Locked in the CAR: Data Diversification in Career Technical Education

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Presentation Objectives

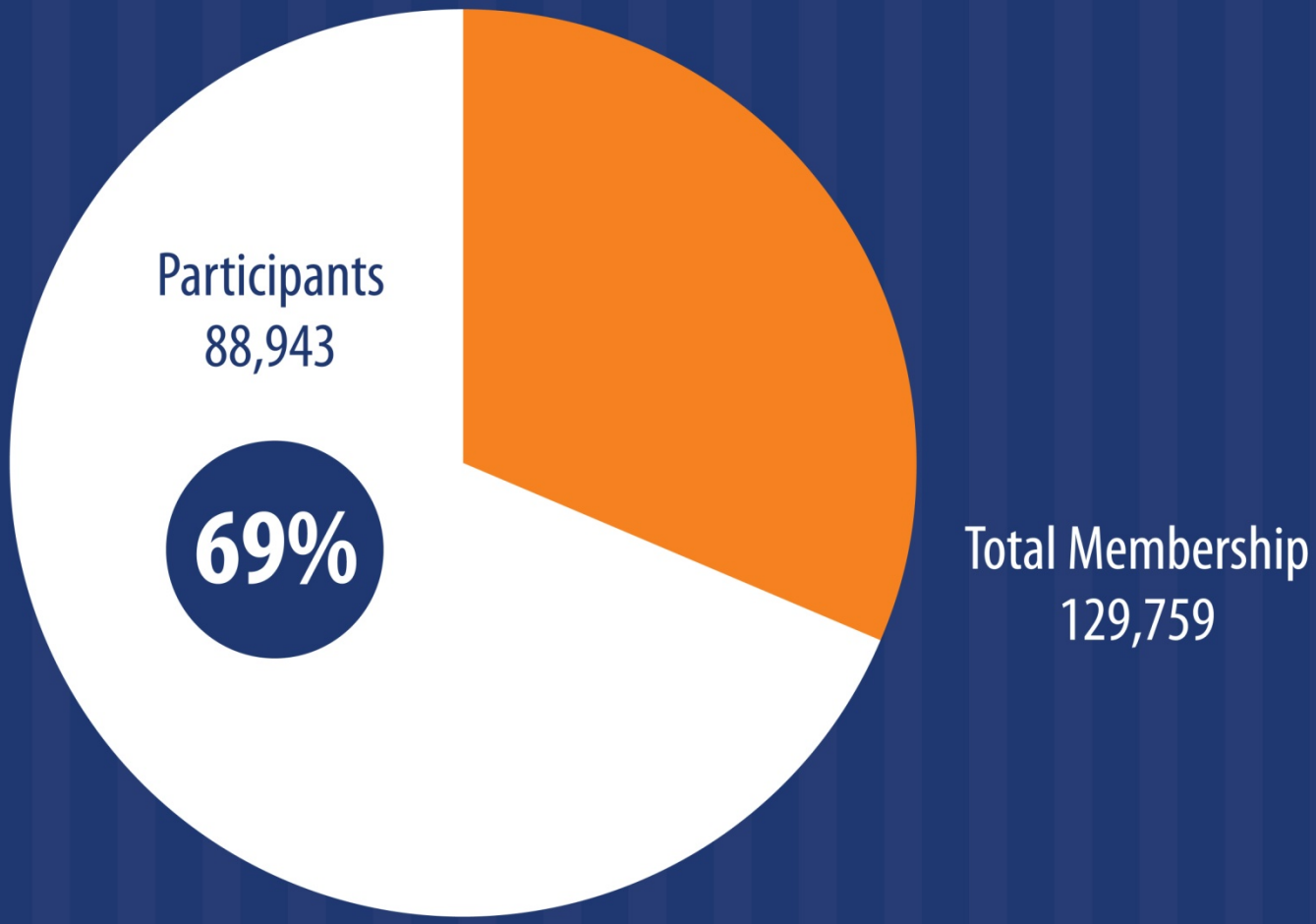
1. Understand the role of subpopulations in Perkins accountability data framework
2. Realize the challenges in relying solely on subpopulation analyses
3. Identify the value in adopting and utilizing a CTE data diversification strategy
4. Gain practical suggestions for initiating a CTE data diversification effort

What is CAR Data Anyways?

- Perkins Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) Data identifies subpopulations of CTE students
  - Students that, presumably, receive some educational benefit from an investment of federal resources (or should)
    - *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 P.L. 109-270*
  - These subpopulations are translated into fractions and ultimately percentages which are compared against performance goals (FAUPLs)

CAR Secondary Population-Subpopulation Schematic

2009-2010 Nebraska Career Education



Nebraska Fall Membership Grades 7-12

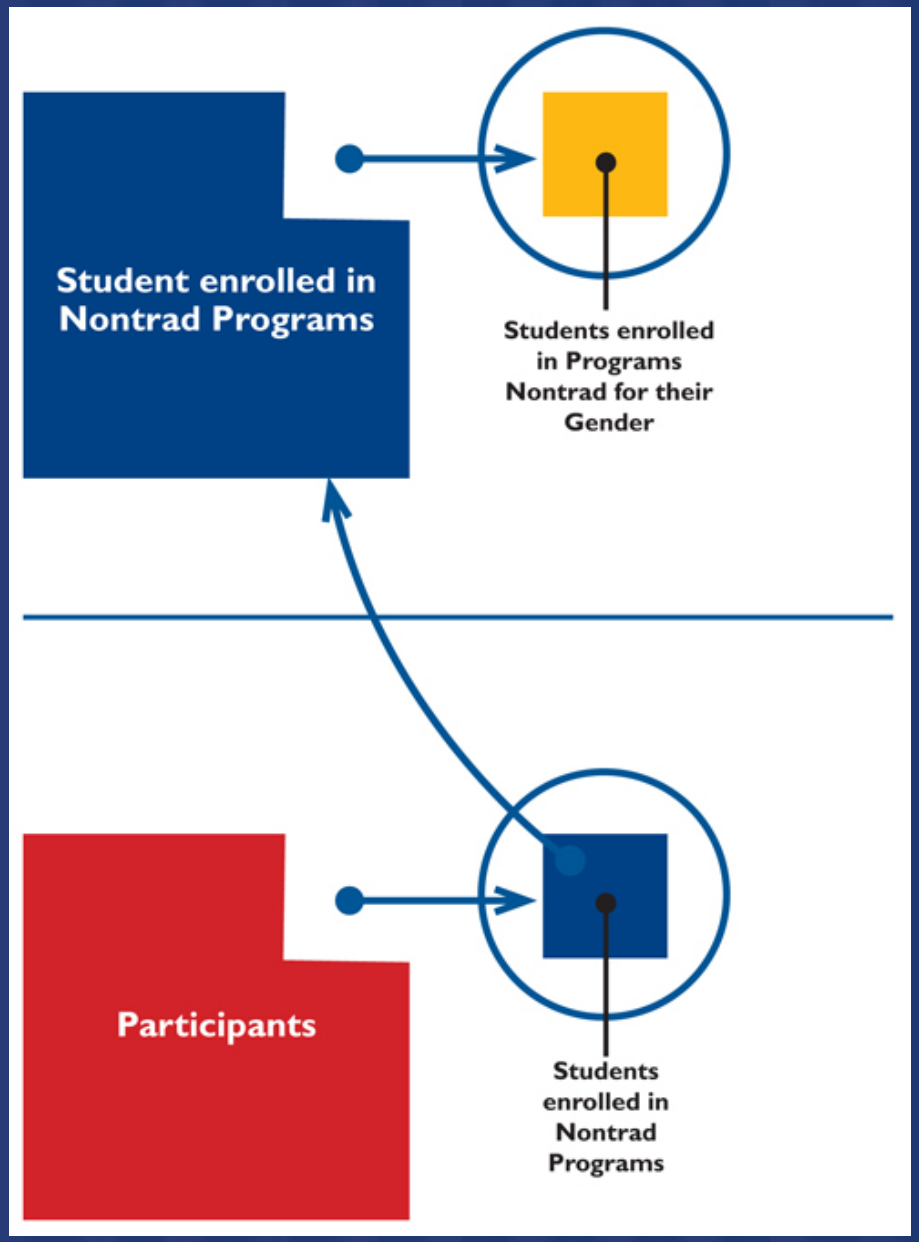
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NCE

Fractions of Subpopulations (6S1)

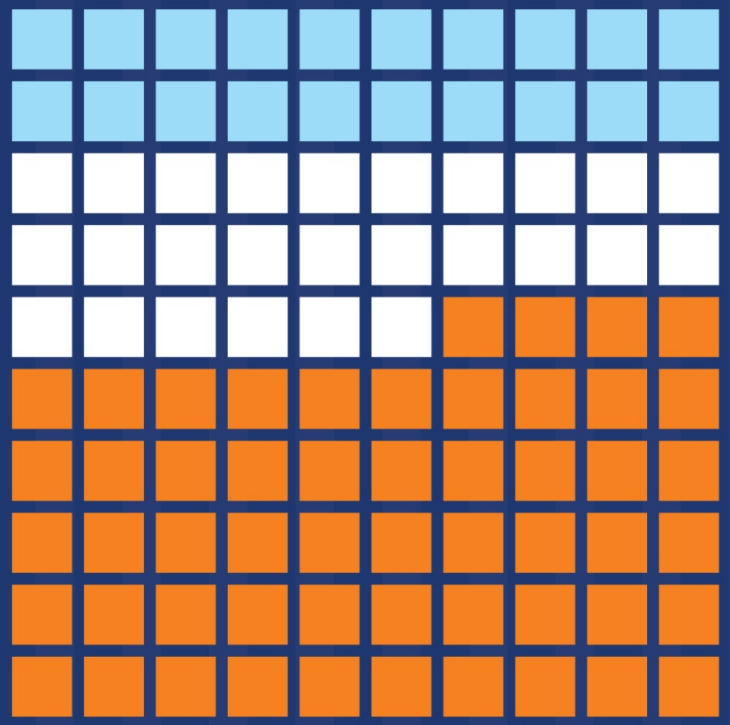
Numerator: Number of CTE participants from underrepresented gender groups who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.

Denominator: Number of CTE participants who participated in a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.



2009-2010 Nebraska Career Education

Grades 7-12



Total Membership: 129,759

Nebraska Fall Membership

6S1: Nontraditional Participation

6S1 Numerator

6S1 Denominator

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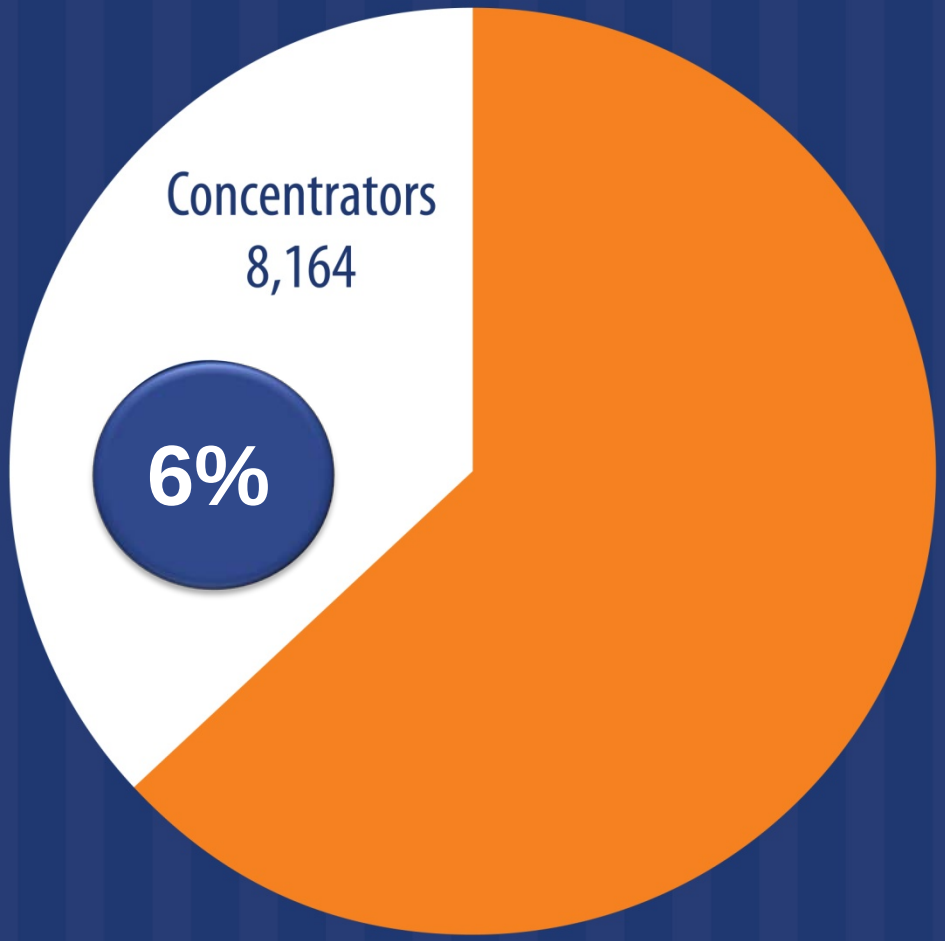
NCE

CAR Secondary Population-Subpopulation Schematic

2009-2010 Nebraska Career Education



Total Membership
129,759

Nebraska Fall Membership 12th Grade

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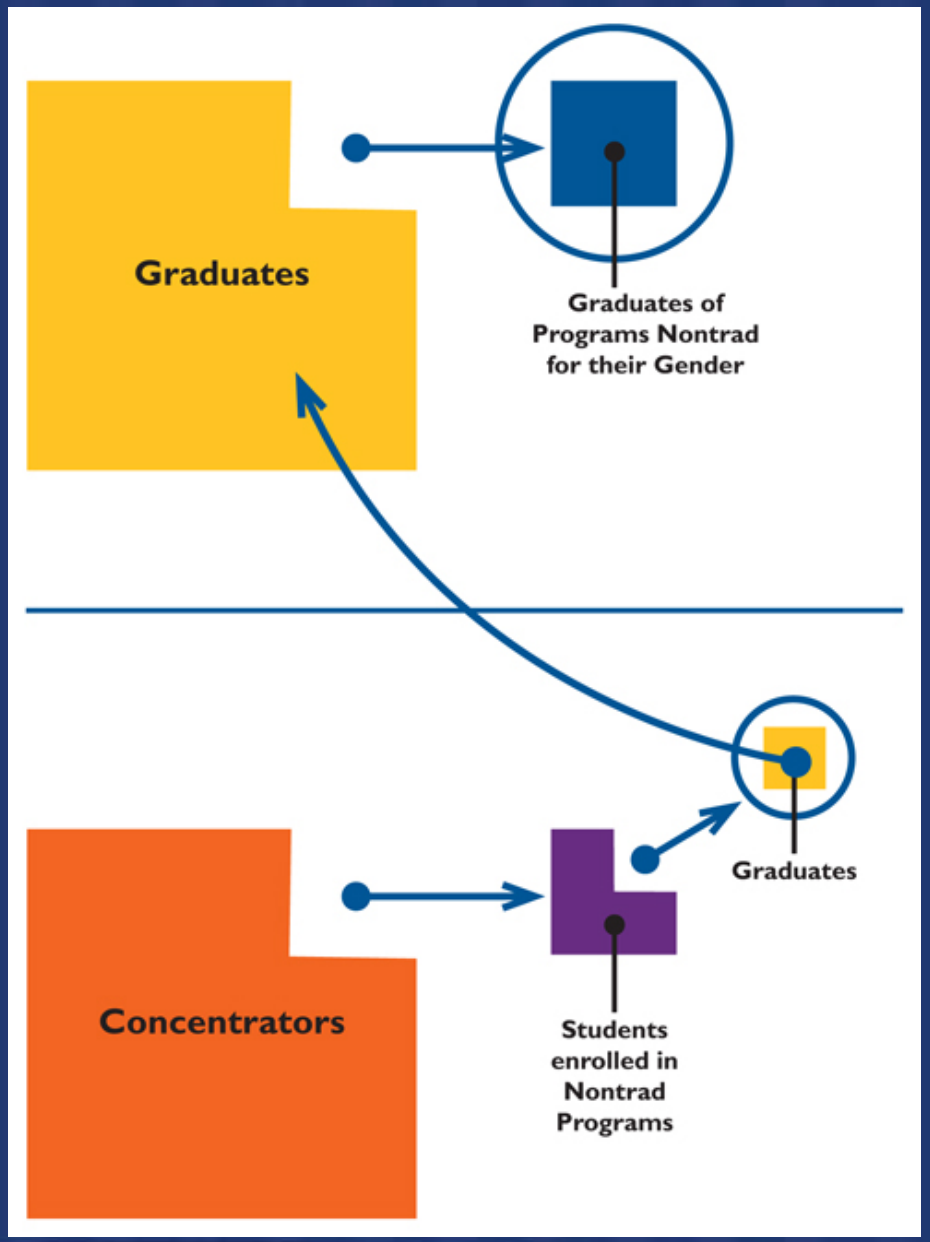
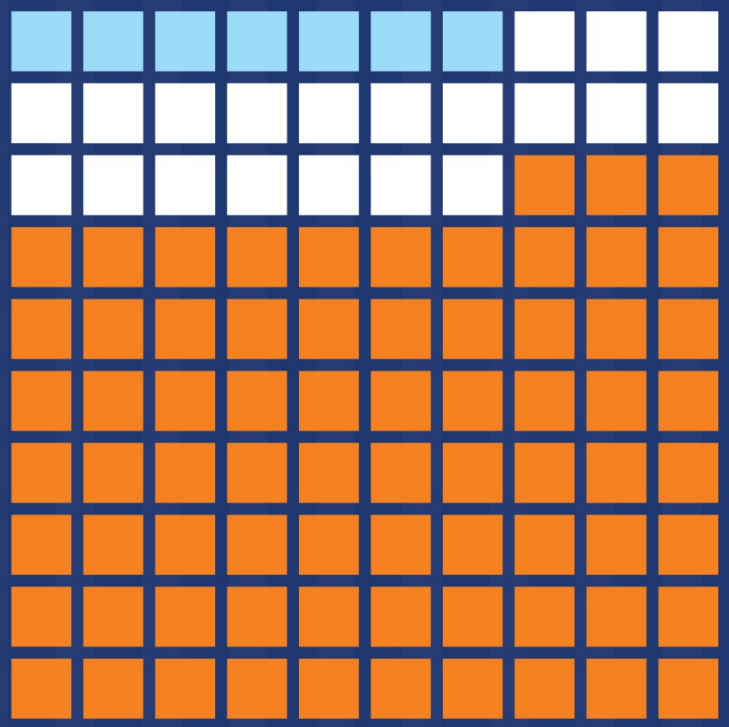
Fractions of Subpopulations (6S2)

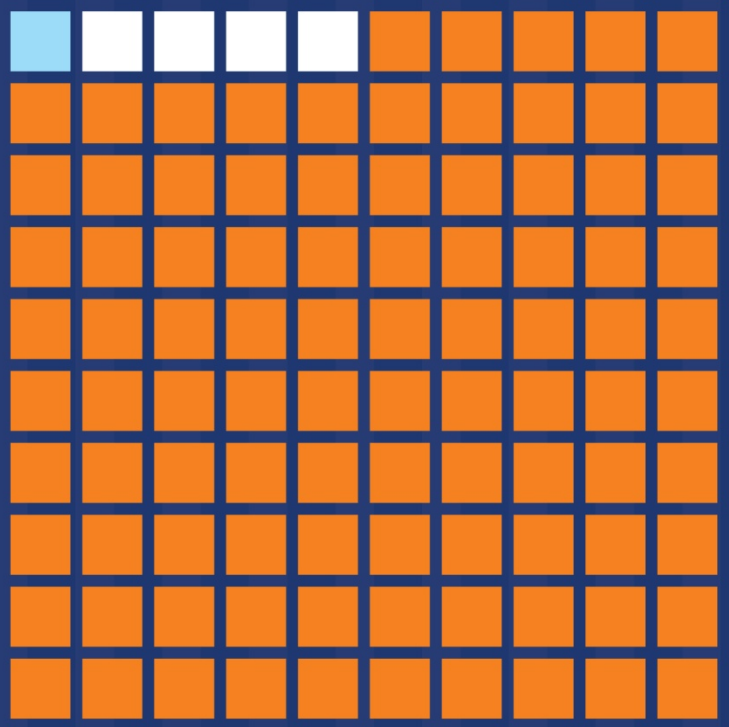
Numerator: Number of CTE concentrators from underrepresented gender groups who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.

Denominator: Number of CTE concentrators who completed a program that leads to employment in nontraditional fields during the reporting year.



2009-2010 Nebraska Career Education





Nebraska Fall Membership

6S2: Nontraditional Completion

6S2 Numerator

6S2 Denominator

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Subpopulations

- Why does accountability focus on such small groups of students?
  - Federal investment is aimed at a subpopulation – CTE students
  - Policymaker determination that:
    - A return on investment will be seen in said measures
    - Compliance or fulfillment of the law will be revealed in said measures
      - How states are held "accountable" for accepting a federal investment

Subpopulation (continued)

- Ultimately then, the accountability framework ends up driving both policy and program decisions/energy
  - Examples:
    - Struggle to best define and operationalization performance indicators
    - Efforts to achieve nation-wide indicator standardization
    - Development and emergence of the Program of Study as a framework for implementing CTE in accordance with the intents and purposes of Perkins IV

Challenges

1. Like many accountability frameworks, this system *becomes* the mechanism for understanding and evaluating CTE student performance/learning
   - "Performance" indicators
   - But, performance relative to what?
     - an arbitrary state goal
   - Tail wagging the dog?

Challenges (continued)

2. Force an accountability system into a dual-purpose role:
   - Accountable for a federal investment
   - Assessment of student learning/outcomes
     - But these are not the same thing – or at least it is quite challenging and costly to develop such a system

Challenges (continued)

3. Thus, we judge the success or failure of CTE student learning/outcomes based on an *accountability* system designed by policymakers for, perhaps, a very different purposes
   - And, because Perkins IV is the product of a legislative process, these policy objectives – while well intentioned – may not be fully coherent in practice

Implications for CTE

1. Because the success or failure of CTE student learning/outcomes becomes based on CAR data, any misgivings about the reliability or validity of said data calls into question not only our efforts/purpose within education
   - In a data-driven world, this leaves us in a rather precarious position
     - All we can speak to is CAR data and anecdotes

Implications for CTE (continued)

2. Because the CAR data framework adopts a "strict" subpopulation evaluation, CTE student data is largely analyzed in isolation from other/larger student populations
   - So, even if the CAR data is deemed valid and reliable, we are left explaining only CTE student data – but relative to what…a state goal?
   - Okay, but what does this say about CTE students as part of a larger student population?

Implications for CTE (continued)

- Collectively, then, these challenges and implications characterize the problematic **"Locked in the CAR"** scenario.

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