CTE | Career & Technical Education RESEARCH NETWORK

Infusing an Equity Approach into Career and Technical Education Research

A presentation to the CTE Research Network 2023 Training Institute

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Equity Challenges in CTE

CTE, formerly known as vocational education, has a history of **"tracking" learners from historically marginalized populations** into terminal vocational programs with limited opportunities.

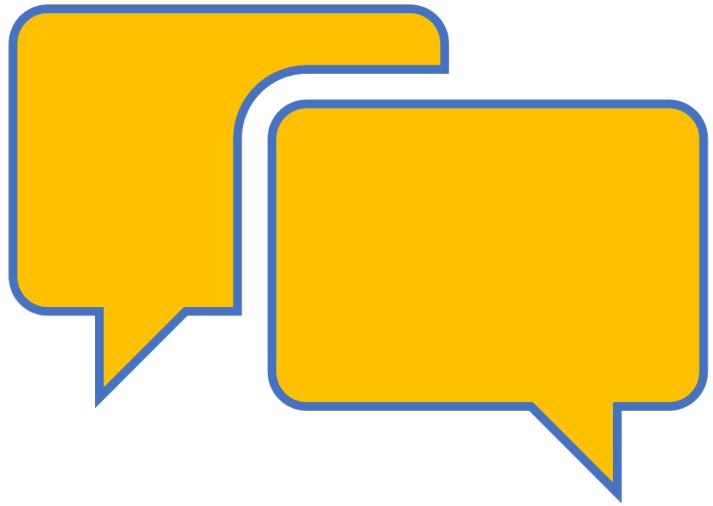
CTE has undergone **a transformation** and now includes a variety of career pathways at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Inequities in accessing and succeeding in higher quality CTE programs **still exist.**

What does equity mean to you?

What does it mean specifically in the context of CTE?

Jot your ideas in the chat.



Defining Equity

> “Every student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.
>
> — Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.

CTE Research Network Equity Workgroup

The CTE Research Network is a group of IES-funded projects that examine the **impact of CTE**.

The Network's **Equity in CTE Workgroup** includes members who are interested in issues of equity.

The workgroup saw the need for a framework to guide CTE researchers in **using an equity lens**.

The workgroup reviewed existing frameworks and literature to develop the **equity framework**, which was then reviewed by individuals from different audiences.

Values Underlying the Framework

About CTE

- Every student should have the opportunity to engage in high-quality CTE experiences that align with and expand their interests and aspirations and prepare them for labor market opportunities.
- Participation in CTE programs, experiences of CTE, and outcomes of CTE should not be determined by group characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, family structure, income, disability status, language, sexual orientation, gender identity).

About CTE Research

- Data should be collected, obtained, analyzed, and used to identify and address structural and institutional barriers that inhibit equitable participation and outcomes for CTE participants.
- Different research questions require different methods, and multiple methods are needed to understand the issues of equity more fully.

What This Framework Is (and Is Not)

It **IS NOT** a methodological primer or a replication of existing research guidance.

It **IS** intended to encourage researchers to think about their work through a different lens to center equity.

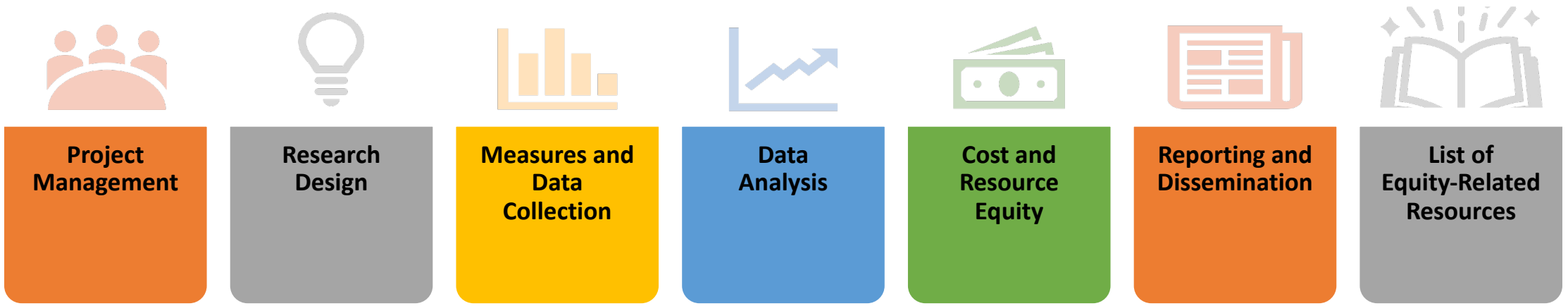
“We believe that infusing equity throughout our research is critical to ensuring that research can make a difference in promoting equitable learning experiences and outcomes for all students who participate in CTE.” — Equity in CTE Workgroup

What does the framework cover?

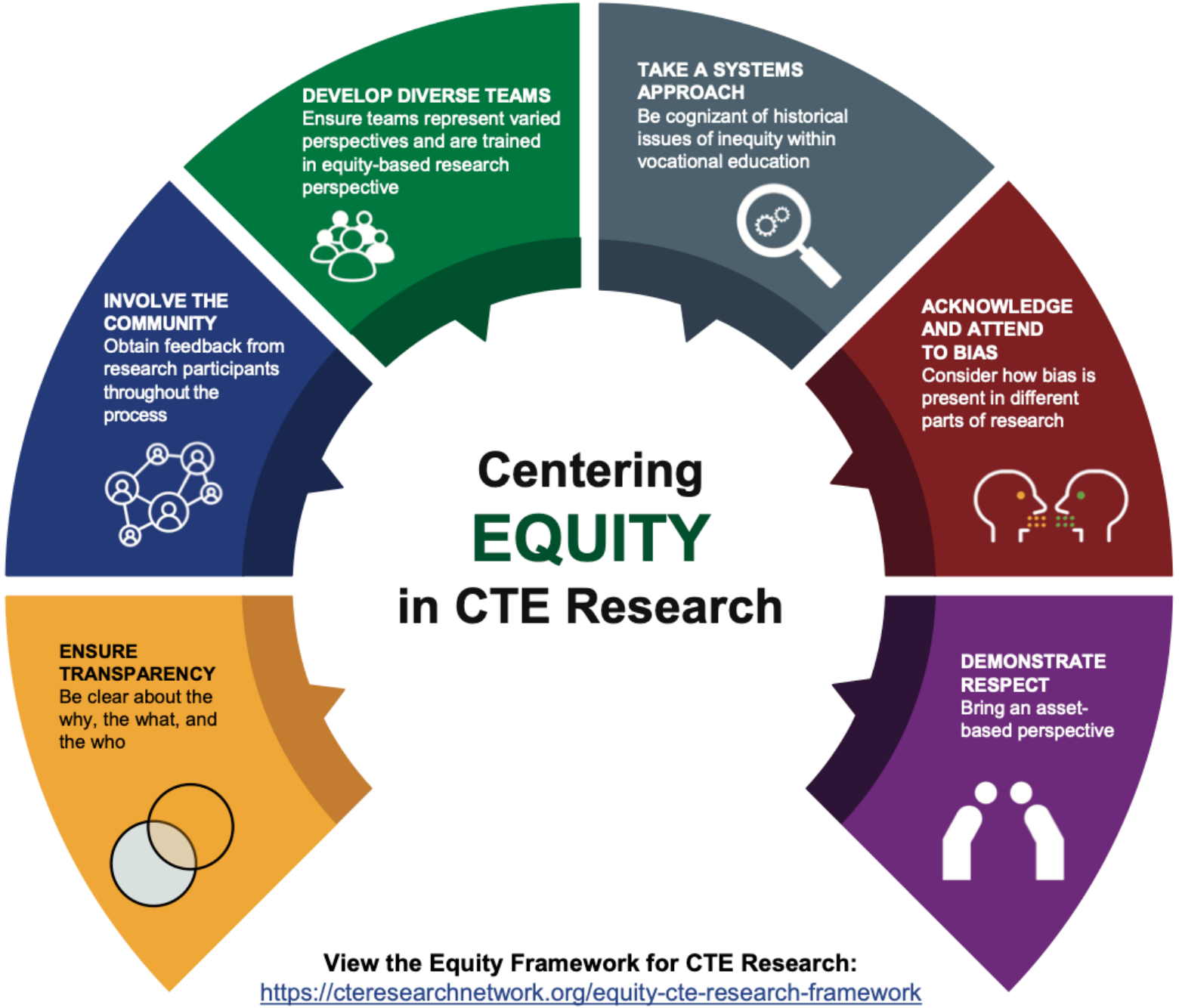
Complex, structural inequities in CTE require research that embeds a focus on equity at **every stage of the research process**.

Each stage includes the following:

- Description of the stage and how to implement it with an equity-focused lens
- Questions and issues to consider in implementing an equity-focused research lens
- Potential barriers to implementing an equity lens in CTE research
- Examples from current or future CTE research



Cross-Cutting Themes Within the Equity Framework



View the Equity Framework for CTE Research:
https://cteresearchnetwork.org/equity-cte-research-framework

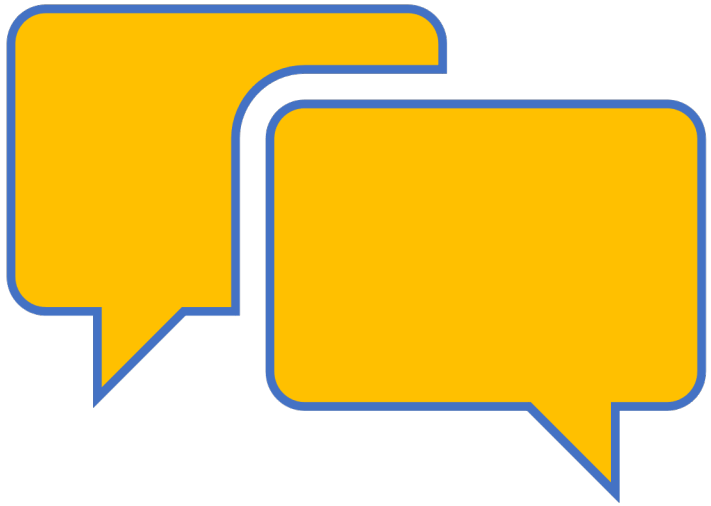
THEME

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

Research Stage	Sample Strategies
Research Design	Engage the community of interest in designing the project to reflect members' input, experiences, and perspectives.
Measurement and Data Collection	Integrate community feedback throughout the instrument development and data collection process.
Data Analysis	Involve community members in making sense of the analyses.
Reporting and Dissemination	Gain input from the populations studied about the language used to share findings. Make sure that findings go back to the people who gave you the data.

How do you involve representatives from the community and other stakeholders in the different stages of the research process?

Jot your ideas in the chat.



THEME

Take a Systems Approach

Research Stage	Sample Strategies
Research Design	Place the burden of change primarily on the system by examining system- or institution-level factors that might result in disparities in outcomes.
Data analysis	Consider the presence and differential impact of structural barriers on CTE participation and outcomes.
Cost and Resource Equity	Capture differences in access to and participation in resource-using activities provided to some but not all learners in a CTE program of study.

Consider these two different research questions

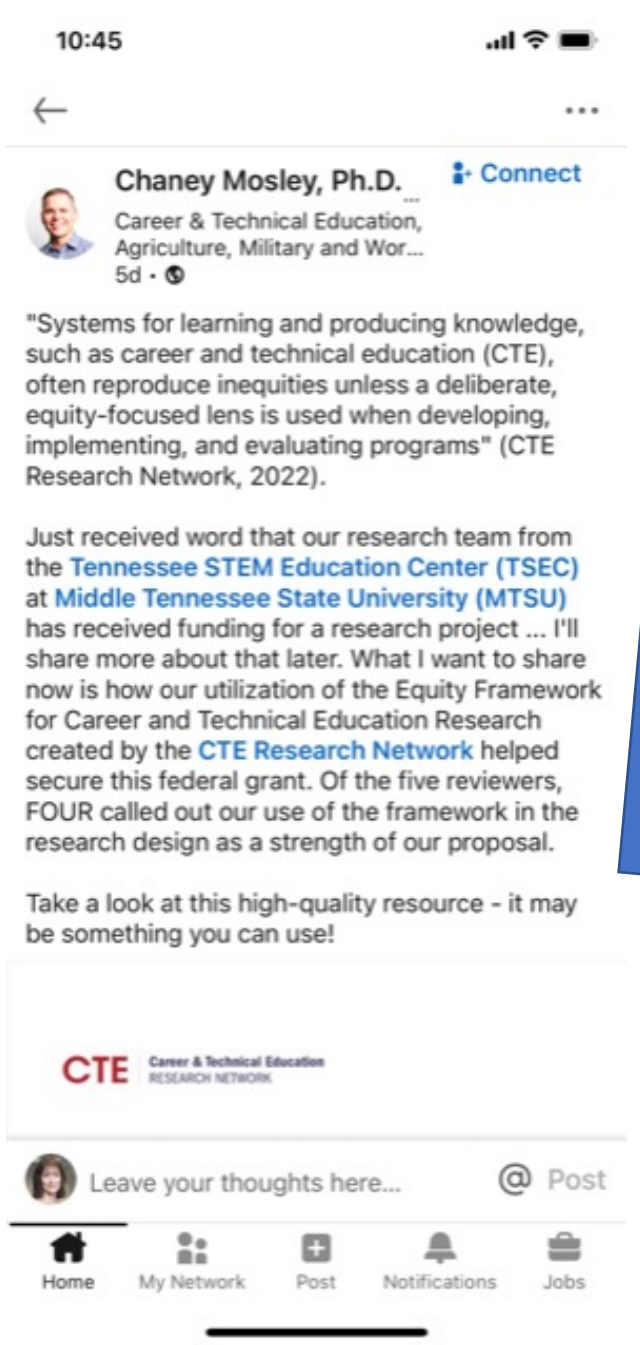
- To what extent do economically disadvantaged students in CTE dual enrollment courses perform as well as non-economically disadvantaged students?
- What institutional factors affect the performance of economically disadvantaged students in CTE dual enrollment courses?

Where does each question put the **responsibility** for change?

How does changing the question affect how you think about the research design?

What kinds of questions are you asking in your research?

Using the Framework can help in lots of ways…



Of the five reviewers, FOUR called out our use of the framework in the research design as a strength in our proposal

Equity Resources

Equity Framework for CTE Research:
https://cteresearchnetwork.org/equity-cte-research-framework

Selected resources for using an equity lens in research:

Guiding Questions for Supporting Culturally Responsive Evaluation Practices and an Equity-Based Perspective (MDRC):
https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/Equity-Guiding_Questions.pdf

How to Embed a Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective in Research (Child Trends):
https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RacialEthnicEquityPerspective_ChildTrends_October2019.pdf

Urban Institute Guide for Racial Equity in the Research Process (Urban Institute):
https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103102/urban_institute_guide_for_racial_equity_in_research_process_0.pdf

The Data Equity Framework (We All Count):
https://weallcount.com/the-data-process/

Questions?

What else do you want to know about the framework?

How can you envision using it?

Connect

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