

From the Editor

It is our pleasure to publish the first issue of the *Journal of Special Education Preparation (JOSEP)*. The team at *JOSEP* believes this journal is acutely needed to fill a gap in the dissemination and consumption of evidence-based practices in special education teacher preparation. It is our hope that an open-access journal, solely focused on research-to-practice articles, will allow special education faculty across higher education settings to share their innovations in teacher preparation. Subsequently, special education faculty can also read *JOSEP* to improve their own educational practices to meet the growing demands and challenges of the field.

In 2017, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) published a set of 22 HLPs that “represent the essence of effective practice in special education” (p. 11). Since then, considerable effort has gone into the development and distribution of resources promoting HLPs regarding special education teacher efficacy (e.g., <https://highleveragepractices.org/>; <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>). As special education teacher preparation conversations increasingly include the integration of HLPs, we felt like *JOSEP* could contribute to these discussions and that HLPs in teacher preparation would be an appropriate special issue topic. Therefore, for this inaugural issue, we invited scholars to contribute an article on the topic of integrating and practicing HLPs in teacher education.

The first article by Markelz et al. approaches HLPs holistically and discusses how teacher preparation programs can systematically identify, integrate, and evaluate HLPs. The authors present a decision-making matrix when identifying and integrating HLPs in preparation programs. The authors also emphasize the importance of data-based decision making regarding the evaluation of HLP integration, not only for programmatic decisions, but for the field of teacher preparation at large. To continue the conversation around HLPs, the authors provide suggestions that university programs should take to start identifying, integrating, and evaluating HLPs, steps that individual instructors can take to unpack evidence-based kernels of HLPs, and future research directions for the field.

The second article by Ackerman and Horn focuses on HLPs 8 and 22 (provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students’ learning and behavior).

In this article, the authors use a scaffolded approach to present how teacher educators can craft experiences for their preservice teachers to practice HLPs 8 and 22 while offering rich coursework experiences, practice-based opportunities, and aligned clinical placements.

In the article by Budin et al., the authors propose that HLPs can serve as a solid foundation for teacher preparation regardless of modality, and offer five tips for how teacher educators can prepare candidates to use HLPs across modalities. Using a scenario to emphasize implementation tips, the authors focus on HLP 7 (create a learning environment that is consistent, organized, and respectful) and HLP 18 (use strategies that actively engage their learners). Even though HLPs 7 and 18 are used as examples, the authors’ tips and strategies are applicable to all 22 HLPs and are necessary to prepare teacher candidates for their future teaching roles which may include instruction in a range of modalities (i.e., face-to-face, remote-synchronous, remote-asynchronous, hybrid).

The article by Morano and Riccomini focuses on HLP 16 (use explicit instruction) and explains how to develop preservice teachers’ expertise in the evaluation and adaptation of mathematics lesson plans with the elements of explicitness to better support students with disabilities. The authors provide example activities and assignments that are anchored in the context of a university math methods course.

The next article by Taylor and Bhana exclusively focuses on incorporating HLP 7 (establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment) in classroom/behavior management courses. The authors provide support for *why* topics should focus on HLP 7 and *how* topics of structure, culturally responsive teaching, student-teacher relationship development, and social emotional learning should be included in classroom/behavior management courses in special education training programs.

The final article in this inaugural edition by Chitiyo and Dzenga is *JOSEP*’s first *International Spotlight* article. Within every issue of *JOSEP*, we hope to publish an article that explores the preparation of special educators outside the United States. It is our aim to present readers of *JOSEP* with a greater understanding of international special education teacher preparation. In this

article, Chitiyo and Dzenga review special education policy, special education teacher professional development, and challenges to successful special education practice in five Southern African countries: Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, and Namibia.

In closing, we would like to thank the contributing authors for partaking in this endeavor, submitting quality articles, and meeting explicit deadlines. We also extend appreciation to our board of reviewers who embrace the mission of *JOSEP* and are willing to commit their time to this journal, even in its infant stage. Thank you, Dr. Sarah Nagro, for overseeing a host of guest reviewers including Christopher Claude, Kevin Monnin, Katherine Szocik, Clarissa Buch, Morgan Strimel, Gino Binkert, Margot Gerry, and Jamie Day. You all completed timely and thorough reviews and contributed greatly to the production of this issue.

The creation and production of *JOSEP* would not be possible without the support of Ball State University's Office of Digital Research and Publishing. Lastly, thank you Micah Gjeltema for your technical expertise and production skills. The editorial board is grateful for this partnership and looks forward to the publication of many issues to come.

We hope *JOSEP* contributes to the quality of special education teacher education and invite authors to consider submitting manuscripts in the future. A second special issue of *JOSEP* will be published in December 2021 on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in teacher preparation. It is our intention to open *JOSEP* up to public submission in January 2022.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Markelz

Founder & Editor of JOSEP

Ball State University

References

Council for Exceptional Children. (2017). *High-leverage practices for K-12 special education teachers*. Arlington, VA: Author.