MASTER COURSE GUIDE

Supporting Special Populations Students in Career & Technical Education

An online, self-paced course for CTE Leaders and Instructors

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Online Course: Supporting Special Populations Students in Career & Technical Education

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Supporting Special Populations Students in Career & Technical Education is an online, self-paced course designed for school leaders, support staff and classroom teachers involved in Pennsylvania Career and Technical Education.

The course is designed and presented by the National Center for College and Career Transitions under contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Career and Technical Education.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop a consistent understanding of "Special Populations" as defined under Perkins V Legislation.
- Understand other major federal legislation related to the education of special populations.
- Recognize physical, social, and psychological barriers to student success within the school environment.
- Learn how to organize classroom, laboratory, and career/technical student organization activities that do not discriminate against students who are representative of special populations.
- Use research-based strategies to support special populations students in the CTE classroom.

All modules are asynchronous and self-paced. Each module takes no more than one hour to complete, which includes reviewing written materials and completing the written reflections.

In each module, you will learn about one of the special populations categories and explore different strategies for serving these students effectively. You will also gain

access to resources, and reflective journal. Two modules focus on serving students with disabilities, which is a more complicated and important topic, given the significant percentage of CTE students who have an identified disability.

The course contains a Reflective Journal where participants will respond to reflective prompts following each module.

Here you see the nine special populations identified in the Perkins Act.

1. individuals with disabilities (2 modules).
2. individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults.
3. individuals preparing for non-traditional fields.
4. single parents, including single pregnant women.
5. out-of-workforce individuals (not covered in this course, because it applies to adults).
6. English learners.
7. homeless individuals described in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a).
8. youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, and
9. youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty.

Each learning module takes on average 30 minutes to complete, and includes,
- PowerPoint slides that explain the relevant content,
- A copy of the PowerPoint narration script to provide background information for future access.
- Links to PDE materials developed for Special Populations in CTE, and other resources relating to the topic of the specific module.
- Reflection prompts that the student will complete to demonstrate their understanding of material covered in the module and their application to their work.

We suggest that you pursue this course in the order it is presented, but if you want to jump ahead to a topic that is of particular interest to you, that is ok, as long as you return to complete the other modules.

Module 1. Introduction to the Course

Description
This module introduces you to the background behind the course and course content, learning outcomes, and expectations. This is a ten module, self-paced, course based on a project sponsored by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Career & Technical Education (referred to as CTE). The focus for this project is serving and supporting students from

"Special Populations" as defined by Perkins V legislation. The Perkins Act is the federal legislation that provides funding and guidelines for state and local CTE.

View the Module 1 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module One Resources

Please use these links to access the related resources we will using as part of this course. You can continue to access these resources after you have completed the course.

In this module, you can access these resources:
- [Resource Guide: Publications & Electronic Resources Relating to Special Populations](#)
- [Strategies For Serving Special Population Students](#)

Reflection Journal

Make sure to use the downloadable Reflective Journal to record your notes and observations. Your journal will be a key tool in supporting your personal learning throughout the course. You may also be asked to share this journal with your administrator to gain professional learning credit for taking this course.

Assignment

Please complete the Module One Prompts (Reflection Journal).

1. What is your current position?

2. What are your individual learning goals for this course?

3. Write a definition of "Special Populations" in your own words.

Module 2: Introduction to Students with Disabilities

Description
In this module, we will be addressing students with disabilities who have met certain criteria that make them eligible for special education services under another federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is explained in more detail in the next section.

In Pennsylvania, 29 percent of CTE students have an identified disability. That is why this topic is so important for CTE teachers to grow in the competence for serving students across a range of disabilities.

When designing support strategies for students with disabilities, it is important to consider the wide range of students that qualify under this special population designation, and the unique barriers they face.

As you develop your knowledge of **support services and accommodations, you will be better equipped to** tailor your instruction and accommodation to each individual student based on their personal strengths, interests, and career goals.

View the Module 2 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module Two Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

Please review each of the resources, both introduced in Module 1 –
- Strategies for Serving Special Populations in CTE
- Resource Guide: Publications & Electronic Resources Relating to Special Populations

These resources will give you a deeper understanding of strategies to better serve students with disabilities in CTE.

Module 2 Assignment

Please complete the Module Two Prompts (Reflection Journal).

1. This module contains a lot of information. What are you wondering about?

2. What is the purpose of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in special education?

3. What are three strategies or concepts you have learned about from the resources that you can use to support your students with disabilities (identify the resources for each strategy or concept).

Module 3: Supporting Students with Disabilities in CTE (Part Two)

Description
In Module 2, participants were introduced to Students with Disabilities as one of the special populations identified under Perkins V legislation and served through the requirements of the. In addition, we provided information about the federal legislation, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA that protects the educational needs

of these students and learned of resources to support special education students in their CTE programs.

This module delves into the specific strategies and supports that you can utilize to support these students in your CTE classroom.

View the Module 3 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module 3 Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, and the resources relating to special education in Module 2, look at these resources related to this module.

- [Best Practices: Cross Cutting Strategies to Support Special Populations](#)
- [Best Practices: Individuals with Disabilities](#)

Module 3 Assignment

Please complete the Module Three Prompts (Reflection Journal):

1. What do you feel is the most difficult part of differentiation for students with disabilities in your classroom?

2. Why is the special education teacher a valuable source for collaboration in the CTE classroom?

3. What are your next steps in creating a classroom that supports Students with Disabilities?

Module 4: Supporting English Learners

Description
In this module, you will learn about English Learners and strategies to address their needs.

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act defines English Learners (EL) as:

- A secondary school student who is an English learner, as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.
- An adult or an out-of-school youth who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and
  - whose native language is a language other than English; or

   o who lives in a family environment or community in which a language other than English is the dominant language.

Three percent of secondary students participating in CTE in Pennsylvania are English Learners (EL). While every CTC may have some EL students, there appears to be concentrations of English Learners in certain parts of the Commonwealth. In some of these communities, EL may make up as much as 50 to 75 percent of the general student population.

Schools and teachers are challenged with implementing strategies that not only teach English Learners the content and skills they need, but also provide supports for these students to develop their English language skills. Even at CTCs with sparse numbers of EL students, educators who teach these students need to address how to best meet the needs of these students.

View the Module 4 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module Four Resources

In addition to the module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

[Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center-Serving English Learners](#)
A video which features the administrative director at Reading-Muhlenberg CTC discusses how a full-time EL assistant provides push-in support services for English Learners.

[Integrating Employability Skills with Classroom Instruction to Support English Learners](#)
Integrating Employability Skills with Classroom Instruction to Support EL 's from the College & Career Readiness & Success Center at American Institutes for Research. This is an interactive module that covers the Employability Skills Framework, the importance of these skills and strategies to differentiate instruction to teach these skills to English language learners.

The module includes PowerPoint slides, a **Facilitator's Guide** (2016) and **Handouts** (2016).

[Strategies for Special Populations Success](#)
Strategies for Special Populations Success. This resource from the Nebraska Department of Education offers quick tips for supporting students in this special population category.

Module Four Assignment

Please complete the Module Four Prompts using your Reflection Journal:

1. Which two strategies defined in this module could you integrate into your classroom to support English Learners?

2. How do we prepare EL students with language skills for success for employability in their industry?

Module 5: Supporting Non-Traditional Students

Description
This module provides information and resources related to "Non-Traditional Students." In Perkins V, the term "non-traditional fields" means occupations or fields of work, such as careers in computer science, technology, and other current and emerging high-skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.

Why do we focus on non-traditional students at all? First, Federal funding for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs includes the stipulation that schools seek to reduce gender stereotypes in career preparation programs for occupations employing less than 25 percent of one gender.

But behind the federal requirement, the focus reflects a more general aspiration of encouraging both men and women to enter the fields that are well-suited to their aptitudes and skills, regardless of the gender norms historically associated with those occupations.

View the Module 5 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module Five Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

[Pennsylvania Department of Education: Nontraditional Programs](#)

[Nontraditional Career Preparation Root Causes and Strategies](#)

[Increasing Access, Equity and Diversity: NAPE's Program Improvement Process for Equity](#)

[The Power of Micromessages in Marketing, Recruitment and Success in CTE](#)

Module Five Assignment

Please complete the Module Five Prompts in your Reflection Journal:

1. What information from today's lesson was the most interesting to you? Why was it the most interesting and how will you use it in your teaching?

2. How can you encourage fostering self-esteem and self-efficacy with non-traditional students?

Module 6: Supporting Homeless Students

Description
In this module, you will learn about students experiencing homelessness (aka homeless students) and strategies to address their needs.

Perkins V defines Homeless Individuals as "An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

This definition includes:
- children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement

These definitions are derived from the McKinney –Vento Homeless Assistance Act, section 725.

View the Module 6 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module Six Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

Act 1 of 2022: Supporting Graduation For Students Experiencing Education Instability

Improving Equity in and Access to Quality CTE Programs for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Sponsored by the College & Career Readiness & Success Center at American Institutes for Research and the American Youth Policy Forum, April 2017, it details the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as they relate to supporting students experiencing homelessness and provides examples of how states and districts are preparing these students to be college and career ready.

Webinar: Recognizing and Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

Presented by the Alliance for Excellent Education, November 2019, a panel of experts discuss the challenges facing students experiencing homelessness and how educators can help them address these challenges.

Module Six Assignment

Please complete the Module Six Prompts in your Reflection Journal:

1. Consider the information in this module in your context as a CTE teacher. What types of supports could you provide in your classroom environment?
2. How can CTE teachers serve as advocates for transitioning homeless students to careers?

Module 7: Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Students

Description

In this module, you will learn about students who are economically disadvantaged and a variety of schoolwide and classroom-based strategies to address their needs.

Perkins V refers to this Special Population as: "individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults."

For many of these individuals, basic and pressing needs – such as food, housing, and transportation – create serious barriers to learning. For example, economically disadvantaged students are five times more likely to drop out of high school than their non-low-income peers and 13 times less likely to graduate from high school on time.

The good news is that support and meaningful relationships with teachers, counselors, and school staff can help build confidence within students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and play a key role in their success.

View the Module 7 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Promising Practices Profiles

This section offers links to explore some best practices throughout Pennsylvania related to supporting economically disadvantaged students.

SUN Area Technical Institute:
[Student Awareness Team: The Student Awareness Team identifies students who are struggling and proactively provides resources and support to address their specific barriers to learning.](#)

Susquehanna County Career & Technology Center:
[Funding Student Educational Needs through Partnership with Foundation: Through a collaboration with the Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains, students who are financially eligible can receive scholarships to pay for the necessary expenses of their CTE program and the certification tests.](#)

Schuylkill Technology Center:
[School Climate Initiative: The School Climate Initiative is based on the work of the National School Climate Center. It is a comprehensive effort to build strong school-to-student and school-to-family relationships so that students and families are connected and engaged in the school experience.](#)

Module Seven Resources

Use these links to review the related resources we have provided

[Understanding and working with Students and Adults from Poverty. By Ruby Payne, Ph.D.](#)

[Making an Impact: How CTSOs Support Students in Poverty](#)

Module Seven Assignment

Please complete the Module Seven Prompts in your Reflection Journal:

1. List two to three strategies that you could use to help meet the needs of Economically Disadvantaged students in your CTE classroom?

Here is a short Case Study:

A CTE class is participating in a field trip to observe a local business as a required part of the class. There is one economically disadvantaged student in the class. Students are required to dress in business casual attire and to purchase lunch at a fast-food restaurant.

Write a response to each of these questions:

1. What obstacles could prevent the student from participating?
2. How would this effect the student's grade?
3. How can the teacher fix the situation without causing the student to be singled out and to not feel less than the other students?

Module 8: Supporting Foster Care Students

Description

In this module, you will learn about students who are involved in the foster care system, with a variety of schoolwide and classroom-based strategies to address their needs.

Foster care is a temporary service provided by a state agency for children who cannot live with their families. Children in foster care may live with relatives or with unrelated foster parents. Foster care can also refer to placement settings such as group homes, residential care facilities, emergency shelters, and supervised independent living. In Pennsylvania, it is important to note that youth "age out" of foster care at the age of 21 but have access to aftercare services until age 23.

Foster care involved youth face a multitude of barriers stemming from their family structure and their involvement within the system. These barriers can include academic setbacks, attachment issues (difficulty forming relationships, challenges with consistent school attendance, lack of familial support, school transience (moving from one school to another during and between school years), and behavioral and emotional challenges related to trauma and stress and undiagnosed learning challenges.

View the Module 8 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Promising Practices: Foster Care Students

These promising practices resources provide examples, ideas and tips for effectively serving foster care students.

Act 1 of 2022: Supporting Graduation for Students Experiencing Education Instability
Foster Care in Pennsylvania
Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program
Colorado Special Populations Programming: ACE
Connecting CTE and Special Populations
YouScience: Aptitude and Interest Inventory
Capstone Portfolio Example – Work Experience Transition Toolkit

Module 8 Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

Strategies for Special Populations Success

Webinar: Role of Data to Support College and Career Readiness and Success for Students in Foster Care

1. **Nebraska Department of Education**
Quick tips for supporting students in this special population category.

[Strategies for Special Populations Success](https://www.education.ne.gov/nce/nontraditional-special-populations/#1596128899230-d15f3440-137e) - https://www.education.ne.gov/nce/nontraditional-special-populations/#1596128899230-d15f3440-137e

2. **Presented by the CCRS Center, the American** Youth Policy Forum, the Data Quality Campaign, and the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, March 2017

[Webinar: Role of Data to Support College and Career Readiness and Success for Students in Foster Care](https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/ccrs-center-webinars-events/role-data-support-college-and-career-readiness-and) - https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/ccrs-center-webinars-events/role-data-support-college-and-career-readiness-and

Module Eight Assignment

Please complete the Module Eight Prompts in your Reflection Journal:

1. How is your institution currently supporting foster care involved students?

2. What are your key takeaways from this module that will impact your classroom practice?

Module 9: Supporting Military Connected Students

Description
In this module, you will learn about students who are from military connected families, and a variety of schoolwide and classroom-based strategies to address their needs.

According to Perkins V, a military-connected student is a "Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty."

There are more than 2 million children in US classrooms whose parents are active-duty military service members, National Guard or reservists, or military veterans. Contending with frequent moves, new schools, and the echoes of deployments and separations, these military-connected kids carry a unique weight — often invisible, often unacknowledged.

The reason why this definition was added to the list of special populations in Perkins V because during the last 20 plus years of U.S. military conflicts, we have learned that the children of active-duty service members move an average of six to nine times during their school years.   Importantly, this is six to nine moves *just* during their school years.

View the Module 9 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module Nine Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

[Military Child Education Coalition](#)

[The Military Family Research Institute](#)

Module Nine Assignment

Please complete the Module Nine Prompts in your Reflection Journal:

1. How is your institution supporting military-connected students?

2. What specific strategies can you use in your classroom to support these students?

Module 10: Supporting Single Parents & Pregnant Students

Description
In this module, you will learn about students who are single parents and pregnant students, and a variety of schoolwide and classroom-based strategies to address their needs.

Pregnant and parenting teens encounter a multitude of challenges on their path to high school graduation. While adolescence can be a cumbersome time for any teenager, pregnant and parenting teens have the added stress of juggling schoolwork with parenting responsibilities.

These challenges could include:
- Lack of affordable childcare,
- Disruption in schoolwork because of pregnancy related absences and maternity/paternity leave,
- Lack of family support systems, and
- Difficulty obtaining, or lack of accommodations related to pregnancy and parenting.

This module provides resources and strategies to assist these students with high school completion either through school-based support services or referrals to local support agencies.

View the Module 10 PowerPoint slides to get started working on this module.

Module Ten Resources

In addition to the Module 1 resources that apply to the entire course, look at these resources related to this module.

[Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students](#)

[Supporting Pregnant & Parenting Teens](#)

Module Ten Assignment

Please complete the Module Ten Prompts (Reflection Journal):

1. What did I learn about serving students who are pregnant or parenting in this module?

2. What can I do differently (or continue doing) in my school or classroom to support these students?

Course Final Reflections

Please complete this final reflection relating to the entire course (Reflection Journal):

1. How has the content of the course impacted/influenced your understanding of special populations?