

Orientation: High-Leverage Practices in Special Education

Purpose: This activity can be used to engage participants in thinking about what they know, what they think they know, and what they want to know about high-leverage practices.

Activity Overview

There is a lot of talk these days about high-leverage practices. As the introduction to *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms* points out, during the last decade, teachers in every state in the United States have been faced with unprecedented accountability demands to increase achievement levels and ensure that *all* students are college or career ready when they complete high school. These demands require teachers to use the most effective available practices to improve student learning and behavior—which is especially important for students with disabilities, who continue to lag behind their general education peers in academic achievement and post-school success.

Time: 10 minutes

Activity Steps

The following are conversation starters that you can choose from to orient participants to high-leverage practices.

- Engage participants in a “Think-Pair-Share” activity. Ask them to think about what they know about high-leverage practices. Direct participants to select a partner to share what each individual knows. Ask pairs to discuss what they would like to know about high-leverage practices. Reconvene the large group and invite pairs to share. Optional: Record their responses. Provide a context for the current interest in high-leverage practices.

- Ask participants, “How would you rate your knowledge of high-leverage practices using a scale of one to five, with five being ‘extremely knowledgeable,’ and one being ‘no or little knowledge?’” Ask participants to share their ratings. Option: Record their responses. Ask the individuals who rated themselves as very knowledgeable, “How did you become interested in the topic and how did you pursue learning?” Segue to providing a context for the current interest in high-leverage practices.
- Ask participants, “Name the practices you use that support student achievement.” Record responses. Review the practices and ask participants, “What is it about those practices that make them desirable?” Ask participants to vote on which of the practices they identified will make it to the list of the twenty-two high-leverage practices. Segue to providing a context for the current interest in high-leverage practices. [*Note:* After sharing the high-leverage practices in the slide presentation, return to this list and point out where participants have identified them or similar ones.]
- If time permits in your agenda, consider adding the activity, “Glossary Review,” after this initial orientation.

Reference: McLeskey, J., Maheady, L., Billingsley, B., Brownell, M. T., & Lewis, T. J. (Eds.). (2019). *High leverage practices for inclusive classrooms*. New York, NY: Routledge.