD. This data comes from individual interviews, lesson plan documents, and questionnaires. One bias I brought to this research was my 12 years of experience as a special education co-teacher at a secondary campus. For eight of those years, I worked at a Title I campus.

At the time of this study, I was an assistant principal and was no longer working as a special education co-teacher. I am interested in special education co-teachers' knowledge, experiences, and background with HLIPs. This research helped determine why some HLIPs are used, and others are not and what challenges special education co-teachers face when using the HLIPs. Understanding special education co-teachers' lived experiences with the HLIPs helps guide future efforts to improve the use of HLIPs in classrooms and, in turn, improve student outcomes.

Procedures

This section discusses the planned procedural steps used to conduct this study. First, I outline the steps to gain permission to conduct the study, and then I conclude the section with the plan for recruiting participants. The purpose of explaining these procedures is so that someone can replicate this study for further research.

Permissions

The procedures for obtaining the data for this study begin with applying for and receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Liberty University. This approval is included in the appendix. During the proposal process, I began informal conversations with the Central School District (CSD) and applied for approval from the CSD. Once approval was obtained from

CSD to conduct the study at the 10 potential campuses, I recruited participants from the 10 campuses that met the study's criteria.

Recruitment Plan

After obtaining approval, I contacted the principal of each Title I campus and asked for permission to contact their special education co-teachers. I explained the purpose of the research, its importance, and the project time commitment for their special education co-teachers. Each special education co-teacher received a recruitment letter, and the special education co-teachers indicated their willingness to participate by signing the agreement forms. I attached the approval to the appendix section. In addition, I asked the Special Education Coordinator to help recruit participants from their campus. I provided each teacher with an explanation of the research in the recruitment letter. Once approved, I sent the participants an acceptance email linked to the Consent form as a Google form. Purposeful sampling was used for this study. I found purposeful sampling appropriate because the study criteria are for participants currently special education co-teachers at a secondary Title I campus. Once they agreed to participate, they signed a consent form. The data was collected through individual interviews, lesson plan analyses, and a questionnaire. The interviews took place on a virtual platform.

Data Collection Plan

For this study, I selected a hermeneutic phenomenology approach to investigate 10 co-teachers at different Title I secondary campuses, including two high schools and eight middle schools. In a well-conducted phenomenological study, the investigated phenomenon is described using the participants' input (Jackson et al., 2018). The data collected typically consists of the participants' thoughts, judgments, intuition, and how they make sense of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I used the triangulation principle in this study to collect data from three

sources (Suter, 2012). Multiple perspectives on this phenomenon increased the probability of identifying practice recommendations, and multiple evidence sources helped verify the same findings (Yin, 2018). The sources of data collection for this study were individual interviews and document analysis, such as lesson plans and a questionnaire.

Individual Interviews Data Collection Approach

The interview is a primary method for collecting participant data in most phenomenological investigations (Moustakas, 1994). This study leveraged individual hermeneutic interviews centered around special education co-teachers' experiences with using HLIPs, the challenges they have experienced, and the success that they have experienced. The investigative questions for the interviews were open-ended, general, and focused on the study's central phenomenon (Creswell, 2018). This study used a data-interpreting hermeneutic interview and conducted the participant interviews after analyzing the lesson plan documents and participant questionnaires. As van Manen (2014) stated, hermeneutic interviews may serve as follow-up interviews. Van Manen (2014) indicated that the data-interpreting interview seeks assistance from the participant in interpreting data gained from interviews, observations, and other data collection methods investigating further interrupted lived experience accounts. The methodology-interpreting interview focuses on insights regarding the approach, assumptions, themes, and methods. Lastly, the hermeneutic interview may be used as a follow-up to other data collection methods.

This study's questionnaire responses and lesson plan documents provided a foundation for interpreting each participant's response to the interview questions. These follow-up questions allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences related to the research questions. For this study, the interviews were conducted virtually, allowing the interview to

occur in a comfortable location for the participant. Van Manen (2014) stated that interviews should not be rushed. The participants for this study selected the interview time that best fit their schedule and allowed for deep conversation. Next, van Manen (2014) indicated that interviews should account for personal experiences using typing or recording conversations. Each interview was recorded using the "Microsoft Teams" software. All participants were asked to agree to both the audio and video recording with signed consent, and the consent was added to the appendix. All interviews were uploaded and stored in Google Drive. Folders and sub-folders, including data collection type, in this case, interviews, were organized in the drive. The folder of interviews had sub-folders for each site and participant.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please provide a little information regarding your educational background and teaching experience, specifically up to this point. Icebreaker question

Interviewer Statement: I have provided you with a copy of one of your submitted lesson plans. Please take a moment to review this lesson plan. As you review this lesson, please consider the experiences designing and implementing this lesson for the following questions.

2. What personal thoughts or experiences stand out when considering how this lesson went in the classroom? CRQ
3. What did this lesson look and feel like when you implemented it in your classroom? CRQ
4. What factors did you consider when designing this lesson to meet the needs of your students with IEPs? CRQ
5. What were the challenges with implementing this lesson? SQ1
6. What was successful about this lesson? SQ2

Interviewer Statement: For the next set of questions, please reference the document I have provided you of the 12 high-leverage instructional practices with their definitions.

7. Of these 12 practices, which practices have you regularly used in your classroom? CRQ
8. Think about a practice you have had significant challenges implementing in your class. What were the challenges you have experienced when attempting to implement this practice? SQ1
9. Of these challenges you have experienced, what have been the biggest sources of these challenges? SQ1
10. Consider the high-leverage instructional practices you *did not list as using*. What are the environmental factors at the school level that impact your ability to use these practices in your classroom? SQ1
11. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as *using* in your classroom. Why do you believe that you use these practices and not others? CRQ
12. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as *using* in your classroom. What personal thoughts or experiences stand out when discussing the successful implementation of these practices? SQ2
13. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as *using* in your classroom. Think about the high-leverage instructional practice you have successfully implemented in your class. What does the experience of implementing this practice in your classroom look and feel like? SQ2
14. What factors have allowed you to successfully implement this practice in your classroom? SQ2

15. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as *using* in your classroom. What are the environmental factors at the school level that impact your ability to successfully use these practices? SQ2
16. What else would you like to add regarding your experience implementing any of the high-leverage instructional practices provided in your classroom? CRQ

The opening question of the interview creates a friendly atmosphere, establishes rapport, and opens the door for more inquiries (Moustakas, 1994). The data-interpreting interview seeks assistance from the participant in interpreting data gained from interviews, observations, and other data collection methods (van Manen, 2014). In questions two through six, the participants were asked to comment on one of the submitted lesson plans. I pre-selected this lesson plan from the ones that the participants submitted. In interview questions seven through 16, the participants refer to a summary of their questionnaire response and a list of the 12 HLIPs definitions (see Appendix J).

Questions two, three, and four focus on the study's central research question and help understand the participant's experiences with implementing the lesson. Questions six, seven, and eight address sub-question number one and explore the challenges the participant experienced in implementing HLIPs. Questions seven and 11 also focused on the central research and provided information about what specific HLIPs the participants used and did not use and their general experiences with them. Questions eight, nine, and 10 allowed the participants to provide descriptions of the challenges they faced related to the HLIPs they indicated as not using and address sub-question 1. Questions 12-14 addressed sub-question two and allowed the participants an opportunity to provide descriptions of the success that they have had related to the HLIPs they indicated they use in their classroom.

Interview Data Analysis Plan

I used a three-step process to transcribe the completed recorded interviews. First, I downloaded the transcription of each interview using the Microsoft Teams transcription functionality. From this transcription, I created a final transcription by comparing the downloaded transcriptions with the recorded video or audio interview. After completing this final transcription, I provided each participant with a digital copy of their transcript to review for accuracy and make any updates required through member checking. All transcriptions were stored using Google Drive in the participant's sub-folders. This raw data allowed for the assignment of preliminary codes by grouping sentences based on the participant's response using inductive coding and theming the data phenomenologically, as described by Saldana (2021). Inductive coding was used to code meaningful statements within the interview transcriptions before analysis. These preliminary codes were grouped for consideration to become final themes after synthesizing the whole data set. An inductive coding strategy was appropriate for the interview questions because they are open-ended questions without a predetermined set of categories or codes (Saldana, 2021).

Document Analysis Data Collection Approach

At the time of this study, the participants for this hermeneutic phenomenology worked as special education co-teachers at a secondary Title I campus in CSD. Reviewing the lesson plans of special education co-teachers provided insight into the application of HLIPs in their classroom and addressed their actual experiences (central research question) with HLIPs. At the time of this study, CSD schools were inconsistent with their lesson plan policy for special education co-teachers at the secondary level. Some schools require a separate planning document from the special education co-teachers, and others only require the lesson plan from the general education

teacher. For this reason, the participants in this study used a special education co-teaching, side-by-side daily planning template that indicated the primary content and the instructional practices used for the students with IEPs (see Table 5). The participants used this planning template to track the instructional activities of their students with IEPs.

Special education co-teachers with multiple subjects and grade levels were asked to select one class and use the required planning document. The participant saved the side-by-side daily planning template for each week for two weeks. The planning documents were saved in a shared Google Drive folder. Each participant had a specific folder assigned to them for their planning documents. The storage of the planning documents follows the overall structure for all data collection artifacts. Following that structure, the folders were the data collection tool, site, and participant. As part of the onboarding process, participants were trained to correctly fill out the side-by-side daily planning template and properly upload the document to Google Drive.

Notice that the term *high-leverage instructional practices* or *HLIPs* was not used in the special education co-teaching side-by-side daily planning template. Instead, the term *specialized instruction* was used. The purpose of this wording was to keep the document's intent, which was to capture the instructional practices used by special education co-teachers so that I may identify what HLIPs they are implementing in their classroom. It was essential to consider that special education co-teachers may be using HLIPs without knowing the official terms or how they are defined by research. Using the term *specialized instruction*, I am asking the participants to document any instructional strategy they used to assist the students receiving special education services. There was a possibility that using the term *high-leverage instructional practices* or *HLIPs* would limit the participant's documentation to only the instructional practices they believed were HLIPs. Therefore, the term *specialized instruction* was used, allowing for a more

accurate representation of what instructional practices and, in turn, HLIPs the special education teachers use in their classrooms.

Table 1

Special Education Co-Teaching Side-By-Side Daily Planning Template

Class/Period:	**Week of:**
Core Curriculum	***Specialized Instruction***
MON	
TUE	
WED	
THURS	
FRI	

Document Data Analysis Plan

The completed co-teaching side-by-side daily planning template was analyzed, and the instructional strategies were coded and compared to the definitions of HLIPs as outlined by the research of McLeskey et al. (2017). The instructional practices documented by the special education co-teachers were compared to the definitions of the HLIPs provided in the appendix. Since the coding categories are predetermined, a deductive coding method was used to code the data by assigning labels to the data (Saldana, 2021). This coded data was imputed into a Google spreadsheet organized by the participant, as shown in Table 6. The number of times a participant documented using one of the HLIPs was indicated in the appropriate column. This coding allowed for further analysis of what HLIPs special education co-teachers use of HLIP's in their classroom.

Table 2

Coded Lesson Plan Matrix

HLIPs	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12
Identify and Prioritize Long and Short Team Goals												
Systematically Design instruction toward a specific learning goal.												
Adapt Curriculum Tasks and Materials for specific learning goals.												
Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.												
Provide Scaffolded Supports												
Use Explicit Instruction												
Use Flexible Grouping												
Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement												
Use Assistive and Instructional Technologies												
Provide Intensive Instruction												
Teach Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning Across Time and Settings												
Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students' Learning and Behavior												

Note: P=Participant

Questionnaire Data Collection Approach

The final source of triangulation for this study was a participant questionnaire. The questionnaire was organized by topic to align with the study's central research question (Merriam

& Tisdell, 2016). To baseline the participants' experiences, they will complete a questionnaire about these three factors. The questionnaire design included questions about each of the 12 HLIPs. The participants responded to a five-item Likert scale for each of the 12 HLIPs by responding to the phrase, “As a co-teacher, I use (insert HLIP) often in assisting the students with IEPs in my classroom.” The Likert scale included the standard 5-item rating for "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Google Forms was used for the questionnaire, and the participants completed the questionnaire digitally. The participants could only submit one response to the questionnaire and received an email copy of their responses. The Google Form was stored in the project Google Drive in a sub-folder. In addition, the participant responses populated a Google Sheet in the project sub-folder on Google Drive.

Questionnaire Questions

Table 3 below shows a sample from the questionnaire question. The complete questionnaire is in the appendix.

Table 3

Questionnaire Questions

HLIP: Identify and Prioritize Long and Short-term Learning Goals Use the definition below to answer the following questions.
Teachers prioritize what is most important for students to learn by providing meaningful access and success in general education and other contextually relevant curricula. They use grade-level standards, assessment data, learning progressions, students' prior knowledge, and IEP goals and benchmarks to decide what is most crucial to emphasize and develop long—and short-term goals accordingly. They understand essential curriculum components, identify essential prerequisites and foundations, and assess student performance concerning these components. Use the scale below to rate your response to the following statement. *“As a co-teacher, I **identify and prioritize long and short-term learning goals** often in assisting the students with IEPs in my classroom."* *1= Strongly disagree* *2 = Disagree* *3 = Neutral* *4 = Agree* *5 = Strongly agree*

Questionnaire Analysis Plan

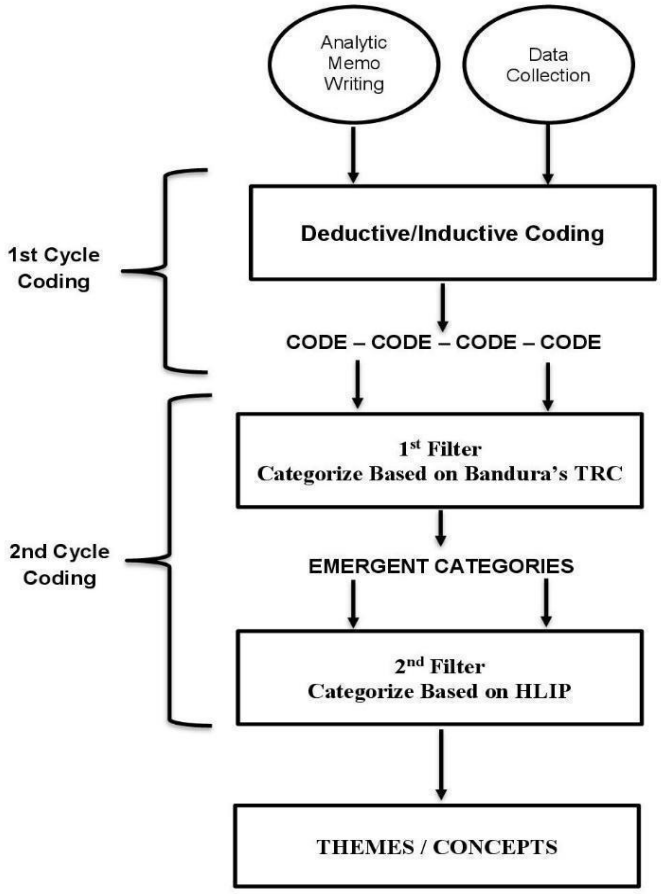
The questionnaire design used a Likert scale, and the responses from the participants created a data set that was made up of the participants' use of HLIPs in their classroom. This data set showed what HLIPs were predominantly used by the participants. Deductive coding was used for the Likert scale, which categorized participants' responses. Deductive coding was appropriate for descriptive qualitative studies, including information such as frequencies or percentages (Saldana, 2021). Once completed, the results were displayed for each HLIP. In addition, the participants' responses started to indicate which of the 12 HLIPs they have had success with and challenges with.

Data Synthesis

This study utilized a two-cycle coding methodology outlined by Saldana (2021). Figure 2 shows the overall structure of this two-cycle coding canon adapted based on this study's theoretical framework and purpose. The first cycle includes deductive or inductive coding of the data collection tools and my analytical memo writing. Once these initial codes were collected, the initial codes were moved into the second coding cycle. The second cycle induced two sets of predetermined categories called "filters" into which the initial codes were categorized. The first filter categorized the codes based on the theoretical framework of the study, in this case, Bandura's (1986; 2001) TRC. The participants' coded experiences were categorized based on the TRC factors of personal, behavioral, or environmental factors. The new coded experiences were then moved to a second filter based on HLIPs. The categorized data was sorted based on whether the data applied at the macro level of the problem, meaning experiences that applied to all HLIPs, or if the experiences were specific based on certain HLIPs. After the data was run through the second cycle, the categorized data was sorted into themes and concepts.

Figure 2

Two Cycle Coding Canon



Note: This is adapted from Saldana (2021). The Two Cycle Coding Canon describes the flow of coded participant experiences. Filters are based on the theoretical framework, Bandura's TCP, and macro-level and micro-level categories.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research describes trustworthiness using credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative researchers should think of these factors as qualitative researchers think of internal and external validity, reliability, and

objectivity. Addressing these trustworthiness factors improves the study's quality, and each factor is addressed in this section.

Credibility

The use of triangulation, member checks, and prolonged engagement provided credibility for this study. Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe credibility as confidence in the study's ability to accurately describe the finding as the actual reality. The first technique was triangulation, which involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study triangulated the participants' experiences through individual interviews, document analysis, and a questionnaire, allowing for research saturation. The next source of credibility was through member checks (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When using member check, participants review the data they provided and check it for accuracy. In this study, participants reviewed the transcriptions of their interviews and submitted any corrections. This study's final source of credibility was prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Engaging the participants for over three months through individual interviews, document analysis, and a questionnaire allowed for prolonged engagement of the participants.

Transferability

To ensure that another researcher may be able to replicate this study and that the findings may be applied in either another context or within the same context at another time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), this study outlined the steps in detail for both the data collection process and the data analysis. Transferability was evident as it contained a detailed description of the processes used to conduct this study. In addition, transferability was addressed throughout the study's design, which will allow for the application of the findings to populations similar to the population of this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Dependability

To show dependability, the study must prove that the findings are consistent and may be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The detailed description of the study's process and procedures allows other researchers to validate the study findings or investigate the same questions with a similar population. In addition, Liberty University conducted an external audit throughout the study process through the dissertation committee and the Qualitative Research Director.

Confirmability

Confirmability for this study was also addressed through data triangulation using three data collection instruments: individual interviews, document analysis, and a questionnaire. Triangulation helps ensure confirmability and that the participants shape this study's findings, not the researcher's bias, interest, or motivation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Several processes and procedures guided ethics for this study. First, before the research occurred, IRB approval was required (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Second, the study used pseudonyms (Creswell & Poth, 2018) for the site names and the participants involved. Third, all participants completed a consent form before participating in the study. The consent form induced a detailed study description and ensured they understood that they participated in individual interviews, provided two weeks of lesson plans, and completed a questionnaire. Fourth, all the study data was stored in Google Drive folders. Each participant only had access to their specific folder, meaning they did not have access to the information or data of the other participants or sites. Only the researcher had access to all the participant data. In addition, all site and participant data were stored under the assigned pseudonyms.

Summary

This hermeneutic phenomenology investigated co-teachers' experiences with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. This chapter outlined the methodology and design for this study, including the research questions, setting, participants, procedures, and the researcher's role. In addition, the chapter described data collection methods that included individual interviews, document analysis, and a questionnaire. The chapter ended with the ethical considerations for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. Chapter Four provides a narrative description of each participant, using pseudonyms and a visual representation of participant demographics critical to the study. Chapter Four also describes themes that arose during data analysis and concludes with findings related to the research questions seeking to describe the lived experience of the phenomenon.

Participants

The 10 participants in this study were drawn from three middle schools and two high schools that qualify as Title I campuses, with a distribution of four middle schools and six high school co-teachers. All participants were special education teachers working with students with IEPs in a co-teach classroom. First, a research approval request was sent to each campus principal. Once approved, a recruitment email was sent to the special education coordinator, who then distributed the email to co-teachers at the school. The potential participants completed a screening survey to ensure they met the participation requirements. Initially, 13 individuals agreed to participate in the study. Of those 13 individuals, 10 completed all the studies completed the data collection requirements. The three participants cited time and work responsibilities as the reason for failing to complete the study. I assigned each participant a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality and a pseudonym to each participating school involved in this phenomenological study. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and that participation was voluntary. Participants signed and submitted a consent form. The participants were required to be 18 years or older, be a special education co-teacher at a

middle or high school campus and work where low-income families make up at least 40% of their campus enrollment. Participants included seven females and three males. The teacher participants and their demographic information are presented in Table 8.

John

John retired from the military, returned to school, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees. During that time, he worked as a substitute teacher and paraprofessional. After completing his master's, John decided to teach and got his alternative certification. He has worked as a teacher for seven years. Most of his experience comes from working in a behavior unit. At the time of this study, he was a special education co-teacher at Ferris High School. 78.3% of the students at High School A are economically disadvantaged, and 54.3 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students received special education services. John said that he focuses on understanding his students, giving them confidence, "breaking things down Barney style" for them, and getting students ready for the real world- "Walmart does not have accommodations."

April

At the time of this study, April was a special education co-teacher at Ferris High School. She has three degrees in education, including a Ph.D. in behavior management, and was licensed as a school psychologist. This was her 28th year teaching. She loves working at her current school and has been with the same co-teaching partner for three years. She says the key to their success was their working relationship and the relationships they built with their students. 78.3% of the students at Ferris High School are economically disadvantaged, and 54.3 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students received special education services.

Pam

At the time of this study, Pam was a middle school special education teacher in her fourth year. She graduated with a BA in multidisciplinary study and entered an alternative certification program. Before coming to her current campus, Pam worked in a middle school behavioral unit. She currently works at Woodbridge Middle School. In 2022, Woodbridge had a 67.1% population of economically disadvantaged students, a 53% population of at-risk students, a 13.5% population of special education students, and a campus rating of B.

Susan

Susan has seventeen years of teaching experience at the time of this study. She started at the elementary school level, has spent time as an ALE teacher, and has taught in a self-contained classroom. Susan holds a bachelor's degree in education and is currently a special education co-teacher at Bryant Middle School. Bryant Middle School's population of economically disadvantaged students is 77.4%, at-risk students are 64.2%, special education was 7.6%, and the campus rating was a B. She appreciates the campus leadership's commitment to co-teaching and setting clear expectations.

Mark

Mark has a bachelor's in education and a master's in special education. He has taught at the high school level as a co-teacher and special education department coordinator. After spending time in high school, Mark has returned to the middle school level as a special education co-teacher. At the time of this study, he taught for 11 years and was a special education co-teacher at Miller Middle School. At Miller, 83.9% of the population was economically disadvantaged, 72.7% were at-risk students, and 16.2% were special education students. The campus rating was a D.

Erin

Erin earned her bachelor's degree in kinesiology and education, intending to be a P.E. Coach at the elementary level. Unable to find a P.E. job, she started subbing sets for some specialist classes and stated, "I kind of fell in love with it." So, she went ahead and took the test for special education and passed. She spent three years as an inclusion teacher at the elementary level before moving to her current school. At the time of this study, she teaches as a co-teacher and ALE teacher at Woodbridge Middle School. She feels that teaching an ALE class helps her get ideas for her co-teaching classroom. In 2022, Woodbridge Middle School had a 67.1% population of economically disadvantaged, a 53% population of at-risk students, 13.5% population of special education students, and the campus rating was a B.

Hector

Hector originally studied kinesiology but was told he needed to add another teaching subject because of the lack of P.E. jobs, so he also got certified in math. He started as a middle school math teacher and coach, and after 7 years, he decided he wanted to coach at the high school level, so he got certified in special education to make himself more marketable. At the time of this study, he has been a co-teacher and coach at the high school level for the last seven years and teaches at Ferris High School. 78.3% of the students at Ferris High School are economically disadvantaged, and 54.3 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students received special education services.

Monica

Monica started as an aid in ALE classrooms while attending school. She received a degree in education and started as an inclusion teacher. During this time, Monica was an inclusion teacher in high school English. She did inclusion for seven years, has moved districts, and was co-teaching at Hamilton High School at the time of this study. Currently, she is co-

teaching in a social studies classroom. She has been teaching for a total of 13 years. At Hamilton, 78.9 % of the students are economically disadvantaged, and 61.1 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students receive special education services.

Jennifer

Jennifer obtained her Community Studies Early Childhood Degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She then began working in their child development center during her senior year with infants and toddlers and then began teaching. Jennifer worked at a childhood education center. She then transitioned to a new school district and worked at the elementary level for three years. Her work included working with K-5 ALE- specialized instruction and self-contained students. At the time of this study, she transitioned to Hamilton High School to work with an older population and jumped back into co-teaching. "The basis of everything I do does fall back on that social-emotional; again, with my degree and youth and community studies, a lot of it is social, emotionally based." At Hamilton High School, 78.9 % of the students are economically disadvantaged, and 61.1 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students receive special education services.

Karen

Karen grew up watching her mom teach special education, and she now works in the same school district where her mother has worked for 30 years. During the study, she taught and coached volleyball at two high schools before her current assignment as head volleyball coach and special education teacher at Hamilton High School. She has been in this position for five years. At Hamilton High School, 78.9 % of the students are economically disadvantaged, and 61.1 % are classified as at-risk. 13.2 % of the students receive special education services.

Table 4

Special Education Co-Teacher Participants

Teacher	Years Taught	Level of Education	School
John	7	Masters	Farris HS
April	28	Ph.D.	Farris HS
Pam	4	Bachelors	Woodbridge MS
Susan	17	Bachelors	Bryant MS
Mark	11	Masters	Miller MS
Erin	5	Bachelors	Woodbridge MS
Hector	15	Bachelors	Farris HS
Monica	13	Bachelors	Hamilton HS
Jennifer	6	Bachelors	Hamilton HS
Karen	9	Bachelors	Hamilton HS

Results

I collected data on special education co-teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of 12 high-leverage instructional practices by collecting responses to the participant questionnaire, a review of lesson plan documents, and individual interviews. The participants provided their responses to the questionnaire by responding to a Google form and submitted lesson plans on a Word document that I provided. All interviews were video recorded using Microsoft Teams, and a backup audio recording was captured using my iPhone. All responses, documents, audio and video recordings were uploaded to a secure password-protected drive. Files will remain in the password-protected files on a password-protected computer for the required minimum of three years.

Once transcriptions were approved through the member-checking process, I completed a two-cycle coding process outlined in Saldana (2021). First, I reviewed and organized the data

collected and used deductive and inductive coding. During the second coding cycle, I passed the code through two levels of filters. The first filter categorized the codes based on the theoretical framework of the study, in this case, Bandura's (1986; 2001) TRC. Once the participant's coded experiences pass through the first filter, they move to a second one based on the macro and micro categories, meaning a general overall experience that applies to all HLIPs or if the experiences were specific based on certain HLIPs. After the data was run through the second cycle, the categorized data was sorted into three themes and eight subthemes, which are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Table 5

Themes & Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Social Emotional Learning	Student Interactions
	Student Efficacy
Student Engagement	Student Motivation
	Managing Student Behavior
	Number of Students
Student Learning Gaps	Student Gaps in Foundational Knowledge
	Meet Students Where They Are At
	Teacher Comfort with Technology

Social Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning was the first theme to develop from the triangulation of data. The theme was derived from participants' descriptions of their lived experiences using HLIPs to support students with IEPs. All 10 participants mentioned a need to use strategies to address students' social and emotional needs during their interviews. In addition, all elements of

addressing students' social and emotional needs appeared across all three data sources. The codes "appropriate social interactions," "inappropriate social interactions," and "student-to-student relationships" were clustered into a subtheme of *student interactions*. These codes appeared across all three data sources a total of 56 times. Pam spoke about the need to address the students' emotional needs because "they are very particular in how they function with each other. For the most part, we do everything as a group, like as a whole, and I kind of break it down into small groups." The codes of "student lack of confidence," "do not want to stand out," and "building relationships" were clustered into a subtheme of *student efficacy*. These codes appeared across all three data sources a total of 59 times. The theme of social-emotional learning and its subthemes appeared 115 times.

The triangulation of the participant data showed that participants used scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 17), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and positive feedback to help all students develop healthy relationships with their teachers and peers. Table 6 shows the breakdown of social-emotional learning subthemes, codes, and evidence.

Table 6

Social Emotional Learning Subthemes, Codes, and Evidence

Subthemes	Codes	Evidence
Student Interactions	Appropriate social interactions Inappropriate social interactions Student-to-student relationships	“They are very particular in how they function with each other.”
Student Efficacy	Student lack of confidence Do not want to stand out Building relationships	"If you give him the right task, the students believe they could do it."

Student Interactions

All participants reported that they felt the need to improve student interactions so that their student-to-student interactions were appropriate. The subtheme of student interactions appeared 56 times across all three data scores. Serval participants cited that this skill had been affected by COVID-19 and would be a skill they need in the future. Many participants reported that students seemed to want to work independently because they did not like to be pointed out and had forgotten how to interact with each other. John remarked in his interview that "COVID did ruin these kids, and their social skills are horrible." To address the needs of their students, all 10 participants reported using flexible grouping (HLIP 17) and strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18) in their questionnaire responses and their side-by-side lesson documents. During their interviews, each participant added that they used these two HLIPs to improve student interactions. When asked why he selected flexible grouping to improve student interactions, Mark indicated, "It just works, it is simple, and it works." Each participant also reported strategies to promote student engagement as an effective strategy to improve student interactions. Several participants reported wanting students to move around and talk to each other and "make class fun."

Student Efficacy

All participants felt they needed to address level HLIPs to improve their self-confidence in learning the material. Hector reported the need to "build their confidence, little by little." Several participants reported that students described themselves as "special," "stupid, or "dumb." Additionally, each participant indicated the need to be sensitive to their student's fear of standing out. Many participants reported that students would not want to accept help because it made them look different. Monica recalled, "They tell you they are good, but they are not; they just do

not want to stand out." During their interviews, all participants reported the need to develop a strong student-teacher relationship to improve student efficacy. Monica indicated, "We think our students have a great relationship with us. Having students return to us proves our amazing relationship with them over the years, and we cherish that."

Throughout the questionnaire response, side-by-side- lesson plans, and interviews, the participants identified two HLIPs as effective strategies for improving student efficacy. The first was scaffolding (HLIP15). The participants found that barking down information into manageable checks improved students' belief in their ability to learn the required material. Karen said, "If you give him the right task, the students believe they could do it." The second HLIP used by the study participants to improve student efficacy was positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior (HLIP 22). Mark stated that if he remained optimistic, the students would feel like "they can do it, even if they are basic-level kids."

Student Engagement

Student engagement was another theme developed from the triangulation of data. The theme appeared several times throughout the participant interviews and in all ten lesson plan documents and questionnaire responses. Participants indicated that focusing on student engagement assisted with student motivation and behavior. Susan said, "We kind of make it fun and a little bit more hands-on so that these kids can want to do it." Data analysis categorized three subthemes as part of student engagement. The codes ``students not trying," "taking the easy way out," and "students not interested" were clustered into a subtheme of *student motivation.* These codes appeared 35 times in the interview transcripts. The second subtheme of student engagement was categorized as *managing student's behavior.* The codes clustered into *managing student's behavior* were "keeping students on task" and "students with behavior issues." In total,

these codes appeared 32 times across the data collection tools. Lastly, the codes of "number of students in class" and "number of students with IEPs" were clustered into the subtheme *number of students*. In total, these codes appeared 23 times throughout the participant interviews. Table 7 shows the breakdown of student engagement subthemes, codes, and evidence.

Table 7

Student Engagement Subthemes, Codes, and Evidence

Subthemes	Codes	Evidence
Student Motivation	Students not trying Taking the easy way out Students not interested	"Ultimately, you want to stay as positive as you can with the students to improve their motivation."
Managing Students Behavior	Keeping students on task Students with behavior issues	"Some students would just be in the corner, on their phone."
Number of Students	Number of students in class Number of students with IEPs	"So many kids in each class."

Student Motivation

The special education co-teachers in this study agreed they needed to consider instructional and behavioral strategies that improve student motivation. The subtheme of student motivation appeared in 35 across the data. Several participants reported that students with IEPs would "guess" or "put their heads down." All 10 participants indicated the need to build positive relationships with students so they would feel comfortable with them, allowing them to ask questions and trust the feedback the teachers give them. An analysis of the participant questionnaire responses and the side-by-side documents showed that all participants leveraged strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18) and positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22).

Further analysis of the interview transcripts shows that all 10 participants leverage these two HILPs to improve student motivation. When asked about student engagement (HLIP 18), Erin indicated that using "games, creating movement," and making the classroom a "fun and safe place to be" helped improve her students' motivation. The participants indicated that the more engaging the activities were, the more likely the students would participate. When asked about positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22), Jennifer said, "Ultimately, you want to stay as positive as you can" with the students to improve their motivation." Hector added that giving positive feedback helps "break down their walls," and when they know "you care about them, they will start working for you bit by bit." April added that positive feedback "constantly helps them" and "keeps them engaged."

Managing Student Behavior

The subtheme of managing student behavior appeared 32 times throughout the data triangulation. The participants consistently indicated that they must use strategies to ensure students stay on task and are not distracted. April indicated that some "kiddos are very rough around the edges" and that using positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22) to "communicate that your care" was critical to managing behavior. Mark supported the use of positive and constructive feedback, saying that "some students would just be in the corner, on their phone, and I am going back and forth with them, but I would let them know that I care and that they deserve access to the same education as everyone else." John added positive interaction will "soften them up." The participants also indicated using strategies to promote student engagement (HLIP 18) through movement and creating a "making the class fun." During the participant interviews all the participants indicated they would leverage flexibility grouping (HLIP 17) to assist with student behavior and that Erin said that "you have less behavior issue" if you design

your group correctly, and that when they worked for the whole group, they would be students "wasting time, not on task, and goofing off." Hector indicated that he monitors the students in their groups closely because "some kids just want to copy other kids."

Number of Students

The subtheme of the number of students consists of the code clusters: the number of students in class and the number of students with IEPs. These codes came up in the 10 participant interviews 23 times. The participants in this study indicated that the number of students in class and the number of students with IEPs are the two primary challenges when trying to improve student engagement, motivation, and managing students' behavior. Additionally, the participants indicated in their interviews these challenges made using HLIPs, such as flexible grouping (HLIP 17), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP22). The first challenge given by the participants was class size. Several participants indicated that the large class sizes made engaging in "fun activities" and "hands-on activities" difficult. Monica indicated that she would design "fun games" but that "because the class is so big, we still have students off task." The second challenge was the number of students in the classroom with IEPs, namely the number of students with IEPs that addressed "behavior challenges." Jennifer said that with so many students in one classroom with "behavior challenges," you must “group very carefully, or the class can get away from you." A smaller number of participants indicated that remembering all the accommodations and strategies for so many students with behavior issues can be very challenging and take up much of their planning and class time. Karen even indicated that since she was spending "so much time with our behavioral kids," they felt like they "missed some of the kids that needed help."

Student Learning Gaps

In describing their lived experiences using HLIPs to support students with IEPs, each participant emphasized the need to use stages to address student learning gaps. All participants described a need to use strategies that addressed students' gaps in foundational knowledge and meet students where they are. The theme and subthemes appeared across the analyzed data 79 times. Additionally, participants indicated gaps in learning for all students, not just those with IEPs. April said all students are on a "very large spectrum," and some are "very low in their base knowledge." In his 8th-grade class, Mark reported that some students are reading at a "3rd-grade level," several participants reported that they are still feeling "the COVID gap." The codes of "low knowledge base," "COVID gap," and "backfilling skills" were clustered into the subtheme of *gaps in foundational knowledge.* The codes of "knowing how students learn" and "design instruction at the student's level" were clustered into the subtheme *of meeting students where they are*. The final subtheme of *teacher comfort with technology* includes the codes of "could use technology more," "thinks technology has benefits," "student behavior with technology," and "need more technology training.'

During the participant interviews, several participants reported several challenges when designing instruction to address learning gaps. First was the number of students in one class with IEPs. John said students need "specific design instruction; every kid needs it." Because the participants have "so many kids in one class, it was very difficult to target every single student with an IEP to help them out." In addition to the number of students with IEP in one classroom, several participants cited the number of IEP goals and accommodations for each student as a challenge. Monica indicated that "with so many IEP accommodations and goals," it was almost impossible to meet the needs of " all our students" all the time "every day." The final concern

several participants cited was a need for more planning time with their co-teaching partner. Table 8 shows the breakdown of student learning gaps, subthemes, codes, and evidence.

Table 8

Student Learning Gaps Subthemes, Codes, & Evidence

Subthemes	Codes	Evidence
Gaps in Foundational Knowledge	Low knowledge base COVID gap Backfilling skills	"Back to 6th grade skills"
Meeting Students Where They Are At	Knowing how students learn Knowing how students learn	"If I know how they learn, it's just easier for me to come up with a lesson for them."
Teacher Comfort with Technology	Could use technology more Thinks technology has benefits Student behavior with technology Need more technology training	"I definitely could improve at using technology."

Student Gaps in Foundational Knowledge

All 10 participants reported that students had many gaps in foundational knowledge during their interviews. In all this subtheme, it was mentioned 23 times across the individual interviews. Jennifer, a high school co-teacher who taught math, reported that many of her students could not "multiply or divide," making it "difficult to teach fractions." Serval participants reported that many of their students with IEPs "really struggle with reading." To help students grasp the content, the participants broke down the work into small, manageable units. All participants reported using scaffolding (HLIP 15) in their questionnaire responses.

Additionally, all 10 participants reported using scaffolding (HLIP 15) to help address student gaps. By scaffolding (HLIP 15) the work for the students, the participants indicated that they could provide students with the needed support and work on backfilling some of the missing

foundational skills. Monica, a high school teacher, reported that they had to go "back to 6th-grade skills" and "we have to scaffold "to teach them the missing skills."

In addition to scaffolding, all participants reported using flexible grouping (HLIP 17) and explicit instruction (HLIP 16) to address the foundational learning gaps in students. Hector indicated that flexible grouping allowed students to work with "lots of skills" and helped "bring them where we need to be." Mark said they would sometimes group students at the same level, and "one of us will give direct instruction to the small group." Other times, the participants reported mixing the groups so that the "higher level students help the lower ones."

Meeting Students Where They Are At

The study participants agreed that to help students learn the content, they needed to design instruction "to meet the kids where they are at" academically—in all, this subtheme appeared across the data scores 27 times. The participants cited their understanding of how the students learn as a critical factor in designing their instruction. April said, "If I know how they learn, it's just easier for me to come up with a lesson for them." Participants indicated in their interviews that scaffolding material (HLIP 17) meets students' needs and levels. All 10 participants also indicated that they would adapt the curriculum (HLIP13) to meet the student's needs and match their level.

Additionally, the participants would utilize accommodations and modifications outlined in the student's IEP. Each participant also mentioned flexible grouping (HLIP 17) to match the students' levels. Karen said that to match the students' levels, she would "give them as much intervention during the week in small group pullouts as possible."

Teacher Comfort with Technology

Nine study participants cited their comfort with using instructional technology (HLIP 19) as a challenge. Jennifer indicated she felt like she was " just not a technology person" and preferred the "hands-on approach to learning." Karen compiled about issues such as "students not being able to log on" or having "multiple versions of the assignment" in case "sometimes the technology does not work." Participants indicated that they felt students would use technology not working correctly as an excuse not to work on the assignment. Furthermore, Hector worried that students would "look up answers" or "use AI for writing assignments." Lastly, the participants reported that one of the biggest challenges was that they had been given very little guidance on using technology in their classroom. Karen indicated she feels " just thrown in" and "on her own." During their interviews, all the participants indicated that more training in instructional technology would be beneficial. John said they needed "step-by-step" instruction, and all participants indicated a desire to improve and incorporate technology moving forward because they think there are many good tools to help their students. In total, this sub-theme appeared 29 times across that data set.

Outlier Data and Findings

This section outlines the unexpected findings from the study that arose during data triangulation. The analysis of the participant data from the three data sources—participant questionnaire, side-by-side lesson plan documents, and individual interviews—aligned with the three major themes and the eight subthemes outlined in the previous section.

Outlier Finding #1

Because the study questions and sub-questions focus on special education co-teachers supporting students with IEPs, I assumed the participants' responses would directly relate to this.

I anticipated these responses would cover many factors that impact the special education co-teachers' ability to use HLIPs to assist the students in their classroom with IEPs. Despite these assumptions, one true outlier finding emerged from three participants. These participants indicated that one of their challenges was not being able to assist students without an IEP.

Several participants did not report an issue with their ability to service the needs of all students, and two indicated that they were "proud" of their ability to help everyone in the classroom. However, three participants indicated it was a challenge. These participants shared that often, their students without IEPs would seek assistance. Still, they would be unable to help due to the high demand from their students receiving special education services. Mark reported telling students, "Sorry, I am helping someone else," or instructing them to "go ask" the other classroom teacher. The fact that they felt like they could not assist these students troubled these participants, and Erin expressed, "A lot of the kids need my help, not just my kids." When asked about the factors that impacted their ability to assist students without IEPs, these participants associated this challenge with large class sizes, many students with IEPs, many IEP goals, and insufficient time in class. The following section will explore many of these challenges and their impact on the special education co-teachers' ability to use certain HLIPs effectively. However, these three participants indicated that these factors affect their ability to serve all students.

Research Question Responses

The triangulation of the three data scores, a crucial method in our research process, was meticulously analyzed and reviewed to address the study's research questions. The following section provides a narrative explanation of the central research question and the following two sub-questions. Evidence from the three data sources completed by the participants supports the

descriptions of their lived experiences with using HLIPs to help their students with IEPs at Title I campuses and the associated challenges and successes.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses with high-leverage instructional practices?

The lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs at the Title I campus were varied but did reveal three main themes. Participants indicated they used HLIPs to address the student's social-emotional learning needs, engagement, and learning gaps. During the 10 participant interviews, each spoke about addressing the social-emotional needs of the students with IEPs and all students in their classrooms. The data coding showed that all 10 participants in the study mentioned using HLIPs to address students' social-emotional needs, and the theme and subthemes were coded 115 times. April indicated that they needed to "build students' confidence" and let them "interact with each other." Additionally, the participants indicated a need to be positive with students and careful about how they approach them because most of their students with IEPs do not want to stand out.

Another factor driving the participants' use of HLIPs was improving student engagement. The coding revealed 90 codes related to the student engagement theme and subthemes across the data set. Participants indicated that students were not "motivated to work" and that they had many students with "behavioral issues." To improve students' motivation, the participants indicated they would use different HLIPs, such as flexible grouping (HLIP 17) and promote active student engagement (HLIP 18) to "make class fun." Many participants indicated that by "making class fun" through small group work and "hands-on activities," they saw an improvement in student motivation and spent less time managing "unwanted student behavior."

Lastly, each participant in the study felt that the HLIPs they favored helped them address student learning gaps. Addressing students' learning gaps was the last central theme identified by the participants as a reason for leveraging an HLIP. The theme and its subthemes were coded 79 times. All participants indicated that using scaffold instruction (HLIP 15) helped them start to address the "wide range" of students' needs and variance in foundational knowledge. During their interviews, each participant mentioned scaffolding instruction (HLIP 15) to address student learning gaps.

Sub-Question One

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe the challenges of implementing high-leverage instructional practices in their classroom?

The participant data analysis showed that the participants reported three main environmental changes: large class sizes, the number of students with IEPs, and the number of IEP goals and accommodations for each student. These three challenges affect all HLIPs to some extent. However, participants reported that since they "have so many kids" and so many students with IEPS in one class period, it particularly hurt their ability to use HLIPs, such as systematically design instruction toward specific learning goals (HLIP 12), teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies (HLIP 14), teach students to generalize new learning (HLIP 21) and identify and prioritize long and short-term learning goals (HLIP 11). Several participants also reported feeling "overwhelmed" with the number of IEP goals and accommodations each student had in their classroom. Karen reported that with "so many students with certain needs, " it was impossible to design SDI for everyone." Another challenge the participants who worked at a middle school reported was the short class times. These participants complained that they " did not have enough time" to work with each student who needed help and that the "45-minute" class

period was "just too short." A few participants also reported "lack of parent" involvement and " no planning time" as challenges.

Nine participants consistently mentioned using assistive and instructional technologies (HLIP 19) as a challenge, while one did not mention it during the participant interviews. The questionnaire data showed that four participants answered "neutral" or "disagree" when asked about using HLIP 19 in their classroom. A document analysis of the side-by-side lesson plans showed that five participants indicated using instructional technology in the classroom. The lesson plans showed that participants used technology for assessments, exit tickets, or video notes. Four participants were high school teachers, while one was a middle school teacher. Despite some participants indicating that they used instructional technology in the classroom, nine participants during their interviews listed personal factors that impacted their ability to use teaching, indicating that they need to "improve" how they use technology or indicated they did "not feel comfortable" using technology regularly in their classroom. Other participants worried about behavioral factors for the students and felt that students are "able to cheat" and "get distracted" by technology. Furthermore, the participants cited environmental factors such as "lack of training" and felt they had just been 'thrown into" using technology without support.

Sub-Question Two

How do special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses describe their success with implementing high-leverage instructional practices in their classroom?

The participants predominantly listed the five HLIPs of adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 17), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22) to address the needs of the students with IEPs in their

classroom. All interview participants mentioned each of the five HLIPs as an effective strategy. In addition, the document analysis also showed that the participants were leveraging the HLIPs of adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 17), and strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18). Lastly, all 10 participants indicated in their questionnaire responses that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they provided scaffolded support (HLIP 15), used flexible grouping (HLIP 17), and provided positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22). Nine participants also indicated that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they used adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13) and strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), with one participant giving a "disagree" with HLIP 13 and another participant giving a "neutral" response to HLIP 18.

The participants listed several behavioral factors as the reason for leveraging these HLIPs. They indicated that these five HLIPs address specific student needs, such as improving social-emotional learning and student engagement and helping address learning gaps. Participants indicated that they needed to "get kids moving," get them "engaged and talking to each other," and that since "a lot of kids " are "so low academically," they needed to "break things down" for them.

Additionally, the participants listed personal factors and experiences as the reasons they favored these five HLIPs. Participants said these HLIPs ``just work" in their experiences and were "simple and easy" to use. Five of the participants indicated that their background as an elementary school teacher or ALE teacher contributed to their use of adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 17), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22). April indicated that "high school students are just like

elementary kids" and the "same strategies work for older students." Another factor that several participants listed as impacting their ability to use these HLIPs is their relationship with their co-teacher. Susan indicated that her "great relationship" helps them design instruction that impacts the students' learning. A few participants indicated that they leverage these HLIPs because of environmental factors. These participants indicated that either their current school or a previous school had set the expectations that "kids need to be moving," "kids must be in groups," and activities need to be "hands-on."

The participants moderately listed other HLIPs as being used in the classroom. Some participants indicated they sometimes used explicit instruction (HLIP 16) and intensive instruction (HLIP 20). Additionally, some participants admitted to clearly understanding what explicit instruction (HLIP 16) and intensive instruction (HLIP 20) were even after reading the definitions. Two participants indicated during the interview that " I did not know what that meant" when asked about their questionnaire response regarding explicit instruction (HLIP 16) and intensive instruction (HLIP 20). Overall, participants indicated that they agreed all the HLIPs were effective but that because of the challenges outlined in the previous section, it was" not possible" for them to use these HLIPs, or they " did not feel capable" of using certain HLIPs. Some participants indicated a "lack of training," another participant asked me directly at the end of the interview if I knew how they "could learn more" or receive "coaching" on the HLIPs.

Summary

By investigating the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs, we may identify ways to improve teachers' knowledge and use of the instructional HLPs and, in turn, improve the academic performance of students with learning disabilities. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study was to investigate the lived experiences of special

education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. The triangulation of participant data revealed three themes and eight sub-themes. Participants indicated that HLIPs helped them improve students' social and emotional learning, a theme connecting the sub-themes of student interactions and student efficacy.

Additionally, the participants indicated the need to use HLIPs to improve student engagement, a theme linked to improving student motivation, managing student behavior, and number of students. Lastly, the participants indicated using HLIPs to address student learning gaps. The themes of addressing student learning gaps relate to the sub-themes of Student Gaps in foundational Knowledge and meeting students where they are. In addition to the themes and sub-themes, the data analysis revealed several challenges that impacted the particle's ability to level all the HLIPs. The participants indicated that their experiences using HLIPs were impacted negatively by the three main challenges of large class sizes, the number of students with IEPs, and the number of IEP goals and accommodations for each student.

Lastly, the participants report using five of the HLIPs consolatory to address the needs of the students and to overcome the challenges outlined above. The five HLIPs the participants leveraged the most were adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 17), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22) to address the needs of the students with IEPs in their classroom. Overall, all the participants indicated a belief that all the HLIPs are effective strategies that they would like to incorporate into their classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. Despite advances in research on implementing practices for improving the performance of students with disabilities (Grima-Farrell, 2018; Nelson et al., 2021), a substantial gap separates the practices supported by research from everyday practices in schools (Brock et al., 2020; Chi, 2021; Grima-Farrell, 2018; McGann et al., 2020). There was a lack of research on whether special education co-teachers supporting students with disabilities provide instruction based on the best available research on HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021; Donohoo et al., 2018). Understanding special education co-teachers' lived experiences and perceptions may provide some insight into this gap since their experiences and perceptions affect their willingness to work with and support students with disabilities (Hind et al., 2019). Chapter Five consists of five discussion subsections: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) implications for policy and practice, (c) theoretical and methodological implications, (d) limitations and delimitations, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This hermeneutic phenomenology study investigated the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. The hermeneutical phenomenology describes the participants' lived experiences and interprets the meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Following the hermeneutic phenomenology design described by Van Manen (2014) and the two-cycle code-to-theory model outlined by Saldana (2021), I coded collected data and identified themes. Below, I review the main themes and

subthemes, followed by my interpretation of the findings. The theoretical connection of my findings, themes, and subthemes will also be discussed and further supported with evidence from the study. Finally, I will briefly discuss the limitations, delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The central research question guiding this study was: What are the lived experiences of special education co-teachers at secondary Title I campuses with high-leverage instructional practices? Two additional sub-questions were posed to focus on the perceived challenges the participants encountered when using HLIPs and the success of participants using HLIPs. Data was triangulated and coded into three main themes and eight sub-themes using the two-cycle code-to-theory model outlined by Saldana (2021). The three main themes were social-emotional learning, student engagement, and learning gaps. The subtheme of student interactions and student efficacy were identified within social-emotional learning. The theme of student engagement was categorized into the subthemes of student motivation, managing student behavior, and number of students. In addition, the theme of student learning gaps was categorized into the subthemes of student gaps in foundational knowledge, meeting students where they are, and teaching teacher comfort with technology.

The data triangulation showed that the participants consistently leveraged five HLIPs to address the study's themes and subthemes. The five HLIPs the participants leveraged the most were adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 15), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22) to address the needs of the students with IEPs in their classroom.

Interpretation of Findings

This study used the hermeneutic phenomenology approach to investigate the structure of consciousness and meanings hidden in lived experiences with daily educational practices (van Manen, 2016b) of special education co-teachers. This study used a data-interpreting hermeneutic interview and conducted the participant interviews after analyzing the questionnaire responses and side-by-side lesson plan documents. As van Manen (2014) stated, hermeneutic interviews may serve as a follow-up to collected data. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT) and particularly Bandura's (1986) TRC, defined in social cognitive theory, guided the study's data analysis. TRC influences how people communicate, work through tasks, and conduct daily activities related to personal, behavioral, and environmental factors and was the lens through which the findings were interpreted.

Student Needs Impact What HLIP Special Education Co-Teachers Use

Limited efforts in special education have attempted to investigate the research-to-practices gap related to special education teachers' use of HLPs (Firestone et al., 2021). This study intended to provide some insight into whether special education co-teachers supporting students with disabilities are providing instruction based on the best available research (Nelson et al., 2021; Donohoo et al., 2018) such as HLIPs and what challenges they face with implementing these practices. The 10 participants in this study provided their experiences with HLIPs in their classroom. All the participants indicated that they use HLIPs that meet the needs of their students. These needs include social-emotional needs, behavioral needs, and learning needs. Participants repeatedly said during their interview that they need to "build kids" confidence, "break down" material to meet the student's instruction needs, and "make class fun" to engage students and minimize behavioral disturbance. Three of the main themes of social-emotional

learning, student engagement, and student learning gaps are directly connected to the participants addressing the different needs of the students.

All the participants repeatedly mentioned five HLIPs as effective ways to address students' needs. The five HLIPs the participants leveraged the most were adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 15), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22). Previous research on HLPs focuses on the effectiveness of individual HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021) and improving teacher knowledge of HLPs through incorporating the HLPs in both pre-service and in-service teacher training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022), leaving a gap in our understanding of how special education co-teachers use practices supported by research, such as HLIPs. Participants indicated that they selected HLIPs to address student needs and used these five HLIPs most frequently, a major finding of this study that helps address the gap in our understanding of how special education co-teachers use practices supported by research.

Special Education Co-Teachers Past Experiences Impact What HLIP They Use

The participants of this study indicated that they leverage the five HLIPs of adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 15), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22) to address students' needs. When the participants were asked why they favored these five steadies, all of them indicated that they had past experiences with these strategies successfully supporting their students. The participants said things like, "In my experience, grouping kids just works," "I believe you must get them moving," and "get them to talk works; I have seen it work." Some participants cited their experiences at the

elementary level; others said they had first experienced most of these instruction strategies during their time in ALE. Two participants said that they still taught in the ALE classroom for part of the day and that their ALE classroom "was a great place to try" different things. Another participant said his experience helping behavioral students introduced him to most of these five HLIPs. Firestone et al. (2021) outline the need to investigate how special education co-teachers use HLIPs, understand HLIPs, and document the challenges, successes, and exposure co-teachers have with HLIPs. Understanding that the participants select these five HLIPs most frequently based on their past experiences was another major finding of this study that helps address the gap in our understanding of special education co-teachers' understanding and exposure to HLIPs (Firestone et al., 2021).

Environmental Factors Impact Special Education Co-Teachers Ability To Use HLIP

Previous empirical research has shown that external factors impact the effectiveness of teachers in a co-teaching classroom. One of those significant challenges was not having an appropriate student-staff ratio (Jurkowski et al., 2020). The study participants confirmed that challenge as they listed class size as one of the three major challenges they ran into when they used HLIPs in the classroom. Lack of planning time (Jurkowski et al., 2020; Mihajlovic, 2020) between co-teachers was another challenge documented by previous research. Some participants in this study also listed a lack of planning time as a challenge when using HLIPs. The participants also listed the number of students in their classroom with IEPs and the number of IEPs each student as major challenges to using HLIPs. Another challenge identified by previous research was providing collaborative professional development opportunities for co-teachers' best practices (Takala et al., 2020). Most of the participants in this study identified a need to improve their ability to use technology in the classroom. The participants said they were "not

comfortable" with technology and needed more professional development to incorporate this HLIP into their classrooms. This information provided by the participants adds to the previous reach of Takala et al. (2020). Understanding that environmental factors impact special education co-teachers' ability to use HLIPs helps us understand and fill in the gap associated with understanding and challenges with implementing HLIPs (Firestone et al., 2021).

Implications for Policy or Practice

This triangulation of data from the study participants revealed practical implications for policy and practice. At the time of this study, the Central School District was the fifth-largest school district in a southern state, with 103,151 students enrolled in CSD's 124 schools. Central School District relies on the co-teaching model to provide inclusion for students with IEPs in the general education setting. Because HLIPs support improved student outcomes for students who struggle to succeed due to learning and behavior disabilities in co-teaching classrooms (McLeskey et al., 2017, 2019), special education co-teachers and other stakeholders in the Central School District stand to benefit from the findings of this study. The lived experiences and perceptions of the participants in this study add to the body of research that may help district and school officials design policies and participants that improve teachers' ability to utilize HLIPs and, in turn, improve teachers' ability to impact students' learning.

Implications for Policy

A significant implication for policy revealed in the findings supports pre-service and in-service HLIP professional development based on the practice-based model (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022). The participants in this study indicated that they use HLIPs to address students' social-emotional needs, engage students, and address learning gaps. Furthermore, the study's findings showed that the participants favored five HLIPs

based on previous experiences. The participant findings showed that these experiences with HLIPs did not come from targeted professional development by the district but rather from various classroom experiences. A few participants mentioned district training in specially designed instruction, which includes some of the HLIPs. However, most indicated they learned the HLIPs they favored from working with elementary, ALE, and behavioral students. Other participants mentioned that they learned certain HLIPs from professional development given in a previous district.

These findings support previous empirical research that of leveraging a practice-based model that gives the participant real-world experience using HLIPs, including practice with real students (Brownell et al., 2019; Maheady et al., 2019; McKown et al., 2022; McLeskey et al., 2019; O'Flaherty et al., 2018; Windschitl et al., 2019) for both pre-service and in-service professional development. Such a policy that includes adequate professional development would address one of the five recommendations by previous research for effective co-teaching (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020). Furthermore, having that professional development include elements of a practice-based model, such as modeling and coaching as part of a teacher training program (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019; Brownell et al., 2019) will improve special education co-teachers' ability to level all the 12 HLIPs and improve their ability to address the learning and behavioral needs of their students.

Implications for Practice

This study's findings revealed implications for practice school stakeholders might consider improving special education co-teachers' ability to use HLIPs effectively. First, as mentioned in the policies section above, school leaders should have in-service professional development at the campus level. Empirical research supports a practice-based model so special

education teachers can develop their ability to utilize HLIPs. Utilizing on-campus mentors and coaches that help model using HLIPs in the classroom (Ackerman et al., 2022; Billingsley et al., 2019; Brownell et al., 2019). This study revealed several challenges for special education co-teachers that school stakeholders need to address to help their special education co-teachers implement HLIPs. One challenge identified in this study that negatively impacted the participants' ability to use HLIPs was the lack of planning time. This challenge was supported by the previous research of Jurkowski et al. (2020) and Mihajlovic (2020). Previous research for effective co-teaching recommends including a constant set time for co-teachers to meet with each other (Carty & Farrell, 2018; King-Sears & Strogilos, 2020). By devising co-teacher schedules so they can meet concisely, school leadership can help ensure that their staff has the best opportunity to leverage effective practices such as HLIPs. School stakeholders should consider two other challenges identified by this study: the number of students with IEPs and the number of IEP goals and accommodations each student has. Participants reported that they had "so many kids" with IEP in each class and that each of these students has "so many accommodations." School offices should do their best to level classes so that classes do not overwhelm students with IEPs in one classroom. Additionally, during students' annual reviews, school stakeholders should ensure that only the accommodations, modifications, and goals supported by data and the student's needs are included in the student's IEP.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

This hermeneutic phenomenology study explored the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. The study presents both empirical and theoretical implications. First, the empirical implications are discussed, followed by an investigation of the theoretical implications.

Empirical Implications

This study addresses three gaps found in the literature by investigating co-teachers' lived experiences when implementing HLIPs at secondary Title I campuses. First, this study was designed to close a gap in the literature that explores how special education co-teachers experience HLIPs. It includes their challenges, successes, and exposure to HLIPs. Much of the available literature focuses on the effectiveness of HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021) and improving teacher knowledge of HLPs through incorporating the HLPs in both pre-service and in-service teacher training (Ackerman et al., 2022; Cutrer-Párraga et al., 2022; McKown et al., 2022), leaving several gaps related to our understanding of how co-teachers use practices supported by research need to be addressed. Firestone et al. (2021) outline the need to investigate how special education co-teachers use HLIPs, understand HLIPs, and document the challenges, successes, and exposure co-teachers have with HLIPs. The triangulation of data from this study provides insight into the participant's challenges, successes, and exposure co-teachers have with HLIPs. The study findings showed that the participants selected HLIPs to address student needs, used HLIPs that they had had previous success with, and experienced environmental challenges that impacted their ability to use HLIPs.

Second, this study was designed to address gaps in the literature exploring research-based instructional practices in co-teaching classrooms. Most of this research includes participants from elementary school (Nelson et al., 2021), leaving a gap in our knowledge about these practices at secondary campuses. The results of this study provide valuable information on co-teachers' experiences and perspectives at the secondary level and contribute to the limited amount of literature that focuses on co-teaching at the secondary level. Lastly, this study was designed to address the gap in the literature between Title I causes and research that investigates

research-based instructional practices in co-teaching classrooms. There is a minimal amount of research investigating Title I campuses, and there is currently no research investigating research-based instructional practices like HLIPs in co-teaching classrooms at Title I campuses. The findings of this study contribute to the research around Title I campuses and help to start our understanding of research-based instructional practices at Title I campuses. Understanding lived experiences and adding to empirical research was critical for future decision-making (Mitchell et al., 2019). These findings contribute to the current literature and help us understand the experiences of special education co-teachers with research-based projects like HLIPs.

Theoretical Implications

The theory that guided this study was Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT), and particularly Bandura's (1986) TRC, which is defined in social cognitive theory, guided the study's data analysis. TRC states that individuals conduct daily activities related to personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Bandura indicates that our past experiences comprise the relationship between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. SCT makes assumptions about learning, performance, and experience through TRC focused on influential processes between the individual, their behavior, and their environment (Ozer, 2022; Schink, 2020).
The first interpretive finding was that the student's needs impact what HLIP special education co-teachers use. This finding was connected to three main themes: social-emotional needs, student engagement, and learning gaps. The participant addressed the students' needs and connected them directly to the behavioral factor in Bandura's TRC.

The study participants use HLIPs to address the students' needs, which fall under behavioral factors in Bandura's TRC. The next interpretive finding of this study was that the participants draw on past experiences to select instructional HLIPs to address students' needs.

Participants reported that most of these experiences stem from the needs of past students. The participants indicated that they could address the needs of these past students, creating a positive relationship between the HLIP they used. According to Bandura (1986), these experiences become a part of their personal factors that help shape their decisions. Therefore, the participants selecting HLIPs based on positive past experiences supports Bandura's claim that personal factors in TRC impact an individual's decisions. The final finding of the study was that participants indicated that environmental factors create challenges for them when using HLIPs. These environmental challenges, such as large call sizes, impact the participant's ability to use certain HLIPs because they feel they will not be effective because of the number of students in the classroom. This finding supports Badura's TRC model and claims that environmental factors impact individuals' decisions. Table 9 shows the study's findings categorized using Bandura's TRC.

Table 9

Findings Categorized Using Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Causation

TRC Factors	Findings
Behavioral	Student Needs Impact What HLIP Special Education Co-teachers Use
Personal	Special Education Co-teachers Past Experiences Impact What HLIP They Use
Environmental	Environmental Factors Impact Special Education Co-Teachers Ability to Use HLIP

Two other findings in this study help support Bandura's (1986) SCT. One of the major components of SCT is self-efficacy. Bandura (1986,2001) defined *self-efficacy* as the belief in one's ability to organize the necessary actions to succeed in each situation. The participants in this study indicated that through one of the themes, they use HLIPs to develop student self-efficacy by improving their confidence and motivation. Another significant component of Bandura's SCT is an agent of influence. An Individual's belief that they are an agent of influence is a critical component of their motivation in how they act, learn, well-being, and sense of accomplishment (Bandura, 1999). Suppose special education co-teachers do not believe they can produce the desired outcome using an instructional strategy. In that case, they are less likely to proceed with the effort required to use that strategy (An & Meaney, 2015). The participants in this study indicated that they constantly used five of the 12 HLIPs in their classrooms and used these strategies because "they just worked." They felt these HLIPs were critical for their success with their students. These findings from this study and the connection outlined in this section add to the large body of research that supports Bandura's SCT.

Limitations and Delimitations

I discovered this study's limitations and delimitations during the research and analysis. The following section discusses the limitations first, followed by a discussion of the delimitations.

Limitations

The first limitation was the number of participants. The Central School District required me to use a multi-step process to gain access to secondary special education theaters, which included getting permission from the research department and then getting the approval of each principal from the ten campuses that qualified for the study. After gaining the principal's

approval to recruit, I had to send my request to the special education campus coordinator, who then forwarded my recruitment email to potential participants. Of the ten principles I contacted for approval, only eight responded with approval. This led to 13 participants agreeing to participate after several months of recruitment. Of the 13 original participants, 10 completed the study. The final sample of participants included six high school special education co-teachers and four middle school special education co-teachers, providing a reasonably balanced sample. The second limitation was that of the 10 participants, seven were female, leaving the study unbalanced based on participants' gender. Lastly, the participants completed a screening survey to participate in the study; in addition, the participants were considered eligible by the participating schools. However, there are limitations to my ability to ensure the participants were honest with their responses to the questionnaire, side-by-side lesson plan, and interview questions regarding their experiences with HLIPs.

Delimitations

The design of this study included several delimitations. First, the study was limited to 12 HLP, specifically the 12 HLP that focus on instruction. McLeskey et al. (2017) developed 22 HLPs for the CEEDEA project. The 22 HLPs are broken into four areas: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral practices, and instruction. This study limited its focus to the 12 HLPs in the installation category. I am comfortable focusing on these 12 HLPs as it allows for a manageable scope for this study. All 22 HLPs were too broad for one study when considering participants' lived experiences. Another delimitation was the decision to use special education co-teachers and not include general education teachers. This delimitation limits the study's finding to special education co-teachers and provides no insight into general education teacher experiences with HLIPs. Since most students with IEPs receive their education in a

general education classroom, understanding the general education teacher's experiences would also be valuable.

Since the study focused on lived experiences, I limited the scope of the study to special education co-teachers. This was an effective way to understand a certain population and keep the scope of the study manageable. The last delimitation was using Title I campuses for the study. This was the most challenging delimitation, limiting the number of schools that meet the study requirement to 10 of 37. Limiting the study to 10 schools directly impacted the number of participants. Despite this, I feel this delimitation was essential to the study due to the lack of research on Title I claims and the growing number of schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

The proposed recommendations are provided to advance this study. This study's limitations and delimitations provide several areas to build future research. First, this study only captured the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs. Future research needs to examine general education co-teachers' experiences with HLIPs. In addition, future research should consider the co-teaching relationship between general education and specified education teachers and how it impacts the pair's ability to use HLPs.

Second, 22 HLPs were developed by empirical research, and this study focused on the 12 in the instruction domain. Future research must examine special education and general education co-teachers' experiences with the HLPs in collaboration, assessment, and social/emotional/behavioral practices. Lastly, this study limited its eligible participants to Title 1 campuses. Future research should consider removing this limitation to capture special education and general education co-teachers' experiences with HLPs or HLIPs in secondary campuses that do not qualify as Title I.

Conclusion

The lack of research on whether special education co-teachers supporting students with disabilities provide instruction based on the best available research on HLPs (Nelson et al., 2021; Donohoo et al., 2018) inspired the purpose of this study. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study was to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. This study was framed by Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT) and particularly Bandura's (1986) TRC, as defined by social cognitive theory. A series of permissions were obtained prior to the start of data collection. Data was collected from 10 participants using a questionnaire, document analysis, and data-interpreting hermeneutic interviews.

The data was coded, revealing three main themes, and identified eight subthemes. All the participants indicated that they used HLIPs to meet the needs of their students, improve social-emotional learning student engagement, and address student-learning gaps. The participants indicated that they consistently use the five HLIPs of adapting curriculum tasks and materials (HLIP 13), providing scaffolded supports (HLIP 15), flexible grouping (HLIP 15), strategies to promote active student engagement (HLIP 18), and providing positive and constructive feedback (HLIP 22) to address student's needs. All participants indicated that they had positive past experiences with these HLIPs.

Additionally, the participants indicated that several environmental challenges, including large class sizes, the number of students with IEPs, and the high number of IPE accommodations and goals each student has, impact their ability to use HLIPs. Limitations of the study included focusing solely on special education co-teachers and only on the 12 HLPs that focus on instruction. Future research should focus on general education co-teachers' experiences with

HLIPs and special education and general education co-teachers' experiences with the HLPs in the other three domains of collaboration, assessment, and social/emotional/behavioral practices. Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the current literature and help us understand the experiences of special education co-teachers with HLIPs.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 29, 2024

Aaron Logan
Rebecca Dilling

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-387 LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CO-TEACHERS WITH HIGH-LEVERAGE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AT SECONDARY TITLE I CAMPUS: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Aaron Logan, Rebecca Dilling,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Attachments tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at .irb@liberty.edu

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Site Approval

[redacted]

February 13, 2024

Aaron M. Logan
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845
Lynchburg, VA 24515

Re: Research Request

Dear Mr. Logan:

This letter is to inform you that your external research request entitled "Lived Experiences of Special Education Co-Teachers With High-Leverage Instructional Practices at Secondary Title I Campus: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study" has been approved by the Research and Development Office at [redacted]

Please keep in mind that the participation of the district and campus administrators, staff, and students in the study is **strictly voluntary**. While the committee has approved your study to proceed, each employee can decide for themselves whether to participate.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Assistant Director

[redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix C

Consent Form for Participants

Title of the Project: Lived Experiences of Special Education Co-Teachers with High-leverage Instructional Practices at Secondary Title I Campus: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study

Principal Investigator: Aaron M. Logan, Doctoral Candidate for a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, United States

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be over 18 years old and currently employed as a special education co-teacher, teaching at a middle or high school campus that qualifies as a Title I campus. Title I campuses include campuses with children from low-income families who make up at least 40% of their enrollment but do not choose to have the designation. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. This study intends to allow special education co-teachers to describe the successes and challenges of using high-leverage instructional practices in their classrooms. Special education co-teachers will be asked to reflect on their experiences using high-leverage instructional practices to serve students with disabilities.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Provide two weeks of digital lesson plans using a side-by-side template provided by the researcher (15 min)
2. Participate in a 45-minute individual interview. This will be audio and video recorded. This will be virtual.
3. Complete the HLIP Questionnaire (5 MIN)
4. Check the transcript of your interview to ensure that I have represented your experiences accurately.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include providing valuable information on co-teachers' experiences and perspectives. The results will also provide insight into these experiences by capturing co-teachers' use, challenges, and success with high-leverage instructional practices.

Future research may use these experiences to better design pre-service and in-service training, address the challenges outlined by this research, and, in turn, help improve how co-teachers understand and implement high-leverage instructional practices.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject or school. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer, and hard copies of data will be kept in a locked cabinet. While data may be used in future presentations, no personal information will be shared. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and hard copies will be shredded.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher and research committee will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [school district name redacted]. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Aaron M. Logan. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [redacted]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Rebecca Dilling, at [redacted]

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [redacted]

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record/photograph me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix D

Recruitment Email Template

Dear [Name]:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction degree. My research aims to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

To participate, you must fit the following requirements:

- Participants must be 18 years or older.
- Currently employed as a special education co-teacher, teaching at a middle or high school campus that qualifies as a Title I campus. Title I campuses include campuses with children from low-income families who make up at least 40% of their enrollment but do not choose to have the designation.

What will you be asked to do?

- Provide two weeks of digital lesson plans using a side-by-side template provided by the researcher (15 min)
- Participate in a 45–60-minute individual interview. This will be audio and video recorded. This will be virtual.
- Complete the HLIP Questionnaire (5 MIN)
- Check the transcript of your interview to ensure that I have represented your experiences accurately.

To participate, please click here to complete a screening survey: [redacted]

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before the start of presenting your artifact.

Sincerely,

Aaron M. Logan
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix E

Recruitment Follow Up Email Template

Dear [Name]:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction degree. My research aims to investigate the lived experiences of special education co-teachers with high-leverage instructional practices at secondary Title I campuses. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study. This follow-up e-mail is being sent to remind you to complete the survey and sign and return the consent document is attached to this email if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].

To participate, you must fit the following requirements:

- Participants must be 18 years or older.
- Currently employed as a special education co-teacher, teaching at a middle or high school campus that qualifies as a Title I campus. Title I campuses include campuses with children from low-income families who make up at least 40% of their enrollment but do not choose to have the designation.

What will you be asked to do?

- Provide two weeks of digital lesson plans using a side-by-side template provided by the researcher (15 min)
- Participate in a 45–60-minute individual interview. This will be audio and video recorded. This will be virtual.
- Complete the HLIP Questionnaire (5 MIN)
- Check the transcript of your interview to ensure that I have represented your experiences accurately.

To participate, please click here to complete a screening survey:
[redacted]

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before the start of presenting your artifact.
Sincerely,

Aaron M. Logan
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix F

Screening Survey

1. Name:

2. Preferred e-mail:

3. Are you currently 18 years old or older?

- Yes
- No

4. Are you a Special Education Co-Teacher at a High School or Middle School?

- Yes
- No

5. Do children from low-income families make up at least 40% of your campus enrollment?

- Yes
- No

Appendix G

Thank You E-mail and Member Check Request for Interviews

Dear Participants in the Experience of Special Education Co-Teachers with High-leverage Instructional Practices Study,

Thank you for meeting with me and completing the interview regarding your experiences with high-leverage instructional practices, as I appreciated your insight and description of your unique experiences.

I have attached a transcript of your interview and ask that you please review the entire document to ensure that your interview has fully captured your experiences with high-leverage instructional practices. After our interview, you may have thought of something you wanted to add. Therefore, using the Track Change feature of Microsoft Word, please feel free to add comments that would add to or clarify your experience. Alternatively, you can print, edit, and scan the transcript. Please do not edit the transcript for grammatical corrections, as this is a transcript of your story told in verbal form.

I have greatly valued your participation in this research study and your willingness to share your experiences. I look forward to your participation in our focus group. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me at [redacted]

Sincerely,

Aaron M. Logan
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix H

High-Leverage Practices (HLP)

Collaboration

1. Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.

2. Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.

3. Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.

Assessment

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

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

6. Use student assessment data, analyze instruction practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.

Social-Emotional/Behavioral

7. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.

8. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behaviors.

9. Teach social behaviors.

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

Instruction

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

12. Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal.

13. Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.

14. Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.

15. Provide scaffolded support.

16. Use explicit instruction.

17. Use flexible grouping.

18. Use strategies to promote active student engagement.

19. Use assistive and instructional technologies.

20. Provide intensive instruction.

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

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

Note. Adapted from McLeskey et al. (2017).

Appendix I

High-Leverage Instructional Practices (HLIP) Descriptions

HLP #11 - Identify and Prioritize Long and Short-term Learning Goals

Teachers prioritize what is most important for students to learn by providing meaningful access and success in general education and other contextually relevant curricula. Teachers use grade-level standards, assessment data, learning progressions, students' prior knowledge, and IEP goals and benchmarks to decide what is most crucial to emphasize and develop long- and short-term goals accordingly. They understand essential curriculum components, identify essential prerequisites and foundations, and assess student performance in relation to these components.

HLP#12: Systematically Design Instruction Toward a Specific Learning Goal

Teachers help students to develop important concepts and skills that provide the foundation for more complex learning. Teachers sequence lessons that build on each other and make connections explicit in planning and delivery. They activate students' prior knowledge and show how each lesson "fits" with previous ones. Planning involves careful consideration of learning goals, what is involved in reaching the goals, and allocating time accordingly. Ongoing changes (e.g., pacing, examples) occur throughout the sequence based on student performance.

HLP#13: Adapt Curriculum Tasks and Materials for Specific Learning Goals

Teachers assess individual student needs and adapt curriculum materials and tasks so that students can meet instructional goals. Teachers select materials and tasks based on student needs; use relevant technology; and make modifications by highlighting relevant information, changing task directions, and decreasing amounts of material. Teachers make strategic decisions on content coverage (i.e., essential curriculum elements), and the meaningfulness of tasks to meet stated goals and criteria for student success.

HLP#14: Teach Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies to Support Learning and Independence

Teachers explicitly teach cognitive and metacognitive processing strategies to support memory, attention, and self-regulation of learning. Learning involves understanding content and using cognitive processes to solve problems, regulate attention, organize thoughts and materials, and monitor one's own thinking. Self-regulation and metacognitive strategy instruction are integrated into lessons on academic content through modeling and explicit instruction. Students learn to monitor and evaluate their performance in relation to explicit goals and make necessary adjustments to improve learning.

HLP#15: Provide Scaffolded Supports

Scaffolded supports provide temporary assistance to students so they can complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently and with a high success rate. Teachers select powerful visual, verbal, and written supports; carefully calibrate them to students' performance and understanding in relation to learning tasks; use them flexibly; evaluate their effectiveness; and gradually remove them once they are no longer needed. Some supports are planned before lessons, and some are provided responsively during instruction.

HLP#16: Use Explicit Instruction

Teachers make content, skills, and concepts explicit by showing and telling students what to do or think while solving problems, enacting strategies, completing tasks, and classifying concepts. Teachers use explicit instruction when students learn new material and complex concepts and skills. They strategically choose examples, non-examples, and language to facilitate student understanding, anticipate common misconceptions, highlight essential content, and remove distracting information. They model and scaffold steps or processes needed to understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks successfully and independently.

HLP#17: Use Flexible Grouping

Teachers assign students to homogeneous and heterogeneous groups based on explicit learning goals, monitor peer interactions, and provide positive and corrective feedback to support productive learning. Teachers use small learning groups to accommodate learning differences, promote in-depth academic-related interactions, and teach students to work collaboratively. They choose tasks that require collaboration, issue directives that promote productive and autonomous group interactions, and embed strategies that maximize learning opportunities and equalize participation. Teachers promote simultaneous interactions, use procedures to hold students accountable for collective and individual learning and monitor and sustain group performance through proximity and positive feedback.

HLP#18: Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies that result in active student responses. Active student engagement is critical to academic success. Teachers must build positive student–teacher relationships to foster engagement and motivate reluctant learners. They promote engagement by connecting learning to students' lives (e.g., knowing students' academic and cultural backgrounds) and using a variety of teacher-led (e.g., choral responding and response cards), peer-assisted (e.g., cooperative learning and peer tutoring), student-regulated (e.g., self-management), and technology-supported strategies shown empirically to increase student engagement. They monitor student engagement and provide positive and constructive feedback to sustain performance.

HLP#19: Use Assistive and Instructional Technologies

Teachers select and implement assistive and instructional technologies to support the needs of students with disabilities. They select and use augmentative and alternative communication devices and assistive and instructional technology products to promote student learning and independence. They evaluate new technology options given student needs; make informed instructional decisions grounded in evidence, professional wisdom, and students' IEP goals; and advocate for administrative support in technology implementation. Teachers use the universal design for learning (UDL) framework to select, design, implement, and evaluate important student outcomes.

HLP#20: Provide Intensive Instruction

Teachers match the intensity of instruction to the intensity of the student's learning and behavioral challenges. Intensive instruction involves working with students with similar needs on a small number of high-priority, clearly defined skills or concepts critical to academic success. Teachers group students

based on common learning needs; clearly define learning goals; and use systematic, explicit, and well-paced instruction. They frequently monitor students' progress and adjust their instruction accordingly. Within intensive instruction, students have many opportunities to respond and receive immediate, corrective feedback from teachers and peers to practice their learning.

HLP#21: Teach Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning Across Time and Settings

Effective teachers use specific techniques to teach students to generalize and maintain newly acquired knowledge and skills. Using numerous examples in designing and delivering instruction requires students to apply what they have learned in other settings. Educators promote maintenance by systematically using schedules of reinforcement, providing frequent material reviews, and teaching skills reinforced by the natural environment beyond the classroom. Students learn to use new knowledge and skills in places and situations other than the original learning environment and maintain their use without ongoing instruction.

HLP#22: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students' Learning and Behavior

The purpose of feedback is to guide student learning and behavior and increase student motivation, engagement, and independence, leading to improved student learning and behavior. Effective feedback must be strategically delivered and goal-directed; feedback is most effective when the learner has a goal, and the feedback informs the learner regarding areas needing improvement and ways to improve performance. Feedback may be verbal, nonverbal, or written and should be timely, contingent, genuine, meaningful, age-appropriate, and at rates commensurate with the task and phase of learning (i.e., acquisition, fluency, maintenance). Teachers should provide ongoing feedback until learners reach their established learning goals.

Note. Adapted from McLeskey et al. (2017).

Appendix J

Interview Questions

1. Please provide a little information regarding your educational background and teaching experience, specifically up to this point. Icebreaker question

Interviewer Statement: I have provided you with a copy of one of your submitted lesson plans. Please take a moment to review this lesson plan. As your review this lesson, please consider your experiences designing and implementing this lesson for the following questions.

2. What personal thoughts or experiences stand out when considering how this lesson went in the classroom? CRQ
3. What did this lesson look and feel like when you implemented it in your classroom? CRQ
4. What factors did you consider when designing this lesson to meet the needs of your students with IEPs? CRQ
5. What were the challenges with implementing this lesson? SQ1
6. What was successful about this lesson? SQ2

Interviewer Statement: For the next set of questions, please reference the document I have provided you of the 12 high-leverage instructional practices with their definitions.

7. Of these 12 practices, which practices have you regularly used in your classroom? CRQ
8. Think about a practice you have had significant challenges implementing in your class. What were the challenges you have experienced when attempting to implement this practice? SQ1
9. Of these challenges you have experienced, what have been the biggest sources of these challenges? SQ1

10. Consider the high-leverage instructional practices you did not list as using. What are the environmental factors at the school level that impact your ability to use these practices in your classroom? SQ1
11. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as using in your classroom. Why do you believe that you use these practices and not others? CRQ
12. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as using in your classroom. What personal thoughts or experiences stand out when discussing the successful implementation of these practices? SQ2
13. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as using in your classroom. Think about the high-leverage instructional practice you have successfully implemented in your class. What does the experience of implementing this practice in your classroom look and feel like? SQ2
14. What factors have allowed you to successfully implement this practice in your classroom? SQ2
15. Considering the high-leverage instructional practices you listed as using in your classroom. What are the environmental factors at the school level that impact your ability to successfully use these practices? SQ2
16. What else would you like to add regarding your experience implementing any of the high-leverage instructional practices provided in your classroom? CRQ

Appendix K

Questionnaire Questions

HLP #11 - *Identify and Prioritize Long and Short-term Learning Goals*

Teachers prioritize what is most important for students to learn by providing meaningful access and success in general education and other contextually relevant curricula. Teachers use grade-level standards, assessment data, learning progressions, students' prior knowledge, and IEP goals and benchmarks to decide what is most crucial to emphasize and develop long- and short-term goals accordingly. They understand essential curriculum components, identify essential prerequisites and foundations, and assess student performance in relation to these components.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **identify and prioritize long and short-term learning goals** in assisting the students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#12: *Systematically Design Instruction Toward a Specific Learning Goal*

Teachers help students to develop important concepts and skills that provide the foundation for more complex learning. Teachers sequence lessons that build on each other and make connections explicit in planning and delivery. They activate students' prior knowledge and show how each lesson "fits" with previous ones. Planning involves careful consideration of learning goals, what is involved in reaching the goals, and allocating time accordingly. Ongoing changes (e.g., pacing, examples) occur throughout the sequence based on student performance.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **systematically design instruction toward a specific student learning goal** often in assisting the students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#13: *Adapt Curriculum Tasks and Materials for Specific Learning Goals*

Teachers assess individual student needs and adapt curriculum materials and tasks so that students can meet instructional goals. Teachers select materials and tasks based on student needs; use relevant technology; and make modifications by highlighting relevant information, changing task directions, and decreasing amounts of material. Teachers make strategic decisions on content coverage (i.e., essential curriculum elements), and the meaningfulness of tasks to meet stated goals and criteria for student success.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific student learning goals** often in assisting the students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#14: *Teach Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies to Support Learning and Independence*

Teachers explicitly teach cognitive and metacognitive processing strategies to support memory, attention, and self-regulation of learning. Learning involves understanding content and using cognitive processes to solve problems, regulate attention, organize thoughts and materials, and monitor one's own thinking. Self-regulation and metacognitive strategy instruction are integrated into lessons on academic content through modeling and explicit instruction. Students learn to monitor and evaluate their performance in relation to explicit goals and make necessary adjustments to improve learning.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **teach cognitive and***

metacognitive strategies *often in assisting the students with IEPs in my classroom, to support* ***learning and independence****."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#15: ***Provide Scaffolded Supports***

Scaffolded supports provide temporary assistance to students so they can complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently and with a high success rate. Teachers select powerful visual, verbal, and written supports; carefully calibrate them to students' performance and understanding in relation to learning tasks; use them flexibly; evaluate their effectiveness; and gradually remove them once they are no longer needed. Some supports are planned before lessons, and some are provided responsively during instruction.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I* ***provide scaffolded support*** *often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#16: ***Use Explicit Instruction***

Teachers make content, skills, and concepts explicit by showing and telling students what to do or think while solving problems, enacting strategies, completing tasks, and classifying concepts. Teachers use explicit instruction when students learn new material and complex concepts and skills. They strategically choose examples, non-examples, and language to facilitate student understanding, anticipate common misconceptions, highlight essential content, and remove distracting information. They model and scaffold steps or processes needed to understand content and concepts, apply skills, and complete tasks successfully and independently.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I* ***use explicit instruction*** *often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#17: ***Use Flexible Grouping***

Teachers assign students to homogeneous and heterogeneous groups based on explicit learning goals, monitor peer interactions, and provide positive and corrective feedback to support productive learning. Teachers use small learning groups to accommodate learning differences, promote in-depth academic-related interactions, and teach students to work collaboratively. They choose tasks that require collaboration, issue directives that promote productive and autonomous group interactions, and embed strategies that maximize learning opportunities and equalize participation. Teachers promote simultaneous interactions, use procedures to hold students accountable for collective and individual learning and monitor and sustain group performance through proximity and positive feedback.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I* ***use flexible grouping*** *often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#18: ***Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement***

Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies that result in active student responses. Active student engagement is critical to academic success. Teachers must build positive student–teacher relationships to foster engagement and motivate reluctant learners. They promote engagement by connecting learning to students' lives (e.g., knowing students' academic and cultural backgrounds) and using a variety of teacher-led (e.g., choral responding and response cards), peer-assisted (e.g., cooperative learning and peer tutoring), student-regulated (e.g., self-management), and technology-supported strategies shown empirically to increase student engagement. They monitor student engagement and provide positive and constructive feedback to sustain performance.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **use strategies to promote active student engagement** often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#19: ***Use Assistive and Instructional Technologies***

Teachers select and implement assistive and instructional technologies to support the needs of students with disabilities. They select and use augmentative and alternative communication devices and assistive and instructional technology products to promote student learning and independence. They evaluate new technology options given student needs; make informed instructional decisions grounded in evidence, professional wisdom, and students' IEP goals; and advocate for administrative support in technology implementation. Teachers use the universal design for learning (UDL) framework to select, design, implement, and evaluate important student outcomes.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **use assistive and instructional technologies** often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom.* "by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#20: ***Provide Intensive Instruction***

Teachers match the intensity of instruction to the intensity of the student's learning and behavioral challenges. Intensive instruction involves working with students with similar needs on a small number of high-priority, clearly defined skills or concepts critical to academic success. Teachers group students based on common learning needs; clearly define learning goals; and use systematic, explicit, and well-paced instruction. They frequently monitor students' progress and adjust their instruction accordingly. Within intensive instruction, students have many opportunities to respond and receive immediate, corrective feedback from teachers and peers to practice their learning.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **intensive instruction** often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#21: ***Teach Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning Across Time and Settings***

Effective teachers use specific techniques to teach students to generalize and maintain newly acquired knowledge and skills. Using numerous examples in designing and delivering instruction requires students to apply what they have learned in other settings. Educators promote maintenance by systematically using schedules of reinforcement, providing frequent material reviews, and teaching skills reinforced by the natural environment beyond the classroom. Students learn to use new knowledge and skills in places and situations other than the original learning environment and maintain their use without ongoing instruction.

1. Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher, I **teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and setting** often when assisting students with IEPs in my classroom."* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.

HLP#22: ***Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students' Learning and Behavior***

The purpose of feedback is to guide student learning and behavior and increase student motivation, engagement, and independence, leading to improved student learning and behavior. Effective feedback must be strategically delivered and goal-directed; feedback is most effective when the learner has a goal, and the feedback informs the learner regarding areas needing improvement and ways to improve performance. Feedback may be verbal, nonverbal, or written and should be timely, contingent, genuine, meaningful, age-appropriate, and at rates commensurate with the task and phase of learning (i.e., acquisition, fluency, maintenance). Teachers should provide ongoing feedback until learners reach their established learning goals.

Rate your response to the following statement. *"As a special education co-teacher,* ***provide positive and constructive feedback*** *often when* ***guiding students with IEPs learning and behavior*** *in my classroom"* by selecting strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree.