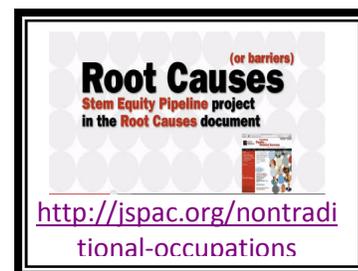


Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee's
Special Populations 101 * E-Seminar * Text and Links *



1 Hello, welcome to the CA Perkins Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee's E-Seminar on "Special Populations 101". The term Special Populations comes from the federal Carl D. Perkins Career Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006. The Perkins Act funds Career Technical Education and governs what expenditures and activities are required, permissible, and/or prohibited with Perkins dollars. Based upon the federal Perkins plan, California has written the CA State Plan for Career Technical Education (CTE) which "established the vision, goals and essential elements of a world-class CTE system for the State of California." In both the federal legislation and the state plan, program accountability is measured by Core Indicators which include: Skill Attainment; Completion; Graduation or Persistence; Placement or Employment; and Nontraditional Participation and Nontraditional Completion in CTE Programs. There will be another E-seminar to address Core Indicators soon. Schools and colleges are required to collect and report on each of the Core Indicators for all students and sub-sets of students defined as special populations. In addition, each school or college must identify a level of success they will achieve. If the schools do not meet this level of success, there is a course of action prescribed. Schools and Colleges are to analyze their Core Indicators data to determine gaps in student and program success and to guide them in developing a spending plan that closes the gaps identified.

2 The six identified sub-sets of students from special populations are presented below along with a brief discussion on a few of the many ways to assist these students in overcoming their individual barriers. Keep in mind that a strategy that works for one group of students may also work for others with little or no adaptation. Many of the words or phrases on the screen are identified as Root Causes by the **Stem Equity Pipeline Project** in the Root Causes and Strategies document available on the JSPAC website.



- The first special population sub-set is **Students with Disabilities** -- This includes all students who meet the criteria defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). California data has shown that students with disabilities are the most likely special population to get a degree and the least likely to get a job. These students often face a lack of self-confidence about entering the workforce and may also encounter employer bias or fear of hiring employees with disabilities.



Therefore, Early Exposure (<http://www.pathwaystoscience.org/discipline.asp?sort=GEN-STEM>) is essential: ensure that disabled students have access to employers, job sites, etc. from the very beginning of their educational program. Additionally, teaching students with disabilities about Self Efficacy and Self Advocacy is important. Teaching students to believe in and advocate for themselves will ease the transition from school or college into the workplace as well as enable them to negotiate for needed accommodations.



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- The next sub-set of students is **Displaced Homemakers**. -- Displaced Homemakers are students who have been out of the workforce caring for a home for an extended period of time and thus have diminished workforce skills. Frequently, these student's biggest hurdle is the internal dialog that says, "they won't be successful". Thus, it is important to show the student how the skills they mastered in running a home are also important to success on a job such as: budgeting, conflict negotiation, transportation logistics, and time management. An additional barrier may be that many of these students may have had little or no access to computers and have been out of school for a long time.

Therefore, these students may need basic computer skills courses as well as basic skills courses. When selecting a career, it is important that these students utilize the JSPAC 4-Step Career Selection process - available on the JSPAC website (www.jspac.org) - which will take them through a process of determining what is required financially to live in their region with their family. This will assist students in determining careers that they will enjoy and at which they will be successful; ensure that the careers selected are in-demand careers, pay enough, and have training close to their homes; This process will provide information they need to make a educational and career plan!

- Students who are **Economically Disadvantaged** are another special population subset -- In working with these students, it is important to assist them in choosing a career that is high-wage and high-demand in their region (<http://www.insightcced.org/index.php?page=ca-sss>). Counseling students to look at careers that are high-wage, high-demand will allow students to become economically self-sufficient as well as expose them to careers that they have never considered.

Frequently the high-wage, high-demand careers are nontraditional by gender for women. A formal educational and career plan is essential as research shows that students with a plan and a declared major are more successful in school and college.

Additionally, many students who are economically disadvantaged face difficulty in paying for tuition, books, childcare, and housing. Therefore, providing **support services** to assist Economically Disadvantaged students in paying for these essentials will allow students to persist and succeed.



Remember to provide these students with written, multilingual information about student services available -- on campus or in the community. Better yet, provide it to all students - students may not have self-identified as economically disadvantaged, thus you may not know that a student is struggling financially. A list of services available attached to all class syllabi is one option, tray liners printed with this information is another!



Limited English Proficient (LEP, ELL, ESL) students are also identified as a special population sub-set -- Some **classroom strategies** that may allow LEP students to fully benefit include: creating group projects and utilizing flexible seating arrangements - both of these strategies provide students opportunities to interact with different students. Often barriers are lessened when students connect with one another.

Make a Difference for
Limited English Proficient
Students

<http://ccspecialpopulations.org/>

Additionally, it is helpful to have written lesson plans, PowerPoints, and/or to write homework assignments and important concepts on the board and on the web. This may benefit all students, not just those who are LEP. Other ideas include: bilingual aides and dictionaries, school tutoring, CTE tutoring and Vocational ESL (an example from SDCE [VESL](#)), expanding the cultural understanding as well as that of the native English speakers in the class and even learning a few words in the student's language to make them feel welcome, and finally, professional development for all educators.

Working with families to support students who choose careers that are Nontraditional by gender or Nontraditional for their culture may be essential. Frequently, students may select a career and then meet with resistance at home. Therefore, it is essential to supply the student with information on salary, career ladders, training, and employment outlook. Additionally, when possible, invite families to the program to allow them to see that the setting is appropriate and safe for their family members. Provide cross-cultural examples, role models and mentors. When one student in a family or cultural group finds success in the program, have them invite others to join them.

Finally, learning and talking about Stereotype Threat is important as cultural bias may exist both at the school or college as well as within the student and their communities. In working with LEP students, remember that limited English skill does not mean lack of conceptual understanding or intelligence!

ReducingStereotypeThreat.org

reducingstereotypethreat.org

- The next group includes **Single Parents, single pregnant women, and parenting teens** --Occupational choice is pivotal to ensuring a self-sufficiency wage (Career Guidance) in a high-wage, high-demand fields. Utilizing the [JSPAC 4-Step Career Selection Process](#) will assist students in selecting a career that meets their needs financially as well as has robust opportunities, and provides job satisfaction. Support Services to help with childcare, etc., and developing a sense of Self Efficacy are also important.

More Resources for Self-Efficacy:

http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/self_efficacy.htm

AND

<http://tweenparenting.about.com/od/educationissues/a/classroom-success.htm>

The final sub-set of students includes all students preparing for a career that is **Nontraditional (NT) by gender** - Students preparing for a career in which fewer than 25% of the employees in that occupation are of the students gender will face barriers that could possibly thwart their efforts. However, with proper preparation and training this can easily be overcome.

The initial barrier remains a lack of Access to and information about ALL CTE programs - even those that may traditionally seem appropriate for only one gender. Thus, providing positive information about career opportunities, job skills requirements and monetary remuneration for example, is vital in encouraging a student to enter into a career that is well suited to the student's interest and abilities and Nontraditional for his or her gender. Highlighting a positive message about CTE in general and NT occupations in specific to counter the negative bias and assumptions that are around.

Talk to the students about the bias they will face - forewarned is forearmed. Invite, involve, and educate parents and families. Provide professional development for all school personnel, especially counselors - who are frequently the gatekeepers to career choice! In addition to it being the equitable thing and at times the right thing to do; remember that the CA education code 66271.7d, states that: *Any school personnel acting in a career counseling or course selection capacity to any pupil shall affirmatively explore with the pupil the possibility of careers, or courses leading to careers, that are nontraditional for that pupil's sex!*



Ok, that is a lot to digest in about ten minutes! However, before you tune out; take a minute to visit (and bookmark) the rest of the JSPAC website, while you are here, sign up for the News You Can Use newsletter. Attend a JSPAC Conference! Host a JSPAC regional workshop! Next time you are thinking about program improvement, or have a student who is not doing as well as you know they could: visit the JSPAC website and look through some resources for inspiration and guidance!