MAKING GOOD *on the* PROMISE

BRAVE DIALOGUES:

A Guide to Discussing Racial Equity
in Career Technical Education

ADVANCE ≫ CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work

CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of Brave Dialogues: A Guide to Discussing Racial Equity in Career Technical Education is to provide state Career Technical Education (CTE) leaders with tools to engage in discussion around racial equity in CTE and to support state CTE leaders in creating an environment in which all stakeholders have the language and comfort to discuss challenges and opportunities related to racial equity in CTE.

The purpose of Brave Dialogues: A Guide to Discussing Racial Equity in Career Technical Education is to provide state Career Technical Education (CTE) leaders with tools to engage in discussion around racial equity in CTE and to support state CTE leaders in creating an environment in which all stakeholders have the language and comfort to discuss challenges and opportunities related to racial equity in CTE.

This guide is designed to help state CTE leaders address equity gaps that emerge through the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) implementation. State leaders can use this guide to engage in necessary conversations with staff and local practitioners including teachers, faculty, school counselors, superintendents, principals, deans, instructional staff, work-based learning coordinators, learner support staff, etc.

There is often great discomfort in discussing race, particularly racial inequities. Ultimately, the goal is for users of this guide to become better equipped and motivated to advance anti-racist CTE policies and practices. Anti-racist policies and practices are not race neutral; rather they are crafted in recognition that historically, CTE — and education more broadly — has systematically perpetuated inequities among certain learner populations. Thus, anti-racist policies and practices are designed to actively dismantle those systems and create an environment in which all learners have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

This guide can be used in various contexts including professional development; diversity, equity and inclusion training; opportunity gap analysis; decision-making and funding initiatives (in conjunction with data); and Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) implementation.

Through five sessions ranging from 60 minutes to 90 minutes, this guide will walk participants of brave dialogue through critical self-reflection. There are also readings, videos and other work that participants should complete prior to some of the sessions, which will take about one hour each. The materials were carefully selected to support participants through their critical self-reflection.

Critical self-reflection encourages leaders and educators to look at how they are positioned within organizations and institutions that have historically and systematically marginalized learners and find ways to personally and organizationally interrupt these systems.[1] As part of critical self-reflection, leaders must examine the role of education and workforce programs, departments, hiring practices and other structures. In CTE, that examination may include looking at entrance requirements for certain programs of study or whether all learners have equal access to all programs of study offered by a school or district.

Everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or positionality, can benefit from critical self-reflection. This includes leaders of color who are sometimes made responsible for the reinforcement of systems that marginalize historically minoritized learners.[2] It is important for everyone who touches CTE within a given school system, postsecondary institution, workforce development system or state leadership role to be fully engaged and open to critical self-reflection and brave dialogue to address and solve persistent and systemic challenges of inequity in CTE.

INTRODUCTION

CTE leaders have a responsibility to understand all of the identities a learner brings to the classroom and the way those identities impact their experiences. There is also a responsibility to understand how education systems and institutions function in supporting or disadvantaging learners.

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Historically, the American education system has privileged White and wealthier learners, often at the expense of minoritized and economically disadvantaged learners.

CTE is not exempt from this history and is still working to recover from a legacy of racial tracking and providing a substandard education experience to mostly minoritized and learners and learners with low-income. Advance CTE's Making Good on the Promise reports document this history and strategies the field has taken to right these wrongs.[3]

Today learners across races and ethnicities enroll in CTE programs and have positive academic outcomes.

Figure 1: CTE Works for Everyone

CTE learners are diverse. **80%** of White, **75%** of Black, and **74%** of Latinx high school learners earn at least one CTE course credit.[4]

The graduation rate for CTE concentrators is about **95%**, approximately 10 percentage points higher than the national average.[5]

Nearly **40%** of all undergraduate credentials awarded are in CTE.[8]

CTE WORKS FOR EVERYONE

CTE concentrators are **half as likely** to need remedial education in college as their peers.[7]

72% of CTE concentrators enroll in postsecondary education full-time immediately after graduating.[6]

CONSIDER THIS

Take a look at your state, institution, or school district's CTE enrollment trends by race? What do you see?

Seeing the gaps is a first step – this guide helps you engage in conversations about what you are seeing in the data and how to resolve the inequities.

However, inequities in access and success in high-quality CTE programs still exist. A 2020 report by JFF found that at the secondary level, most learners enrolled in skilled trade CTE programs of study are White and male.[9] In fact, White learners were over-represented in every skilled trade program of study, particularly carpentry. Furthermore, a 2019 report by the American Enterprise Institute found that in Texas' CTE programs, learners are still "tracked" into traditionally gendered occupations, with female learners being most likely to concentrate in education, health science and human services and males being most likely to concentrate in architecture and construction, manufacturing and transportation.[10] Lastly, according to a 2019 JFF report on equity in Registered Apprenticeships, the median hourly wage for men who completed an apprenticeship was $27.75 while the median for women was $11.49.[11] For Black Registered Apprentices, the median hourly earnings were $14.35 an hour, less than all other racial/ethnic groups. This data demonstrates that, despite the progress CTE has made over the years to improve the quality of its programs and ensure equitable access, there is still more work to be done.
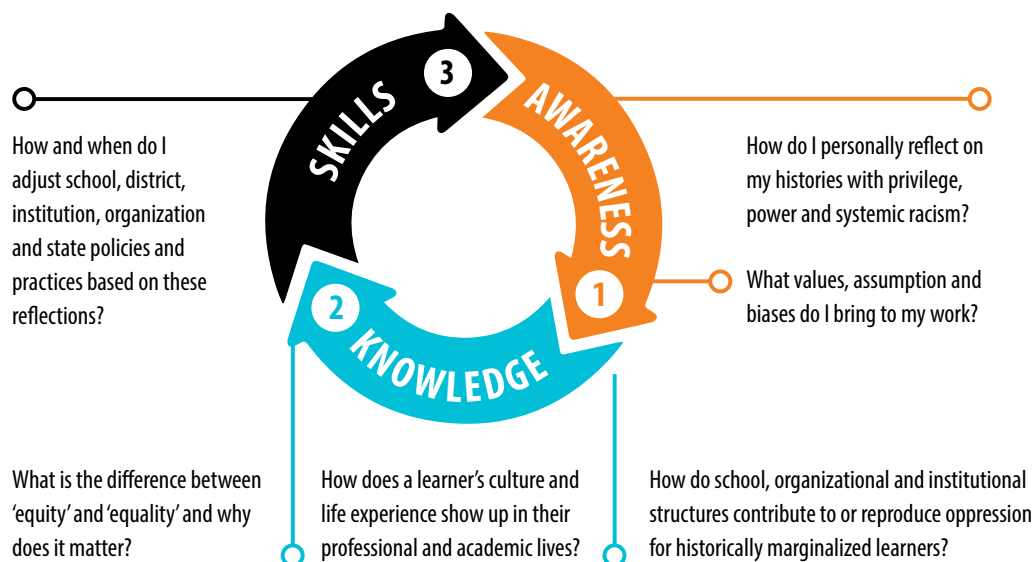
State leaders have made commitments to advancing access and equity in CTE, most notably in their Perkins V state plans.[12] To follow through on these commitments and close opportunity gaps in CTE, state CTE leaders need to engage in brave dialogues about the systemic and structural challenges facing minoritized learners so they can take bold steps in developing effective policies, programs and practices rooted in equity.

TOWARDS CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION

Brave Dialogues: A Guide to Discussing Racial Equity in Career Technical Education is a resource to support state CTE leaders and CTE practitioners in their efforts to engage in these important conversations. This guide is structured using a framework toward critical self-reflection. The framework has three components: (1) awareness, (2) knowledge and (3) skills.[13,14] Figure 2 identifies questions that you will answer as you work through each component in the framework. Note that Figure 2 is designed as a cycle because critical self-reflection is an ongoing, continuous improvement process that never truly ends.

Figure 2: Framework Towards Critical Self-Reflection

SKILLS 3
How and when do I adjust school, district, institution, organization and state policies and practices based on these reflections?

AWARENESS 1
How do I personally reflect on my histories with privilege, power and systemic racism?

What values, assumption and biases do I bring to my work?

KNOWLEDGE 2
What is the difference between 'equity' and 'equality' and why does it matter?

How does a learner's culture and life experience show up in their professional and academic lives?

How do school, organizational and institutional structures contribute to or reproduce oppression for historically marginalized learners?

Adapted from Culturally Responsive School Leadership by Muhammad Khalifa (2018).[15]

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Before you engage in brave dialogue, establishing community agreements or a shared understanding of rules and expectations is vitally important to guide the conversation. Establishing community agreements collaboratively with all participants involved in the process is advisable. This collaborative ownership of the space encourages vulnerability, engagement, and a willingness to learn with one another. At Advance CTE, community agreements include committing to being fully present, assuming positive intent, trying to understand a person's experiences, and being receptive as opposed to defensive. Advance CTE also commits to holding the stories and experiences participants share within the group but taking the lessons and reflections forward in the organization's work. In other words, the stories stay, and the learning leaves. Community agreements recognize that participants are coming to the training with different lived experiences, knowledge and levels of comfort with regard to racial equity. They are vital to ensure that participants can show up and engage as their authentic selves, take risks and be vulnerable. They are necessary to ensure that participants understand that as part of their learning and growth they will make mistakes and that they will not be judged or punished because of those mistakes. Community agreements are necessary to form a brave space for participants.

SAFE SPACES VS BRAVE SPACES[16]

SAFE SPACES	BRAVE SPACES
Reassure participants who feel anxious about sharing thoughts and feelings regarding sensitive or controversial topics. Often imply comfort.	Encourage participants to take risks in dialogues focused on the topic of race and racism. Encourage participants to show courage and vulnerability.

The biggest difference in safe spaces versus brave spaces is that the latter acknowledge that it is okay to experience discomfort. For some, discomfort occurs when facing evidence of unearned privilege, reflecting on how and to what degree they have participated in oppressive acts, and hearing the stories of pain and struggle from minoritized group members.[17] Additionally, direct challenges to one's worldview can elicit emotions of fear, sorrow and anger.[18] For others, discomfort can occur when reflecting on or sharing direct experiences with oppression or listening to members of a privileged group do the same.[19] When feeling discomfort, remember to check in with the heart, the head and the hands.

Heart: What am I feeling? What emotions does this experience elicit?[20]

Head: What am I thinking? How will I actively reflect on this experience?[21]

Hands: What am I going to do? How will I turn my reflections into actions?[22]

Checking in with the heart, head and hands empowers you in brave dialogue to take risks, be vulnerable and make mistakes. Feeling discomfort is normal in these conversations and is a sign of learning and growth.

WHAT ARE YOUR COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS?

COMPONENT ONE:
Awareness

Participants become **aware** of their own values, assumptions and biases as it relates to issues of race and race relations and what impact those biases may have on others.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1.

How do I personally reflect on my issues with privilege, power and oppression?

2.

What values, assumptions and biases do I bring to my work?

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN CTE?

In CTE, this means understanding how your values, assumptions and biases can impact your approach to the work in terms of setting priorities, determining what questions to ask or not to ask, or in designing policies or programs in ways that maintain or reproduce oppressive systems.

SESSION 1: **IDENTITY**

OBJECTIVE: Participants will explore their own identities, the concept of multiple identities, and how their identities influence their work in CTE.
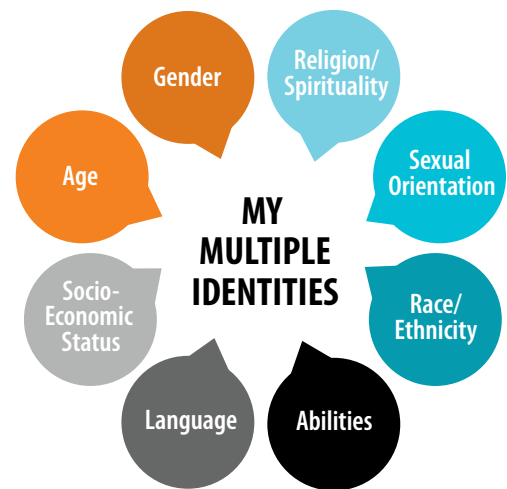
PRE-WORK:

Write a short story (one to two pages) about your name. Some suggestions to begin include: Who gave you your name and why? What is the ethnic origin of your name? Does your name have any special meaning? What are your nicknames, if any? What do you prefer to be called?

You are encouraged to be as creative as possible. You can use poetry, include humor, etc. Be prepared to share your short story with your colleagues.

CONTEXT:

Everyone has an identity that is important to who they are. A name, for example, is an important part of one's personal identity. Race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity are also important parts of a person's identity that influence their lives in many different ways. It is important to note that one's identity is not mutually exclusive. People can, and often do, take pride in having multiple identities (e.g., being Black, a woman and LGBTQ).

People bring their identities with them wherever they go. Learners bring their identities into the classrooms. CTE educators, administrators and policy leaders also bring their identities with them as they carry out their work. The key is to understand your identity and the ways in which it influences your work.

MY MULTIPLE IDENTITIES — Gender, Religion/Spirituality, Sexual Orientation, Race/Ethnicity, Abilities, Language, Socio-Economic Status, Age

Adapted from University of Southern California School of Social Work (2020)[23]

APPLICATION OF LEARNING

MY FULLEST NAME:[24]

For pre-work, you were asked to write a short story about your name.
This session will begin with everyone sharing their short stories.

REFLECTION:

When everyone has shared, please reflect as a group on the following questions:

- How did it feel to share your story?
- Why is this activity important?
- What did you learn from this activity?

WITH A PARTER (OR A SMALL GROUP):

Discuss the following questions with a partner or in a small group:

- How might your identities show up at work?
- How might your identities influence your work?
- How might a learner's identities show up in different CTE programs?

CLOSING DISCUSSION:

When the whole group has returned, share a key takeaway from the conversation.

SESSION 2: **IMPLICIT BIAS**

90 MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Participants will explore the concept of implicit bias and how implicit bias can affect their work in CTE.

PRE-WORK:

WATCH:

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?
by Kirwan Institute[25] (5 minutes)

WATCH:

MITIGATING UNWANTED BIAS: INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS
by Kirwan Institute[26] (3 minutes)

CONTEXT:

Everyone has biases. There are the obvious, conscious explicit biases one may have toward people, places or things. Then there are the not-so-obvious, unconscious implicit biases one may have — the attitudes, reactions and stereotypes that affect behavior and understanding. Examples of implicit biases in education are assumptions instructors can hold about a student's learning behaviors and their capability for academic success, which are tied to their identity and/or background. In CTE, these biases may show up in the way school counselors and administrators provide counseling and advising services and recommend programs of study. Learning about implicit biases, particularly biases that do not align with your true values, intentions or beliefs, is important to interrupt or prevent them from affecting decisions about policy or practice.

APPLICATION OF LEARNING

WATCH:

OUR HIDDEN BIASES
by Project ABC[27] (5 minutes)

REFLECTION:

In small groups, process the video by reflecting on the following questions:
- **What did you notice in the video?**
- **What is the experience of the child?**
- **In which moments could implicit bias have influenced behaviors or decisions about the child?**

* Have a note-taker prepared to share with the whole group without tying comments to specific individuals.*

WHOLE GROUP:

Each group will take turns sharing key takeaways from their small group reflections. Then, as a whole group, discuss the following questions:
- **How might implicit biases show up in your role within CTE and your interactions with learners?**
- **How might they show up in other roles?**
- **As CTE leaders, how can you recognize and interrupt implicit biases when they show up in your work?**

SESSION 3: **PRIVILEGE**

⏱ **90 MINUTES**

OBJECTIVE: Participants will explore the concept of privilege, examine any privileges they may have, and reflect on the ways privilege shows up in policymaking or leadership in CTE.

PRE-WORK:

READ:

WHITE PRIVILEGE: UNPACKING THE INVISIBLE KNAPSACK
by Peggy McIntosh[28]

READ:

THE ORIGINS OF "PRIVILEGE"
by Joshua Rothman[29]

WATCH:

"BREAKING DOWN WHITE PRIVILEGE"
from the Oprah Winfrey Network (1 minute)[30]

TAKE THE QUIZ:

HOW PRIVILEGED ARE YOU?
by Buzzfeed[31]

CONTEXT:

Privilege simply means benefitting from unearned advantages.[32] Having privilege is not inherently a bad thing or even discriminatory. Most who benefit from privilege often do not think about or acknowledge their unearned advantages because they do not have to or are not aware of them.

The term "white privilege" has been talked about quite extensively in the mainstream as of late, but privilege extends far beyond race. For example, not having to wonder if the building you are traveling to will have a ramp or elevator to accommodate a physical disability is an example of able-body privilege. In CTE, privilege may look like not feeling the need to "prove" your skills or ability because you are a White man in a program of study that is over-represented by White men.

The idea is not to make a person feel badly about their privileges. However, it is imperative to be aware of one's privileges, how those privileges affect the lives of those who have them or those who do not, and how one can use their privileges to advocate on behalf of those without.

APPLICATION OF LEARNING

DISCUSSION:

Reflecting on the pre-work activities, discuss the following questions in small groups:

- What is privilege?
- We all have privileges. What are yours?
- Were you surprised by any of the privileges you found in your invisible knapsack?
- What are you likely to see or miss because of your privileges?

- How might privilege affect policymaking and/or education leadership?
- What are some ways that privilege can influence who can access high-quality CTE programs and who is successful in CTE?

Have a note-taker prepared to share with the whole group without tying comments to specific individuals.

WHOLE-GROUP REFLECTION:

Each group shares their group's reflection and responds to their colleagues. Guiding questions can be:

- What did you hear from other groups that resonated with you?
- How might this reflection lead to changes in the way you approach your work?

COMPONENT TWO:
Knowledge

Participants become **knowledgeable** of cultural heritage, life experiences and historical backgrounds of diverse groups in society. They understand how these differences impact the choices and behaviors of people who belong to different cultural, racial and ethnic groups; how those differences are frequently perceived by society and what meanings are attached to them; and an understanding of within group differences and the intersection of multiple identities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1.

What is the difference between "equity" and "equality" and why does it matter?

2.

How does an individual's culture and life experiences show up in their professional and academic lives?

3.

How do education and state policy structures contribute to or reproduce oppression for historically marginalized learners?

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN CTE?

In CTE, this means understanding that people carry their identities – and all of the history, biases and assumptions – throughout every aspect of their life. Because of the ways education and policy broadly and CTE specifically were inequitably designed, CTE education and policy structures must take an equity-minded approach to identifying and interrupting oppressive systems.

SESSION 4: **EQUALITY** VS. **EQUITY**

OBJECTIVE: Participants will explore the distinctions between equality and equity and reflect on CTE policies, programs or practices within their purview that represent equality and/or equity.

PRE-WORK:

READ:

MAKING GOOD ON THE PROMISE: UNDERSTANDING THE EQUITY CHALLENGE IN CTE
by Advance CTE[33]

READ:

WHEN THE RULES ARE FAIR, BUT THE GAME ISN'T
by Muktha Jost, Edward Whitfield and Mark Jost[34]

READ:

EDUCATION NARRATIVES: I WAS AN "ACCIDENTAL RACIST" WHO HELPED DENY EDUCATION TO OTHERS
by Scott Jenkins[35]

CONTEXT:

The pursuit of anti-racist policies and practices requires a commitment to equity-minded education. A commitment to equity-minded education means advocating for educational equity and the dismantling of systems and power structures that perpetuate inequity for minoritized learners. It is also important to note that, while often conflated, *equity* and *equality* are two distinct terms. Equality means treating everyone the same — a color-blind approach. An example of equality would be ensuring that all learners have access to the same resources, even if some learners do not need the resources or some learners need more resources. Equity, on the other hand, acknowledges the differences in learners — understanding that learners have different needs — and provides resources based on those needs.

Image courtesy of Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire. Retrieved from https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/ and http://madewithangus.com/ [36]

These images may be familiar, as they are commonly used to demonstrate the differences between the two concepts. In the first image, three people of different heights are attending a baseball game. They are standing behind a fence, each on top of one box. Distributing one box to each person is equal, but it is not equitable as each person does not need a box or the same number of boxes. By providing the number of boxes based on need, each person can enjoy the game. This is equity.

In the second image, four people of different sizes and ability are going for a bike ride. Providing each person with the same type

Image courtesy of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2017) [37]

of bicycle is equal, but it is not equitable as the bicycle is too big for some, too small for others and inoperable for others. By providing bicycles that are of different sizes or specifically made to accommodate riders with different physical abilities, each person can enjoy the bike ride. This is equity.
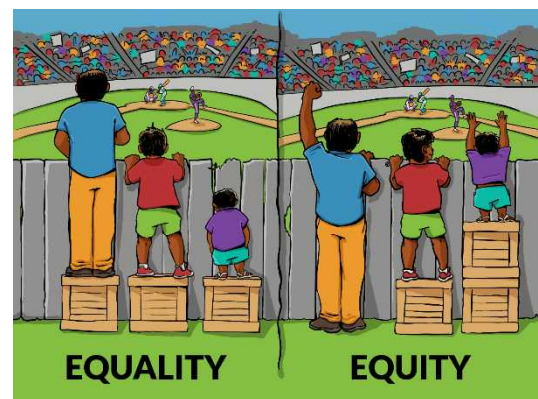
While these images are helpful in understanding the differences between equity and equality — and ensuring that resources and policies are distributed equitably is important — it is important to note that in solving for racial equity, the challenges do not lie with the individuals (e.g., not being tall enough to see over the fence or not being physically able to ride a traditional bicycle). This deficit frame, which inherently views differences in individuals as a challenge, does not lead to equitable policies and practices.

The third image illustrates the distinction between equality and equity while underscoring that the challenges are not with the children but instead with the ways in which systems and structures around them have been designed. In this case, the structure of the sloped fence and grass is a barrier to children of equal heights enjoying a baseball game. Providing each child with the same number of boxes may be equal, but it is not equitable as all children still are not able to enjoy the game. Providing each child with the number of boxes needed, even if some receive more than others, is equity and ensures that each child can enjoy the game.

It is important for CTE leaders, and education leaders more broadly, to embrace an asset frame as opposed to a deficit frame. An asset frame celebrates differences in individuals and recognizes that each person brings talents and gifts that can be nurtured and developed when given the opportunity. This occurs when systems that perpetuate inequities are eliminated to a point where race, socioeconomic status, gender identity and/or disability is no longer predictive of academic outcomes.[38]
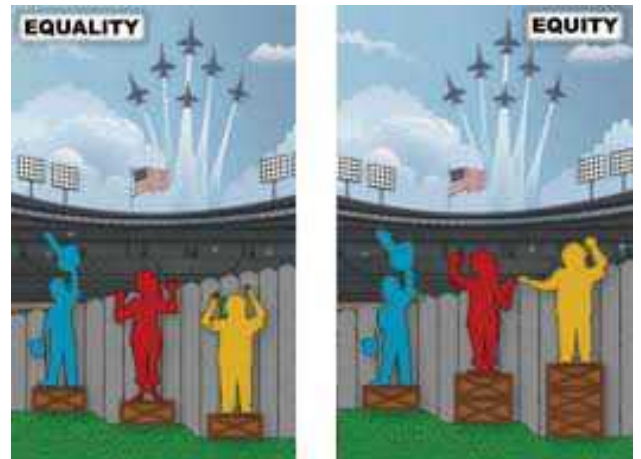

Image courtesy of the Equity in Education Coalition and retrieved from Pittsburgh Public Schools (2019)[39]

APPLICATION OF LEARNING

WHOLE GROUP:

Reflect on the pre-work readings by discussing the following questions:

- **Why is it important to distinguish between equality and equity?**
- **How is this distinction important to your work in CTE?**
- **What are examples of treating CTE learners with equality that might not actually be fair or may limit their success?**
- **How are learners treated/supported in an equitable CTE system?**

WHOLE-GROUP ACTIVITY:

EQUALITY VS. EQUITY:
The facilitator will lead this activity *(see Appendix A).*

WHOLE-GROUP ACTIVITY:

APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS TO AN OPPORTUNITY GAP:
In a small group, brainstorm ways to address opportunity gaps. An opportunity gap is a disparity in access or performance between one or more learner groups. Examples of opportunity gaps could be data showing English Language Learners are less likely to earn an industry-recognized credential or that female learners are overrepresented in programs of study that, on average, have lower wages than other programs of study.

For this activity, please refer to *Appendix C*, which has three different charts indicating various opportunity gaps between the percentage of high school learners enrolled in CTE compared to the overall learner population in a school district. The data indicate opportunity gaps by gender, race/ethnicity and special population categories. The facilitator will assign your group one opportunity gap to discuss. In your group, answer the following question:

- **How might this school district address the opportunity gap in a way that promotes equity, not just equality?**

REFLECTION:

Share out and discuss as a whole group

SESSION 5: **STRUCTURAL RACISM**

⏱ **90** MINUTES

OBJECTIVE: Participants will explore the concept of structural racism, consider how one's identity can affect their educational experience, and examine the ways biases and structural racism show up in CTE policies and practices.

PRE-WORK:

WATCH:

IMPLICIT BIAS AND STRUCTURAL RACISM
by Kirwan Institute (5 minutes)[40]

WATCH:

THE RACE GAP: HOW U.S. SYSTEMIC RACISM PLAYS OUT IN BLACK LIVES
by Reuters (3 minutes)[41]

WATCH:

HOUSING SEGREGATION AND REDLINING IN AMERICA: A SHORT HISTORY
by NPR (6:30 minutes; explicit language)[42]

WATCH:

LIFE CYCLES OF INEQUITY: HIGH SCHOOL
by Race Forward (7 minutes)[43]

WATCH:

BLACK STUDENT VOICES: WHAT EDUCATORS SHOULD KNOW
by Education Week (5 minutes)[44]

WATCH:

LATINO EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS: RUNNING FASTER BUT STILL BEHIND
by the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce (3 minutes)[45]

READ:

THE ARCHITECTURE OF SEGREGATION
by Paul Jargowsky[46]

CONTEXT:

The exclusion and marginalization of minoritized learners is not always intentional or at the forefront of a leader's mind; however, the marginalization is historical in nature and relies on structures that continue to shape the lives of minoritized learners. Black, Native American, Latinx, LGBTQ, immigrant and Muslim learners; learners from low-income families; and English language learners are examples of minoritized learners who have been historically shamed, physically removed, and asked to assimilate into spaces that have not honored them or their cultures.[47] And because learners often carry multiple identities (e.g., being Black or Latinx and economically disadvantaged), they can experience marginalization in different ways. For example, while someone can be White and economically disadvantaged, they still can benefit from a system that privileges Whiteness (recall Session 3 on privilege) whereas poverty can be an entirely different experience for someone who is Black and economically disadvantaged.

CONTINUED

APPLICATION OF LEARNING

DISCUSSION:

Reflecting on the pre-work, discuss the following questions in the whole group:

- **How might one's identity affect their experience in the education system?**
- **How might having multiple marginalized identities affect their experience?**

WHOLE GROUP ACTIVITY:
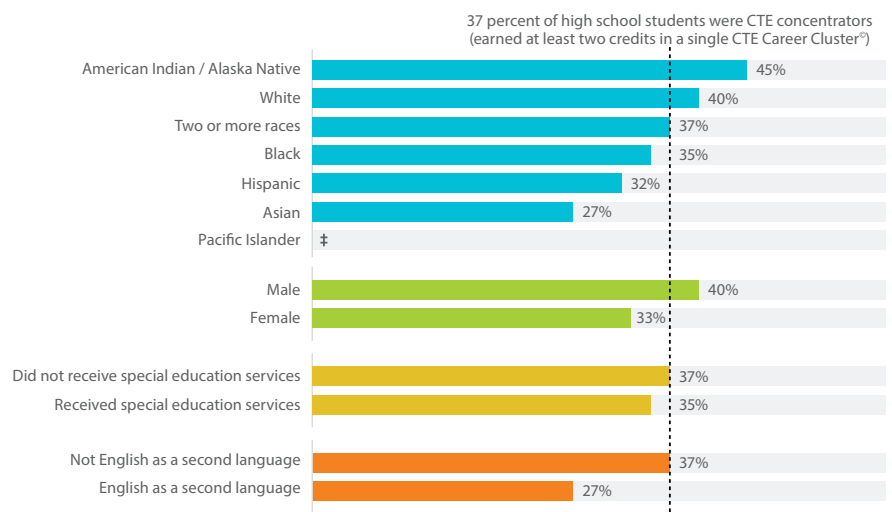
FISHBONE DIAGRAM ACTIVITY (CONTEXT):

A fishbone diagram is a visual way to brainstorm and identify possible causes of a problem by sorting ideas into useful categories. In this visual, the problem statement is displayed at the head of the fish while possible causes are listed on the smaller bones under various categories. Team members work collaboratively to brainstorm, and question and consider alternative causes from various perspectives during this exercise. The fishbone diagram can be helpful in identifying causes that might not have been considered by asking questions and digging deeper beyond the surface to better understand systems and underlying processes that may be contributing to and/or causing the identified opportunity gap. More than one root cause can be identified through this approach.

See Appendices D and E for a completed fishbone diagram example and a blank template for this activity.

FISHBONE DIAGRAM ACTIVITY (DIRECTIONS):

According to the U.S. Department of Education, less than half of all CTE participants in high school (37 percent) went on to concentrate in a specific program of study in 2013.[48] The data, also shown in figure 3, show that when disaggregated by subpopulations, White learners and male learners who were CTE participants went on to become concentrators at rates greater than the average (40 percent each) while Black learners (35 percent), Latinx learners (32 percent), female learners (33 percent) and English Language Learners (27 percent) were less likely to become concentrators.

Figure 3: Percentage of high school students who were CTE concentrators

37 percent of high school students were CTE concentrators (earned at least two credits in a single CTE Career Cluster©)

American Indian / Alaska Native	45%
White	40%
Two or more races	37%
Black	35%
Hispanic	32%
Asian	27%
Pacific Islander	‡
Male	40%
Female	33%
Did not receive special education services	37%
Received special education services	35%
Not English as a second language	37%
English as a second language	27%

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2019)[49]

Using a fishbone diagram, select a subpopulation that is under-represented among CTE concentrators. Map the ways bias and structural racism can affect who becomes a CTE concentrator.

- **How might bias at the school, district or postsecondary level affect who becomes a CTE concentrator?**
- **How might the design of policies and practices affect who becomes a CTE concentrator?**

Note that with this activity, the purpose is not to assign blame or criticism to any person or group of people.

Rather, the purpose is to identify and diagnose systemic barriers that leaders in CTE can control.
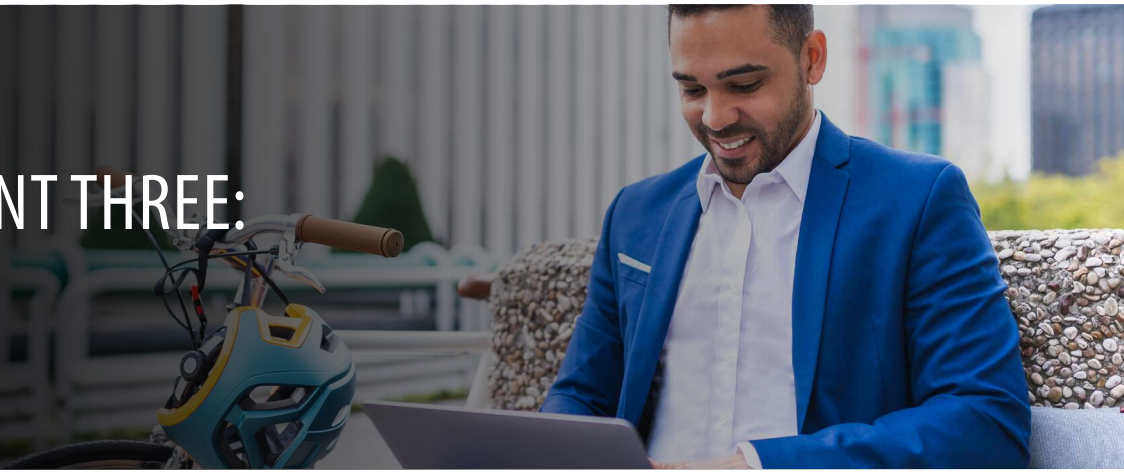
GROUP REFLECTION:

Share out and reflect.

COMPONENT THREE:
Skills

Participants **apply** and translate the awareness and knowledge components of the framework towards critical self-reflection into good policy and practice.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1.

How and when do I adjust policies and practices within my school district, institution, organization or state based on these reflections?

2.

How do I develop new policies, programs, and initiatives that foster equity in CTE? How about racial equity specifically?

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN CTE?

In CTE, this means evaluating existing and forthcoming policies and practices to ensure that they are rooted in equity.

SESSION 6: EQUITY-MINDED POLICY AND **PRACTICE**

OBJECTIVE: Participants will apply their awareness and knowledge to explore ways they can design equity-minded policies and practices.

PRE-WORK:

WATCH:

MITIGATING UNWANTED BIAS – INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS
by Kirwan Institute (4 minutes)[50]

READ:

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE ADVANCING EQUITY IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
by MDRC [51]

READ:

RACIAL EQUITY: POLICY DESIGN AND ADVOCACY
by Prosperity Now[52]

CONTEXT:

After a leader becomes aware and knowledgeable, the next logical question becomes, so what? How can I take what I have learned and apply it to my work? As stated in the purpose section of this guide, the ultimate goal is for users to become better equipped and motivated to advance anti-racist CTE policies and practices that are rooted in equity.

Whereas diversity is focused on increased representation of historically marginalized groups, equity focuses on an institution's or system's track record of producing successful outcomes among historically marginalized groups.[53] The three components to being an equity-minded leader are:[54]

1. Being race-conscious — noticing and questioning patterns of educational outcomes that reveal opportunity gaps and viewing inequities in the context of a history of exclusion and discrimination;

2. Being aware that beliefs, expectations and practices can be racialized unintentionally through implicit biases; and

3. Being willing to actively work to dismantle systems that perpetuate inequity.

Leaders in CTE can use equity-minded decision making to inform their approach to policy and practice. For example, states can use the Perkins V reserve fund to target increasing concentrator completion for learners with special population status. Local education leaders can leverage their CLNA data analysis to redirect Perkins V resources to close access gaps for subpopulations. Education leaders can conduct equity audits,[56] host equity ambassadors[57] and use human-centered design principles[58] in guiding decisions about priorities and incentives for funding. You can conduct an analysis of your hiring practices, working toward representational diversity among your educator workforce. These are just few examples. What others can you come up with?

EQUITY AUDITS

Tools states, institutions, districts and schools can use to identify and address inequities. These audits can involve examining data, policies and documents or conducting stakeholder surveys.[55]

EQUITY AMBASSADORS

Internal stakeholders who serve as local equity experts for an institution, district or school. In Ohio, each career technical planning district (CTPD) has an equity ambassador who serves as a liaison between the state and CTPD and represents the CTPD at state-level meetings.[59]

HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN

Systems or policies that are designed from the perspective of the person who experiences a problem, their needs, and whether the system or policy solution that has been designed is truly meeting their needs.[60]

CONTINUED

As leaders, your role can influence whether learners are successful or not. It is important to understand the way one's attitudes, beliefs and values inform the way a person thinks about minoritized learners and their outcomes.[61] One's attitudes, beliefs and values determine what questions are asked, what data is collected, how problems are defined and what actions are taken.[62]

APPLICATION OF LEARNING

DISCUSSION:

Reflecting on the pre-work, discuss the following questions in the whole group:

- **What were some of the equity challenges in the MDRC pre-reading? How did the community colleges address these challenges through policy and practice?**
- **How have you seen education and workforce programs in your state work to design equitable policies, programs or practices for CTE? If you have not seen examples of this work, what have been the challenges and barriers?**
- **What challenges and barriers do you foresee going forward? How might you proactively work to address these challenges and barriers?**

ACTIVITY:

EQUITABLE CTE POLICY DESIGN:

This activity is designed to engage participants in applying an equity-minded lens to CTE policy and practice. To meet this goal, it is important to identify the problem you are seeking to address through policy or practice, identify any equity challenges associated with this problem and develop equity-centered solutions. You will read three scenarios and practice applying an equity-minded lens to each. The first two scenarios will be discussed collaboratively as a whole group. For the third scenario, you will revisit the fishbone diagram exercise with the same group that you worked with in Session 5. Building on the fishbone activity, your group will apply an equity lens to address the opportunity gap you and your colleagues identified.

As a whole group, the facilitator will lead a discussion to identify the problem, equity challenges and possible equity-minded solutions for Scenarios 1.

Scenario 1:	*A small school district has an open enrollment policy for all of its CTE programs of study. However, the school district has only two area technical center campuses, both located in middle-class suburbs. The school district does not provide transportation.*
	How would you define the problem in this scenario? What equity challenges might this problem present? Using an equity-minded lens, identify possible solutions.

EQUITABLE CTE POLICY DESIGN CONTINUED:

For Scenario 2, the facilitator will place you in small group to repeat the same process as before.

Scenario 2:	*A community college examines enrollment and completion data for its remedial education courses. When doing so, the college discovers that a disproportionate percentage of learners in remedial education identify as economically disadvantaged and are first-time-in-college students. As a result, these learners are taking longer to complete their programs of study — if they complete at all.*
	How would you define the problem in this scenario? What equity challenges might this problem present? Using an equity-minded lens, identify possible solutions.

With the same group that you worked with to complete the fishbone diagram activity in Session 5, read Scenario 3 and consider how you would design a policy initiative using an equity-minded lens with the goal of increasing the percentage of learners who become CTE concentrators.

Scenario 3:	*Recall that in Session 5 you completed a fishbone diagram exploring the ways implicit biases and structural racism can affect who becomes a CTE concentrator. You have already identified the problem and equity challenges. Now, working with the same group from Session 5, imagine that you are a state leader planning to use your state's Perkins V set-aside funds for recruiting learners with special population status to design a new policy initiative that would increase the percentage of learners who become CTE concentrators.*

REFLECTION:

Each group shares their policy initiative for Scenario 3.

CONCLUSION

This equity discussion guide is designed to help CTE leaders better understand how they can approach the design of policies, programs and practice from an equity-minded lens. It also is intended to help leaders begin important, but difficult, conversations. However, it is not intended to be the end of these conversations. As noted, critical self-reflection is a continuous cycle. It requires continuous personal work to understand how your personal identities, experiences and worldviews influence your professional positions. This work happens in your heart, in your head and in your hands. The work is never done. Mistakes will be made. That is okay. We are all learning and endeavoring to do better.

APPENDIX:

A. **EQUALITY VS. EQUITY**

B. **EQUALITY VS. EQUITY** (ANSWER KEY)

C. **FICTITIOUS OPPORTUNITY GAP DATA**

D. **FISHBONE DIAGRAM EXAMPLE**

E. **FISHBONE DIAGRAM TEMPLATE**

E. **RESOURCES FOR STATES**

APPENDIX A   **EQUALITY** VS. **EQUITY**

Use of this activity is courtesy of Dr. Kumea Shorter-Gooden, Shorter-Gooden Consulting

Indicate whether each of the following is an example of equity, equality or neither.

1. **1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to integrate public schools**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

2. **Americans with Disabilities Act requirement that people with disabilities have equal access to public facilities**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

3. **Religious freedom per the First Amendment**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

4. **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which says that employers are required to accommodate their employees' religious observances or practices unless doing so would cause a "unique hardship to the conduct of the employer's business"**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

5. **Need-based scholarships**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

6. **Merit-based scholarships**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

7. **Property-tax based funding of local school districts**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

8. **Affirmative action**

   Equality   Equity   Neither

If the example is not an example of equity, what could be done instead to foster equity?

9. **A city is forced to cut the budget of its neighborhood service centers. The budgets of all six centers are cut by the same amount.**

    Equality   Equity   Neither

    If this is not equity, what would you do to foster equity?

10. **All public schools in one town have computer labs with the same number of computers and hours of operation.**

    Equality   Equity   Neither

    If this is not equity, what would you do to foster equity?

Develop your own examples — one that reflects equality and one that reflects equity.

11. **Example of an equality-oriented program in education:**

12. **Example of an equity-oriented program in education:**

EQUALITY VS. EQUITY
ANSWER KEY

Use of this activity is courtesy of Dr. Kumea Shorter-Gooden, Shorter-Gooden Consulting

Indicate whether each of the following is an example of equity, equality or neither.
Answers are in bold type.

1. **1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to integrate public schools**

   ◉ **Equality**   ○ Equity   ○ Neither

   RATIONALE: *Brown v. Board of Education* struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine and provided equal access to schools for Black children, but it did not correct historic inequities in education or rectify differences in access to educational resources based on persistent residential segregation and local property tax funding of schools.

2. **Americans with Disabilities Act requirement that people with disabilities have equal access to public facilities**

   ○ Equality   ◉ **Equity**   ○ Neither

   RATIONALE: The American with Disabilities Act provides targeted support to people with disabilities and ensures that public facilities provide necessary accommodations.

3. **Religious freedom per the First Amendment**

   ◉ **Equality**   ○ Equity   ○ Neither

   RATIONALE: The religious freedom component of the First Amendment allows for every American to practice the religion of their choosing, or to not practice any religion at all, without prejudice against or preferential treatment for any religion. However, it does not require employers or schools to provide reasonable accommodations for employees' or students' religious practices.

4. **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 says that employers are required to accommodate their employees' religious observances or practices unless doing so would cause a "unique hardship to the conduct of the employer's business"**

   ○ Equality   ◉ **Equity**   ○ Neither

   RATIONALE: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 goes beyond "religious freedom" and addresses potential inequities in the ability of employees to practice their religion. For example, the law offers protections to employees for whom Saturday is the sabbath and whose religion calls for them not to work on the sabbath.

5. **Need-based scholarships**

   ○ Equality   ◉ **Equity**   ○ Neither

   RATIONALE: Need-based scholarships provide targeted support to learners with low income who otherwise may have difficulty attending a school or postsecondary institution.

CONTINUED

6. **Merit-based scholarships**

○ Equality   ○ Equity   ◉ **Neither**

RATIONALE: Merit-based scholarships are not given to everyone nor are they intended to support learners from historically marginalized and excluded communities. Merit-based scholarships are instead offered to learners who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement. Merit-based scholarships tend to exacerbate inequity because learners who have experienced educational inequities are, on average, less likely to be eligible for merit-based scholarships.

7. **Property-tax based funding of local school districts**

○ Equality   ○ Equity   ◉ **Neither**

RATIONALE: The funding of local school districts based on property taxes does not result in the same amount of money being allocated to each school district nor does it result in added support to school districts serving learners from historically marginalized communities. Funding school districts based on property-taxes results in funding being distributed to schools based on the value of the homes that are located in the district. This results in learners from wealthier communities having greater access to educational resources, thus exacerbating inequities.

8. **Affirmative action**

○ Equality   ◉ **Equity**   ○ Neither

RATIONALE: Affirmative action provides preferential treatment in admissions for qualified students who represent communities that have been historically excluded from higher education institutions.

**For the following, indicate whether each is an example of equality, equity, or neither.
If the example is not an example of equity, what could be done instead to foster equity?**

9. **A city is forced to cut the budget of its neighborhood service centers.
    The budgets of all six centers are cut by the same amount.**

◉ **Equality**   ○ Equity   ○ Neither

RATIONALE: Cutting the budget of neighborhood service centers equally does not consider the different needs of each center; rather, this merely ensures each center's budget is reduced by the same amount.

If this is not equity, what would you do to foster equity?

> **EXAMPLE:** Conducting an equity analysis to understand the needs in each neighborhood, the types of services provided by each center, how often each service is used, and who uses the services. Based on this analysis, make proportional cuts — as necessary.

CONTINUED

10. **All public schools in one town have computer labs with the same number of computers and hours of operation.**

    ◉ **Equality**   ○ Equity   ○ Neither

    RATIONALE: Providing each public school the same number of computers does not consider the number of students at the school or the needs of students to use the computer lab outside of traditional school hours (i.e. if a school serves a large number of learners with low income who may be less likely to have computers or internet in the home). Instead, it provides each school an equal number of computers and standard hours of operation.

    If this is not equity, what would you do to foster equity?

    > **EXAMPLE:** Analyze school data and collect additional data as necessary (i.e. surveys) to determine the number of students attending each school in the town and any differences in the availability of computer access at home by race, ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status. Based on this data, allocate computers accordingly and create a plan to address the need for computer usage outside of traditional school hours.

Develop your own examples -- one that reflects equality and one that reflects equity.

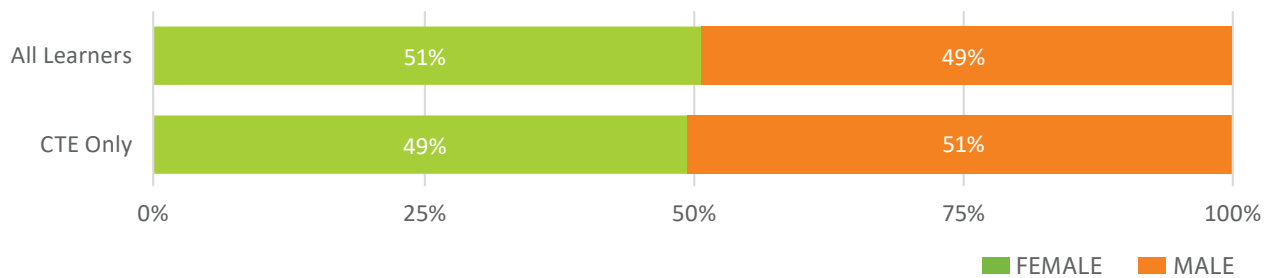11. **Example of an equality-oriented program in education –**

12. **Example of an equity-oriented program in education –**
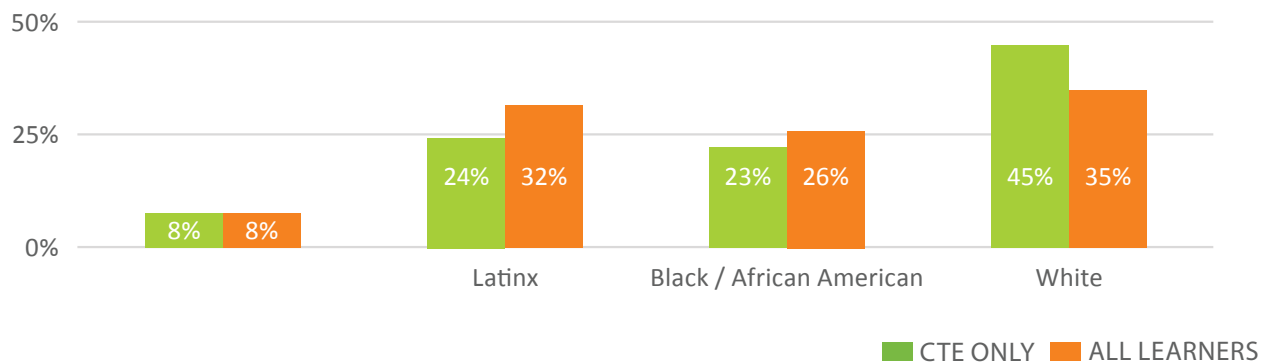
FICTITIOUS OPPORTUNITY GAP DATA

The following graphs represent fictitious data for Heartland Public Schools.

CTE Enrollment Compared to Community Demographics by Gender

	FEMALE	MALE
All Learners	51%	49%
CTE Only	49%	51%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

◼ FEMALE   ◼ MALE

INTERPRETATION: Female learners are underrepresented by 2 percentage points in CTE compared to all 9-12 learners in Heartland Public Schools.

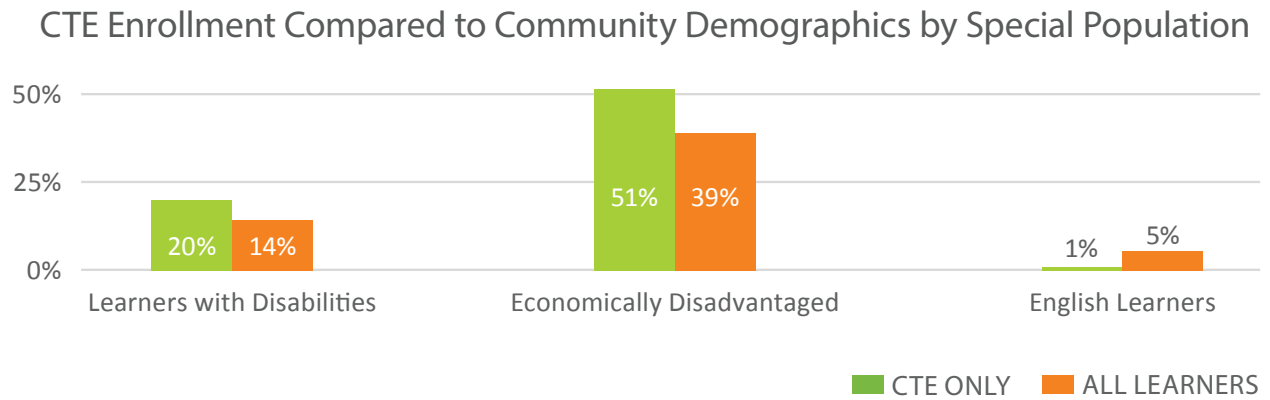### CTE Enrollment Compared to Community Demographics by Race / Ethnicity

	CTE ONLY	ALL LEARNERS
	8%	8%
Latinx	24%	32%
Black / African American	23%	26%
White	45%	35%

◼ CTE ONLY   ◼ ALL LEARNERS

INTERPRETATION: Latinx learners are underrepresented in CTE by 8 percentage points compared to all 9-12 learners in Heartland Public Schools. Black/African American learners are also underrepresented by 3 percentage points, and White learners are overrepresented by 10 percentage points.

CTE Enrollment Compared to Community Demographics by Special Population

Bar chart showing percentages:
- Learners with Disabilities: CTE ONLY 20%, ALL LEARNERS 14%
- Economically Disadvantaged: CTE ONLY 51%, ALL LEARNERS 39%
- English Learners: CTE ONLY 1%, ALL LEARNERS 5%

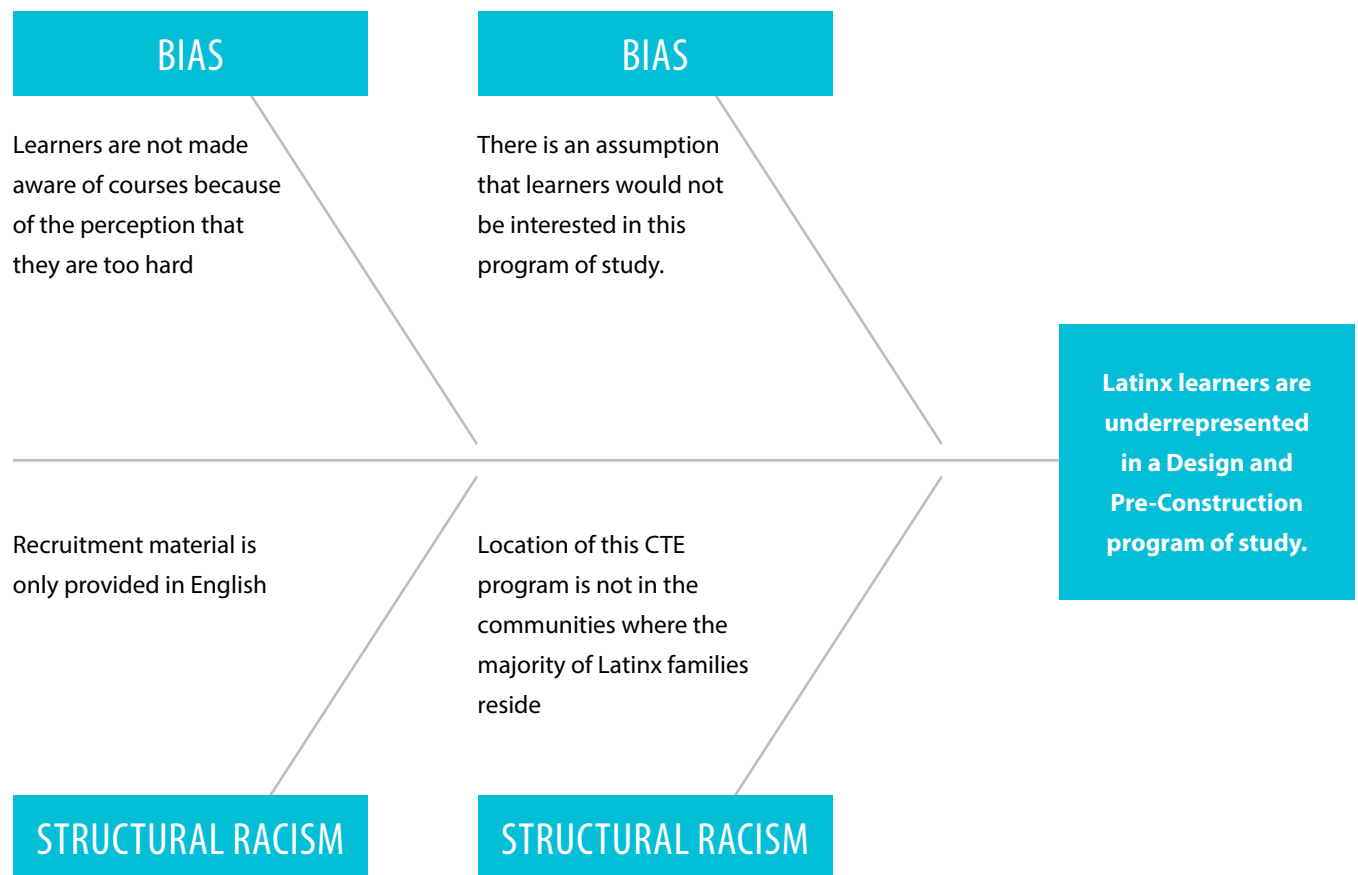Legend: CTE ONLY (green), ALL LEARNERS (orange)

INTERPRETATION: Learners with disabilities are overrepresented in CTE by 6 percentage points compared to all 9-12 learners in Heartland Public Schools. Economically disadvantaged learners are also overrepresented by 12 percentage points and English learners are underrepresented by 4 percentage points.
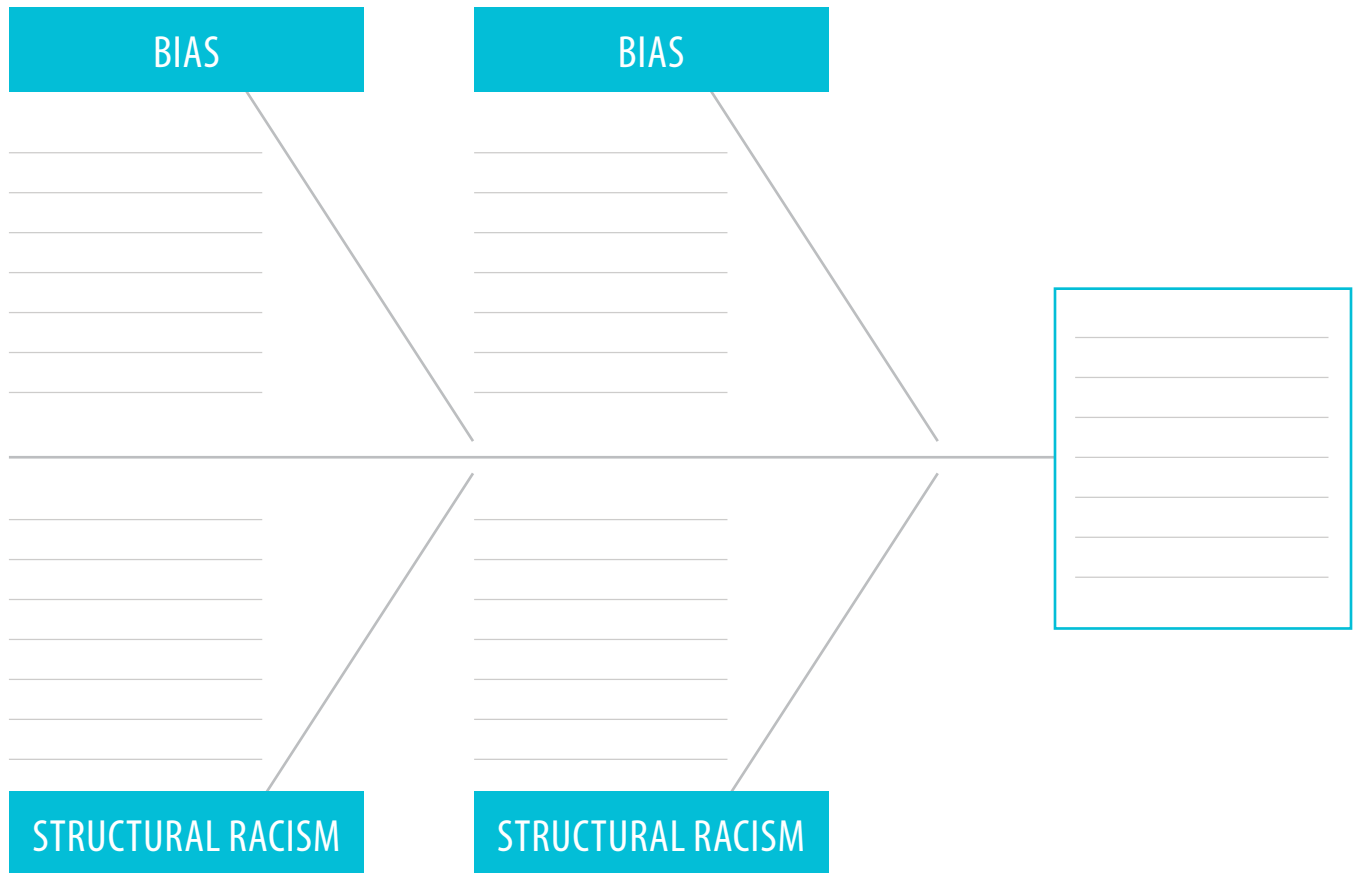
FISHBONE DIAGRAM
EXAMPLE

In this fictitious example, Latinx learners are under-represented in a public school district's Design and Pre-Construction program. In a brainstorming session using a fishbone diagram to explore biases that may contribute to this opportunity gap, the team of CTE leaders suggested that some school counselors or administrators may be more reluctant to advise Latinx learners to consider the Design and Pre-Construction program because they believe it may be too challenging or they assume this program may not be of interest to Latinx learners.

When considering structural racism or systemic biases, the team suggested that the district's policy of providing recruitment material only in English may be a barrier to entry for Latinx learners. Another example of a structural barrier concerns the location of the CTE program. The district only offers the Design and Pre-Construction program at select high schools, none of which are in communities where many Latinx families reside. Safety and transportation issues or other concerns may be a barrier preventing Latinx learners from pursuing this program.

BIAS

Learners are not made aware of courses because of the perception that they are too hard

BIAS

There is an assumption that learners would not be interested in this program of study.

Latinx learners are underrepresented in a Design and Pre-Construction program of study.

Recruitment material is only provided in English

Location of this CTE program is not in the communities where the majority of Latinx families reside

STRUCTURAL RACISM

STRUCTURAL RACISM

FISHBONE DIAGRAM
TEMPLATE

BIAS

BIAS

STRUCTURAL RACISM

STRUCTURAL RACISM

STATE RESOURCES:

- **Colorado Workforce Development Council**: **2020 Colorado Talent Equity Agenda** – This tool provides a policy agenda for targeting resources, raising awareness, and accelerating shared strategies to close racial economic disparities in the state's talent pipeline and to measure results.

- **Illinois State University: Super Strategies** – This website provides strategies for secondary and postsecondary CTE leaders working students from special populations.

- **Michigan Department of Education: Advancing Equity: A Strategic Vision for English Learners** – This resource describes four goals and strategies for fostering an educational environment that promotes the well-being and the building of knowledge for English language learners from early elementary through high school graduation.

- **Nebraska Department of Education: Strategies for Special Population Success** – This resource was developed for CTE practitioners to help develop plans to address equity gaps for special populations.

- **New Jersey Department of Education: Career Equity Resource Center** – This resource provides modules to support secondary and postsecondary CTE schools in addressing special population equity issues.

- **New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED): Martinez and Yazzie Equity Plan** – These tools and resources support the creation of an effective and equitable system of supports for all students and are focused on root-cause analysis, equity-focused leadership and continuous improvement, and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and pedagogy.

- **Vermont Agency of Education (VAE): Equity Lens Tool** – This resource establishes a common vocabulary and protocol for evaluating policies, programs, practices and decisions for equity.

- **Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS): System-wide Equity Report** – This report that identifies equity gaps within the WTCS along with goals and action steps for addressing the gaps.

OTHER RESOURCES:

- **University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education: Equity Scorecard** – The scorecard includes data tools and resources to help institutions explore opportunity gaps and potential solutions for improving equitable outcomes.

- **Racial Equity Tools** – This website offers tools, research, tips, curricula and ideas for people who want to increase their own understanding and to help those working for racial justice at every level: in systems, organizations, communities and the culture at large.

- **National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE): Nontraditional Career Preparation: Root Causes and Strategies** – This resource provides a comprehensive literature review that explores root causes or barriers to recruiting and retaining learners into non-traditional career paths along with evidence-based strategies and recommendations based upon root causes.

BOOKS:

- *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X Kendi
- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
- *Unequal City: Race, Schools, and Perceptions of Injustice* by Carla Shedd
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

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ENDNOTES

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