

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS AND SELF-EFFICACY
TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

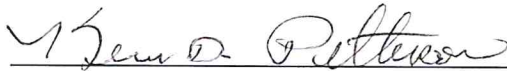
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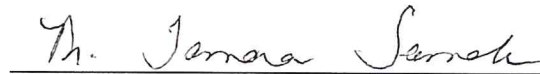
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HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS AND SELF-EFFICACY
TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS AND SELF-EFFICACY
TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools in Missouri. The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. The participants in this study were high school principals and high school general education teachers in rural public school districts in the state of Missouri. This study included themes of teacher experience, special education leadership, collaborating with special education teachers, and professional development. This study reviewed how teacher experience and professional development impact a teacher's self-efficacy in the regular education classroom. This study discussed the importance of collaboration with special education administration, special education teachers, and regular education teachers. The personal experiences of how behavior difficulties are handled in the regular education classroom or the lack of behaviors was noted from the teachers within the study. This study provided information on the need for training for general education teachers in the area of research-based strategies and the use of assessments for students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Administrators should provide opportunities for general education teachers to gain experiences in working with students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. School districts should focus on professional development to increase teacher confidence to teach students with disabilities and provide professional development training on inclusion and working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Time should be provided for general education teachers to collaborate with special education teachers

to increase the self-efficacy of regular education teachers to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

Chapter I

Introduction

According to the data from Riser-Kositsky (2019), 64.8% of special education students ranging from ages 6-21, spent 80% or more of their time at school in a regular education classroom. Approximately 7.3 million students in the United States, ranging in age from 3 to 21 years old, were classified as special education students, accounting for 14.4% of the total student population between 2019 and 2020. In Missouri, the proportion of special education students was slightly higher, with 14.5% all students representing special education students (Riser-Kositsky, 2019).

Children with disabilities are to be taught in an educational setting with students who are not disabled (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004c). Educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom is called inclusion (Butler, 2020). When students with disabilities are taught in the general education classroom, the students are more likely to receive instruction on grade-level standards (O'Connor, 2016a). When students with disabilities see other students making progress, their self-expectations increase, and students are given the opportunity to interact with their peers (O'Connor, 2016a).

The purpose of this study is to explore rural high school teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Regular education teachers do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices with inclusive practices for students with disabilities (Rodden et al., 2019). When teachers have low self-efficacy, the inclusion

of students can be impacted. Teacher programs are not preparing teachers for effective inclusion and should be providing teachers training to address the effectiveness of inclusion (Rodden et al., 2019). Increasing teacher self-efficacy is essential for teachers to have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusion practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021). Batool and Khawaja (2021) found that teachers have a higher self-efficacy to manage an inclusive classroom, but have lower levels of self-efficacy for instructional strategies, student engagement, assessment practices, and collaboration in inclusive settings.

Many educators believe undergraduate programs do not provide sufficient training to pre-service teachers regarding inclusion practices (Peculea, 2019). General education teachers are not trained properly or feel prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom (Gilmour, 2018). Furthermore, new teachers require ongoing professional development in inclusion practices to effectively support students with disabilities (Garrett, 2017).

The theoretical framework for this study is Bandura's (1977) Theory of Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in one's ability to execute a particular behavior effectively and produce the desired outcome. Teacher self-efficacy suggests a teacher's assumption that he or she can perform certain activities to positively influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017). Bandura (1977) identified perceived self-efficacy not only influenced the choice of activities but can affect achievements. Self-efficacy can affect how much effort someone will give and how long an individual will endure challenges and adversities. When an individual

believes in their ability to perform a task or achieve a goal, the actual level of achievement tends to be higher. Subsequently, the higher one's perceived self-efficacy, the higher achievements are likely to be (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura discovered four major sources of information affect someone's levels of efficacy. The sources include performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. According to Bandura's work, performance accomplishments are based upon an individual's accomplishments through experiences. When individuals have multiple opportunities for success, failures are less likely to have a negative impact on the individual's efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Vicarious experiences are based upon individuals seeing others and modeling. When individuals observe others, individuals assure themselves they can improve. Verbal persuasion occurs when individuals are directed to believe they can be successful, even overcoming obstacles of the past. Physiological states, such as emotional arousal, occur when individuals handle circumstances differently, and can affect one's perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura's work reveals individuals with a high sense of self-efficacy are able to visualize success. Subsequently, individuals who are uncertain of their self-efficacy visualize failures and imagine many things can go wrong. Individuals with a perspective of visualizing success, can have an effect on one's self-efficacy because it is hard to be successful when the individual is disbelieving (Bandura, 1993).

Research suggests teachers with more experience tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy (Batoool & Khawaja, 2021). However, to further develop teacher self-efficacy, is a need for teacher training, professional development, and school-wide

programs is necessary (Woodcock & Faith, 2021). Important to note is teachers may have a lower sense of self-efficacy when working with students who have behavioral problems (Vlah et al., 2021). Therefore, efforts to improve teacher self-efficacy should include strategies to help teachers effectively manage such situations.

The first chapter provides a background of the study, explains the theoretical framework, and examines the problem and purpose of this study. The research questions used to guide this study are also included. Additionally, rationale, significance, the nature of the study, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions, and key terms for the study are also discussed.

Problem Statement

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 requires schools to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (Lory et al., 2020). Children with disabilities are to be taught in an educational setting with students who are not disabled (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004c). However, teachers often do not have the training to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusive setting (Gilmour, 2018). Subsequently, when teachers lack training, teachers tend to rate their attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities in an inclusive setting lower than teachers who have received training (Werner et al., 2021).

The problem encompasses a need for professional development to improve teacher understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities (Shaukat et al., 2019). Regular education teachers do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices for inclusive practices for students with disabilities (Rodden et al., 2019). Accordingly, when teachers have low self-efficacy, the inclusion of students

can be impacted. Many teacher programs are not preparing teachers for effective inclusion and should be providing teachers training to address the lack of preparation in this area (Rodden et al., 2019). To enhance teacher self-efficacy, it is essential to implement teacher training, professional development opportunities, and school-wide programs (Woodcock & Faith, 2021). Thus, future research is needed to review how teacher experience and professional development may impact a teacher's view of inclusive education and self-efficacy (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

Obstacles to inclusion include unfriendly schools, lack of teacher training in diversity, and adapting curriculum, and assessment (Batool & Khawaja, 2021). Moreover, many teachers do not feel equipped to provide a quality inclusive education for students (Beaton et al., 2021). Accordingly, for students with severe disabilities, further research is needed on effective inclusion which can be used in the regular education classroom (Agran et al., 2020).

Hind et al. (2019) found students with social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties disrupt learning in the classroom and teachers often lack the understanding to handle student behaviors and implement behavior management techniques. In addition, teachers-felt support staff was lacking in consistently supporting the teacher (Hind et al., 2019). Furthermore, teachers felt inclusion would be more successful if they received more workshops and short courses both initially and throughout their teaching career (Hind et al., 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore rural high school principals, English language arts (ELA) and mathematics general

education teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to study problems at a deeper level with questions that help to understand the view of other individuals. Answers to questions can provide detailed information to understand the problem (Butina, 2015).

The design of this study is a qualitative phenomenological study. Qualitative research is the selection, inquiry, and interpretation of an all-encompassing explanation of data to gain insight into a particular experience or event of interest (Mills & Gay, 2019). Qualitative research is a method that aims to explore diverse perspectives and backgrounds of individuals and situations. This type of research involves collecting data through interviews and observations, which are then analyzed to identify patterns and themes to help develop a narrative. In other words, qualitative research focuses on understanding subjective experiences and opinions, rather than on quantitative measurements or statistical analysis (Mills & Gay, 2019). Within the following study, interview questions will be developed, and contributed to a narrative of data used gain insight into the research question.

Research Questions

The research questions guide this qualitative study to review the problem regular education teachers have had regarding various training in their undergraduate programs and school district, on inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. The research questions examine high school ELA and mathematics general education teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Additionally, the research

questions examine principal and teacher's perceptions of the amount of training teachers have received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy and ability to positively impact student learning among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms?
2. What are the perceptions of the amount of training received among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers regarding research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management to support students with disabilities to positively influence student learning?
 - a. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities with research-based practices among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers?
 - b. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy regarding using assessments with students with disabilities among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers?
 - c. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy regarding behavior management of students with disabilities among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Bandura's (1977) Theory of Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy is the confidence a person can successfully carry through with a required behavior to yield the desired result (Bandura, 1993). Bandura found individuals with a high level of self-efficacy can visualize and make a plan for success. However, Bandura also discovered individuals doubting themselves see the things that can go wrong and dwell on failure (1993).

Bandura's early theories of social learning believed behavior was a response to experienced consequences. In alignment of earlier work, Bandura found learning also resulted from observing others' behaviors and their consequences. Accordingly, the observations of others play a role in future actions an individual chooses to take (Bandura, 1971).

Bandura (1977), reported an individual's mental processes are part of learning and developing new behaviors. By mentally representing future outcomes, individuals can create present motivators for their behavior. Thus, looking at human behavior through this lens, changed the way Bandura understood what affected an individual's behavior. An individual's efficacy also determined how an individual would handle difficult situations and unfavorable experiences. Bandura found individuals with higher self-efficacy would continue to push through the experience. Subsequently, individuals who can push through undesirable experiences, can diminish averting from such experiences. However, individuals who give up continue to have discouraging thoughts and expectations for some time.

Based on Bandura's study, four major sources of information which can affect one's levels of efficacy. The four major sources of information include performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. Performance accomplishments are based upon an individual's accomplishments through experiences. When individuals have multiple opportunities for success, failures are less likely to have a negative impact on an individual's efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

One of the prominent components of self-efficacy is performance accomplishments. When individuals experience success self-efficacy tends to increase. Accordingly, when individuals meet or exceed their goals, they normally raise the standard for subsequent goals. Conversely, when individuals experience failure this normally lowers self-efficacy. Thus, when individuals do not meet their goals, the standard for subsequent goals is sometimes raised and sometimes lowered. Overall self-efficacy is affected by previous experiences and performance (Brink, 2022).

Another source of information that can impact self-efficacy is vicarious experiences. Vicarious experiences are based upon individuals seeing others and modeling. When individuals observe others, they assure themselves they can improve themselves (Bandura, 1977). This can increase an individual's self-efficacy, specifically when the observer does not have experience completing the task or is questioning their abilities. Thus, modeling can have an impact on an individual's self-efficacy (Brink, 2022; Capa et al., 2018).

Additionally, another source of information that can impact self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. Verbal persuasion occurs when individuals are directed to believe they can be successful, and can even overcome obstacles of the past (Bandura, 1977). Verbal persuasion reinforces an individual's belief they can be successful. For verbal persuasion to occur, individuals need someone to encourage and believe in them (Situmorang, 2022).

Physiological states is an additional source that can impact one's self-efficacy. Physiological states, such as emotional arousal, take place when individuals handle circumstances differently and can affect one's perceived self-efficacy. When individuals have fears about their lack of confidence, lack of confidence can cause one to have anxiety and can affect one's performance. Due to the stress this can cause on an individual, the individual can develop avoidance behaviors for the situation or task. To some, this can be motivating, but to others, it might not (Bandura, 1977).

When individuals can have success, self-efficacy is increased. Accordingly, previous performance and experiences can affect an individual's self-efficacy. Thus, an individual's beliefs about their effectiveness can affect how they perform and cope in situations. When an individual can have opportunities for repeated success, experiencing a failure is less likely to result in a negative effect (Bandura, 1977).

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore rural public high school principal, ELA and mathematics teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. Few studies on teachers' self-efficacy to work with

students with behavioral difficulties have been completed (Vlah & Kovacic, 2021). Thus, a need is present to review how teacher experience and professional development impact a teacher's views of inclusive education and self-efficacy in the classroom. Professional development focusing on the improvement of supportive relationships and collaborative practice can increase teachers' sense of self-efficacy for inclusion for all. Additionally, there is also a need to review how professional development impacts teachers' views of inclusive education and self-efficacy is also evident (Woodcock & Jones, 2020). Thus, more research is needed on general education teacher self-efficacy in the areas of researched-based instruction, use of assessment and data, and behavior management in the regular education classroom.

This type of qualitative phenomenological study is the process of improving understanding by continuing to study the phenomenon (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Butina, 2015). The qualitative research methods allowed the researcher to study problems at a deeper level with questions which help to understand the view of other individuals (Butina, 2015). The goal of this study was to explore perceptions of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics general education teachers' in rural schools in Missouri related to their self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Data was collected through interviews and the data was analyzed to establish themes and trends.

In 2019, 64.8% of special education students ages 6-21 spent at least 80% or more of their time in a regular education classroom (Riser-Kositsky, 2019). With a high percentage of special education students spending most of their time in the general education classroom, high school general education teachers need be trained

and feel equipped to support students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Unfortunately, general education teachers often lack knowledge about inclusion and mainstreaming due to a lack of training in undergraduate programs and a lack of professional development on inclusion (De La Cruz, 2020). Subsequently, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusive practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

Many teachers are continuously feel unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students with exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Thus, the goal of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of high school ELA and mathematics teachers in teaching students with disabilities. The interviews conducted as part of the study will gather the views of the teachers and will allow the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were used operationally for this study.

Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA): IDEA is a federal law which guarantees students with disabilities receive appropriate services in school (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004b).

Inclusion: Educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Butler, 2020).

Least Restrictive Environment: Students with disabilities should be educated with children who are not disabled to the maximum extent possible (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004c).

Rural Schools: Schools that are located in counties with a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile (Consolidated Federal Programs Administrative Manual, 2023).

Self-efficacy: The confidence a person can successfully carry through with a required behavior to yield the desired results (Bandura, 1977).

Student with a disability: A child with an intellectual disability, hearing impairment including deafness, speech or language impairments, visual impairments including blindness, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities requiring special education and related services (Section 1401, 2019).

Limitations

Limitations are factors within the study not controlled by the researcher. The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. The individuals interviewed may show bias through their responses.
2. Individuals within the study attended a variety of undergraduate programs.
3. Individuals within the study have received different types of professional development.
4. Each school district within the study provided different types of professional development.
5. The size of the class each individual teaches varies.
6. The different types of inclusion practices implemented at each school.

Delimitations

Delimitations are factors controlled by the researcher. Delimitations of this study were as follows:

1. Only rural public high schools in Missouri were included in this study.
2. Participants interviewed only included high school principals, ELA and mathematics general education teachers.
3. The study exclusively utilized interview questions.
4. Instructional practices for this study focused on research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.
5. The theoretical framework for this study focused on self-efficacy.

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study can be generalized to high school principals, English language arts and mathematics teachers in rural schools in Missouri.

Assumptions, what is assumed to be true, for this study included:

1. It is assumed all high school principals, ELA and mathematics general education teachers were not deceptive with their answers and the participants answered questions honestly and to the best of their ability.
2. It is assumed this study is an accurate representation of the current situation in rural districts in Missouri.

Design Controls

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore rural high school principals and teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in

Missouri. Qualitative research is the selection, inquiry, and interpretation of an all-encompassing explanation of data collected to gain insight into a particular experience or event of interest. Qualitative research aims to uncover diverse perspectives and backgrounds of individuals and situations. Accordingly, this research method involves collecting data through interviews and observations, which are subsequently analyzed to identify common themes and develop a narrative. In summary, qualitative research provides a rich understanding of subjective experiences and opinions by exploring them in a narrative analysis (Mills & Gay, 2019).

For this study, interview questions were developed from common phrases and themes gathered from the literature review of this study. The participants of this study included four high school principals and eighteen regular education high school teachers from a rural school, one ELA, and one mathematics teacher with at least one student with a disability in their classroom. The principals were interviewed independently. The teachers were interviewed together via Google Meet and the interviews were transcribed with Otter.ai. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Otter.ai to prevent interviewer bias.

At least two teachers from each of the nine regional professional development regions of the state were chosen. This ensured a wide range of sampling from rural districts across the state. Also, choosing one teacher from ELA and one from mathematics, ensured different viewpoints from different content areas. Additionally, limitations included the different undergraduate programs the teachers and principals attended and also varying professional development experiences.

The research questions of this study were used to examine high school principals and teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and the amount of training teachers have received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. To ensure the participants would be open and honest with their responses, confidentiality was discussed before each interview. The importance of confidentiality was discussed, and the interviewees were ensured information would not be shared with employers (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The researcher also established rapport to generate honest and open responses during the interviews. The interview process was consistently created for each interview. The interviewer developed a consistent interview process by using the same interview protocol for each interview. The interviewer established interview procedures to reduce the likelihood of bias from the interviewer (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Upon the completion of interviews, the participants from the study were able to review their transcribed responses to make additions or clarifications. This process of the participants reviewing individual responses is called member checking. Member checking occurs when the researcher provides the transcripts of the interview to the participants for comment and review. Thus, member checking increases the credibility of reviewing the data (Varpio et al., 2017).

After member checking, the researcher reviewed the data with triangulation. Triangulation of the data included the responses to the interview questions from the teachers, the responses to the interview questions from the principals, and the field notes taken by the researcher during the interviews. The data from the teacher

interview questions provided data about the teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy in teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. The data from the principal's interview questions provided data on the principal's perceptions of the teacher's self-efficacy, confidence, and competence to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Additionally, the field notes were analyzed to support data collected in the interviews of both principals and teachers.

Summary

Children with disabilities are to be taught in an educational setting with students who are not disabled (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004c). These students have the same right as their non-disabled peers to free appropriate public education (FAPE) (Office of Civil Rights, n.d). However, general education teachers feel professional development is lacking in regard for inclusion practices and a need for continued professional development for teachers is needed (Garrett, 2017).

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore rural public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to be more flexible, considerate, helpful, and supportive of diverse students (Woodcock & Jones, 2020). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to make the effort to adapt and differentiate so all students can be taught successfully (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

The research questions were used guide this study to examine public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and examine the teacher's perceptions of the

amount of training teachers have received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. This study aimed to identify areas undergraduate programs and school districts can improve in professional development efforts to support inclusive practices in the general education setting and increase teacher self-efficacy in teaching students with disabilities. Thus, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy, so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusion practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

Chapter 2 will present a review of current research on inclusion, self-efficacy, researched-based instructional strategies, assessment, and behavior management. Chapter 3 will review the methodology, research design, and procedures for this investigation. Chapter 4 will provide details of how the data was analyzed and provides a written summary of the results. Chapter 5 will include a summary and implications of the findings of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Introduction

In fall of 2020, 95% of students eligible under IDEA were enrolled in public schools. In 2020, 66% of special education students spent 80% or more of their time in the regular education classroom, which is an increase from 2009 of 59%. Thus, over the past two decades, an overall trend of special education students spending more time in the regular education classroom has been evident (National Center for Education Statistics).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) originated in 1975 when Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, also called Public Law 94-142. Before this act, many students with disabilities were denied access to educational opportunities (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004a.). This law was reauthorized in 1990 and the name was changed to IDEA. Then, the act was reauthorized again in 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004a.) With the reauthorization of the act, students with disabilities have the same right as their non-disabled peers to receive free appropriate public education (FAPE) (Office of Civil Rights, n.d; Smith & Larwin, 2021).

According to the IDEA law, students with disabilities receive FAPE in the least-restrictive environment (LRE). IDEA mandates students with disabilities be taught in regular education classrooms unless their academic and behavioral needs cannot be met in the regular classroom environment with the use of supplementary aids and services. A student's FAPE and LRE are determined by the student's

Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. During one of the stages of the IEP meeting, the team will determine the student's services and where the student will receive the services. The team generally consists of the student's parents, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, a school staff member who can interpret evaluation results, and the student (Gilmour, 2018).

As schools strive to place students accordingly, inclusion and inclusive practices must be considered. Inclusion is educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Butler, 2020). Inclusion is based on encouraging and taking down barriers to learning and benefiting everyone (O'Brien, 2020). For schools to develop an inclusive environment, the school must understand the student's right to participate and the school's ability to adapt rules, norms, routines, and be accepting. For schools to be inclusive, schools must consider how students with disabilities are supported and guided to participate must take place (Hansen et al., 2020).

Students with disabilities need special education services and support (Office of Civil Rights, n.d). However, many teachers do not feel equipped to provide a quality inclusive education for students (Beaton et al., 2021). Many teachers continuously feel unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students having exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Oftentimes, general education teachers feel professional development is lacking in regard to inclusion practices and understanding and implementing student IEPs (Garrett, 2017; Shaukat et al., 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore rural public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. A teacher's positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy can impact on the classroom environment and promote academic success within their schools (Bandura, 1993). Furthermore, a teacher's self-efficacy is important for student achievement (Rezaull et al., 2021). Teacher self-efficacy suggests a teacher's assumption that he or she can perform certain activities to positively influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017).

Few studies on teachers' self-efficacy to work with students with behavioral difficulties have been conducted (Vlah & Kovacic, 2021). However, a need to review how teacher experience and professional development impact a teacher's views of inclusive education and self-efficacy in the classroom is evident. Furthermore, professional development focusing on the improvement of supportive relationships included with collaborative practice can increase teachers' sense of self-efficacy for inclusion for all (Woodcock & Jones, 2020). Furthermore, more research is needed on general education teacher self-efficacy in the areas of researched-based instruction, use of assessment and data, and behavior management in the regular education classroom.

Further research will establish a more expansive list of instructional practices used by general education and special education teachers in inclusive settings at the secondary level (Kuntz & Carter, 2019). Currently, many teachers have minimal training and lack the knowledge to address the academic, social, emotional, and

behavioral needs of students (Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). According to Vlah et al., (2021), few studies on teachers' self-efficacy to work with students with behavioral difficulties have been completed. Thus, it is important teachers are supported, trained, and have the resources necessary to help all students succeed (Woodcock & Hitches, 2017).

The literature review for this study was completed by using academic databases to review peer-reviewed and empirical research articles related to the phenomena. For the theoretical framework, the researcher searched the terminology of self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy suggests a teacher's assumption he or she can perform certain activities to positively influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017; Hassan, 2019). A teacher's positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy can an impact on the classroom and promote academic success within their schools (Bandura, 1993; Hassan, 2019; Love et al., 2020). Thus, a teacher's self-efficacy is important for student achievement and can impact student's own self-efficacy (Rezaull et al., 2021; Hassan, 2019). Accordingly, students who are taught by teachers with low self-efficacy show a loss in their own self-efficacy when they transition from elementary school to junior high school (Bandura, 1993).

In a study completed by Pearman et al., (2021), teacher educators determined the following characteristics as necessary for self-efficacy in teachers: confidence/self-empowerment, commitment, ability to handle challenges, innovative

thinking, and facilitation. Teachers who have self-efficacy can make professional decisions, believe they have an impact on student learning, participate in professional development, and reflect on their teaching. Self-efficacious teachers are seen as confident, resourceful, and motivated and are described as empathetic, genuine, hard-working, team players, and continuously learning (Pearman et al., 2021). Teacher self-efficacy is improved with positive working environments, efficient building-wide initiatives, and effective leadership (Rezaull et al., 2021). Additionally, teachers with a high level of self-efficacy also have high levels of job satisfaction (Elrayah, 2022; Kasalak & Dagyar, 2020).

The theoretical framework of self-efficacy guides this qualitative study to review the problem many regular education teachers have had regarding various experiences in training in undergraduate programs and school districts on inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. Research questions guided this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. The research questions also examined the teacher's perceptions of their confidence in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.

Teacher Training

In the classroom, teachers are responsible for educating, informing, managing, training, and assessing students (Abida Ferindistika Putri et al., 2019). Teachers play a vital role in education. Accordingly, teachers who are trained well are important in providing a quality education for students (Jagannath K. Dange, 2020).

Many teachers continuously feel unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students with exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Many educators believe undergraduate programs do not provide sufficient training to pre-service teachers regarding inclusion practices (Peculea, 2019). Accordingly, pre-service teachers have reported needing training in working with extreme behaviors, evidence-based practices, and more practice in the classroom (Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). However, pre-service teachers must be able to create and facilitate learning to meet the diverse needs of learners in the classroom (Foley, 2020).

Research demonstrates the importance of providing courses early to pre-service teachers about learning disabilities (Crispel & Kasperski, 2019). Subsequently, teacher preparation programs should focus on positively changing the attitudes of pre-service teachers regarding diversity (Keppens et al., 2021). Incorporating experiences for pre-service teachers to have the opportunity to learn about students with disabilities, can help teachers view the classroom environment different as pre-service and current teachers have reported special education coursework changed their mind frames regarding the abilities of the students with disabilities (Duchaine et al., 2021; Thompson, 2012). Additionally, both differentiation of the instruction of the lesson and assessments helped students to be successful (Duchaine et al., 2021).

Researcher consistently agree, undergraduate programs need to provide students with opportunities to learn more about inclusion and offer more experiences for pre-service teachers (Geidel, 2015; Kaczorowski & Kline, 2021; Peculea, 2019). Inclusion experiences should be provided in classrooms with strong general education

teachers implementing positive inclusive settings (Stites et al., 2018). Furthermore, undergraduate programs should locate and provide student teaching opportunities within schools supporting a positive perception of inclusion for general education teachers (Geidel, 2015).

Generally, special education courses for teachers are applicable and purposeful. The special education courses provide skills and knowledge which can impact a teachers attitude toward teaching students with disabilities. When provided courses focused on effective instruction, intervention strategies, assessment, and classroom management, teachers can provide better instruction for all students and meet the learning needs of all students. Subsequently, courses in special education impacted the teachers' perception of their own abilities when teaching students with disabilities (Duchaine et al., 2021).

According to Peculea (2019), first-year undergraduate students tend to be more positive regarding inclusion than students in their third year of undergraduate programs. As first-year students tend to be more positive in regard to inclusion yet lack knowledge of inclusion practices. Thus, it is vital for undergraduate programs to support undergraduate students through their training program to help pre-service teachers understand inclusion and ways to support students with disabilities (Peculea, 2019). Furthermore, the data from the study revealed when special education courses were incorporated pre-service teacher programs inclusion was more likely to be promoted (Duchaine et al., 2021). Consequently, however, the lack of quality teacher training tends to make inclusion less successful (De La Cruz, 2020).

General education teachers often lack knowledge regarding inclusion and mainstreaming due to an inadequacy of training in both undergraduate programs and professional development on inclusion (Beaton et al., 2021; De La Cruz, 2020). In a study by Kroesch and Peeples (2021), general education teachers did not know how to implement IEPs for students with significant disabilities. Thus, to support special education students in the general education classroom, pre-service teacher programs need to better prepare teachers for their role as a members of IEP teams.

In a study by Crispel and Kasperski (2019), even experienced teachers benefited from professional development focused on learning disabilities. When working with students with autism, research has shown teachers' perceptions of working with students with autism spectrum disorders in the classrooms are affected by preparedness, knowledge of autism, amount of training, and support (Johnson et al., 2021). Additionally, teacher in-service training often falls short in adequately teachers' professional development (Eroglu & Kaya, 2021). Lack of training may be attributed to various factors, such as teachers' negative attitudes towards professional development, limited course time, disinterest in the content, ineffective trainers, insufficient knowledge, inconvenient course locations, or a shortage of available courses (Eroglu & Kaya, 2021). Hills and Sessoms-Penny (2021) also found teachers believe professional development lacks effectiveness in preparing teachers for the diverse learning needs of students.

In regard to adequate professional development training, general education teachers often feel professional development is lacking in regard to inclusion practices and understanding and implementing student IEPs (Garrett, 2017).

Moreover, general education teachers should be provided professional development regarding inclusion, roles, and expectations of both the general education teacher and special education teacher. Accordingly, teachers should be provided trainings focused on developing IEPs, and monitoring student progress and outcomes (Hill, 2021). Thus, regular education teachers, who are teaching special education students, should be provided training in teaching methods, individualized instruction, IEPs, classroom management, evaluations, and non-academic skills (Ali, 2020), as teacher training in the area of evidence-based practices and interventions is beneficial due to potentially reducing significant behaviors in students with developmental disabilities (Lory et al., 2020).

Bethel (2019), noted numerous principals believe general education teachers need more training in special education law as many new teachers have very little knowledge of special education law. The study also revealed principals also maintain general education teachers need more training in providing accommodations to students with disabilities and implementing co-teaching strategies (Bethel, 2019). Horner et al., (2020), found participants did not know the correct information about IDEA and how IDEA impacts their teaching. Additionally, students also reveal general education teachers and special education teachers need training on how to differentiate instruction in the general education classroom (Bethel, 2019; Stites et al., 2018).

Ultimately, special education administrators are responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional

development can increase the teacher's knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022). Thus, when teachers are not confident in their abilities to implement evidence-based practices, teachers are less likely to apply such practices in their classrooms with students (Layden et al., 2022).

In a study completed by Layden et al. (2022), participants self-reported on their levels of training, confidence, and frequency of evidence-based practices for students with an autism spectrum disorder. Even though evidenced based practices had been identified, most educators reported little training and low confidence in implementing the practices in the classroom. Thus, training on evidence-based practices could benefit teachers. Furthermore, Layden et al. also identified future research should focus on how special education administrators can develop professional development, opportunities for teachers, and the impact the training could have on the implementation of evidence-based practices (Layden et al., 2022).

In sum, to better enhance teacher self-efficacy, teachers should undergo training programs which incorporate their beliefs and attitudes regarding the teaching profession and their responsibilities. Furthermore, teacher professional development should allocate time for teachers to learn effective teaching strategies and how to implement the strategies in the classroom (Elrayah, 2022). Overall, professional development plays a crucial role in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to implement the most effective practices in their classrooms (Elrayah, 2022; Schwab, 2019).

Self-Efficacy and Teacher Training

A teacher's positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy can impact the classroom and potentially promote academic success within their schools (Bandura, 1993; Hassan, 2019; Love et al., 2020). Therefore, a teacher's self-efficacy is important for student achievement (Rezaull et al., 2021; Hassan, 2019). Moreover, teachers who perceive their work as important tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy, which in turn enhances their motivation and overall effectiveness (Tamari, 2022).

As can be expected, teachers with more experience have higher levels of self-efficacy (An & Wei, 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Similar to self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy is built upon having continual experiences to practice teaching. Subsequently, the more opportunities a teacher can have to teach will only improve their performance. Additionally, teachers' self-efficacy is also associated with a teacher's commitment, engagement of students, preparedness to teach, and competency to teach their content (Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). The relationships teachers have with their students and their level of job satisfaction is also associated with a positive impact as well. Consequently, having difficulty with classroom management skills, can actually have a negative impact on a teacher's self-efficacy (An & Wei, 2021).

As high self-efficacy is important, research from Elrayah (2022), recommends for schools to invest in efforts to help teachers improve their self-efficacy. Teachers need training programs which incorporate beliefs and attitudes about the teaching profession and responsibilities. Studies indicate, teacher professional development

should give teachers time to learn about effective teaching strategies and how to use such strategies in the classroom (Elrayah, 2022; Schwab, 2019). Providing teacher in-service can develop teacher self-efficacy and is important for increasing teacher effectiveness (Rezaull et al., 2021; Hassan, 2019). Professional development can increase teacher confidence and have a positive impact a teacher's beliefs and positively effect one's self-efficacy (Baez-Hernandez, 2019).

When teachers have the opportunity to increase their educational skills and have time for quality teacher collaboration, self-efficacy can increase (Akman, 2021). Accordingly, when teachers have high levels of self-efficacy, performance and the belief in their potential are higher. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy can overcome adverse issues at school and in the classroom (Sophiah & Narmaditya, 2021).

Higher levels of self-efficacy are important given the increase in classroom diversity, it is crucial to provide teachers with training empowering them to effectively handle various types of differences among students (Boghain, 2019). In inclusive classrooms, no discrimination between students with and without disabilities as the presence of each student contributes to the diverse range of ideas and actions within the classroom, emphasizing the importance of welcoming and appreciating all students and valuing the diversity present (Celik, 2019). Thus, for successful inclusion, it is essential for teachers to possess knowledge and understanding of inclusive education practices (Ahmad & May, 2018).

Teaching Students with Disabilities in the Regular Education Classroom

History of IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) originated in 1975 when Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, also called PL 94-142. Before PL 94-142, many students with disabilities were denied access to educational opportunities. The law was reauthorized in 1990 and the name was changed to IDEA. Then act was reauthorized again in 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004a) and stated students' with disabilities have the same right as their non-disabled peers to free appropriate public education (FAPE). Students with disabilities may need special education services and support, but are entitled to the same rights as their non-disabled peers (Office of Civil Rights, n.d).

In best meeting the needs of students, teachers, service providers, and parents should be knowledgeable of education laws (Francisco et al., 2020). Particularly, two notable court cases have affected school districts serving students with disabilities. The cases are *Board of Education v. Rowley* (1982) and *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017), both of which provide students the opportunity for FAPE under IDEA. In compliance with educational laws and court cases, school district staff are responsible for understanding and implementing the requirements of IDEA. Furthermore, special education teachers are to be trained to write and implement IEPs which provide students with disabilities the opportunity to make reasonable progress despite the child's disability (Rozalski et al., 2021). Additionally, the new standard for FAPE is more demanding than before as the parents of students with disabilities are to participate in their children's special education process. As part of the process,

the student's IEP is to be fully implemented to ensure the student is making progress (Fisher et al., 2020).

IEPs are to be written to meet the unique needs of students based on their disability (Horner et al., 2020; Rozalski et al., 2021). Unique to each student, IEPs are individualized to meet each student's needs (Rozalski et al., 2021; Zirkel, 2020). As regular education teachers will have students with IEPs in their classroom, teachers should understand special education laws which support students with disabilities (Horner et al., 2020). In order to help teachers better understand and implement best practices, schools should be providing teachers with training with special education law and its legal ramifications (Dieterich et al., 2019).

The Every Student Succeeds Act emphasizes the needs of all children and it is important for school staff and families to understand the law (Foley, 2020). To implement best practices with students, teachers should be provided training in the historical background with special education law as well as effective practices for working with students with disabilities (Francisco et al., 2020). In best serving students with special needs, a variety of data should be collected for IEP teams to determine if a student would be best served in a separate classroom, self-contained classroom, or regular education classrooms (Cole et al., 2020; Kurth et al., 2019).

Inclusion occurs, when students with disabilities are educated in the regular education classroom (Butler, 2020). Inclusion of students with special needs can provide social benefits for other students in the classroom (Dalcin, 2022; De La Cruz, 2020; Kart & Kart, 2021). However, for successful inclusion to occur, most teachers need additional professional development which is focused on research-based

practices to ensure effective instruction for students with learning needs in inclusive classrooms (Johnson et al., 2021).

Inclusion

Inclusion is educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Butler, 2020). According to Steen & Wilson (2020), most teachers have a positive attitude about inclusion and working with students with disabilities (Steen & Wilson, 2020; Ahmad & May, 2018). Geidel (2015) interviewed pre-service teachers regarding their perception of inclusion. Pre-service teachers believed they were prepared to teach in an inclusive setting and had a positive perception of inclusion prior to teaching. However, the same sample of participants had difficulty maintaining a positive perception of inclusion after being exposed to negative factors during student teaching. Geidel (2015), identified three factors influenced a regular education teacher's perception of inclusion. The three factors influencing teacher perception included the pre-service teacher, the preparation the pre-service teacher received from their undergraduate program, and the amount of positive and negative factors which occurred during their student teaching experience (Geidel, 2015). Moreover, even though the university prepared the pre-service teacher, negative experiences during their student teaching could make a teacher develop a negative attitude toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. Negative experiences which resulted in a negative attitude towards inclusion of students with disabilities included lack of time for planning and collaboration, the ability to work as a team, the knowledge base of the cooperating teacher, the teacher's attitude, and the amount of support received from school administration (Geidel, 2015; Peculea, 2019).

Hill (2021) found administrative support is important for effective inclusion. Administrative support includes quality professional development, management of resources, providing teachers enough time to prepare for instruction, and the development of a collaborative culture. Common planning with professional learning along with accountability systems put in place can assist with contributing to effective inclusion practices (Jung et al., 2019).

Inclusion has a social benefit for students with and without disabilities (Dalcin, 2022; De La Cruz, 2020; Kart & Kart, 2021). Studies demonstrate peer approval and friendships happen more within inclusive classrooms and students without disabilities tend to have better attitudes toward students with disabilities in inclusive environments (Kart & Kart, 2021). When working with students with disabilities inclusion in the general education classroom can be challenging and requires lots of effort, patience, training, and flexibility (De La Cruz, 2020). However, Rodden et al. (2019) determined regular education teachers often do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices for inclusive practices for students with disabilities. When teachers have low self-efficacy, it can impact the inclusion of students. Consequently, many university teacher programs are not preparing teachers for implementing effective inclusion practices and should be providing teachers with training to address this discrepancy (Rodden et al., 2019).

In another study completed by Johnson et al., (2021), it was suggested for instruction students with disabilities to be included in the general education classroom and for instruction to be effective, teachers need more professional development on researched-based practices. When teachers do not have adequate training then

instruction is not beneficial for the students, and inclusion only becomes a location and not instructional inclusion (Johnson et al., 2021). Thus, a compelling relationship between a teacher and principal's years of experience and their perceptions of inclusion exists (Smith & Larwin, 2021).

Barriers for Inclusion

General education teachers often feel multiple barriers impede successful inclusion in the regular education classroom. One of the barriers includes the lack of common plan time between regular education and special education teachers (Garrett, 2017). Another barrier is a lack of time in general for planning differentiated lessons to meet the learning needs of all students (Kart & Kart, 2021).

Accordingly, Hind et al. (2019) found teachers often perceived a shortage of materials and support as major obstacles to successfully implementing effective inclusion practices in their classrooms.

Without collaborative planning, many regular education teachers do not feel equipped to provide a quality inclusive education for students (Beaton et al., 2021). General education teachers often feel little professional development is provided for learning effective inclusion practices. Additionally, numerous general education teachers noted few training opportunities regarding how to better understand and implement student IEP's were ever offered. Thus, a need for continued professional development in inclusion practices for teachers continues to exist (Garrett, 2017).

The development of separate learning standards for student with and without intellectual disabilities in the United States and Sweden has contributed to another barrier for effective inclusion. With separate learning standards for students with

special learning needs, the focus shifts more to life skills versus academic skills. With the shift to more focus on life skills, students have less access to content and concepts taught in the regular education classroom so inclusive practices become more difficult (Hanreddy & Ostlund, 2020).

In summary, regular education teachers feel multiple barriers to contribute to the prevention of successful inclusion in the regular education classroom. Many teachers feel a lack of professional development provided for inclusion practices and training on how to implement student IEPs is a major barrier to best understanding and implementing best inclusive practices. Consequently, teachers continue to need professional development on the implementation of effective inclusion practices (Garrett, 2017).

Research-Based Instruction for Students with Disabilities

According to Jung et al. (2019) and Lory et al. (2020), teachers should provide students with evidence-based interventions to help students make significant progress on their goals. O'Connor (2016) writes in his book, *Great Instruction, Great Achievement for Students with Disabilities*, students with disabilities should be provided rigorous instruction with research-based instructional practices. O'Connor's list of effective practices to increase student achievement includes: increasing practice turns and feedback, providing explicit instruction, providing explicit and embedded vocabulary instruction, filling-in-the-gap interventions, incorporating metacognitive instruction, and implementing effective behavior systems. Subsequently, teachers need professional development opportunities focused on effective research-based

learning practice and strategies to best meet the learning needs of students (Al-Shammari, 2019).

The use of research-based practices is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 and IDEA of 2004 to meet the needs of all students (Johnson et al., 2021). Additionally, Section 1450 of IDEA requires organizations to create and implement strategies which enhance educational outcomes for students with disabilities. The law emphasizes the importance of maintaining high academic standards and performance goals for students with disabilities. Moreover, the law also includes the need for measurable definitions of goals with disabilities are expected to achieve after high school (Section 1450, 2023).

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law. The legislation includes various provisions aimed at promoting the success of students and schools. One key aspect of the ESSA is the laws commitment to advancing equity by providing essential protections for disadvantaged and high-need students across the United States. The law establishes a significant requirement for all students to be taught with high academic standards, ensuring students are prepared for college and careers. Additionally, the ESSA supports the use of evidence-based interventions. Overall, the enactment of the ESSA represents a comprehensive effort to enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for all students (Every Student Succeeds Act, n.d.).

Researched-based practices are based on specific research strategies and often recognized as positively impacting student outcomes. Research has shown teachers who lack knowledge of research-based practices often feel unprepared and have

lower confidence when involved within an inclusive classroom setting (Johnson et al., 2021). However, teachers who have knowledge of research-based practices often have higher levels of self-efficacy to work with students with disabilities in an inclusive environment (Johnson et al., 2021).

In their study, Bryd and Alexander (2020) studied the perspectives of special education teachers on what skills and knowledge general education teachers needed for students with disabilities to be successful in an inclusive classroom. The study revealed, general education teachers must use assessment and data to monitor student progress to be most successful. Teachers must be able to adapt curriculum and assignments within the classroom to meet the learning needs of students (Byrd & Alexander, 2020). Furthermore, teachers need to be understanding, compassionate, and have good communication skills (Byrd & Alexander, 2020). Educational practices must be evidenced-based, from an educational perspective which meets the needs of the student (Navarro-Montaña et al., 2021).

School administrators must ensure teachers use high-leverage, evidence-based practices to best benefit students with disabilities (Dieterich et al., 2019). When evidence-based practices are implemented consistently, student outcomes can improve. However, evidence-based practices can be can also be ineffective if not implemented correctly (Rowe et al., 2021).

An example of the effectiveness of implementing high-leverage, evidence-based practices can be demonstrated from a study completed by Hunt et al. (2019). In the study, students with severe disabilities were randomly assigned to an intervention group and a control group. The intervention group received instruction using the

platform Early Literacy Skills Builder (ELSB) and the control group, called the business-as-usual (BAU) group, received literacy instruction planned by special education teachers addressing the special education students' goals as stated in their IEPs. Each group received literacy instruction every day from special education teachers in a regular education classroom. Results indicated the scores for students in both groups showed a significant increase over nine months in literacy skills, but the ELSB group made more gains than the BAU group (Hunt et al., 2019).

Studies demonstrate teacher's with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to implement classroom-based interventions, despite the student's disability (Chunta & DuPaul, 2022). Generally, secondary regular education teachers receive little training on implementing practices which support special education students in the regular education classroom (Mahoney, 2020). Thus, most regular education teachers need training and professional development on evidence-based practices for working with students with learning needs (Morin et al., 2021).

In summary, when teachers have higher levels of self-efficacy, the teacher is more likely to implement classroom-based interventions regardless of the student's disability (Chunta & DuPaul, 2022). To best meet the needs of students, it is important for evidence-based educational practices to be utilized (Navarro-Montaña et al., 2021). Students tend to make significant progress in meeting their learning goals when teachers provide students with evidence-based interventional strategies (Jung et al., 2019; Lory et al., 2020).

Assessment and data

Assessment tools can be utilized to help improve instruction and student learning (Lazarus et al., 2022; Schildkamp et al., 2020). To help teacher improve instruction and positively impact student learning, assessments should be available to all students. However, to be most effective, teachers should be provided professional development on how to use assessments and the data to drive instruction for all students (Lazarus et al., 2022).

According to IDEA, every state must guarantee the inclusion of all children with disabilities in both state and district-wide assessments. Additionally, the IDEA mandates each child's IEP team determines any necessary accommodations required for the child to participate in assessments effectively. The accommodations determined by the IEP team should align with the child's IEP goals and ensure accurate measurement of student academic achievement and functional performance in accordance with state and district standards (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2023).

Accurate and authentic student data is important for making decisions regarding instruction which can improve student outcomes. Using data generated from formative assessments, can help develop formative assessment can develop learning environments centered around student learning needs and help support students with disabilities (Lazarus et al., 2022). The effective use of formative assessments by teachers can be influenced by prerequisites related to knowledge and skills, as well as psychological and social factors present among the populations of students in inclusive classrooms' (Schildkamp et al., 2020).

For formative assessment to be most effective, school leaders should ensure professional development is provided to all teachers on how to use formative assessments effectively with the general education curriculum (Lazarus et al., 2022). However, further research is recommended in exploring the key attributes of effective professional development in regarding the development, implementation, utilization, and evaluation for formative assessment usage in the classroom (Schildkamp et al., 2020).

Overall, regularly reviewing data can help a teacher to recognize instruction needs to improve (O'Connor, 2016a). Most special education teachers have experience with assessments and using student data. Accordingly, special education teachers often use informal assessments to gain knowledge about students' academic, behavioral, and functional needs (McLeskey et al., 2017).

To be most effective, teachers must be able to analyze student data to make instructional decisions so trainings focused on data collection, interpretation of data, as well as monitoring student progress is needed. Teachers must be able to analyze student data to make instructional decisions (Wilcox et al., 2021).

Overall, all students with disabilities must be included in state and districtwide assessments (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2023). Assessments can provide student data which can be used for making student data is important for making decisions regarding instruction and can improve student outcomes (Lazarus et al., 2022). Subsequently, for teachers to be most effective, teachers should be provided with professional development on how to use assessments and how to use data to drive instruction (Lazarus et al., 2022).

Behavior management

School leaders and teachers must develop positive behavioral systems for the school and the classroom. To be most effective, teachers must define expected behaviors and model what the expected behaviors look like in the classroom. Additionally, school staff must also build relationships with students and teach students the expected behaviors (McLeskey et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2016a). Many teachers could benefit from trainings focused on improving and implementing effective classroom management (Gaastra et al., 2020).

One study demonstrated when students demonstrate a behavioral difficulty in the classroom the behavior significantly impacts a teacher's attitude toward the student (Jury et al., 2021). The study revealed, one barrier to the successful inclusion of students was the behavior of students. Students can exhibit unpredictable, unruly, disruptive, aggressive, self-harming, and challenging behaviors. Local education agencies and school administrators often lack supports to assist teachers with behaviors that students can exhibit (Holmes & Butcher, 2020).

When working with students who may be exhibiting particular barriers in the regular education classroom, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) can be more effective rather than using disciplinary measures (Holmes & Butcher, 2020). To promote inclusion, one notable strategy to assist students in the regular education classroom was to assign the student an important job. Other strategies included using visual schedules and timers (Bolourian et al., 2022). It is important for teachers to understand students need consistency and structure in the classroom. Accordingly, when students are more engaged, fewer problem behaviors tend to occur (Bolourian

et al., 2022). Moreover, teachers should be provided training in evidenced-based behavior management strategies most effectively to address behaviors in the classroom (Bolourian et al., 2022; Schwab, 2019). The implementation of effective evidenced-based behavior management strategies can promote inclusion, build positive relationships, and contribute to positive reinforcement (Bolourian et al., 2022).

Furthermore, students with significant cognitive disabilities should be included in school-wide positive behavior supports and taught appropriate behavior expectations (Zagona et al., 2021). Accordingly, in the regular education classroom, peer-based interventions can decrease challenging behaviors in the classroom for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Thus, these particular students can benefit from positive verbal reinforcement given by peers throughout classroom activities to strengthen social skills (Dupuis & Jacobs, 2021).

Scott et al. (2007) suggest defining, teaching, and reinforcing pro-social behaviors can lead to positive outcomes across populations and settings. Accordingly, Garrote et al. (2020) students who display cooperative and pro-social behavior in inclusive classrooms are more accepted by their peers. Conversely, students with low levels of social behavior tend to be less accepted by their peers. Therefore, Garrote et al. (2020) emphasize creating opportunities for all students to acquire and practice cooperative and pro-social behaviors is crucial in promoting social acceptance in inclusive classrooms.

Teacher Self-Efficacy to Teach Students with Disabilities

Various studies, such as Cheetham-West (2021), Vent (2021), Daniels (2018) and Johnson et al. (2021), have explored the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their ability to effectively teach students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Cheetham-West (2021) found no correlation between high teacher self-efficacy and high student achievement, while Vent (2021) revealed high levels of self-efficacy among general education teachers, but no correlation between special education services and teacher self-efficacy. Daniels (2018) discovered special education teachers had higher levels of self-efficacy for inclusion than general education teachers, and Johnson et al. (2021) revealed professional development training had a significant impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Additionally, pre-service teachers' experiences and classroom management skills can increase self-efficacy (Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Batool & Khawaja, 2021).

Teacher self-efficacy has been studied worldwide. In Saudi Arabia, teachers feel confident in their ability to teach students with disabilities, but more training is needed for managing student behavior and collaboration in inclusive classrooms (Alnahdi, 2020). In a study conducted in Japan and Finland, teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy perceived inclusion as more beneficial for students with moderate disabilities, as teacher self-efficacy can potentially be influenced by the severity of students' disabilities (Yada & Savolainen, 2019). However, further research is needed to investigate factors which could clarify discrepancies in teachers' self-efficacy to teach in inclusive classrooms and the relationship between teacher

attitudes and self-efficacy towards inclusion of students with disabilities (Alnahdi, 2020).

In sum, a need for professional development to improve teacher's understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities exists (Shaukat et al., 2019). When teachers have low self-efficacy, inclusion of students can be impacted (Rodden et al., 2019). Thus, there is a need for teacher training, professional development, and school-wide programs to develop teacher self-efficacy is evident (Woodcock & Faith, 2021). However, future research is needed to review how teacher experience and professional development can impact one's views of inclusive education and self-efficacy (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

Summary

The literature review of this chapter presents a review of teacher self-efficacy. The second section discussed teacher training regarding training in undergraduate programs, teacher professional development provided by school districts, and how teacher perceptions of self-efficacy are impacted by professional development. The history of special education, teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom, and strategies to effectively teach students with disabilities were included. Additionally, the last section examined a review of studies of teacher self-efficacy when teaching students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

The next chapter presents the methodology of this qualitative phenomenological study and the interview questions developed to study the phenomenon. The design, setting, and participant selection of the study explains how the researcher gathered data to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training

of teachers teaching high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools in Missouri. Additionally, the process of conducting and completing interviews is discussed as well as the specific process of how the data will be analyzed to answer the research questions of this study.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore rural public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. The existing problem is professional development is needed to improve teacher's understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities (Shaukat et al., 2019). Many regular education teachers do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices for inclusive practices for students with learning needs. When teachers do not feel supported or are ill-equipped, low efficacy can result the effective inclusion of students can be impacted. Contributing to the problem is many university teacher programs are not preparing teachers for effective inclusion and teachers now need trainings to address this deficiency (Rodden et al., 2019).

This chapter presents the methodology of the study and the research questions developed to study the phenomenon. The research setting and the process of participant selection are also described. The design of this qualitative, phenomenological study is as well as how the researcher explained how the researcher collected data to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers teaching high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in public rural schools in Missouri. Additionally, the interview protocols for this study and the process of completing the interviews are also included. Furthermore, specific information on how the data were analyzed to address the

research questions is defined. Questions and a summary of the methodology implemented to study the phenomenon is discussed.

Research Questions

The research questions guide this qualitative study to review the problem regular education teachers have regarding various experiences in training in undergraduate programs and within their district, with inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. Accordingly, the research questions guide this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Furthermore, the research questions also examine the teacher's perceptions of the amount of training teachers have received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy and ability to positively impact student learning among Missouri public high school teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms?
2. What are the perceptions of the amount of training teachers have received among Missouri public high school teachers regarding research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management to support students with disabilities to positively influence student learning?
 - a. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities with research-based practices among Missouri public high school teachers?

- b. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy regarding using assessments with students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers?
- c. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy regarding behavior management of students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers?

Within the following study, interview questions were developed to collect a narrative of data for the purpose of gaining insight into the research questions. High school regular education teachers from rural schools were interviewed via Google Meet. Interviews were then transcribed with Otter.ai and common themes were analyzed.

Research Design

The design of this study is a qualitative phenomenological study. The study of an individual's lived experiences is a type of qualitative research called phenomenology. Phenomenology is a type of research which deepens our understanding of the multiplex phenomena (Neubauer et al., 2019). Qualitative research is the selection, inquiry, and interpretation of an all-encompassing explanation of data used to gain insight into a particular experience or event of interest.

Qualitative research tells the different perspectives and backgrounds of individuals and situations (Mills & Gay, 2019). The participants in this study were high school general education teachers in rural public school districts in the state of Missouri. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of high school

English language arts and mathematics general education teachers in rural schools in Missouri with at least one student with a disability in their class. Semi-structured interviews of participants will improve understanding of the phenomenon studied. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to study problems at a deeper level with questions which help to understand the view of other individuals (Butina, 2015).

The study of an individual's lived experiences is a type of qualitative research called phenomenology. Phenomenology is a type of research which deepens our understanding of the multiplex phenomena (Neubauer et al., 2019). The methodology of phenomenological research allows for more precise questions which can provide in-depth information about the phenomenon (Frechette et al., 2020). Within a phenomenological study, the researcher uses a small sample which can sufficiently describe an individual's thoughts and voice. A phenomenological study inquires about an individual's experiences and then analyzes the experiences to draw conclusions (Bartholomew et al., 2021). Phenomenological research values the first-person perspective and uncovers an individual's experiences. Through the process of phenomenological research, the researcher allows the participants to share their personal experiences (Williams, 2021).

In qualitative studies, the researcher is essential for data collection. To have accurate data in a qualitative study, the researcher must ensure the research design, method, and results are accurate, reliable, and free of preconceived opinions (Johnson et al., 2023). Data is gathered through interviews and observations. Once data is completed, the data is then analyzed and organized into themes to develop a narrative (Mills & Gay, 2019). For the purpose of this study and data collection, interview

questions were developed to gain insight into the individuals' self-efficacy and the amount of training received to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

For the purpose of this study, interview questions were developed based on findings and gaps in the literature identified in the literature review of this study. The principal interview questions were developed from themes regarding teacher self-efficacy and professional development for teachers. Moreover, the teacher interview questions were developed from themes of self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher training. Additionally, to address the research questions of this study, an interview protocol was developed and approved by the Southwest Baptist University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Furthermore, the principal of a rural school in each of the regional professional development areas in the state of Missouri was emailed about the study.

In this study, data triangulation was completed. Triangulation of the data included the responses to the interview questions from the teachers, the responses to the interview questions from the principals, and the field notes taken by the researcher during the interviews. The data from the teacher interview questions provided data about the teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Additionally, the data from the principal's interview questions provided data on the principal's perceptions of the teacher's self-efficacy, confidence, and competence to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Additionally, the field notes taken by the researcher were analyzed to support data collected in the interviews of the principals and teachers. In

previous studies on self-efficacy, the following themes emerged for positive teacher beliefs of self-efficacy: experience, self-confidence, competence, and personal development (Kandl, 2017; Marschall, 2022; Ozcan, 2022; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023).

Population and Sample Selection

The participants in this study were high school principals and high school general education teachers in rural public school districts in the state of Missouri. Four high school principals and eighteen general education teachers were interviewed for this study. Four principals and two teachers were chosen from a rural school in each of the nine regional professional development center areas in the state of Missouri. The number of interviewees was chosen to incorporate districts statewide within the study. For the data collection of the study, the principals were interviewed independently. Additionally, the two teachers from a district in each region were interviewed together, one ELA teacher and one mathematics teacher. When working within a phenomenological study, it is recommended the researcher should use a small sample to sufficiently describe an individual's thoughts and voice (Bartholomew et al., 2021).

The criteria for participants included a high school principal in rural public schools in Missouri. The criteria for the teachers included high school general education teachers only teaching ELA or mathematics in rural public schools in Missouri with at least one special education student in their class. The interviews were held via Google meet and recorded and then transcribed with Otter.ai. The participants of the study were given the choice of time to complete the interview. The selection of the school districts chosen for the study were based on the criteria for

rural schools in Missouri. High school principals were emailed, provided information about the study, and four principals were asked to participate in the study, those four principals and additional principals will be asked to identify two teachers that would be willing to participate in the study (Appendix A). The teachers were then emailed, provided information about the study, and provided the interview questions (Appendix B). Interested participants were able to schedule interviews with the researcher. Before starting the interview, participants were provided a detailed letter stating participants had the right to not participate in the study, could opt-out at any time, and the reassurance responses were confidential.

Interview Procedures

Interview questions (Appendix D) were developed to gain insight into the principal's perceptions of the teachers' self-efficacy, the individuals' self-efficacy, and the amount of training received to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. This study sought to identify areas in which undergraduate programs and school districts could improve in professional development to support inclusive practices in the general education setting and to increase teacher self-efficacy when teaching students with disabilities. The phenomenological study was most appropriate for this study as such studies inquires about an individual's experiences and then analyzes the experiences to draw conclusions (Bartholomew et al., 2021).

Before the interview, the participants signed an informed consent. The participants were informed withdrawal from the study can occur at any time. Confidentiality was also be discussed with the participants. For confidentiality, each

of the transcripts did not include the name of the participant or the name of the school. The transcripts for the principals were labeled P1, P2, P3, etc. and the transcripts for the teachers were labeled T1, T2, T3, etc. and so on. The interviews for the study were conducted virtually via Google Meet with the principals interviews lasting approximately 20 minutes and the teacher interviews lasting approximately 30-45 minutes. Once the interviews were completed, each interview was transcribed with Otter.ai.

The research questions for this study were developed from the literature review of the study. The principal interview questions were developed from themes regarding teacher self-efficacy and professional development for teachers. The teacher interview questions were developed from themes of self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher training. The interview questions were sent to participants before the interview.

Each of the interview sessions consisted of the researcher guiding the dialogue with an interview protocol, including follow-up questions and probes. The interview process allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions to gain data regarding each of the participant's thoughts and feelings about specific topic of the study. The purpose of the interview session was to collect data and gather information from participants with personal experiences in the area being researched (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

During the interview, the researcher established rapport by being genuine and open-minded to each of the participant's responses. The questions presented during the interview sessions were open-ended and indifferent, using simple vocabulary

(DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Additionally, the interview questions were relevant to the study and allowed each participant an opportunity to openly share their experience (Roberts, 2020). Prior to the interview sessions the participants were informed they can refuse to answer a specific question or can withdraw from the study at any time (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

To find participants and schedule interviews, the principal of a rural school in each of the nine regional professional development areas in the state of Missouri were emailed about the study. Four high school principals will be asked to participate in the study, and asked to identify two teachers willing to participate in the study (Appendix A). The four high school principals will be from four different regions of the state of Missouri. Once teachers were identified by the principals, the teachers were then emailed, provided information about the study, and given the interview questions (Appendix B). After receiving information regarding the study, interested participants were able to schedule interviews with the researcher. However, before starting the interview, participants were provided a detailed letter stating each had the right to not participate in the study, could opt-out at any time, and the reassurance all responses were confidential.

Prior to conducting the interview sessions, a consent form was sent to each participant before the interviews. After receiving consent forms from all the participants, interviews were conducted via Google Meet and transcribed with Otter.ai. Each of the participant's responses to the questions contribute as the data for this study and the responses will be transcribed from the recording. Having the interview transcribed allowed the researcher to analyze the exact words the

participants used (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Following transcription of each interview, each transcribed interview was provided to the participant to make any additions, removals, or provide any additional clarification.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research is considered as the trustworthiness, accuracy, and quality of the study (Golafshani, 2003). Validity ensures the study is credible. Qualitative studies can ensure validity by using some of the following methods: member checking, triangulation, think description, peer reviews, and external audits (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Triangulation can enhance the confirmation of the findings in qualitative research (Thurmond, 2001). The integration of triangulation, this can also increase the validity of the results (Lauri, 2011). Additionally, triangulation can also help the researcher consider inconsistent data (Bans-Akutey, 2021). Triangulation of the data included the responses to the interview questions from the teachers, the responses to the interview questions from the principals, and the field notes taken by the researcher during each of the interviews. The data from the teacher interview questions provided data about the teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Additionally, the data from the principal's interview questions provided data on the principal's perceptions of the teacher's self-efficacy, teachers confidence and competence to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Moreover, the field notes were analyzed to support data collected in the interview sessions of both principals and

teachers to note similarities and differences. The field notes served to support the interview responses and explain various meanings when compared to the transcripts.

The research questions for this study were developed from the literature review of this study (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The principal interview questions were developed from themes regarding teacher self-efficacy and professional development for teachers. Additionally, the teacher interview questions were developed from themes of self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher training. Prior to conducting each of the interviews, each of the interview questions developed for the study were reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee.

The researcher conducted practice interviews in the researcher's district of employment before starting the research process. A pilot study was completed before the research questions were finalized. Pilot studies in qualitative research are completed to improve the quality and trustworthiness of the study. By completing the pilot study, the researcher can make necessary adjustments and revisions to the central study. Conducting a pilot study can also be beneficial for beginner researchers in preparing the main study (Kim, 2010).

Pilot interviews are used to improve the interview protocol and validate the interviews conducted during the research process (Imtiaz Abd Gani et al., 2020). For the purpose of this study, the pilot study included an ELA teacher and mathematics teacher from rural schools in southwest Missouri. The teachers were able to provide the researcher feedback on the questions asked. After feedback was reviewed, the questions were updated and approved before the researcher began the research for this study.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research ensures consistency in the research process and the analysis of data (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability in research is the trustworthiness and dependability of the study. Thus, the more reliable the study, the more credible results (Mills & Gay, 2019).

The interview protocol developed for this study was reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee and the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board (RRB). Additionally, to increase the reliability of this study, member checking was completed. Member checking encompasses providing the transcripts of the interviews and the data to the participants and allowing the participants to review the transcript. In sum, member checking also increases the credibility of the data (Varpio et al., 2017).

In addition to member checking, coding and analysis of data were also used to increase reliability. Coding involves the process of examining qualitative data and reviewing the information for words or phrases which can provide a summary of the content (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2018). Coding assists the researcher in organizing the information into essential categories by discerning and developing common themes in the data. During the coding process, the researcher is able to break apart and label information into categories and labeling the information into categories. Once the data is separated into categories, the data is then labeled which represents a common theme in the data (Ruona, 2005). Thus coding increases the quality of research and aids the researcher in checking for conflicting findings in the material as well (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2018).

To become aware of any values or bias the researcher implemented the process of reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process the researcher used to identify their values and biases which could potentially have an impact on the study. To become aware of any personal bias, the researcher can write their own experiences and biases into a narrative (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Accordingly, the researcher kept a journal throughout the research process to acknowledge and address potential biases and subjectiveness. Throughout the research process, the researcher reflected on personal biases and assumptions. It is important to note, for this qualitative study to be replicated, results could vary depending on the following factors: the teacher's years of experience, the undergraduate program attended, the district of employment, and the participant's path to certification.

Data Analysis Procedures

The research questions guide this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Additionally, the research questions also examine the teacher's perceptions of the amount of training teachers have received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. The data to answer the research questions were obtained through interview sessions with participants. The answers given during the interview sessions provide detailed information to understand the problem (Butina, 2015). The interviews were conducted and recorded through Google Meet and transcribed with Otter.ai. Once transcriptions were completed, each participant was provided with the transcription to make any additions, removals, or provide clarification. The transcripts for the principals were labeled P1, P2, P3, etc.

and the transcripts for the teacher interviews were labeled T1, T2, T3, etc. accordingly.

Prior to providing participants with copies of the transcripts, the transcriptions were reviewed, the researcher completed bracketing. Bracketing is the process of the researcher putting aside their own personal beliefs about the study and the data collected to provide a factual description of the participants' life experiences. The bracketing process removes the biases from the researcher (Chan et al., 2013).

Once each of the interview sessions were transcribed, the transcriptions were read in their entirety so the researcher could become accustomed to the responses from the interviews. The researcher listened to each recording to become familiar with and understand each individual's experience. The researcher also reviewed the transcripts to delineate the units of meaning. The process allowed the researcher to analyze the data and help the researcher better understand the participants' experiences as the researcher looked for statements and quotes of importance (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). The researcher read through each interview for the purpose of discovering common themes and occurrences within each interview. Additionally, the researcher read through each transcription multiple times to identify reoccurring words, phrases, and themes. As the researcher read each transcript, the researcher examined the frequency, items left out, and statements made within each interview (LeCompte, 2000). As the researcher identified reoccurring words, phrases, and statements, the units of meaning were then clustered to develop themes (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). Specifically, the process of coding was used to organize information into essential categories by discerning and developing common

themes in the data. The researcher used the process of coding to specifically break apart, sort, and label information into categories. As information was sorted and labeled, common themes became evident from the data (Ruona, 2005).

After establishing common themes in the data, the researcher then developed a summary of all of the themes from each interview to describe the experiences of each the participants. During the development each summary, the researcher confirmed or adjusted the data if necessary (Groenewald, 2004). Each of the interviews were given to the participant to validate their experiences. After all the interviews were reviewed by participants, then all of the general and uncommon themes from the interviews were then developed into a synthesized summary (Groenewald, 2004). By completing this process, an improved understanding of the phenomenon resulted (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Throughout the process of completing the transcriptions and organizing the data, all research and data were stored on the researcher's cloud drive. Following the completion of the study, the transcriptions will be stored on a jump drive for three years and then destroyed.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues to be considered for the study included the right to maintain the privacy of the participants, the ability to remain anonymous, confidentiality, and avoiding harm (Govil, 2013). Before starting the interview, participants were provided a detailed letter stating each had the right to not participate in the study, could opt-out at any time, and all responses were confidential. Additionally, the individual's name and school were kept confidential and not used in the study.

Each of the interview sessions were completed through Google Meet and transcribed with Otter.ai. The principals interviews were transcribed and labeled P1, P2, P3, etc. and the teacher interviews were transcribed and labeled T1, T2, T3, etc. accordingly. Additionally, the transcriptions were stored on the researcher's cloud drive. Furthermore, after the conclusion of the study was completed, the transcriptions will be stored on a jump drive for three years and then destroyed.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are factors within the study not controlled by the researcher. The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. The individuals interviewed may show bias through their responses.
2. Individuals within the study attended a variety of undergraduate programs.
3. Individuals within the study have received different types of professional development.
4. Each school district within the study provided different types of professional development.
5. The size of the class each individual teaches varies.
6. The different types of inclusion practices implemented at each school.

Delimitations are factors controlled by the researcher. Delimitations of this study were as follows:

1. Only rural public high schools in Missouri were included in this study.
2. Participants interviewed only included high school principals, ELA and mathematics general education teachers.
3. The study exclusively utilized interview questions.

4. Instructional practices for this study focused on research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.
5. The theoretical framework for this study focused on self-efficacy.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers teaching high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools in Missouri. The research questions guide this qualitative study to review the problem of undergraduate programs and school districts not providing adequate training for regular education teachers on inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. The research questions guide this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.

The design of this study is a qualitative phenomenological study. The methodology of phenomenological research allows for more precise questions which can provide in-depth information regarding a phenomenon (Frechette et al., 2020). The participants in this study were high school general education teachers in rural public school districts in the state of Missouri.

The interviews were held via Google Meet and recorded and then transcribed with Otter.ai. The purpose of the interview sessions were collect data and gather information from participants with personal experiences in the area being researched (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The teacher's responses to the questions were the

data for this study. Each of the interviews were analyzed for common themes and findings for the study.

Chapter 4 will include the findings of the study, data analysis procedures, and results of the study. The chapter will include a narrative of the characteristics and demographics of the sample population and a detailed description of the data analysis procedures. Additionally, the results will be presented with a thematic analysis.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

Children with disabilities are to be taught in an educational setting with students who are not disabled (Individuals With Disabilities Act, 2004c). When students with disabilities are taught in the general education classroom, the students are more likely to receive instruction on grade-level standards by regular education teachers (O'Connor, 2016a). When students with disabilities see other students making progress, their self-expectations increase, and students are given the opportunity to interact with their peers (O'Connor, 2016a). The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore rural public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri.

The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1993), self-efficacy is the confidence a person can successfully carry through with a required behavior to yield the desired result. Bandura found individuals with a high level of self-efficacy can visualize and plan for success. A teacher's positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy impacts the classroom and promotes academic success within their school (Bandura, 1993; Hassan, 2019; Love et al., 2020). Teacher self-efficacy indicates a teacher's assumption he or she can perform certain activities to positively influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017; Hassan, 2019). Thus, a teacher's self-efficacy is important for student achievement and can impact a student's own self-efficacy (Hassan, 2019; Rezaull et al., 2021). Chapter four discusses the findings of this qualitative,

phenomenological study to explore rural public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri.

The problem encompasses a need for professional development to improve teacher understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities (Shaukat et al., 2019). Regular education teachers do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices for inclusive practices for students with disabilities (Rodden et al., 2019). Accordingly, when teachers have low self-efficacy, the inclusion of students can be impacted. Many teacher programs are not preparing teachers for effective inclusion and should be providing teachers training to address the lack of preparation in this area (Rodden et al., 2019).

Thus, there is a need to present to review how teacher experience and professional development impact a teacher's views of inclusive education and self-efficacy in the classroom. Additionally, a need was evident to review how professional development impacts teachers' views of inclusive education and self-efficacy (Woodcock & Jones, 2020). More research is needed on general education teacher self-efficacy in the areas of researched-based instruction, use of assessment and data, and behavior management in inclusive regular education classrooms.

The existing problem is professional development is needed to improve teachers' understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities (Shaukat et al., 2019). Many regular education teachers do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices for inclusive practices for students with learning needs. When teachers do not feel supported or are ill-equipped, low efficacy can

result and the effective inclusion of students can be impacted. Contributing to the problem is many university teacher programs are not preparing teachers for effective inclusion and teachers now need training to address this deficiency (Rodden et al., 2019).

For this study, interview questions were developed from common phrases and themes gathered from the literature review of this study. The participants of this study included four high school principals and 18 regular education high school teachers from a rural school, one ELA, and one mathematics teacher with at least one student with a disability in their classroom. The principals were interviewed independently. The teachers were interviewed independently or together via Google Meet and the interviews were transcribed with Otter.ai. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Otter.ai to prevent interviewer bias.

The research questions guided this qualitative study to review the problem regular education teachers have had regarding various types of training in their undergraduate programs and school district on inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. The research questions examined high school ELA and mathematics general education teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Additionally, the research questions examine principals' and teachers' perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy and ability to positively impact student learning among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms?
2. What are the perceptions of the amount of training received among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers regarding research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management to support students with disabilities to positively influence student learning?
 - a. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities with research-based practices among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers?
 - b. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy regarding using assessments with students with disabilities among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers?
 - c. What are the perceptions of self-efficacy regarding behavior management of students with disabilities among Missouri public high school ELA and mathematics teachers?

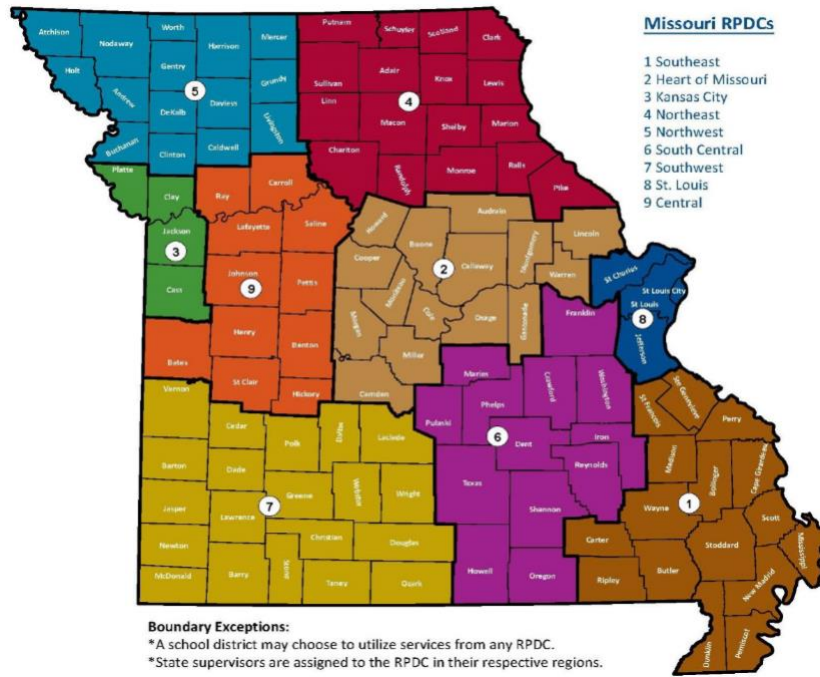
Chapter Four includes the data analysis procedures, findings, and results of the study. This chapter presents a narrative of the characteristics and demographics of the sample population and a detailed description of the data analysis procedures. Additionally, the results are presented with a thematic analysis.

Participants

The participants in this study were high school principals and high school general education teachers in rural public school districts in the state of Missouri. Four high school principals and 18 general education teachers were interviewed for this study. For the data collection of the study, the principals were interviewed independently. Additionally, the two teachers from a district in each region were interviewed, one ELA teacher and one mathematics teacher. The criteria for participants included a high school principal in rural public schools in Missouri. The criteria for the teachers included high school general education teachers only teaching ELA or mathematics in rural public schools in Missouri with at least one special education student in their class. Four principals and two teachers were chosen from a rural school in 8 out of the 9 regional professional development center areas in the state of Missouri. The St. Louis area was not included in this study. Two schools from Region six were included. Figure 1 includes a map of the Missouri Regional Professional Development Centers.

Figure 1

Missouri Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs)



Note. Missouri Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDC) rev. 2022 (<https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/regional-professional-development-centers-rpdc-rev-2022>)

The criteria for participants included a high school principal in rural public schools in Missouri. The criteria for the teachers included high school general education teachers only teaching ELA or mathematics in rural public schools in Missouri with at least one special education student in their class. The interviews were held via Google Meet and recorded and then transcribed with Otter.ai. The participants of the study were given the choice of time to complete the interview. The selection of the school districts for the study were based on the criteria for rural schools in Missouri. High school principals were emailed, provided information about the study, and four principals were asked to participate in the study. Those four

principals and additional principals were asked to identify two teachers that would be willing to participate in the study (Appendix A). The teachers were then emailed, provided information about the study, and provided the interview questions (Appendix B and E). Within the study, nine ELA and nine mathematics teachers were interviewed. Interested participants were able to schedule interviews with the researcher. Before starting the interview, participants were provided a detailed letter stating participants had the right to not participate in the study, could opt-out at any time, and the reassurance responses were confidential. Table 1 includes background information for each participant.

Table 1*Participant Information*

Participant	Years Experience in Public Education	Current Role	Years Experience in Current Role
Principal 1 (P1)	13	High School Principal	3
Principal 2 (P2)	19	High School Principal	19
Principal 3 (P3)	26	K-12 Principal	5
Principal 4 (P4)	38	High School Principal	4
Teacher 1 (T1)	18	High School Math	14
Teacher 2 (T2)	0	High School ELA	0
Teacher 3 (T3)	16	High School ELA	9
Teacher 4 (T4)	27	High School Math	27
Teacher 5 (T5)	8	High School ELA	5
Teacher 6 (T6)	3	High School Math	3
Teacher 7 (T7)	0	High School ELA	0
Teacher 8 (T8)	19	High School Math	11
Teacher 9 (T9)	10	High School ELA	1
Teacher 10 (T10)	4	High School Math	4
Teacher 11 (T11)	5	High School ELA	1
Teacher 12 (T12)	5	High School Math	2
Teacher 13 (T13)	19	High School Math	1
Teacher 14 (T14)	8	High School Math	8
Teacher 15 (T15)	12	High School ELA	8
Teacher 16 (T16)	14	High School Math	7
Teacher 17 (T17)	27	High School ELA	15
Teacher 18 (T18)	10	High School ELA	10

Teachers with 0 years of experience are in their first year of teaching.

Verification/Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, the researcher is essential for data collection. To have accurate data in a qualitative study, the researcher must ensure the research design, method, and results are accurate, reliable, and free of preconceived opinions (Johnson et al., 2020). Data are gathered through interviews and observations. Once data are completed, they are then analyzed and organized into themes to develop a narrative (Mills & Gay, 2019). Validity in qualitative research is considered as the

trustworthiness, accuracy, and quality of the study (Golafshani, 2003). Validity ensures the study is credible. Qualitative studies can ensure validity by using some of the following methods: member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer reviews, and external audits (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Throughout the interview process, to ensure the participants would be open and honest with their responses, confidentiality was discussed before each interview. The importance of confidentiality was discussed, and the interviewees were ensured information would not be shared with employers (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The researcher established rapport to generate honest and open responses during the interviews. The interview process was consistently created for each interview. The interviewer developed a consistent interview process by using the same interview protocol for each interview. The interviewer established interview procedures to reduce the likelihood of bias from the interviewer (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Upon the completion of interviews, the participants from the study were able to review their transcribed responses to make additions or clarifications. This process of the participants reviewing individual responses is called member checking. Member checking occurs when the researcher provides the transcripts of the interview to the participants for comment and review. Thus, member checking increases the credibility of reviewing the data (Varpio et al., 2017).

Triangulation of Data

Triangulation can enhance the confirmation of the findings in qualitative research (Thurmond, 2001). The integration of triangulation, can increase the validity of the results (Lauri, 2011). Additionally, triangulation can help the researcher

consider inconsistent data (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). Triangulation can enhance the confirmation of the findings in qualitative research (Thurmond, 2001).

Triangulation of the data included the responses to the interview questions from the teachers, the responses to the interview questions from the principals, and the field notes taken by the researcher during each of the interviews. The data from the teacher interview questions provided details about the teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Additionally, the data from the principals' interview questions provided data on the principals' perceptions of the teachers' self-efficacy, teachers' confidence and competence to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. The teacher and principal interviews were transcribed and the process of coding was completed. During the coding process, common themes were developed. Moreover, the field notes were analyzed to support data collected in the interview sessions of both principals and teachers to note similarities and differences. The field notes served to support the interview responses and explain various meanings when compared to the transcripts. This process aimed to identify consistencies and discrepancies within the data. The field notes were used to identify consistent themes and strengthen the reliability of data.

Clarifying Bias

To become aware of any bias the researcher completed the process of reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process the researcher used to identify their values and biases that could potentially have an impact on the study. To become aware of any personal bias, the researcher wrote their own experiences and biases into a narrative

(Creswell & Miller, 2000). Accordingly, the researcher wrote throughout the research process to acknowledge and address potential biases and subjectiveness.

Data Analysis Procedures

The research questions guided this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Additionally, the research questions examined the teachers' perceptions of the amount of training they had received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. The data to answer the research questions were obtained through interview sessions with participants. The answers given during the interview sessions provide detailed information to understand the problem (Butina, 2015). The interviews were conducted and recorded through Google Meet or by phone and transcribed with Otter.ai. Once transcriptions were completed, each participant was provided with the transcription to make any additions or removals, or provide clarification. The transcripts for the principals were labeled (P1, P2, P3, etc.) and the transcripts for the teacher interviews were labeled (T1, T2, T3, etc.) accordingly.

Prior to providing participants with copies of the transcripts, the transcriptions were reviewed and bracketed by the researcher. Bracketing is the process of the researcher putting aside their own personal beliefs about the study and the data collected to provide a factual description of the participants' life experiences. The bracketing process removes the biases from the researcher (Chan et al., 2013).

Once all of the interview sessions were transcribed, the transcriptions were read in their entirety so the researcher could become accustomed to the responses

from the interviews. The researcher listened to each recording to become familiar with and understand each individual's experience. The researcher reviewed the transcripts to delineate the units of meaning. The process allowed the researcher to analyze the data and better understand the participants' experiences as the researcher looked for statements and quotes of importance (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). The researcher read through each interview for the purpose of discovering common themes and occurrences within each interview. Additionally, the researcher read through each transcription multiple times to identify reoccurring words, phrases, and themes. As the researcher read each transcript, the researcher examined the word frequency, items left out, and statements made within each interview (LeCompte, 2000). As the researcher identified reoccurring words, phrases, and statements, the units of meaning were then clustered to develop themes (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). The researcher used the process of coding to specifically break apart, sort, and label information into categories. As information was sorted and labeled, common themes became evident from the data (Ruona, 2005).

After establishing common themes in the data, the researcher then developed a summary of all of the themes from each interview to describe the experiences of each the participant. During the development of each summary, the researcher confirmed or adjusted the data if necessary (Groenewald, 2004). Each of the interviews were given to the participant to validate their experiences. After all the interviews were reviewed by participants, then all of the general and uncommon themes from the interviews were then developed into a synthesized summary (Groenewald, 2004). Completing this process resulted in an improved understanding of the

phenomenon (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Throughout the process of completing the transcriptions and organizing the data, all research and data were stored on the researcher's computer drive. Following the completion of the study, the transcriptions will be stored on a jump drive for 3 years and then destroyed.

Coding

The process of coding was used to organize information into essential categories by discerning and developing common themes in the data. The researcher used the process of coding to specifically break apart, sort, and label information into categories. As information was sorted and labeled, common themes became evident from the data (Ruona, 2005). Otter.ai included the most used words from each transcription. The researcher read through each transcription multiple times to identify reoccurring words, phrases, and themes. As the researcher read each transcript, she also examined the word frequency, items left out, and statements made within each interview (LeCompte, 2000). As the researcher identified reoccurring words, phrases, and statements, the units of meaning were then clustered to develop themes (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019).

For the principal interviews, there was a total of 32 commonly used words or phrases (Appendix F). The top five terms included Teacher/Staff, Students, Feel, Classroom, and Special Education Director/Coordinator. The most used term was Teacher/Staff used 10 times in Principal 3's interview. The same process of coding was used for the teacher interviews.

After reviewing the terms from the teacher interviews, the five terms that were most used included Students/Kids, Classroom/Class, Feel, Teachers, and

Work/Working (Appendix G). The term Students/Kids was used most by teacher 7. The term Students/Kids was used an average of 8.2 times by all teacher participants. The coded information from the principal and teacher interviews was developed into common themes.

Participant Narratives

Interviews were conducted individually except one joint interview done via Google Meet. Interviews were scheduled based upon participant availability. All participants completed the informed consent (Appendix C) prior to their interview. Recording of the interviews was done after participants gave consent. The interviews were then uploaded and transcribed with Otter.ai. Once transcriptions were completed, each participant was provided with their transcription to make any additions, removals, or provide clarification to increase credibility of data. The following is a summary of each interview.

Principal 1

Principal 1 (P1) had 13 years in public education. Principal 1 had 6 years of experience as a high school principal and was in year 3 of their current position. According to P1, “I don’t feel super knowledgeable about special education.” In regards to teacher confidence to teach students with disabilities in the inclusive setting, P1 shared, “The more veteran the teacher is, the more comfortable they feel. I don’t think that students come out of college feeling very prepared for that.” Principal 1 stated, “I think teacher self-efficacy is huge to influence learning in general.” Principal 1’s district discussed self-efficacy a lot, but did not think everyone understood what it meant. Principal 1 could not say the professional development

teachers had received in the district had increased their confidence and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. Furthermore, P1 could not describe research-based strategies teachers used in the classroom to teach students with disabilities. The participant felt the teachers were more comfortable with adapting assessments for students with disabilities. Lastly, when asked about behavior management strategies teachers were using, the participant could not think of students with behavioral issues.

Principal 2

Principal 2 (P2) had 19 years in public education. Principal 2 had been a high school principal within the same district for 19 years. The participant worked with the special education director and cooperative learning center for students with disabilities. When describing teacher confidence to work with students with disabilities, P2 shared “teachers are plenty confident.” Additionally, P2 felt teacher self-efficacy has a positive influence on student learning in the classroom. The district did not specifically have professional development in regards to teacher self-efficacy. In regards to professional development to increase teacher confidence and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, P2 believed, “They do a good job and students are being successful.” Moreover, professional development had improved student behavior and was keeping students with their peers. When asked about researched-based strategies teachers used in the classroom to teach students with disabilities, the participant stated, “The special education director provides the teachers with information.” In regards to teachers’ competence to adapt assessments for students with disabilities, the participants updated the teachers were, “fully

confident.” Finally, when describing specific behavior management strategies teachers were using to support students with disabilities, P2 shared teachers were given strategies and accommodations ahead of time.

Principal 3

Principal 3 (P3) had 27 years of experience in education, 26 in public education. Principal 3 had been a K to 12th grade principal for 5 years in the current district. Additionally, P3 also served as special education director for the district. The participant described teachers as “fairly competent” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. In regards to how teacher self-efficacy influences student learning,

So I really feel like when a teacher is more confident, and comfortable in what they’re teaching, then students feel more related in the classroom and can tend to understand the topics a little better, because of the teachers teaching in a way that they feel like they know what the teacher is talking about.

The participant shared professional development was determined by needs of teachers, which increased their confidence. Additionally, the district utilized the regional professional development center for professional development. Principal 3 shared that the research-based strategies teachers used in the classroom to teach all students includes strategic learning models and Kagan strategies. In regards to adapting assessments, P3 felt teachers “struggle with the knowledge that all teachers can modify and give accommodations, no matter if a student has an IEP or not.”

Lastly, when describing specific behavior management strategies teachers were using to support students with disabilities, the district used the Great 8 and had started

training to become a school-wide positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) school.

Principal 4

Principal 4 had 38 years in public education. The participant had been a high school principal for 24 years, 4 years in the current district. Principal 4 shared attending a lot of IEP meetings and managing teachers. When asked about the confidence level of teachers, P4 responded, “I don’t think we’re doing as well as we can.” In regards to how teacher self-efficacy influences student learning in the classroom, the participant shared, “I think they do a nice job.” Yet, P4 had some issues with staff not being certified. Furthermore, for professional development in self-efficacy, the participant shared, “It’s not a lot.” The special education coordinator worked with the staff and this increased their confidence and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. Moreover, the participant could not list any specific research-based strategies or behavior management strategies the teachers were using in the classroom to teach students with disabilities. Finally, the participant shared, “They do adapt assessments.”

Teacher 1

Teacher 1 (T1) had been in public education and had been a teacher for 18 years. The participant was currently a high school math teacher and had been in the current position for 14 years. When T1 described experiences working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, and explained how several years ago felt very untrained, but had to adjust by communicating with parents and other teachers. They felt “very confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.

Additionally, T1 felt that students with disabilities are given the opportunity to learn and have the same treatment. In regards to professional development to teach students with disabilities, T1 “was trained through my master’s degree for mathematics.” Moreover, for professional development regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities, T1 had more classes with special education included through additional degrees. In the district, “Our special education department will give professional development days for our needs in our areas of what we need to do.” To stay current with evidence-based practices, T1 read books, watched documentaries, and would search out what was needed. Additionally, research-based strategies used included modified lessons, chunking assignments into sections, and making videos for visual learners. To measure how effective these strategies were T1 used observation and assessments. Teacher 1 was “very confident” in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. Additionally, T1 described modifying tests with the number of questions, types of questions, and breaking down questions. Teacher 1 was “highly confident” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. Specific behavior management strategies included seat placement, teacher proximity, making eye contact, and holding students accountable. Finally, T1 shared resources or support that would be helpful to increase self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom would be more information about specific disabilities.

Teacher 2

Teacher 2 (T2) had experience as a substitute teacher and was in their first year of public education as a teacher. This participant was teaching high school

English and did not have a teaching certificate. Additionally, T2 had experience working with students with disabilities at a before- and after-school program and subbing at a cooperative learning center for students with disabilities. In regards to describing confidence to teach students with disabilities, T2 expressed, “I am a person that could always learn more.” Teacher 2 was always looking for other resources and the special education teacher was very helpful. Furthermore, T2 described teacher self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom by “getting students more involved” and “making a safe space.” In regards to professional development, T2 was taking courses to obtain teacher certification and had not had any professional development to teach students with disabilities. Also, T2 was taking courses to stay current with evidence-based practices. For research-based strategies used in the classroom to positively influence students with disabilities, T2 used observations of the student and felt it was very effective. Teacher 2 could not speak to confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. For assessments, T2 provided extra time for students. Teacher 2 would not be able to effectively assess students with disabilities. When speaking about specific behavior management strategies used in the classroom to handle challenging behaviors, T2 kept students engaged in the classroom. Lastly, T2 would have liked “a class or course” to increase self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom.

Teacher 3

Teacher 3 (T3) had 16 years of experience in public education as a teacher. Teacher 3 taught high school ELA and had been in the current position for 9 years.

Teacher 3 had experience teaching a class within a class with a special education teacher. Additionally, T3 felt “confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom and felt self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom when students are more comfortable and confident. Teacher 3 took a college course and the district hosted professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. In regards to professional development to develop lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities, the district hosted professional development that gave examples of how to use guided notes, accommodations, and modifications. Furthermore, to stay current with evidence-based strategies, T3 had “done book studies.” For researched-based strategies, T3 used visual practice with modeling and independent practice, cooperative learning, guided notes, and strategies in reading. To measure effectiveness, T3 used learning goals, formative, and summative assessments. Moreover, T3 was “pretty confident” in using researched-based strategies with students with disabilities. For assessment strategies, T3 gave students choices in how they present their assessments and show learning. Teacher 3 was pretty confident in effectively assessing students with disabilities. In regards to specific behavior management strategies, T3 stated, “In the beginning, building relationships with students, helps tremendously.” Lastly, T3 shared it would be helpful to know what resources are available and be able to collaborate with the special education teacher.

Teacher 4

Teacher 4 had 27 years of experience in public education. Teacher 4 was currently a high school math teacher and had been in that role for 27 years. Teacher 4 had worked with students with disabilities at an array of different levels. When describing confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, T4 explained “It depends on the kid and the situation.” Moreover, T4 felt self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom and “wants the best for them.” Teacher 4 had not had a lot of professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities or develop lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities. Furthermore, T4 had learned with experience and used the special education teacher as a resource. To stay current with evidence-based practices, T4 was always researching and trying to learn better ways to teach students. The district focused on building thinking classrooms. Research-based strategies used included modeling and peer tutoring. To measure effectiveness, T4 was, “always looking for constant feedback to see how things are going.” When describing confidence to use researched-based strategies, T4 expressed confidence pretty well and had experience. For assessment strategies, T4 modified tests, had more performance-based assessments and did okay to confidently assess students with disabilities effectively. For specific behavior management strategies, T4 paired students with peers, used seating options, and held one-on-one student conferences. Finally, for resources and support, T4 expressed, “Any professional development and resources would be good.”

Teacher 5

Teacher 5 (T5) has 8 years of experience in public education as a teacher. Teacher 5 had been a high school English teacher for 5 years and had previous experience as an elementary special education teacher. Additionally, T5 had experience co-teaching and working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Teacher 5 felt “very confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. When describing how self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom, T5 explained, “I think by making sure that their needs are met by making sure that we are sticking to the IEP and making sure they are getting their services within the classroom.” In regards to professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, the teacher expressed, “That is something again, that I don’t think that we’ve really gotten a ton of here because I feel like there’s such a separateness.” Additionally, T5 had not had professional development regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities. To stay current with evidence-based practices, the special education teacher shared resources. Teacher 5 could not describe research-based strategies, but used test scores to measure effectiveness of strategies and felt confident in their use. For assessment strategies, T5 modified tests for students and felt confident to effectively assess students with disabilities. Furthermore, specific behavior management strategies used included a recovery room, offering breaks, and setting firm boundaries. Lastly, when asked what resources or support would be helpful to increase self-efficacy to teach students with

disabilities in an inclusive classroom, T5 was “glad that I am a certified special education teacher.”

Teacher 6

Teacher 6 (T6) had 3 years of experience in public education. Teacher 6 was a high school math teacher and had been in the role for 3 years. Teacher 6 had limited experience working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.

Additionally, T6 was “fairly confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Teacher 6 felt self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom. Professional development that T6 had received to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities included

Nonviolent Crisis Prevention (CPI) which includes using calm language and de-escalation techniques. To develop lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities, T6 looked at IEP summaries and would “give them extra feedback and support.” To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T6 had professional development in building thinking classrooms. Furthermore, T6 could not describe specific research-based strategies, but collaborated with the special education teacher. To measure effectiveness, T6 used building-thinking classrooms and end-of-course exam scores and felt confident using research-based strategies with students with disabilities.

Assessment strategies used include varying levels of depth of knowledge, modifying tests, and allowing them to go to the special education classroom to take tests.

Teacher 6 stated, “I don’t” feel confident in effectively assessing students with disabilities. Furthermore, specific behavior management strategies used included CPI

and offering breaks. Lastly, for resources and support to increase self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, T6 expressed having students in classrooms more, hiring more people, and more money to support students.

Teacher 7

Teacher 7 (T7) was in her first year of teaching in public education as a seventh to 12th- grade English teacher. Teacher 7 had a degree in agriculture education and was teaching ELA as a critical need teacher. Additionally, T7 described her confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom as “pretty low.” When discussing how teacher self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom, T7 discussed how teaching is not enjoyable, unless it is fun and she tried to find common ground with students. In regards to professional development, T7 had not had any to work with students with disabilities. Teacher 7 had received ELA professional development through the RPDC. To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T7 met with a data team to record student data and measure progress. Research-based strategies used included seating charts, extra practice, preferential seating, building relationships, and positive praise. To measure effectiveness of these strategies, T7 used daily preparedness points for students and communicated with special education teachers. When asked to describe confidence in using researched-based strategies with students with disabilities, T7 expressed, “Not the highest. Not sure what they are.” Furthermore, T7 participated on the professional development team and hoped this helped to improve confidence. To describe assessment strategies,

T7 modified tests, allowed oral reading, had students go to the special education classroom to take tests, color coding, and allowed asking parents what worked best. Teacher 7 was “more confident” in effectively assessing students with disabilities, formally and informally. Moreover, for specific behavior management strategies, T7 expressed understanding students helped to know their triggers, positive behavior support, reward systems, seating chart, keeping some students separated, and a spare desk near the teacher. Lastly, for support and resources, T7 expressed the need for CPI resources for physical altercations, being aware of duties of teachers for legal actions, and a need for professional development.

Teacher 8

Teacher 8 (T8) had 19 years of experience in public education. Teacher 8 had been in the current position teaching high school math for 11 years. Additionally, T8 had experience as a special education director, high school principal, and superintendent. Teacher 8 had been in administration and returned to the classroom. Furthermore, T8 had experience working with paraprofessionals and mainstreamed students. Teacher 8 felt “very confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. In regards to self-efficacy positively influencing student learning in the classroom, T8 modeled for students and demonstrated a positive work ethic. For professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, T8 had received a grant to attend training on a local university campus to teach math. Through this professional development, T8 had received training on how to develop lessons and activities. Specialists then came to the classroom to observe. To stay current with evidence-based strategies for student

learning and teaching students with disabilities, T8 expressed, “It is hard for veteran teachers to stay current,” but was still pushing for professional development. For researched-based strategies used in the classroom, T8 used Marzano, Jerry Valentine, and Harry Wong. To measure effectiveness of these strategies, T8 assessed students differently and felt confident in assessing students with disabilities. For assessment strategies, T8 did not use as many written tests. In addition, T8 made assessments activity based or verbal assessments, turning assessments into a game. Teacher 8 did not feel as confident in effectively assessing students with disabilities because it changes so much. For behavior management, T8 used firm expectations, building relationships, and following through with expectations. Lastly, in regards to resources and support, T8 stated, “I am a firm believer in being able to observe and have people observe me. I am a huge feedback person.”

Teacher 9

Teacher 9 (T9) had 10 years of experience in public education and as a teacher. Teacher 9 had been in the current position of an ELA teacher for one year. Teacher 9 had experience working with special education teachers, modifications for students, and co-teaching experience. Additionally, T9 described confidence to teach students with disabilities as “pretty confident overall.” Teacher 9 believed teacher self-efficacy has an impact after the first quarter. In regards to professional development, T9 had attended a Write to Learn conference and co-teaching professional development via Zoom. This professional development provided guidance in developing lessons and reaching low reading and writing expectations. To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching

students with disabilities, T9 read lots of books, attended the Write to Learn conference, and reviewed data. Furthermore, research-based strategies used in the classroom included preferential seating, Kagan, note-taking assistance, magic school, celebrations, extended time, flexible seating, incentives, scaffolding reading, setting goals, and having regular conferences. To measure the effectiveness of these strategies, T9 conferenced with students, set goals, and evaluated data. In regard to confidence to use researched-based strategies, T9 explained, “I am confident in trying anything.” Assessment strategies used included weekly quizzes, alternative setting, differentiating reading levels, and shortening essays. Teacher 9 felt “pretty confident” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. Specific behavior management strategies used included conference, conversations, goal setting, working with parents, seating, and incentives. Lastly, for resources and support, T9, wanted to be able to co-teach multiple hours and have common plan time.

Teacher 10

Teacher 10 had 4 years of experience in public education. Teacher 10 had been in the current role of a high school math teacher for 4 years. Teacher 10 had several students with disabilities and felt “pretty confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Additionally, T10 felt that if the teacher is confident, the students are more comfortable. Teacher 10 had not had any professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. The teacher had not received any professional development regarding developing lessons that positively influenced the learning of students with disabilities. Furthermore, T10 explained to stay current with evidence-

based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T10 reviewed each student's data monthly. In addition, research-based strategies used in the classroom to positively influence students with disabilities included Kagan strategies. To measure how effective these strategies are, T10 looked at data, specifically scoring before and after. To describe confidence in using researched-based strategies with students with disabilities, T10 explained, "with the right training, pretty confident." For assessment strategies, T10 modified homework, developed separate assignments, and described confidence to effectively assess students as "needs work." Teacher 10 had not had a lot of challenging behaviors. Finally, in regards to resources and support, T10 would have like professional development monthly, specifically for students with disabilities.

Teacher 11

Teacher 11 (T11) had 5 years of experience in public education and as a teacher. Teacher 11 had been in the current position of high school ELA for one year. Additionally, T11 had a background in special education and working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Teacher 11 was "pretty confident" to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom and felt that self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom. Teacher 11 had not received very much professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. Furthermore, T11 expressed, "The thing that I found most beneficial is just watching others." Teacher 11 had not had a lot of professional development regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities. To stay current with evidence-

based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T11 liked researching, reading, and collaborating with other teachers. Researched-based strategies used in the classroom included giving students choice on what assignment or project to complete and choice of topics. To measure effectiveness of these strategies, T11 talked with students, gave formal tests and quizzes, and reviewed student progress. Moreover, confidence in using researched-based strategies varied depending on the strategy. Assessment strategies included giving traditional tests by eliminating options, matching with partial lists, and shortening essays. Teacher 11 is, “pretty confident,” to effectively assess students with disabilities. For specific behavior management strategies, T11 would talk with students and provide them time. Lastly, in regards to resources and support, T11 expressed, “Here in the district, we have a lot of support.”

Teacher 12

Teacher 12 had 5 years of experience in public education and as a teacher. Teacher 12 had been in the current position of high school math teacher for 2 years. Teacher 12 had students with autism in inclusive classrooms. Additionally, T12 described confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive class as “ongoing development” and “not as strong.” In regards to self-efficacy positively influencing student learning in the classroom, T12 described encouraging student independence. For professional development, T12 provided information and collaborated with the special education teacher and director. To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T12 googled strategies. Research-based strategies used include repetition, lots of

practice, differentiation, and cooperative learning. To measure effectiveness of these strategies, T12 used homework. Teacher 12 described confidence as “Not the highest, it is there” in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. For assessment strategies, T12 modified tests, omitted word problems, and looked at specific skills being tested. Teacher 12 had “high confidence” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. For specific behavior management strategies, T12 was stern and held his ground. Finally, for resources and support, T12 liked videos, resource sheets, visuals, and examples of what to do in class.

Teacher 13

Teacher 13 had 19 years of experience in public education and as a math teacher. Teacher 13 had been in the current position for one year. Teacher 13 expressed that it could sometimes be challenging when a student has a disability in math and has experience with class within a class with special education teachers and paraprofessionals. Additionally, T13 described confidence as “confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Teacher 13 felt self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom by building relationships and trust to give students the confidence needed. Furthermore, T13 had not had any specific professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, but had professional development on what is best for all students and collaborated with colleagues. In regards to professional development to develop lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities, throughout the years, T13 had training in differentiated instruction to reach each level. Teacher 13 described being “a life-long learner” to

stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities. Research-based strategies included differentiating and smaller class sizes. To measure how effective these strategies were, T13 used formative assessments, summative assessments, check-ins, and building connections. Teacher 13 was “pretty confident” in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. For assessment strategies, T13 used modified tests, sometimes a conversation, or listening to conversations with peers. Teacher 13 described confidence as “good” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. Specific behavior management strategies used included behavior intervention support team (BIST), conversations, developing relationships, and using a buddy/safe room. Finally, resources and support that would be helpful included professional development opportunities, time to collaborate, observe other teachers, connecting with other teachers with similar-sized schools, and support from administration for substitutes.

Teacher 14

Teacher 14 (T14) had been in public education for 8 years and had 9 years of experience as a teacher. Teacher 14 had been in the current role of high school math teacher for 8 years. Teacher 14 did not have a lot of experience teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Additionally, T14 felt “confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. When expressing how T14 felt their self-efficacy positively influenced student learning in the classroom, T14 felt that students use them as a crutch because students know the teacher knows what to do. In regards to professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and

effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, T14 had attended professional development at a local university on how to “effectively teach math” and collaborated with vertical team members. Teacher 14 described the professional development at the local university as professional development to develop lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities. Moreover, T14 did not seek assistance to stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities due to having only a few students with disabilities. Additionally, T14 used the same strategies and measured effectiveness the same for all students. Teacher 14 did not have confidence in using research-based strategies. For assessment strategies, the teacher modified assessments and was “very confident” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. For specific behavior management strategies, T14 provided a verbal warning and used assigned seats. Teacher 14 did not have major behavior issues. Lastly, when asked what resources or support was needed, teacher 14 stated that special education teachers provide help.

Teacher 15

Teacher 15 (T15) had 12 years of experience in public education and 12 years of experience as a teacher. Teacher 15 had been in the current position as an ELA teacher for 8 years. Teacher 15 had good experiences working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and collaborated with special education staff. Teacher 15 described confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting as being able to handle students with disabilities fairly easily, like the regular education students. Teacher 15 felt that students reading and writing at high volumes and providing feedback continues to build student confidence. In

regards to professional development that T15 had received to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, the best professional development had been the courses to get a master's degree in English. The district had provided more training about procedures and accommodations, but not professional development. To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teacher students with disabilities, T15 read quarterly publications and worked with the special education teacher. For research-based strategies to positively influence students with disabilities, T15 used a feedback loop and the students could resubmit any assignment. To measure the effectiveness of these strategies, the teacher stated it varied and looked at progress over the semester. When describing confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities, T15 was "pretty confident." For assessments, T15 used projects or capstone assignment, gave options, and differentiated. To describe confidence to effectively assess students with disabilities, T15 was, "pretty confident." For specific behavior management strategies, T15 described basketball students; "I call them basketball students, because they're like a basketball that you have to dribble whenever you are teaching." In regards to resources and support, T15 expressed doing well with current support.

Teacher 16

Teacher 16 (T16) had 14 years of experience in public education. Teacher 16 had been in the current teaching position as a high school math teacher for 7 years. Experience working with students with disabilities had ranged from students who needed extra help to students with 504 plans. Teacher 16 had "over years gained

confidence.” Teacher 16 felt self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom by students receiving feedback and being able to stay in the classroom to learn more. Additionally, T16 had not received any professional development to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. The professional development received regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities included T16’s vast amount of experience. To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T16 talked with special education teachers to understand students. Additionally, T16 used lots of research-based strategies. To measure effectiveness of these strategies, T16 looked at student growth, grades, and standards. When talking about confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities, T16 expressed, “Not every strategy works for each individuals,” and expressed the need to adapt and evaluate strategies. For assessment strategies, T16 followed modifications and had “high confidence” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. The specific behavior management strategies used for all students included correcting behavior and using safe seats/buddy seats. Lastly, in regards to resource and support, T16 expressed special education teachers using a team approach with case manager and to see what is working for students.

Teacher 17

Teacher 17 (T17) had 27 years of experience teaching in public education. Teacher 17 had been in the current position as a high school ELA teacher for 15 years. Teacher 17 had experience working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting through class within a class experience with a special education

teacher and having a paraprofessional in most English classes. Additionally, to describe confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, T17 was “pretty confident.” In regards to teacher self-efficacy, T17 explained, “the more confident I feel, the more confident the kids are.” For professional development to build confident, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, T17 had not had a lot. Teacher 17 had attended Missouri teacher academy and was a STAR teacher. For professional development regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities, T17 had very little from the school, but had attended outside workshops. Furthermore, to stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T17 used resources from the regional professional development center and had recently read *The Artisan Teacher* (Rutherford, 2014). When asked about research-based strategies used in the classroom to positively influence students with disabilities, T17 used vocabulary strategies and elements from the science of reading. To measure effectiveness of these strategies, T17 reviewed student grades, and district and state assessment scores. Moreover, to describe confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities, T17 was “very confident.” For assessment strategies, T17 modified tests and differentiated the reading. Teacher 17 felt “pretty confident” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. For specific behavior management strategies to handle challenging behaviors, T17 did not have an overall system, but built positive relationships with students. Lastly, for support and resources, T17 would have liked professional development in classrooms

to know what strategies work and be able to get professional development from the RPDC.

Teacher 18

Teacher 18 had 10 years of experience in public education and 13 years of experience as a teacher. Teacher 18 had been in the current role of high school ELA teacher for 10 years. For experiences working with students with disabilities, T18 had experience working with students on IEPs and 504 plans. In regards to confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, T18 described “My confidence comes from, what I would say, communication is the most important skill these kids can come up with.” Teacher 18 felt teacher self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom by analyzing what he is doing as a teacher. For professional development received to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities, T18 had attended professional development with counseling and diversifying multiple intelligences. Recent training focused on “diversifying education for multiple intelligences to the idea that you can appeal to multiple styles of learning with the same lesson with minor adjustments per student based on what they need.” Additionally, T18 had received professional development in different strategies for different disabilities. To stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities, T18 stated “I spent a significant amount of time reading pedagogical manuals and nonfiction books and articles on all kinds of varieties of things.” Furthermore, research-based practices used in the classroom included Kagan cooperative learning and Fred Jones. To measure the effectiveness of these strategies, T18 used direct

feedback from students and questions students. Teacher 18 was “fairly confident” in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. For assessment strategies, T18 had students use answers to support their writing in papers. Teacher 18 was “fairly confident” in effectively assessing students with disabilities. For specific behavior management strategies to handle challenging behaviors, T18 stated it was not often a concern. Teacher 18 handled behavior simply or directly. The district used the BIST process. Lastly, for resources or support, T18 would like more communication with special education teacher, more funding, and more clear, consistent communication.

Themes

Once the interviews were transcribed, the transcriptions were read in their entirety so the researcher could become accustomed to the responses from the interviews. The researcher reviewed the transcripts to delineate the units of meaning. This process allowed the researcher to analyze the data and helped the researcher better understand the participants' experiences as the researcher looked for statements and quotes of importance (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). The researcher read through each interview for the purpose of discovering common themes and occurrences within each interview. Additionally, the researcher read through each transcription multiple times to identify reoccurring words, phrases, and themes. As the researcher read each transcript, the researcher examined the frequency, items left out, and statements made within each interview (LeCompte, 2000). As the researcher identified reoccurring words, phrases, and statements, the units of meaning were then clustered to develop themes (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk,

2019). Specifically, the process of coding was used to organize information into essential categories by discerning and developing common themes in the data. The researcher used the process of coding to specifically break apart, sort, and label information into categories. As information was sorted and labeled, common themes became evident from the data (Ruona, 2005). After establishing common themes in the data, the researcher then developed a summary of all of the themes from each interview to describe the experiences of each of the participants.

Triangulation of the data included the responses to the interview questions from the teachers, the responses to the interview questions from the principals, and the field notes taken by the researcher during each of the interviews. The data from the teacher interview questions provided information about the teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. Additionally, the data from the principals' interview questions provided insight on the principals' perceptions of the teachers' self-efficacy, and teachers' confidence and competence to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. The teacher and principal interviews were transcribed and the process of coding was completed. During the coding process, common themes were developed. Moreover, the field notes were analyzed to support data collected in the interview sessions of both principals and teachers to note similarities and differences. The field notes served to support the interview responses and explain various meanings when compared to the transcripts.

Principal Interview Themes

During the coding process, the following themes developed: teacher experience, special education leadership, collaborating with special education teachers, and professional development. As found in the literature review, teachers with more experience had higher levels of self-efficacy (An et al., 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Layden et al. (2022) discussed how special education administrators are responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022). Moreover, one of the barriers for successful inclusion of students with disabilities included the lack of common plan time between regular education and special education teachers (Garrett, 2017). Furthermore, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022).

Teacher Experience. When asked to describe how confident the principals felt teachers were to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom a common theme arose based on teacher experience. Most principals discussed teacher experience when asked about the confidence of teachers. Principal 1 shared, "The more veteran the teacher is, the more comfortable they feel. I don't think that students come out of college feeling very prepared for that." Principal 3 described teachers as "fairly competent" to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom and shared that the district recently hired "more experienced teachers, which experienced teachers feel more comfortable in teaching." Principal 4 stated, "I don't think we're

doing as well as we can.” Principal 4 shared the school did a nice job, yet had some issues with staff not being certified.

As confirmed in the literature review, teachers with more experience had higher levels of self-efficacy (An et al., 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Similar to self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy is built upon having continual experiences to practice teaching. Subsequently, the more opportunities a teacher can have to teach will only improve their performance (Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Also found in the literature review, many teachers continuously feel unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students with exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Many educators believe undergraduate programs do not provide sufficient training to preservice teachers regarding inclusion practices (Peculea, 2019). This information coincides with the theme found in the principal interviews.

Special Education Leadership. In all of the principal interviews, each principal discussed how teachers receive support from the special education director or coordinator. The phrase “special education director” or “coordinator” was used by each participant. Principal 1 discussed that the special education director came to do observations of the special education teachers in the building. Principal 2 explained that the special education teacher went and sat with the teachers to provide support. Principal 3 was also the special education director for the district and support staff. Principal 4 stated, “We have a special education coordinator who works with staff.”

Special education leadership within each district provided support and professional development to staff to foster growth to teachers in the area of special education. Layden et al. (2022) discussed how special education administrators are

responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022).

Teacher Interview Themes

Collaborating with Special Education Teachers. Throughout the interviews, more than half of the teacher participants discussed collaborating with special education teachers. The phrase used by most participants included “work” or “working” with special education staff. Regular education teachers engaged in collaborative efforts with special education counterparts, participating in co-teaching, resource sharing, and receiving valuable assistance from special education teachers. Three of the teacher participants had a class that was co-taught or considered class within a class with a special education teacher (T3, T5, T17). Additionally, teacher participants discussed special education staff providing professional development, resources, or collaboration with special education staff (T1, T2, T4, T5, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16).

In the literature review, one of the barriers for successful inclusion of students with disabilities included the lack of common plan time between regular education and special education teachers (Garrett, 2017). More than half of the participants discussed using the special education teacher as a resource (T2, T4, T5, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16). Special education teachers are a valuable resource to provide insight to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Professional Development. When asking teacher participants what resources and support are needed to increase self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, half of the teacher participants said professional development and resources (T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, T10, T12, T13, T17). In the teacher interviews, teachers were asked about professional development that had been received to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. The teachers were asked to describe the professional development received regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities. Half of the teacher participants received professional development in regards to these areas in their district (T1, T3, T6, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18). Only four of the teacher participants had received training through the local RPDC or outside of the district (T7, T8, T9, T17). Additionally, five of the participants discussed that the college courses taken for master's programs assisted in regards to those areas (T1, T2, T3, T14, T15).

As found in the literature review, teachers who are trained well are important in providing a quality education for students (Jagannath K. Dange, 2020). As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022). Thus, when teachers are not confident in their abilities to implement evidence-based practices, teachers are less likely to apply such practices in their classrooms with students (Layden et al., 2022).

Research Questions

The research questions guided this qualitative study to review the problem regular education teachers have regarding various experiences in training in

undergraduate programs and within their district, with inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. Accordingly, the research questions guided this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Furthermore, the research questions examined the teachers' perceptions of the amount of training teachers have received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.

When categorizing themes and key phrases, the research categorized the results in the following way: 12 or more as "*most*," 6-10 as "*many*," and fewer than five as "*some*." The first research question was about the perceptions of self-efficacy and ability to positively impact student learning among Missouri public high school teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Many teachers felt "very confident," "confident," or "pretty confident" to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom (T1, T3, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10, T11, T13, T14, T16, T17). Some teachers felt "fairly confident" (T6, T15) and some felt pretty low or not as strong (T7, T12). Teacher 7 described confidence as "pretty low." Some felt it "depends on the student and the situation" (T4), can "always learn more" (T2), and "meets students where they are" (T18).

The second question was about perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received among Missouri public high school teachers regarding research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management to support students with disabilities to positively influence student learning. Most teachers stated throughout their interview that they received professional development in their district (T1, T3, T6,

T12, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18). Teacher 1 described, “Our special education department will give professional development days for our needs in our areas of what we need to do.” Teacher 18 had attended professional development with counseling and diversifying multiple intelligences. Recent training had focused on “diversifying education for multiple intelligences to the idea that you can appeal to multiple styles of learning with the same lesson with minor adjustments per student based on what they need.” Some teachers had received training through the RPDC or outside of the district (T7, T8, T9, T17). Some had continued their education and received a master’s degree (T1, T2, T3, T14, T15). Teacher 14 had attended professional development at a local university on how to “effectively teach math.” On the other hand, Teacher 5 stated, “That is something again, that I don’t think that we’ve really gotten a ton of here because I feel like there’s such a separateness.”

The first subquestion was about perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities with research-based practices among Missouri public high school teachers. Many teachers feel confident in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10, T13, T15, T17). Teacher 1 was “very confident” and Teacher 3 was “pretty confident.” Some teachers felt fairly confident in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities (T12, T18). Some teachers had no confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities (T2, T7, T14). Teacher 7 expressed, “Not the highest. Not sure what they are.” Some teachers felt confidence; “varies depending on strategy” (T11) and “not every strategy works for each individual” (T16).

The second subquestion regarded perceptions of self-efficacy using assessments with students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers. Most teachers felt confident in effectively assessing students with disabilities (T1, T3, T5, T7, T9, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17). Teacher 14 was “very confident.” Some teachers felt okay or “needed work” (T10) to effectively assess students with disabilities (T4, T8, T18). Teacher 6 stated, “I don’t” feel confident or not effective (T2).

The third subquestion was about perceptions of self-efficacy regarding behavior management of students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers. Most teachers had strategies used to address challenging behaviors in the classroom. Teacher 3 stated, “I state very fresh in the beginning, building relationships with students, that helps tremendously.” Teacher 15 described basketball students; “I call them basketball students, because they’re like a basketball that you have to dribble whenever you are teaching.” Some teachers had not had a lot of challenging behaviors (T10) and felt behaviors were not a concern (T18).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore rural public high school teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. The purpose of this study was to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools in Missouri. Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy

tend to make the effort to adapt and differentiate so all students can be taught successfully (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

The research questions were used to guide this study to examine public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and examine the teachers' perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. This study aimed to identify areas undergraduate programs and school districts can improve in professional development efforts to support inclusive practices in the general education setting and increase teacher self-efficacy into teaching students with disabilities. Thus, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy, so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusion practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

The following themes developed to increase teacher self-efficacy: teacher experience, special education leadership, collaborating with special education teachers, and professional development. As found in the literature review, teachers with more experience have higher levels of self-efficacy (An et al., 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Layden et al. (2022) discussed how special education administrators are responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill. Moreover, one of the barriers for successful inclusion of students with disabilities included the lack of common plan time between regular education and special

education teachers (Garrett, 2017). Furthermore, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022).

Chapter Five will provide a summary of the overall study to examine public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities. Additionally, Chapter Five will include a summary of the findings and conclusion of the study. Lastly, recommendations for future research and practices will be included.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

A teacher's positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy can have an impact on the classroom and promote academic success within their schools (Bandura, 1993; Hassan, 2019; Love et al., 2020). Chapter Four discussed the findings of this qualitative, phenomenological study to explore rural public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. The purpose of this study was to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools in Missouri. The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the confidence a person can successfully carry through with a required behavior to yield the desired result (Bandura, 1993). Teacher self-efficacy suggests a teacher's assumption he or she can perform certain activities to positively influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017; Hassan, 2019).

The problem within this study encompassed a need for professional development to improve teacher understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities (Shaukat et al., 2019). Regular education teachers do not feel supported in their training and teaching practices for inclusive practices for students with disabilities (Rodden et al., 2019). Accordingly, when teachers have low self-efficacy, the inclusion of students can be impacted. Many teacher programs are not preparing teachers for effective inclusion and should be providing teachers training to

address the lack of preparation in this area (Rodden et al., 2019). To enhance teacher self-efficacy, it is essential to implement teacher training, professional development opportunities, and school-wide programs. There is a need for teacher training, professional development, and school-wide programs to develop teacher self-efficacy (Woodcock & Faith, 2021). Thus, future research is needed to review how teacher experience and professional development may impact a teacher's view of inclusive education and self-efficacy (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

The research questions were used to guide this study to examine public high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and examine the teachers' perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. This study aimed to identify areas undergraduate programs and school districts can improve in professional development efforts to support inclusive practices in the general education setting and increase teacher self-efficacy into teaching students with disabilities. Thus, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy, so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusion practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

Chapter Five will present an overview of the inquiry into the perceptions of self-efficacy among public high school teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities. Furthermore, it will review the study's findings and conclusions. Finally, it will offer recommendations for future research directions and instructional practices.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are factors within the study not controlled by the researcher. The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. The individuals interviewed may have show bias through their responses.
2. Individuals within the study attended a variety of undergraduate programs.
3. Individuals within the study had received different types of professional development.
4. Each school district within the study provided different types of professional development.
5. The size of the class each individual taught varied.
6. Different types of inclusion practices were implemented at each school.

Delimitations are factors controlled by the researcher. Delimitations of this study were as follows:

1. Only rural public high schools in Missouri were included in this study.
2. Participants interviewed only included high school principals, and ELA and mathematics general education teachers.
3. The study exclusively utilized interview questions.
4. Instructional practices for this study focused on research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.
5. The theoretical framework for this study focused on self-efficacy.

Summary of Methods

For this study, interview questions were developed from common phrases and themes gathered from the literature review of this study. The participants of this study

included four high school principals and 18 regular education high school teachers from a rural school, one ELA, and one mathematics teacher with at least one student with a disability in their classroom. The principals were interviewed independently via Google Meet and the interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai. The teachers were interviewed together via Google Meet and the interviews were transcribed with Otter.ai. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Otter.ai to prevent interviewer bias.

At least two teachers from each of the nine regional professional development regions of the state were chosen. This ensured a wide range of sampling from rural districts across the state. Also, choosing one teacher from ELA and one from mathematics ensured different viewpoints from different content areas. Additionally, limitations included the different undergraduate programs the teachers and principals attended and varying professional development experiences.

Summary of Findings

Once the interviews were transcribed, the transcriptions were read in their entirety so the researcher could become accustomed to the responses from the interviews. The researcher reviewed the transcripts to delineate the units of meaning. This process allowed the researcher to analyze the data and help the researcher better understand the participants' experiences as the researcher looked for statements and quotes of importance (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). The researcher read through each interview for the purpose of discovering common themes and occurrences within each interview. Additionally, the researcher read through each transcription multiple times to identify reoccurring words, phrases, and

themes. As the researcher read each transcript, the researcher examined the frequency, items left out, and statements made within each interview (LeCompte, 2000). As the researcher identified reoccurring words, phrases, and statements, the units of meaning were then clustered to develop themes (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2019). Specifically, the process of coding was used to organize information into essential categories by discerning and developing common themes in the data. The researcher used the process of coding to specifically break apart, sort, and label information into categories. As information was sorted and labeled, common themes became evident from the data (Ruona, 2005). After establishing common themes in the data, the researcher then developed a summary of all of the themes from each interview to describe the experiences of each the participants.

After reviewing the principal interviews, the first theme developed was teacher experience. When asked to describe how confident the principals felt teachers were to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, a common theme arose based on teacher experience. The more experience the teacher had, the more confident the teachers in teaching students with disabilities. Participants shared veteran teachers and teachers with experience are more comfortable teaching. One participant spoke of concerns with staff not being certified.

The second theme developed from the principals included special education leadership. In all of the principal interviews, each principal discussed how teachers receive support from the special education director or coordinator. Multiple participants discussed special education directors and/or coordinators supporting teachers and working with staff.

While reviewing the teacher interviews, a theme developed on collaborating with special education teachers. Throughout the interviews, more than half of the teacher participants discussed collaborating with special education teachers. Teacher participants discussed engaging in collaborative effects with special education teachers through professional development, co-teaching, resource sharing, and receiving valuable assistance from special education teachers.

The second theme that developed from the teacher interviews was professional development. In the interviews teacher participants shared a need for professional development and resources. Teacher participants discussed receiving professional development in their districts, through local RPDC, and outside of the district. Some of the teacher participants received training to work with students with disabilities in their master's programs.

The research questions guided this qualitative study to review the problem regular education teachers have regarding various experiences in training in undergraduate programs and within their district, with inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. Accordingly, the research questions guided this study to examine high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Furthermore, the research questions examined the teachers' perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management.

The first research question was about the perceptions of self-efficacy and ability to positively impact student learning among Missouri public high school

teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Many teachers felt “very confident,” “confident,” or “pretty confident” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom (T1, T3, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10, T11, T13, T14, T16, T17). Some teachers felt “fairly confident” (T6, T15) and some felt pretty low or not as strong (T7, T12). Teacher 7 described confidence as “pretty low.” Some felt it “depends on the student and the situation” (T4), can “always learn more” (T2), and “meets students where they are” (T18).

The second question was about perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received among Missouri public high school teachers regarding research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management to support students with disabilities to positively influence student learning. Most teachers stated throughout their interview that they received professional development in their district (T1, T3, T6, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18). Teacher 1 described, “Our special education department will give professional development days for our needs in our areas of what we need to do.” Teacher 18 had attended professional development with counseling and diversifying multiple intelligences. Recent training focused on “diversifying education for multiple intelligences to the idea that you can appeal to multiple styles of learning with the same lesson with minor adjustments per student based on what they need.” Some teachers had received training through the RPDC or outside of the district (T7, T8, T9, T17). Some had continued their education and received a master’s degree (T1, T2, T3, T14, T15). Teacher 14 had attended professional development at a local university on how to “effectively teach math.” On

the other hand, Teacher 5 stated, “That is something again, that I don’t think that we’ve really gotten a ton of here because I feel like there’s such a separateness.”

The first subquestion was about perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities with research-based practices among Missouri public high school teachers. Many teachers felt confident in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10, T13, T15, T17). Teacher 1 was “very confident” and Teacher 3 was “pretty confident.” Some teachers felt fairly confident in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities (T12, T18). Some teachers had no confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities (T2, T7, T14). Teacher 7 expressed, “Not the highest. Not sure what they are.” Some teachers felt confidence, “varies depending on strategy” (T11) and “not every strategy works for each individual” (T16).

The second subquestion regarded perceptions of self-efficacy regarding using assessments with students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers. Most teachers felt confident in effectively assessing students with disabilities (T1, T3, T5, T7, T9, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17). Teacher 14 was “very confident.” Some teachers felt okay or “needed work” (T10) to effectively assess students with disabilities (T4, T8, T18). Teacher 6 stated, “I don’t” feel confident or not effective (T2).

The third subquestion was about perceptions of self-efficacy regarding behavior management of students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers. Most teachers had strategies used to address challenging behaviors in the classroom. Teacher 3 stated, “In the beginning, building relationships with students,

that helps tremendously.” Teacher 15 described basketball students; “I call them basketball students, because they’re like a basketball that you have to dribble whenever you are teaching.” Some teachers had not had a lot of challenging behaviors (T10) and felt behaviors are not a concern (T18).

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore rural high school principals, ELA and mathematics general education teachers’ perceptions of their self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. The problem encompassed a need for professional development to improve teacher understanding and knowledge of teaching students with disabilities (Shaukat et al., 2019). Future research is needed to review how teacher experience and professional development may impact a teacher’s view of inclusive education and self-efficacy (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

The research questions were used to guide this study to examine public high school teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and examine the teachers’ perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received in research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management. This study aimed to identify areas undergraduate programs and school districts can improve in professional development efforts to support inclusive practices in the general education setting and increase teacher self-efficacy into teaching students with disabilities. Thus, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy, so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for

diverse learners and develop successful inclusion practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

With a high percentages of special education students spending most of their time in the general education classroom, high school general education teachers need be trained and feel equipped to support students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Unfortunately, general education teachers often lack knowledge about inclusion and mainstreaming due to a lack of training in undergraduate programs and a lack of professional development on inclusion (De La Cruz, 2020). Subsequently, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusive practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

Research Questions

The first research question for this study was about the perceptions of self-efficacy and ability to positively impact student learning among Missouri public high school teachers regarding the instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Many teachers felt confident/pretty confident to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Some teachers felt fairly confident and some felt pretty low or not as strong. Some felt it “depends on the student and the situation” (T4), can “always learn more” (T2), and “meets students where they are” (T18). As found in the literature review, a teacher’s positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy can an impact on the classroom and promote academic success within their schools (Bandura, 1993; Hassan, 2019; Love et al., 2020). Thus, a teacher’s self-efficacy is important for student achievement and can impact students’ own self-

efficacy (Rezaull et al., 2021; Hassan, 2019). Also, the literature review found many teachers continuously felt unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students with exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Within this study, some teachers had low self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities.

The second question was about perceptions of the amount of training teachers had received among Missouri public high school teachers regarding research-based practices, assessment, and behavior management to support students with disabilities to positively influence student learning. Most teachers stated throughout their interview that they received professional development in their district. This strengthens the information from the literature review that included providing teacher in-service can develop teacher self-efficacy and is important for increasing teacher effectiveness (Rezaull et al., 2021; Hassan, 2019). Professional development can increase teacher confidence and have a positive impact a teacher's beliefs and positively effect one's self-efficacy (Baez-Hernandez, 2019).

In the teacher interviews, some had received training through the RPDC or outside of the district. Some had continued their education and received a master's degree. This contradicted information found in the literature review that stated many university teacher programs are not preparing teachers for implementing effective inclusion practices and should be providing teachers with training to address this discrepancy (Rodden et al., 2019). Teacher participants that discussed obtaining a master's degree discussed receiving training on working with students with disabilities in their coursework.

The first subquestion was about perceptions of self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities with research-based practices among Missouri public high school teachers. Many teachers felt confident in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. Some teachers felt fairly confident in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. Some teachers had no confidence in using research-based strategies with students with disabilities. Some teachers felt confidence, “varies depending on strategy” (T11), and “not every strategy works for each individual” (T16).

As found in the literature review, researched-based practices are based on specific research strategies and often recognized as positively impacting student outcomes. Research has shown teachers who lack knowledge of research-based practices often feel unprepared and have lower confidence when involved within an inclusive classroom setting (Johnson et al., 2021). However, teachers who have knowledge of research-based practices often have higher levels of self-efficacy to work with students with disabilities in an inclusive environment (Johnson et al., 2021).

The second subquestion regarded perceptions of self-efficacy regarding using assessments with students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers. Most teachers felt confident in effectively assessing students with disabilities. Some teachers felt okay or “needed work” (T10) to effectively assess students with disabilities (T4, T8, T18). Some teachers felt they were not confident (T6) or not effective (T2). As stated in the literature review, the effective use of formative assessments by teachers can be influenced by prerequisites related to

knowledge and skills, as well as psychological and social factors present among the populations of students in inclusive classrooms (Schildkamp et al., 2020). As some of the teachers lack confidence to assess students with disabilities, there is a continued need for professional development. For formative assessment to be most effective, school leaders should ensure professional development is provided to all teachers on how to use formative assessments effectively with the general education curriculum (Lazarus et al., 2022).

The third subquestion was about perceptions of self-efficacy regarding behavior management of students with disabilities among Missouri public high school teachers. Most teachers had strategies used to address challenging behaviors in the classroom. Some teachers had not had a lot of challenging behaviors (T10) and felt behaviors were not a concern (T18). The literature review found many teachers could benefit from trainings focused on improving and implementing effective classroom management (Gaastra et al., 2020). Yet, according to findings of the study, most teachers have strategies to use to address student behavior in the classroom.

Themes

The theoretical framework of self-efficacy of this study guided this qualitative study to review the problem many regular education teachers had regarding various experiences in training in undergraduate programs and school districts on inclusion practices for students with disabilities in rural settings in Missouri. The themes developed within this study included teacher experience, special education leadership, general education teachers collaborating with special education teachers, and professional development.

During the principal interviews, when asked to describe how confident the principals felt teachers were to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, a common theme arose based on teacher experience. Principal 1 shared, “The more veteran the teacher is, the more comfortable they feel. I don’t think that students come out of college feeling very prepared for that.” Principal 3 described teachers as “fairly competent” to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom and shared that the district recently hired “more experienced teachers, which experienced teachers feel more comfortable in teaching.” Principal 4 stated, “I don’t think we’re doing as well as we can.” Principal 4 shared the school did a nice job, yet had some issues with staff not being certified.

As found in the literature review, teachers with more experience had higher levels of self-efficacy (An et al., 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Similar to self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy is built upon having continual experiences to practice teaching. Subsequently, the more opportunities a teacher can have to have to teach, the more their performance will improve (Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Also found in the literature review, many teachers continuously felt unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students with exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Many educators believe undergraduate programs do not provide sufficient training to preservice teachers regarding inclusion practices (Peculea, 2019). This information coincides with the theme found in the principal interviews.

Additionally, in principal interviews, each principal discussed how teachers receive support from the special education director or coordinator. Principal 1 discussed that the special education director came to do observations of the special

education teachers in the building. Principal 2 explained that the special education teacher went and sat with the teachers to provide support. Principal 3 was the special education director for the district and supports staff. Principal 4 stated, “We have a special education coordinator who works with staff.”

Furthermore, special education leadership within each district provided support and professional development to staff to foster growth to teachers in the area of special education. Layden et al. (2022) discussed how special education administrators are responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers’ knowledge and skill.

Moreover, throughout the interviews, more than half of the teacher participants discussed collaborating with special education teachers. Regular education teachers engaged in collaborative efforts with special education counterparts, participating in co-teaching, resource sharing, and receiving valuable assistance from special education teachers. Three of the teacher participants had a class that was co-taught or considered class within a class with a special education teacher (T3, T5, T17). Additionally, teacher participants discussed special education staff providing professional development, resources, or collaboration with special education staff (T1, T2, T4, T5, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16).

Additionally, in the literature review, one of the barriers for successful inclusion of students with disabilities included the lack of common planning time between regular education and special education teachers (Garrett, 2017). More than

half of the participants discussed using the special education teacher as a resource (T2, T4, T5, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16). Special education teachers are a valuable resource to provide insight to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

When asking teacher participants what resources and support are needed to increase self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, half of the teacher participants said professional development and resources (T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, T10, T12, T13, T17). In the teacher interviews, teachers were asked about professional development that had been received to build confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities. The teachers were asked to describe the professional development received regarding developing lessons that positively influence the learning of students with disabilities. Half of the teacher participants had received professional development in regards to these areas in their district (T1, T3, T6, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18). Only four of the teacher participants have received training through the local RPDC or outside of the district (T7, T8, T9, T17). Additionally, five of the participants discussed that the college courses taken for master's programs assisted in regards to those areas (T1, T2, T3, T14, T15).

As found in the literature review, teachers who are trained well are important in providing a quality education for students (Jagannath K. Dange, 2020). As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022). Thus, when teachers are not confident in their abilities to implement evidence-based practices, they are less likely to apply such practices in their classrooms with students (Layden et al., 2022).

Implications

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore rural high school principals, ELA and mathematics general education teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy and training to effectively instruct students with disabilities in general education classrooms in Missouri. This study aimed to identify areas undergraduate programs and school districts can improve in professional development efforts to support inclusive practices in the general education setting and increase teacher self-efficacy into teaching students with disabilities. Thus, it is essential to increase teacher self-efficacy, so teachers can have a positive effect on the educational outcomes for diverse learners and develop successful inclusion practices (Woodcock & Faith, 2021).

Within this study, most principals discussed teacher experience when asked about the confidence of teachers. As confirmed in the literature review, teachers with more experience have higher levels of self-efficacy (An et al., 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Similar to self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy is built upon having continual experiences to practice teaching. Subsequently, having more opportunities to teach will only improve their performance (Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Also found in the literature review, many teachers continuously feel unprepared to work in a diverse classroom with students with exceptional needs (Abraham, 2001; Rivera & McKeithan, 2021). Many educators believe undergraduate programs do not provide sufficient training to preservice teachers regarding inclusion practices (Peculea, 2019).

Principals discussed how teachers received support from the special education director or coordinator. Special education leadership within each district provided support and professional development to staff to foster growth to teachers in the area of special education. Layden et al. (2022) discussed how special education administrators are responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill.

Within this study, more than half of the teacher participants discussed collaborating with special education teachers. The phrase used by most participants included “work” or “working” with special education staff. Regular education teachers engage in collaborative efforts with special education counterparts, participating in co-teaching, resource sharing, and receiving valuable assistance from special education teachers. As found in the literature review, one of the barriers for successful inclusion of students with disabilities included the lack of common planning time between regular education and special education teachers (Garrett, 2017). Special education teachers are a valuable resource to provide insight to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Within this study, teachers expressed a need for professional development and resources to increase self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Teachers who are trained well are important in providing a quality education for students (Jagannath K. Dange, 2020). As studies have revealed,

providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022).

In regards to teacher experience, veteran teachers and teachers with more experience feel more confident in the classroom. Administrators should provide opportunities for teachers to gain experiences. School districts should focus on professional development to increase teacher confidence. Within this study, most districts utilized the special education administration to support teachers and staff. Districts should provide time within professional development time to provide teachers training on inclusion and working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Time should be provided for general education teachers to collaborate with special education teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

For further research into this topic, the relationship factors between regular education teachers and special education teachers increase the confidence of teachers to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. This could include the relationships between building principals and special education administration. Specifics could include communication, trust, and time available to collaborate.

In reference to professional development, future research could explore what types of professional development increase regular education teacher confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Another perspective could be the effectiveness of different inclusion training to support students with disabilities. Studies could review the different training options and which ones had the highest influence on teacher confidence.

In regards to teacher experience, veteran teachers and teachers with more experience feel more confident in the classroom. Administrators should provide opportunities for teachers to gain experiences. School districts should focus on professional development to increase teacher confidence. Within this study, most districts utilized the special education administration to support teachers and staff. Districts should provide time within professional development time to provide teachers training on inclusion and working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Time should be provided for general education teachers to collaborate with special education teachers.

Conclusion

A teacher's positive beliefs of their instructional self-efficacy can have an impact on the classroom and promote academic success within their schools (Bandura, 1993; Hassan, 2019; Love et al., 2020). The purpose of this study was to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools in Missouri. The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the confidence a person can successfully carry through with a required behavior to yield the desired result (Bandura, 1993). Teacher self-efficacy indicates a teacher's assumption he or she can perform certain activities to positively influence student learning (Donohoo, 2017; Hassan, 2019). Thus, a teacher's self-efficacy is important for student achievement and can impact students' own self-efficacy (Rezaull et al., 2021; Hassan, 2019).

This study included themes of teacher experience, special education leadership, collaborating with special education teachers, and professional development. As found in the literature review, teachers with more experience had higher levels of self-efficacy (An et al., 2021; Shah & Bhattarai, 2023). Layden et al. (2022) discussed how special education administrators are responsible for and can influence the development and implementation of quality professional development for teachers. As studies have revealed, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill. Moreover, one of the barriers for successful inclusion of students with disabilities included the lack of common planning time between regular education and special education teachers (Garrett, 2017). Furthermore, providing teachers with quality professional development can increase the teachers' knowledge and skill (Layden et al., 2022).

This study reviewed how teacher experience and professional development impact a teacher's self-efficacy in the regular education classroom. This study discussed the importance of collaboration with special education administration, special education teachers, and regular education teachers. The personal experiences of how behavior difficulties are handled in the regular education classroom or the lack of behaviors was noted from the teachers within the study. Furthermore, this study provided information on the need for training for general education teachers in the area of research-based strategies and the use of assessments for students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

Administrators should provide opportunities for general education teachers to gain experiences in working with students with disabilities in the regular education

classroom. School districts should focus on professional development to increase teacher confidence to teach students with disabilities. Districts should provide time within professional development time to provide teachers training on inclusion and working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Time should be provided for general education teachers to collaborate with special education teachers to increase the self-efficacy of regular education teachers to teach students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

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Appendix A

Email Communication to Principal

Hello,

My name is Erica Long. I am a doctoral student working on research for my dissertation for the doctoral program in educational leadership at Southwest Baptist University. My dissertation is titled, "High School Teacher's Perception of Preparedness and Self-Efficacy to Achieve Successful Inclusion of students with Disabilities." The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. More specifically, this study is researching the experiences of high school English language arts and mathematics general education teachers in rural schools in Missouri teaching at least one student with a disability in their class. Interviews with these educators will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

My research proposal has been accepted and approved by my research committee and the research review board at Southwest Baptist University. For my research, I am seeking to interview a high school principal, one high school English language arts teacher, and one high school mathematics teacher. For the purpose of my study, both teachers would need at least one special education student in their class. Your building will be one of nine high schools interviewed as part of this research. Each of the nine high schools are rural schools from each of the nine regional professional development center regions in Missouri.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the Informed Consent Link and reply with a confirmation email. Additionally, please send me the contact information for the two teachers willing to participate in the study.

Attached is a copy of the interview questions. The questions will help me understand teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and training to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns regarding my study and your participation. I can be reached at 417-830-5292 or longerica31@gmail.com. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Erica Long

Appendix B

Email Communication to Teachers

Hello,

My name is Erica Long. I am a doctoral student working on research for my dissertation for the doctoral program in educational leadership at Southwest Baptist University. My dissertation is titled, "High School Teacher's Perception of Preparedness and Self-Efficacy to Achieve Successful Inclusion of Students with Disabilities." The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. More specifically, this study is researching the experiences of high school English language arts and mathematics general education teachers in rural schools in Missouri teaching at least one student with a disability in their class. Interviews with these educators will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

My research proposal has been accepted and approved by my research committee and the research review board at Southwest Baptist University. For my research, I am seeking to interview one high school English language arts teacher, and one high school mathematics teacher. For the purpose of my study, both teachers would need at least one special education student in their class. Your building will be one of nine high schools interviewed as part of this research. Each of the nine high schools are rural schools from each of the nine regional professional development center regions in Missouri.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the Informed Consent Link and reply with a confirmation email.

Attached is a copy of the interview questions. The questions will help me understand teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and training to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns regarding my study and your participation. I can be reached at 417-830-5292 or longerica31@gmail.com. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Erica Long

Appendix C

Consent Form

Shared electronically via Google Form

The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Kevin Patterson, Professor of Education and Education Department Chair at Southwest Baptist University. This study has been approved by the Research Review Board of Southwest Baptist University.

The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. More specifically this study is researching the experiences of high school English language arts and mathematics general education teachers in rural schools in Missouri teaching at least one student with a disability in their class. Interviews with these educators will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Informed Consent

Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this research. However, you may request to end the interview at any time. By completing this Google Form, you are consenting to participate in this research effort.

All personal information, such as participant name and district name, will be kept confidential. I will be recording and transcribing the interview session for research purposes. Following the completion of the interview session, you will be provided a copy of both for your review. All files containing personal identifiers will be kept secure by the researcher for seven years and then all information will be destroyed. Interview sessions will be conducted via Google Meet and recorded. Upon completion, all interviews will be transcribed electronically via Otter.ai. You will be provided a copy of both the recording and transcription.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or my advisory. I can be reached at longerica31@gmail.com or 417-830-5292. Dr. Kevin Patterson can be reached at kpatterson@sbuniv.edu. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be directed to the Southwest Baptist University Research Review Board.

By checking the box below and typing your name, you are electronically consenting to participate in this research effort.

Sincerely,

Erica Long
Ed. D. Student, Southwest Baptist University

Appendix D

Principal Interview Protocol

Introduction

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview process on experiences of self-efficacy and training to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. Our interview today will last approximately 30 minutes, during which I will be asking you a variety of questions in hopes to gain a better understanding.

The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. More specifically this study is researching the experiences of high school English language arts and mathematics general education teachers in rural schools in Missouri teaching at least one student with a disability in their class. Interviews with these educators will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

I would like your permission to record this interview. Please note, no names or titles will be used in the report and all individuals will be referred to as participants. Do I have permission to record this interview? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes during our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions] Feel free to ask questions at any time. I am more than happy to answer anything that comes up during the interview.

Interview Questions –

1. Tell me about yourself:
 - a. Overall years in public education
 - b. Overall years as a high school principal
 - c. Years in current position
2. Describe your experience working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.
3. Can you describe how confident you feel your teachers are teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom?
4. How do you feel teacher self-efficacy influences student learning in the classroom?
5. Can you describe the professional development your district provides regarding self-efficacy?

6. Do you feel the professional development your teachers have received in your district increased their confidence and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities?
7. Can you describe the researched-based strategies your teachers use in the classroom to teach students with disabilities?
8. Can you describe your teacher's competence to adapt assessments for students with disabilities?
9. Can you describe the specific behavior management strategies your teachers are using to support students with disabilities?

Appendix E

Teacher Interview Protocol

Introduction

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview process on experiences of self-efficacy and training to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. Our interview today will last approximately 45 minutes, during which I will be asking you a variety of questions in hopes to gain a better understanding.

The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of self-efficacy and training of teachers to teach high school students with disabilities in the regular education classroom in rural schools. More specifically this study is researching the experiences of high school English language arts and mathematics general education teachers in rural schools in Missouri teaching at least one student with a disability in their class. Interviews with these educators will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

I would like your permission to record this interview. Please note, no names or titles will be used in the report and all individuals will be referred to as participants. Do I have permission to record this interview? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes during our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions] Feel free to ask questions at any time. I am more than happy to answer anything that comes up during the interview.

Interview Questions –

1. Tell me about yourself:
 - a. Overall years in public education
 - b. Current teaching position
 - c. Years of experience as a teacher
 - d. Years in current position
2. Describe your experience working with students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.
3. Can you describe your confidence to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom?
4. How do you feel your self-efficacy positively influences student learning in the classroom?

5. Can you tell me about the professional development you have received to build your confidence, preparedness, and effectiveness to teach students with disabilities?
6. Can you describe the professional development you have received regarding developing lessons which positively influence the learning of students with disabilities?
7. Describe how you stay current with evidence-based practices for student learning and teaching students with disabilities.
8. Can you describe the researched-based strategies you use in the classroom to positively influence students with disabilities?
9. How do you measure how effective these strategies are in teaching students with disabilities?
10. Can you describe your confidence in using researched-based strategies with students with disabilities?
11. Can you describe the assessment strategies, for example portfolio assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessments, you use for students with disabilities?
12. Can you describe your confidence in effectively assessing students with disabilities?
13. Can you describe the specific behavior management strategies you are using to handle challenging behaviors in your classroom?
14. What resources or support do you feel would be helpful to increase your self-efficacy to teach students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom?

Appendix F

Code Terms Used Per Principal in Each Interview

Term	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
Teacher/Staff	4	2	10	9	25
Students	6	5	9	1	21
Feel	5	0	9	0	14
Classroom	4	2	0	7	13
Special Education Director/Coordinator	2	4	1	2	9
Teaching	2	0	6	0	8
Co-Teacher/Co-Teaching	8	0	0	0	8
School	0	0	7	0	7
Years	0	0	4	2	6
Comfortable	0	0	6	0	6
Strategies	0	0	6	0	6
IEP	0	0	0	6	6
Disabilities	1	1	3	0	5
Learning	0	0	5	0	5
Special Education	2	0	2	0	4
Principal	4	0	0	0	4
Special Education Teacher	2	0	0	2	4
General Education	3	0	0	0	3
Question	2	0	1	0	3
Assessment	2	0	0	1	3
Successful	0	3	0	0	3
Critical Thinking Skills	0	0	3	0	3
Certified	0	0	0	3	3
Supposed	0	0	0	3	3
General	2	0	0	0	2
Provide Information	0	2	0	0	2
Kagan	0	0	2	0	2
PBIS	0	0	2	0	2
Working	0	0	2	0	2
Turnover	0	0	2	0	2
Aide	0	0	0	2	2

Appendix G

Code Terms Used Per Teacher in Each Interview

Term	Total	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8
Students/Kids	148	4	6	3	9	11	16	18	8
Classroom/Class	107	4	10	7	2	13	11	8	9
Feel	56	1	4	6	0	8	14	0	0
Teachers	56	5	6	8	1	6	2	10	0
Work/Working	43	6	12	7	1	0	0	0	4
Teach	38	4	0	2	1	3	1	1	2
Professional Development	32	2	0	0	1	4	2	5	0
Test	31	0	0	5	1	6	0	0	0
Math	29	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Modified/Modification	29	2	0	0	1	5	1	0	0
Special Education Teacher	28	1	0	0	2	3	4	2	0
Strategies	27	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	2
ELA/English	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Assessments	25	1	1	5	0	0	0	6	6
School	25	9	8	0	1	0	0	0	0
Learn	21	4	0	6	2	0	0	0	7
Year	20	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	0
IEP	19	2	0	0	0	3	10	0	0
Disabilities	19	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0
Reading	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Writing	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Confident/Confidence	17	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Know(ing)/Understand	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
Questions	14	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Term	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T14	T15	T16	T17	T18
Students/Kids	8	9	0	12	10	5	7	4	8	7
Classroom/Class	7	0	3	0	8	1	7	12	5	0
Feel	0	0	4	0	11	0	0	0	8	0
Teachers	0	0	5	3	2	0	0	0	8	0
Work/Working	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	6	0
Teach	5	2	0	3	2	1	5	0	4	2
Professional Development	3	2	0	2	4	1	0	0	3	3
Test	0	6	9	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Math	0	2	0	7	7	2	0	0	0	0
Modified/Modification	4	4	0	3	0	3	0	6	0	0
Special Education Teacher	0	0	0	2	3	2	7	0	1	0
Strategies	4	0	0	2	2	4	0	3	2	0

ELA/English	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	8	0
Assessments	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Learn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Year	6	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
IEP	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabilities	0	2	0	0	3	5	0	0	3	0
Reading	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Writing	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	6
Confident/Confidence	0	1	0	0	5	2	1	0	3	1
Know(ing)/Understand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Questions	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
