Welcome to the JSPAC's (CA Perkins Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee's) *Using Data for Career Technical Education (CTE) Program Improvement*. Over the next 15 minutes or so, we will provide a brief overview of how data can be used to improve Career Technical Education programs and lead to enhanced student success. We will also direct you to some resources that will assist you as you work towards program improvement.

The Perkins Act of 2006 requires that data be analyzed to determine students' outcomes and identify gaps in performance among various special population subgroups. Once gaps are identified, you can look to possible root causes for those gaps and design strategies to close them.

The goal we all have as educators is to improve services, processes, programs, pedagogy, and materials so that there are as few barriers to student success as possible. Data on how students are performing will guide us in determining where we are succeeding and where improvement is needed. From there, we can identify root causes and select strategies and services to assist students in reaching their goals. In addition to identifying performance gaps, data can tell us which programs, services, or instructors are working well and enabling students to thrive.

We know that some of you are giddy with excitement at the use of data and some just want to throw your hands up in the air. It's okay. We agree. With all of you! Data isn't the answer to all our questions, but it must be the starting point to all program improvement planning.

The Perkins Act contains Core Indicators of program and student success. Although they are a bit different for secondary and post-secondary education, in general the Core Indicators are: Skill Attainment, Completion, Graduation or Persistence, Placement or Employment, and Nontraditional by gender Participation and Completion. For each Core Indicator, schools track and report outcomes for each special population sub-group ((Dis)abled, Displaced Homemakers, Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, Nontraditional (by gender) and Single Parents). Visit your system's Perkins office or the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network[1] for additional and specific information (http://cte.ed.gov/index.cfm).

Each school must set a level of performance for each Core Indicator and then is required to meet at least 90% of that goal. Additionally, each year the goal is raised – remember, Perkins funds are to improve and expand! If your school doesn't meet or exceed the goal, it is faced with sanctions and a possible loss of funding. It is important to realize that the goals are there to help us see what is happening in our classrooms and programs so we can best serve our students, it is not punitive! When an indicator isn't met, it behooves us to look at the performance of the special populations' subgroups to see which subgroup might be struggling and therefore, may be the cause of the low performance. From there, we look for the Root Cause of the low performance, and select strategies to address that issue.

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[1] http://cte.ed.gov/index.cfm

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However, before commencing a program improvement process, it's important to know, specifically, which core indicators are weak and what other data sets indicate. The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity or NAPE has developed the PipeSTEM Program Improvement Process. In this process, the first step is to analyze your data fully because the strategies for program improvement vary. For example, if students are having difficulty in Core Indicator 1 or skill attainment, instructional or classroom approaches might need to be changed. However, if the difficulty is in Core Indicator 2 or completion, it might mean that additional student supports are required.

However, sometimes the Core Indicator data doesn't tell us everything. It is helpful to get additional data that refine the picture. For instance, at the community college level, it is important to work with your Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) office when looking at the Core Indicator data for students with disabilities. Additionally, working with your school or community CalWORKs or welfare office when looking at Core Indicator data on students who are Economically Disadvantaged may allow you to develop a clearer and more accurate picture of how low socio-economic status (SES) students are faring on your campus. On your screen and in the companion PDF file for this E-Seminar on the JSPAC website (www.jspac.org) are links to additional data sets to analyze in your search.

a. Disabled – Disabled Students Programs and Services
b. Displaced Homemaker – Supplemental registration, financial aid,
c. Economically Disadvantaged – Supplemental registration, financial aid, free and reduced lunch
d. ESL– Supplemental registration, ESL courses
e. NT– Supplemental registration, course registrations
f. Single parent– Supplemental registration, financial aid, Special Population program rosters

For the Core Indicator for placement or employment, it is important to look also at the Labor Market Information for your local area. If a student is getting her or his certificate or diploma only to find there are no jobs in her or his field, it does the student, our schools, and ultimately, our economy a major disservice! On your screen and in the companion PDF are two resources that are beneficial in obtaining California Labor Market Information (LMI) http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/ & http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/.

In order to understand the entire story, it is also important to get all the data disaggregated for your site to the lowest common factor (Such as by each special population group as well as ethnicity and gender). If you have no access to the data yourself, ask your institutional researcher or admissions officers for data disaggregated by gender, race and ethnicity, age, parental status, socio-economic status, English language learner status, (dis)ability, etc. It is also important to know the subgroup's outcomes **_compare to_** outcomes of students who are not a member of the Special Populations subgroups.
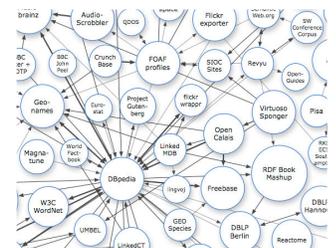
Finally, getting your **_local program level data_** is imperative – you simply can't improve your specific program with district level data alone. Get local demographic data to see the makeup of your community and see if one gender or racial group is over-represented or under-represented in your school or programs. If this is an issue, a professional development day with

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counselors, recruiters, feeder-school information officers, the marketing department, etc. may be in order to bolster recruiting of the under-represented groups.

In addition to the Core Indicator data, look at additional local data such as attendance, GPA, graduation rates, and middle or high school course enrollment. This may assist you in identifying gaps in counseling or marketing practices about careers. You may identify a course selection

$$GPA = \frac{\sum (Course\ GP * Course\ Credits)}{\sum Gradable\ Credits}$$

bias or micro-messages in posters, classroom decorations, or counseling materials that indicate to some students that a career is only for men or that Blacks need not apply.

Once you have a clear picture that it is one specific subgroup – maybe teen parents or single parents -- who are not succeeding, it is easier to plan strategies that accurately address the issue. Additionally, seeing programs or classes that are extremely successful in serving a particular sub-group, gives you a place to start to identify what administrators and or teachers are doing that is working so well. This allows you to model strategies around locally proven successes.

Okay, so now you have completed Step 1 of NAPE's Process for Program Improvement. The next step is to identify and verify Root Causes for the gaps and select Strategies to address them. If, indeed, you have verified that it is the teen- or single parents who are not doing well in your program, you now can talk to these students, do a literature review, talk to teen parents/single parents who have dropped out, etc. to determine the actual Root Cause. NAPE has a _Root Cause and Strategies_ document that is a fabulous literature review that can be used as a starting point for this step. Access it on the JSPAC or CCC Special Populations (www.jspac.org or www.cccspecialpopulations.org) websites. The cause of low performance might be a lack of transportation, the pace of the class is too fast, inadequate daycare options, or any of the plethora of other barriers teen-parents and single parents may be facing that is making it difficult to succeed.

Once you have identified a probable root cause or causes, it then falls upon you to select the most economical, practical, and effective strategy to close the gap. Going back to our teen or single parents, let's say your inquiry determines that the biggest barrier is the pace of the class. Strategies to help students overcome this barrier may include developing an online self-paced program, establishing tutoring and study groups, or making some one-semester courses into two-semester courses for some sections. These strategies may also close gaps for other special populations such as students who are ELL, disabled, or economically disadvantaged.

Once you have selected a strategy or two, the 3rd and final step is to apply the strategy and then measure the outcomes again. The strategy may not have worked as intended. Alternatively, it may have worked not only on the teen-parents in our example but also for students with disabilities. Only a re-analysis of the data will allow you to know the outcomes of your program improvement strategies. In the environment in which schools function, we cannot spend time and dollars with no outcomes, nor can we gamble with our students' futures.

The following resources will aid you in your Program Improvement Process.

Our website, the Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee site at www.jspac.org has written resources, additional E-Seminars, low-cost or free professional development opportunities, links to other sites, newsletters, etc. to assist you in your process.

The California Community College Special Populations Collaborative at www.cccspecialpopulations.org, has information on CA Perkins Core Indicators, effective practices, resources, links, and four-page handouts on tips to serve Nontraditional students, Limited English students, Students from Special Populations in general, as well as one on understanding and using the Core Indicators.

The final organization that is especially helpful is the aforementioned National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity or NAPE. NAPE has dozens of one-hour webinars, hundreds of scientifically proven resources, public policy information, and fee-based yearlong professional development opportunities on the PipeSTEM Program Improvement Process and on the scientifically proven ideas behind eliminating micro-inequities and using positive micro-messages (micro-affirmations) to reach all students. You'll find the Root Causes document on their website as well.

Ok, we know data is a lot to handle – but really, it's just story telling with numbers. Don't be intimidated by the charts, columns, and dryness. It's actually easy with a little effort and understanding – and disaggregated data of course. We are here to help!

Before you tune out; take a minute to visit and bookmark the rest of the JSPAC website, while you are there, 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!

References and Works Cited

CA Community College Collaborative
www.cccspecialpopulations.org
CA EDD -- Labor Market Information
http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/
Doing What Matters
http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/

Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee
www.jspac.org
System for Adult Basic Education Support
http://sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol16/16teller.htm
Perkins Collaborative Resource Network
http://cte.ed.gov/index.cfm

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