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An Examination of Educator Perspectives on Career and College Pathways for Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color with Disabilities

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for Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color with Disabilities

by

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Abstract

Black, Indigenous, and students of color (BIPOC students) in high school, who are dually experiencing the socially constructed labels of race and disability (BIPOC-SWD), are not provided with equitable access to Career and College Pathway (CCP) programs, which contributes to a lack of preparedness and success within postsecondary settings. Despite school reform policy efforts that incorporate Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), (Gay, 2002, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2014) and Career and College Readiness frameworks (Conley 2010; Farrington et al. 2012; Monahan et al. 2020; Morningstar et al. 2017), BIPOC-SWD perpetually have lower achievement rates, poorer postsecondary outcomes, and are less prepared for careers or college (Monahan et al., 2020; Lipscomb et al., 2017; McFarland., 2017; Newman et al., 2011; Castro, 2020).

Utilizing a Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) (Connor et al., 2016) lens, this comparative case study was used to examine educator perceptions of the purpose and accessibility of CCPs, barriers and supports of evidence-based practices (EBPs), and traits of students who are both successful and unsuccessful in accessing or completing CCPs in a Pacific Northwest School District. A variety of educators participated in semi-structured interviews. Findings of this study include a comparison of results based on participant role and location. Significant findings included specific practices and systems contributing to gatekeeping and pushout being heavily dependent on individual educators, unclear understandings of EBPs, and heavy emphasis on educator willingness to advocate and collaborate to support diverse learners.

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and company. I love you all, and I could not have completed this without you. I am

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Chapter 1: Problem Statement

Introduction

The important issue that I researched is related to racism, white supremacy, and

the colonization within society and education. Most importantly, I want to acknowledge

that in the United States, all educational systems, policies, and practices occur on

Indigenous land. This is important to acknowledge due to the growing inequities that

exist for non-white student groups within a white-centered educational system. The

continuous push for equity within education is often lacking the consideration of how our

existing educational system inherently erases the values and culture of Black, Indigenous,

and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. This erasure shows up in our schools, our

professional development, our classrooms, and our policies and practices. The social

unrest and the uprising of movements such as *Black Lives Matter*, *Stop Asian Hate,* and

Land Back continue to remind us of the racism and Anti-Blackness that lives in every

United States institution, and within our society. Equity initiatives within our schools are

consistently implemented in ways that fail to bring true transformation to the classroom.

Due to recent political uprising around racial discrimination, a recent equity trend is

based in dismantling racist educational systems has called for educators to be Anti-Racist

in their every thought and action. This is not necessarily a call to action from school

leadership, but more led by those already pushing for equitable change in schools. Within

public education, these equity policy initiatives are meant to address continued disparities

that "underserved" student groups face. *Underserved student groups* are often a term

used in place of terms such as non-white or disabled. By referring to students as underserved, the owness of the issue is nuanced and vague.

This research study was specifically focused on the inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color (BIPOC students) who are also labeled with a disability (Students with Disabilities - SWD), hereafter, (BIPOC-SWD). Students who fall into this group are dually experiencing the socially constructed labels of race and disability. Due to our identification processes within education, any student who does not speak English as their first/native language, is labeled as an English Language (EL) learner. Therefore, BIPOC students who are labeled as having a disability could be labeled as an EL learner. In this study, I use a definition of disability derived from Critical Disability Studies (Connor et al., 2016). The term disability, as it is used in Critical Disability Studies, represents how perceptions of ability are shaped by the interdependence of systems of privilege, meaning race and disability cannot exist separately. Under this definition of disability, the way educators perceive student ability will also always be impacted by their perceptions of race.

Without individualized interrogation of their eligibility process, it is unclear whether a SWD has been wrongfully labeled due to the intersection of racism and ableism, or due to a specific disability that significantly impacts their learning. The focus of this study was not to look deeper into the special education identification systems that lead to BIPOC students being labeled with disabilities, and because of that, I used the term disability to refer to students who are labeled with a disability, whether they truly

have a disability that they are experiencing, or whether they were wrongfully labeled due to racial bias and lack of appropriate instruction. Furthermore, this research focused on the high school systems of Career and College Readiness (CCR), with an emphasis on Career and College Pathway (CCP) programs and courses that exist within the high schools in a Pacific Northwest school district.

Career and College Readiness (CCR) education continues to be approached differently in each district, state, and country. The CCP model is one way school districts attempt to provide inclusive career and college opportunities within courses that are offered to all students. The CCP model is different from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which outline CCR anchor standards focusing on reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening. The CCSS anchor standards for CCR are meant to address what students "should be able to do" to be prepared for career and college settings after high school graduation (CCSS, n.d.). The CCSS anchor standards for CCR are intended to be addressed in core academic classes such as English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, however, the CCP model used in the school district being researched is an integration of CCR curriculum that connects academic skills with career and college interests and hands on opportunities. Within the CCP model, there are specialized areas of interest that are offered as a series or sequence of classes over 2-4 years of a student's high school career, each of which includes a capstone course upon completion. For example, if a student is interested in agriculture, there are agriculture CCP programs throughout the district that entail taking a series of courses related to the topic. These

programs offer hands-on experiences and opportunities to explore the area of interest more deeply. The capstone course includes the senior project, which is a graduation requirement. Due to COVID, graduation requirements have been altered for a temporary period, but overall, the senior project is typically a graduation requirement for students working toward a regular or modified Oregon diploma.

Throughout this research, I focus on CCP programs and the systems and practices that reside within them, rather than the systems and practices that reside within core academic, general education classrooms. It is important to note that these two areas are deeply intertwined under the umbrella of CCR education, but the intentional focus on CCP programming is an attempt to better understand the details of CCPs and how they impact student outcomes. Additionally, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs fall under the umbrella of CCP within some districts and schools. CTE programs are created and taught by educators who have been licensed under the requirements of CTE, have industry experience, and receive state funding. This factor is important in the discussion of CCP due to varying titles of courses and pathways that are used across schools and districts. Note: Some CCP programs might also be CTE programs, but not all CCP programs are CTE certified and funded. A CTE program is also a CCP, but every CCP is not a CTE.

Before further discussing the systems that lead to the exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from accessing and succeeding in CCP programs, I discuss my identity and positionality as an educator and a researcher. I am a white woman, with a master's degree in Special

Education and Art Education. As a white educator who grew up in a middle-class household, I acknowledge that I continue (whether intentionally or not) to contribute to the systemic problems that I hope to begin to dismantle throughout this research and throughout my career as an educator. I have unintentionally, but directly, played a role in racially biased special education identification systems, which could have led to wrongly placing BIPOC students on an IEP for a disability. Additionally, I could have played a role in guiding students toward specific pathways for career or college, as my educational practices were shaped by traditionally white-centered, able-bodied philosophies and influences. These actions are rooted in both racism and ableism, and as I move forward in addressing this problem, it remains important that I continue to interrogate my own biases and actions.

Throughout my 15 years of experience as a special education case manager, I have witnessed numerous "alternative pathway" classrooms filled with non-white students, students with disabilities (SWD), and EL learners. These alternative pathway classes occur in the senior year for students as they make their way through their last graduation requirements. This alternative pathway course is a placeholder for students who have been pushed out of CCP programs, or who have not accessed a CCP program at all. These situations are a result of both gatekeeping and pushout. Gatekeeping and pushout could be symptoms of educational practices related to internal biases such as racism and ableism.

The exploration of this problem was both a personal and professional journey. Personally, I wanted to learn how I continue to play a role in perpetuating this problem, so that I can unlearn those practices and fight for equity that is truly transformational with every professional decision and interaction. Professionally, I wanted to understand how a predominantly white teaching force could plan and implement CCPs that are culturally responsive, non-ableist, and based on students' interests, strengths, and needs, rather than perpetuating a system in which students having to conform to a predetermined career and college path that is outdated and unrelated to their lives.

Certainly, the teaching force should not be predominately white. Addressing the need to diversify the mostly white teaching force in this Pacific Northwest District was not part of this study, but remains another issue related to this topic. Additionally, and most related to this specific research, I want to understand how educators understand their role in the exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCPs. As a special education case manager and teacher, I am expected to build strong rapport with classroom teachers to collaborate and provide accessible education for students. To address BIPOC-SWD not accessing CCPs, it is necessary to understand the perspectives of educators that teach CCPa and support BIPOC-SWD. This topic is both politically charged and related to historical and current racial injustice in our communities and schools.

Additionally, the intersection of race and ableism is still not addressed explicitly in equity training that occurs in this school district. DeMatthews (2020) stated that the racism and ableism that are present in schools could be perpetuated unknowingly, but that

school leaders are in a position to utilize Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) (Annamma et al. 2013) components to make a change. Equity training that is presented within each building comes from the district office from the district equity team. Equity training often contains information that comes from equity driven initiatives, with language that educators are not necessarily familiar with. The academic and research-based language used in the training are not able to be unpacked by educators due to time constraints and nuanced interpretations of the purpose. This often leaves staff feeling like the equity "checkbox" has been checked and then educators move on to the regularly scheduled white, normative, able-bodied school routine. This research was an attempt to move toward understanding this pattern of oppression in just one sector of our high school systems.

Problem Statement

Within high school, students are inundated with options for career and college planning. The urgency for students to be career and college ready is built into every aspect of school. The CCP programs are advertised as being open to all students, however, systems and practices change the accessibility for a variety of student groups. Despite school reform policy efforts that incorporate Career and College Readiness (CCR) standards, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), and CCR frameworks, consistently underserved or underachieving student groups are not at the center of CCR programming (Majors, 2019, as cited in Lindstrom et al., 2020; Castro, 2013). BIPOC-SWD continue to have lower achievement rates, poorer postsecondary outcomes, and are

less prepared for career or college (Monahan et al., 2020; Lipscomb et al., 2017; MacFarland et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2011; Castro, 2020). Access to, and success within, rigorous pathway courses are proven to have impact on the educational experience and postsecondary outcomes for students (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018), which highlights the importance of inclusive and equitable programming that centers the needs and goals of BIPOC-SWD specifically.

Initially, the problem to be addressed in this research was that BIPOC students in high school, who are dually experiencing the socially constructed labels of race and disability (BIPOC-SWD), are not provided with equitable access to CCR opportunities and education as their white peers, contributing to a lack of preparedness and success within postsecondary settings. However, as I have explored this issue more deeply, the focus has shifted to exclusionary practices, such as Gatekeeping and Pushout, that occur through our school systems. Systems of exclusion are embedded in pedagogical practices, school policies, the organizational structure of high schools, and within the history of CTE and College Preparation (College Prep) programming.

The lack of implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) and evidence-based practices (EBP) in CCP settings leads to Pushout, Gatekeeping, and lack of access to, and success within, pathway programs for BIPOC students and SWD, specifically BIPOC-SWD. Overall, racism and ableism are embedded in the systems of the CCP model and this research further explores how educators view and function within these systems. CCP classes and the CCP model are implemented in a variety of

ways. CCP courses contain CTE coursework and bridge career and college skills and opportunities to fulfill CCR initiatives beyond core classes such as English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. A more detailed explanation of the research that supports the CCP model and a detailed description of the CCP model in the school district being studied are provided below.

I am approaching this research from the understanding that race and disability are socially constructed. It is not assumed that every BIPOC student labeled with a disability has a disability but could be experiencing a label that was wrongly placed upon them due to a lack of equitable instruction. It is extremely important to note that while BIPOC-SWD are being addressed as a group in this research study, students of varying racial and cultural backgrounds, and students with varying abilities, are not assumed to carry the same life experiences. Throughout this research, BIPOC-SWD is used as an umbrella term to address how race and ability are interdependent within the accessibility of CCP programming for non-white students experiencing disability or disability labels.

Background of the Problem

Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color with disabilities (BIPOC-SWD) are not receiving equitable access to CCR programming in the high school setting, and this is impacted by a variety of historical, political, and social factors (Kanno, 2018; Welton & Martinez, 2014, as cited in Lindstrom et al., 2020). CCP educators, special education case managers, counselors, and administrators who support students in working toward their career and college goals, are functioning within a system that does not support

implementing evidence-based practices (EBP) for BIPOC-SWD specifically. The EBPs

that support BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings eliminate exclusionary practices and systems

which lead to Pushout, dropout, and lack of access to CCP programs. Below is a more

thorough explanation of the background of this historical equity issue. Furthermore,

EBPs refers to practices that stem from CRP and CCR practices and are specifically

outlined for CCP classroom settings and practices.

Gatekeeping and Pushout

Gatekeeping and Pushout are terms that refer to policies, structures, and practices

that lead to the exclusion of students from existing general education spaces and

opportunities. Educators in various positions can engage in practices that lead to

Gatekeeping and Pushout. According to a study by Siuty (2019), special education

teachers can act as gatekeepers to the general education setting which contains students

and/or maintain the status quo of existing school systems. This same concept could also

be applied to CCP teachers, counselors, case managers, and administrators, due to their

involvement in recruiting, referring, and overseeing the scheduling of students into CCP

programs. Gatekeeping as a concept has been studied and written about for decades,

originating in the field of journalism and communication (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Gatekeeping might not occur intentionally but carries influence from personal and

systemic factors. In this research, Gatekeeping is in reference to the Gatekeeping of

students from CCP programs.

Pushout is a concept that has been utilized in the field of education to explain the process of students being pushed out of public education. Pushout carries heavy ties to the systemic issue of pull out and drop out epidemics (Burbach, 2018). Burbach (2018) also claimed that the dropout narrative is based on the assumptions of youth based on implicit biases. Therefore, Pushout and dropout are heavily connected, but throughout this study, Pushout is used to refer to the specific issue of BIPOC-SWD being pushed out of CCP programs and opportunities. Tuck (2011) explained Pushout as something that occurs when youth are pressured to leave school due to components of schools that either detain or derail students from graduating in a public-school setting. Both Gatekeeping and Pushout are potential systems that interplay with systemic exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCP programs, and potentially impacts a student's feelings of high school success.

Policy

Inclusion

The Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA), a federal policy, originally enacted in 1975, and most recently reauthorized in 2015 through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), ensures that children with disabilities are guaranteed access to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Amendments to IDEA have led to a focus on students with disabilities accessing the general education curriculum and transition planning (IDEA, 2015). The federal policies that drive inclusion are relevant to the discussion of how BIPOC-SWD are provided with CCR education and where the instruction occurs. Zigmond et al. (2009) explained that

the nation's pedagogical commitment for inclusive education has been shaped each time IDEA has been reauthorized. Although IDEA and ESSA are federal policies meant to ensure that SWD are educated in the LRE, subjective interpretations of public policy still heavily determine the educational placement of SWD, which can contain throughlines to access and completion of CCP programs. This is related to equitable access to CCP for BIPOC-SWD because the IEP could be used to justify career, college, and transition planning in an alternate/segregated setting, preventing a student from attending pathway courses.

The debate about inclusion and where instruction is most beneficial for students continues to be a very relevant topic in the special education and general education silos of education. Although the federal policy addresses inclusion as a collective school occurrence, the reality is that general education and special education sectors of education often have varying views of what inclusion means. Connor and Ferri (2007) emphasized that IDEA required students with disabilities to be evaluated and placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and that shortly after this new practice, the parameters of LRE began to be debated by professionals in the field. The ongoing institutional debates about LRE are one in the same with the everlasting debates about the inclusion of SWD into the general education/mainstream setting. Furthermore, Connor and Ferri (2007) outline the paradoxes of inclusion and special education practices, highlighting overrepresentation of non-white students in special education, and the differences in services and dis-services of special education.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have CCR components embedded in

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language anchor standards, which are

essentially implied to be woven into all high school courses (CCSS Initiative, 2020). In

response to the ESSA (2015) and the reauthorization of IDEA (2015), nearly every state

has adopted a version of CCR standards, which are meant to ensure that every student is

being held to rigorous, high-quality standards to be prepared for success in the real world

(USDE, n.d.). These rigorous standards are intended to be embedded into English

Language Arts and Mathematics classes (USDE, n.d.), however, elective courses and

capstone projects fall under Career and College Pathway (CCP) programs. CCP courses

are included within students' course taking options and graduation requirements. For

example, a student who is identified as having a disability and who is not white will go

through the transition IEP process, where their transition goals are decided by the IEP

team, however, the curriculum and instruction that occurs in CCP programs, does not

necessarily encapsulate the skills that are identified in the transition planning. Below is a

further explanation of how transition policies are not tied to CCP policies. IDEA (2015)

and ESSA (2015) have most recently shaped CCR policy to address equity initiatives,

including making CCR accessible to underserved student groups. According to USDE's

(n.d.) explanation of College and Career-Ready Standards, it is critical that the bar is

raised for each student collectively regardless of their race or geographic location, which

will allow students to compete in the evolving economy. Holding BIPOC-SWD to high

standards in CCR classes must also be accompanied with appropriate support, and

evidence-based practices (EBP), to build capacity for consistent and equitable CCR education.

Transition Individualized Education Plan

The reauthorization of IDEA (2004) places emphasis on the transition portion of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students with disabilities to be ensured access to proper planning, training, and support for their postsecondary goals. Cavendish (2017) explained that the transition IEP was intended to center students within their educational planning and be based on the student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths, and that these post-secondary goals be based on students' individual input. Transition planning occurs for every student in high school who has been placed on an IEP. Student input does not supersede existing school policies and structures which is where the IEP process and CCP opportunities collide. The transition process of IEPs often occurs in a parallel fashion to existing school processes. This means that the transition process of the IEP is compliant with IDEA, and this planning occurs within the IEP team. Decisions made within the IEP team are not necessarily integrated into the practices which occur in the general education setting, causing the transition planning to potentially be implemented in an exclusionary setting rather than within the general education setting. In this case, the CCP setting would be the general education setting where transition goals could be addressed for students receiving IEP services. Legally, the IEP team is required to include one general education teacher. The general education teacher who participates in the meeting may or may not be a CCP teacher. The transition goals are

meant to be implemented in any setting for the student, hence the emphasis on the

individualization portion of the IEP. There is no guarantee that IEP transition goals make

their way into inclusionary classroom settings, such as CCP programs. Students with IEP

supports are sometimes expected to receive transition planning and support in segregated

special education settings either at the request of the student and the family, due to the

influence of the case manager, due to difficulties with scheduling and course offerings, or

due to the recommendation of the teacher or admin. The policies and practices around

transition planning could impact existing CCP opportunities offered by the school

because the CCP programming is not tied to the IEP process. Equity and inclusion

initiatives are heavily centered around classroom practices and leave out collaborative

systems planning between CCP and special education compliance requirements.

Perkins V and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The latest version of the Perkins Act, referred to as the Strengthening Career and

Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), was passed in 2018 and carries

a strong emphasis on CCR for underserved student groups, and connections to current

conditions of the school and workforce. According to the National Alliance for

Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) Education Foundation (n.d.), the purpose of Perkins V is

to increase the skills and employment opportunities for underserved populations and

populations who are chronically underemployed.

Black, Indigenous, Students of Color with disabilities (BIPOC-SWD) are

potentially funneled into special education based on factors out of their control (Counts et

al., 2018; Waitoller et al., 2010). On a national level, policy is being changed to address disparity gaps in underserved student groups, however, the CCP educators working to support various student groups may not necessarily be prepared, or supported, to implement equitable curriculum and practices education for BIPOC-SWD entering their CCP classrooms. Cushing et al. (2019) explained that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014) consists of Title I and Title II funds to support the education and training for youth and adults who are not fully English language proficient or have not earned a high school diploma, and who are actively looking for employment. Perkins V (2018) and WIOA (2014) carry funding that supports the latest equity initiatives, however, school systems, pedagogical practices, and a variety of factors could influence an educators' ability to meet the needs of BIPOC-SWD in CCP classes. An example of using funding to provide support would be connecting funds to bussing students to internship opportunities or creating new programs that meet the interests of historically marginalized groups.

Due to the recent policy changes around CCR, which impacts CCP programming, the focus of this study is specifically on CCPs in high school settings, as opposed to English and Mathematics courses. In the past, a focus on CCPs might not have been an appropriate way to address this problem, due to CTE being primarily focused on vocational-only education (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018). However, recent initiatives have created a shift in CTE to be more of a comprehensive, well-rounded approach to CCR, thus leading to models such as CCP, which incorporates the CTE programming as well.

Due to the nature of local education agencies labeling CCR education in a variety of ways, there is a more in-depth explanation below of the organizational structures in this district.

Student Scheduling

Course scheduling directly impacts students' access to CCP courses and programs. Students who are labeled as needing special education services have the possibility of being scheduled in remedial academic classes to target academic skills or support classes to address specially designed instruction (SDI) and learning supports. BIPOC-SWD who are also dual identified as needing language support have the potential to miss out on multiple CCR courses due to the school team scheduling them in classes that support language development and SDI. Wagner et al. (2004) stated that SWD may have vocational focused courses pushed out of their schedule due increased attention being on academic courses with rigor. Limited access to CCP courses could be due to new pushes for students to have access to grade level content, requiring them to need more special education classes in their schedule to support a more rigorous workload. Additional special education or language support classes could be a result of instruction that is not accessible in the general education core classes, or due to the influence of any member of the IEP team. There are a variety of complex situations that could lead to students having a schedule built with nothing but core classes and support classes, leaving no room for classes of interest or related to career or college goals/interests.

However, there are varying reports of CTE course-taking over the years, specifically related to students receiving IEP services and racial categories of students. According to USDE (2014), as cited in Bal (2017), BIPOC students placed in special education are more often removed and excluded from the general education setting, either for academics or other reasons, than their white peers. However, Lui, Hudson, and Burns (2020) reported that high school graduates who received IEP services in their 9th grade year earned more CTE credits than peers that did not have an IEP. Reports on CTE course-taking and its impact on graduation and postsecondary success for various student groups varies, however, the intersection of race and ability is often not addressed throughout data analysis. This leaves open many speculative theories of which students get tracked into which programs based on learning level and skill level.

Evidence of the Problem

In addition to the examples below, the district has started to vocalize attention to this problem. District CCP staff have started informational training sessions about CCPs and equity, specifically emphasizing that district data shows that students of color and students on IEPs are not completing CCP programs at the same rate as their white peers who are not on an IEP. The district has not openly shared data and statistics, but CCP representatives have been explicitly calling out this issue in staff meetings. The importance of equity in CCPs has also been included in the 5-year strategic plan for the district, including the expansion of CCP knowledge and planning to span from Kindergarten through grade 12.

Student Engagement and Achievement

Students with disabilities (SWD) are less likely to enroll in courses that prepare them for college during high school, take college entrance exams at lower rates, and continue to have poor employment outcomes (lower wages or less likely to be employed) than their same aged peers (Monahan et al., 2020; Lipscomb et al., 2017; MacFarland et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2011). Additionally, the majority of BIPOC students who have gotten their GED or graduated high school are not college-ready according to standardized measures (Castro, 2020). Noting that BIPOC students are not career and college ready according to standardized testing is important because this is not a suggestion that teachers are not making their best effort to teach students, but more about how standards for being career and college ready are not aligning to the initiatives on equity. BIPOC-SWD are not accessing courses that prepare them to pursue their interests in postsecondary career and college education at the same rate as their white peers. Schoolwide efforts to improve CCR education, including non-academic skills, should include SWD (Lombardi et al., 2018) and be culturally appropriate.

School to Prison Pipeline (STPP)

The School to Prison Pipeline (STPP) is a concept that refers to connections between school disciplinary policies and practices that systematically lead to students becoming victims of the criminal justice cycle (Rocque & Snelling, 2018). Disparities in punishment for racial minorities and students with disabilities have striking similarities to the disparities of the criminal justice system (Krezmien et al., 2006, Rocque, 2010,

Rocque & Paternoster, 2011, Skiba et al., 2002, as cited by Rocque & Snellings 2018).

As BIPOC-SWD fit into both categories of students that are disproportionately

disciplined, there is a higher level of risk of being funneled directly into the STPP for this

student population. Multiple scholars from the field of Disability Studies (DS) have

explained how race and ability have historically been used to perpetuate the oppression

and dehumanization of students, which include the influences of slavery and colonialism

(Baynton, 2001; Bell, 2006; Ben-Moshe, 2013; Blanchett, 2010; Chen, 2013; Erevelles,

2011; Ferri & Connor, 2006; Adams & Erverelles, 2016; as cited in Samuels, 2014). The

continued dehumanization of BIPOC-SWD comes out in the forms of mislabeling and

exclusionary practices. As students are funneled away from CCP programs based on

practices related to school systems, CCP programs continue to grow without adjusting to

the needs of BIPOC-SWD.

BIPOC students are also more likely than their white peers to have higher rates of

exclusionary discipline, be incarcerated, be represented in special education, and have

lower graduation rates and academic achievement (Olmsted et al., 2019; Slesaransky-Poe

& Garcia, 2014). Examining disciplinary practices can lead to a greater understanding of

how students are excluded from CCR pathways. According to the Oregon Statewide

Report Card 2019-20, non-white students falling into the subcategories of special

education are among the highest percentages of students who received one or more

discipline referrals; Black/African American and American Indian/Alaskan Native

students hold the highest percentages among racial demographic categories. BIPOC-

SWD are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline than their white peers with disabilities and are more likely to be referred to special education (Green et al., 2018). The disparities in discipline for BIPOC-SWD is important due to disciplinary action impacting potential enrollment in CCP programs.

Achievement and discipline are two large factors in considering the scheduling for students in high school. Gregory et al. (2010) argued that disproportionate achievement rates are tied to disproportionate discipline rates for BIPOC students. Due to the increased likelihood of removal from class, success in prerequisite courses or initial CTE or CCP courses could be hindered. "Disciplinary" behavior that results in BIPOC-SWD being removed from class can also impact BIPOC-SWDs chances of successfully completing prerequisite courses of CCP pathways of their choice, thus further limiting access to CCR learning opportunities available within CCP programs. Based on data from the U.S. Department of Education on the 2015-2016 school year, Whitaker et al. (2020) stated that SWD overall had the most referrals to law enforcement, and that Black, Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Latinx students all had higher rates of referrals and arrests than their white peers.

In a school system where every student is expected to become Career and/or College Ready, it is imperative that every student be included in a CCP program and experience success. The intersection of race and ability and the perceptions of staff who are enforcing disciplinary actions is related to the systemic exclusion of BIPOC-SWD

from CCP courses, especially when BIPOC students could be wrongfully labeled due to a

lack of culturally and linguistically responsive education.

Intersection of Race and Ability

Schools could improve outcomes for BIPOC-SWDs in a variety of settings if

exclusionary practices were examined while considering the intersection of race and

abililty. Policy that drives to increase the inclusion of SWD has led to improved rates of

inclusion, but all SWD do not experience inclusion equally, and race, disability label, and

other factors are still used as tools for segregation (National Council on Disability, 2018;

Stelitano et al., 2020). Some BIPOC students may be labeled with a disability due to

white-centered standards of education and behavior. Multiple scholars have explained

disability as being fluid and being shaped by intersecting structural systems of privilege

and oppression within educational settings (Hernandez-Saca et al., 2018; Artiles et al.,

2016; Garland-Thomson, 2002). I agree that conceptualizing disability as a fluid

construct that is upheld by systems of oppression can provide insight on the exclusionary

systems that live within the CCP processes.

Annamma et al. (2013), in reference to the Crenshaw's (1993) concept of

intersectionality, continuously reference how race and ability do not exist separately for

students of color, and that both race and ability are built upon, and uphold, the perception

of each other. From this perspective, race cannot be removed from disability and

therefore both must be examined concurrently to see where one label might end and the

other begins. Reid and Knight (2006) suggested that BIPOC students who are labeled

with a disability are continuously excluded under the guise of a label that is subjectively

justifiable. This particular use of a disability label brings into question whether ingrained

biases related to racism and ableism are driving factors in the IEP eligibility process.

Furthermore, the use of special education labels as a tool for continued segregation of

BIPOC students is directly related to access to CCR education throughout high school

(Artiles et al., 2016).

Bal (2017) stated that BIPOC students labeled with a disability are forced into a

white-washed special education system which historically ignores racial and cultural

factors. Cultural background and cultural responsiveness are often removed from

discussion when BIPOC students are placed in special education due to the focus being

primarily on academic deficits and behavior support. BIPOC students with a special

education label may experience being further marginalized rather than the disability label

providing them with the required accommodations for learning (USDE, 2014, as cited in

Bal, 2017). BIPOC students placed in special education are therefore subject to being

excluded from CCR education and opportunities based on race, culture, and ability.

Simultaneously, they could be receiving special education services without a culturally

responsive approach while also being pushed out or kept from CCP programs due to

these identified "deficits."

In addition to factors of race, culture, and ability, and the identification of special

education, there are also BIPOC-SWD who fall into a third category of English Learners

(EL). Carncock and Silva (2019) stated that national data suggest that students identified with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) have higher rates of also being labeled as EL but noted that there are over and under identification problems across the nation. The intersection of EL and the overidentification of specific disability labels is an indication that a deeper examination of identification processes is required. By looking at the intersecting labels of students, educational teams can uncover pathways to exclusion based on race and ability. Hernandez-Saca et al. (2018) argued that we can no longer ignore the nature, contexts, and power relations connected to the intersectionality of disability. Overall, the investigation of labeling and segregation and how it relates to the intersection of race and ability are necessary in understanding the perpetual exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCR programming.

Context of the Problem

Multiple Case Study

Within this problem, each school location and the district office is being considered its own case. Each school within the district handles CCPs in a variety of ways, including different offerings at each school. There are some consistencies that are required by the district in terms of scheduling, forecasting, and process, but overall, it is up to each school how they approach CCPs. Additionally, CCP teachers have district support, which includes district administration and Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs). In 2021, School A had approximately 16% students on IEPs, 6% of students as

dual identified (English Language/IEP), and 37% white. School B had approximately

12% students on IEPs, 2% of students as dual identified, and 44% white. School C had

approximately 13% students on IEP, 2% as dual identified, and 51% white.

Career and College Pathways as a Structure

Pathways which are intended to bridge the gap between core learning skills such

as reading, writing, math, and CCR skills related to the job market are continuously being

researched and reinvented within high schools. Hoachlander (2021) explained that

support for the CCP model continues to grow and that CCP is thought of as a

comprehensive strategy to connect CTE and core academics for transformative high

school experience. This means that CCP acts as an umbrella for all things related to CTE

and CCP programming. Hoachlander (2021) also explained that various researchers have

suggested that this model improved career and college readiness, student outcomes, and

relied on a culture of equity and inclusion. The CCP model is not utilized everywhere and

varies from district to district. Within each state, there are varying funding programs and

mandates that support different versions of CCR education.

Organizational Structure of the District

Within the focal school district, there are specific CCP programming aspects that

are relevant to this research. This district refers to any CCR instruction that is not

occurring in the core classes of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies as being

present in CCP courses and programs. CCP programs include CTE courses that are

specific to the state and federal CTE policies and funding, in addition to other community

partners and program initiatives within the district. This means that CTE programs are

always considered a CCP, but all CCP programs are not certified as CTE funded

programs. In theory, students in general education core classes are being provided with

the reading, writing, and math instruction that will lead to the preparation for their career

and college goals. Within CCP courses, there are a combination of skill areas addressed.

Skill areas are related to the philosophy behind that specific pathway and CCP teachers

are considered experts in that field, often generating their own curriculum based off their

expertise. Within this district, there are six career learning areas, which include a wide

variety of CCP programs that exist across the schools. The six career learning areas are:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource Systems
- Arts, Information and Communications
- Business and Management
- Health Sciences
- Human Resources
- Industrial and Engineering Systems

This focal district has a strategic 5-year plan that focuses on culturally relevant

Career and College Pathways and improvement of pathways to postsecondary

opportunities for all students, specifically student groups who are historically

underserved. Within this district there are four comprehensive high schools, grades 9-12,

and these six career learning areas are offered through a variety of courses and CCPs in each school. However, each school does not offer the same pathway courses. For example, one school might offer an Agriculture pathway, and another might offer an Environmental Science pathway, but they both fit under the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources cluster of the CCP focus area of study.

Students can elect to attend a pathway at another school with approval from the school team and will receive transportation to that school to participate. Within this study, I focus on three of the four comprehensive high schools within the district. Figure 1 represents the organizational structure of CCP in this district, which displays all the components that fall under Career and College Readiness and CCP. Additionally, this CCP structure is an EBP for CCR education (Career and College Academy Support Network, 2018). Within Figure 1, there are three identified components to CCR education in the district of focus: CCSS that occur in ELA and Math courses, traditional CTE courses, and CCP programs. The arrows represent how components of both CCSS and CTE are combined under the umbrella of CCP programs. CCPs are meant to incorporate the range of curriculum and skills that support both career and college.

Figure 1

Diagram of Career and College Readiness Model in District

Career and College Pathway District Model

Career and College Pathways Umbrella

Core Classes
- Reading/Writing/Math= Essential Skills
- CCSS
- Grad. Requirements

CCP
- Career and College Pathways
- Includes CTE Courses/Pathways
- Opportunity for IB/AP/Honors
- Capstone/Senior Project
- Chords at Graduation

CTE
- Funding from Perkins V
- CTE certified Teacher
- Industry Connection
- Career focused
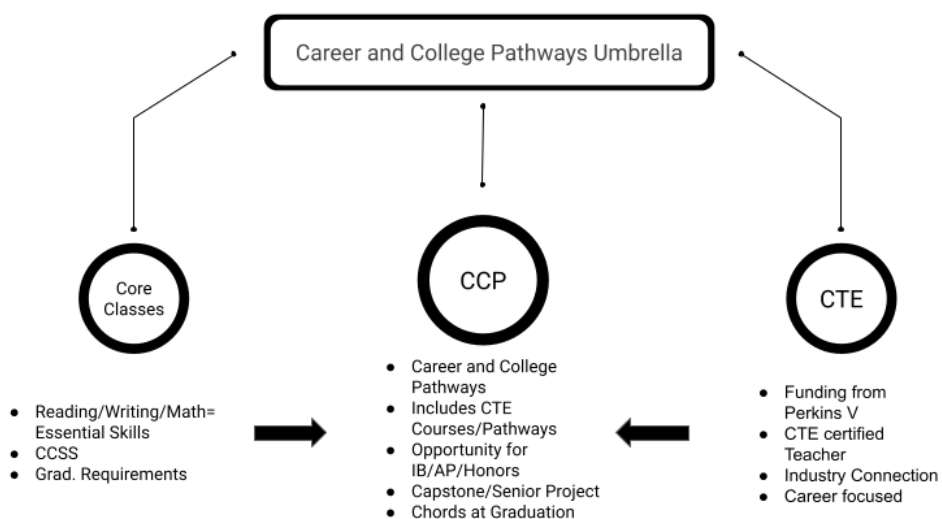
Demographic Makeup of District

Within this school district at the time of the research, the teaching staff was approximately 83% white, 10% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 1% each of Black, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native. The student demographics were approximately 42% white, 40% Hispanic, 7% multiracial, 7% Asian, 2% Black, 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native. The racial demographics of educators in the district is important to highlight because the teaching staff is primarily white, not matching the demographics of the student body. With a primarily white teaching force, providing culturally relevant CCR

programming requires attention. This includes the support of educators' implementation of EBPs, including the components of CRP. Because this study was focused on the educators who teach and support BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings, the racial and demographic makeup of that teaching force remained a major factor in data collection and analysis.

Stakeholders Involved in Career and College Pathways

BIPOC-SWD and Parents/Guardians. BIPOC-SWD are the most important and obvious stakeholders in CCR education, whether it be in core classes or in CCP settings. BIPOC-SWD and their parents/guardians are central participants on the IEP team. While students and parents often have different views about selecting classes and scheduling, student and caregiver input have influence on the trajectory of students' schedules. Although students and parents have heavy influence on these decisions, the options for scheduling are still outlined and planned by the school team first, and then carried out by existing school systems and processes. Furthermore, students and caregivers might make decisions based on the instructional style and reputation of staff or the information that was given to them by case managers and counselors.

CCP Teachers. Teachers of CCP (which includes CTE teachers) courses are content area experts. CTE teachers have direct industry experience in the subject area that they teach. CCP teachers sometimes come to the teaching field with additional degrees in other career areas, which lends to their expertise in their specific pathway. CCP teachers might also be certified CTE teachers, which makes their CCP program also considered a

CTE program. Many CCP teachers are not only experts in their instructional area, but they host a variety of school clubs and activities to help students get involved with their school and make career connections. An example might be an Engineering pathway teacher also being the club advisor for a robotics club, or the Vocal Arts pathway teacher also being a club advisor for an acapella group that meets after school. Each school has a variety of options that are offered based on the effort and availability of the CCP teachers.

There are a variety of influences that students might have when they are forecasting for CCP classes, but ultimately CCP teachers are in control of building their program and their curriculum. In the case of CTE certification, CTE teachers utilize CTE funding and policies to determine appropriate courses and requirements for the program. Within the scheduling and forecasting process, which is slightly different from building to building, students can forecast for some introductory courses which are also electives that count toward graduation. The success within these introductory courses could potentially have an impact on whether students take the second level course within a pathway. The second and third courses within a pathway might not fit into a student's schedule if they have competing classes that are required for their core classes or decisions based on their IEP team considerations. CCP teachers have predetermined requirements for their carefully planned programs, which might lead to students not qualifying for the second and third courses in the sequence. Additionally, if appropriate

support and accessible curriculum were not offered during the introductory class, the students' lack of success in the introductory course might not have been in their control.

Special Education Case Managers. The Case Managers of students receiving IEP services are IEP team members. After students reach the age of 16, it is required that the IEP team address transition planning and goals on the IEP. The transition page on an IEP is where student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths are identified, in addition to their career, college, and independent living goals. Case managers are responsible for considering factors such as graduation requirements, academic progress, learning levels, diploma track, and behavior when helping students decide what courses will best suit their needs. However, practices vary from building to building regarding inclusion and equity, and those individual approaches could impact transition conversations during IEP meetings. For example, a student who is on a regular diploma track, but struggles in math could either be forecasted for a general education math class with push-in support or a special education support class. If the team decides to schedule the student for a special education support class, the student loses an opportunity for an elective because that course gets replaced with the special education support class for math. Special education teachers and case managers also manage any behavior or safety plans for students on their caseload. Behavior conversations become a part of the forecasting process when students with behavioral plans show interest in forecasting for a CCP program or course. A student's behavioral history might lead to a CCP teacher

expressing concerns about whether the student can be successful in their program. This could interfere with a student's access to their preferred pathway program.

Counselors. High school counselors play a variety of roles. Counselors are tasked with facilitating the forecasting process for all students, including students who have special education case managers and other support specialists tied to their service delivery plan. Counselors work collaboratively with special education case managers and CCP teachers to help students get forecasted for classes they are interested in taking. This process starts in the middle of 8th grade when counselors go to middle schools to explain the forecasting process and promote the information for CCP programs. Counselors are expected to carry out the process that is outlined first by the district, and secondly, by the processes that are expected by the building administration. Counselors across the district work together to align practices, but due to the decisions made by individual principals, some of the processes vary between schools. Because CCP programs have prerequisites built into them, counselors must abide by the requirements when students show interest in a class.

Administrators. Administrators play a variety of roles within this context. Administrators in this district have the autonomy to dictate processes regarding scheduling and access to classes and programs. Building administrators also oversee the master schedule, which has a heavy influence on when courses are offered within the school day. This sometimes causes difficulty with scheduling for BIPOC-SWD due to conflicting course offerings such as English Language Development (ELD) or Special

Education support classes only being offered one time during the day, conflicting with the elective of CCP program of their choice.

Additionally, building administrators have the authority to deny a student access to a CCP program based on their behavior in middle school or throughout high school. These sorts of decisions can come from pressure from the CCP teacher about behavior and expectations. Additionally, union contract components can be utilized by CCP teachers to resist the inclusion of students who display concerning behaviors in the classroom, which limits an administrator's ability to enforce equitable practices.

District level administrators oversee the development and growth of CCPs across the district and foster community partnerships for work based and internship collaboration opportunities. The district administration plays a different role than building administrators in supporting students and teachers in CCPs. District administration also look at district wide data to analyze access and completion trends. District administration also offer a variety of supports to CCP teachers based on their individual program needs.

Community Partnerships. Local partnerships allow for school districts to build connections between school and the local economy, industry, and job market. Workshops, internships, and volunteering opportunities are available to students through a variety of events. The events and resources related to community partnerships are advertised as being open to every student. However, when students fall behind on their academic progress toward graduation and the school team is scrambling to help students

catch up, accessing community partnerships is not a priority. Lastly, community

partnerships are heavily reliant on the effort of the school district and the willingness of

the business community.

Capitalism and the Job Market

The push for equity in CCR education is a complex topic. From one viewpoint,

CCR education must be equitable so that underserved student groups have access to

programs that will allow them to be successful in their adult lives. However, arguing for

equitable access to CCR for BIPOC-SWD does support a capitalist society that often

exploits laborers in the job market. These factors are important to consider because

discussing access to existing programs does assume that these programs are necessary for

students in the first place. However, it could be argued that the entire system requires an

overhaul for something such as CCP to be equitable and accessible. The argument for

BIPOC-SWD to have equitable access to existing CCP programs fits within the context

of making small improvements to a system that continuously excludes students based on

white supremacist and ableist foundations.

White Supremacy in Schools

Nationally, white supremacy as a concept has been recognized only by equity

advocacy groups as being present in our school system. White supremacy is not explicitly

named within national school policy or within equity driven initiatives. DeMatthews

(2020) referenced many academic scholars (DuBois, 2007; Valencia, 2012; Selden, 1999)

who have recalled the impact that white supremacy has had, and continues to have, on

school policy and practice. Locally, within this school district, white supremacy has only been named by equity activists within the school setting. The district has not explicitly named white supremacy as an underlying factor in the exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCPs, or in relation to any equity issues. Within this research white supremacy is defined as the underlying concept that leads to exclusion of students based on race, whether intentional or not.

Significance of this Research

The field of education desperately needs the input of educators who serve diverse student groups in Career and College Pathway (CCP) settings. Black, Indigenous, and students of color with disabilities (BIPOC-SWD) are continuously and perpetually underserved in our K-12 educational school system, specifically in Career and College Readiness (CCR) programming. Data collected from the interviews in this research study provided insight into educator perspectives on internal and external factors, that either support or prevent them from providing equitable access and supports in CCP settings.

Prior research has proven that dually oppressed student groups, such as BIPOC-SWD, are consistently met with a variety of inequities that impact their K-12 schooling experiences, their opportunities after high school, and their success as adults. Annamma et al. (2013), in referencing Crenshaw's (1993) concept of intersectionality, discussed how race and ability do not exist separately for students of color, and that both race and ability are built upon, and uphold, the perception of each other. Throughout this investigation, the hope was to uncover what factors foster harmful actions such as

Gatekeeping (Siuty, 2019) or Pushout (Burbach, 2018), and how educator perceptions of

race and ability impact those processes. The intentional use of educator input from this

research can lead to strategic school improvement planning with positive outcomes for

BIPOC-SWD. Specifically, by providing the recommended systems of support for

educators in CCP settings, the consistent barriers that exist for BIPOC-SWD can be

addressed and dismantled. In efforts to dismantle the barriers for students, there must also

be efforts to dismantle barriers for the educators supporting diverse student populations

within CCP settings. Without the rich information that can be provided from the

educators in these roles, policies and systems could potentially continue to perpetuate the

systemic exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCP programs.

Presentation of Methods and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the varying perspectives that

educators have about BIPOC-SWD accessing and being successful in the variety of CCP

programs that are offered across the three high school locations. This critical comparative

case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) research design incorporates qualitative data

collection and analysis in the form of interviews, observations, and document review.

The theoretical components of DisCrit (Connor et al., 2016) is the foundational

guidelines of this study. The following research questions are addressed with this study:

1. How do educators perceive the purpose of CCP BIPOC-SWD?

2. How do educators describe the accessibility of CCP? What factors lead to
   Gatekeeping, Pushout, and/or support of BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings?

3. How do educators describe the barriers and supports that influence their decisions and capability in implementing EBP for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings? What are the internal and external factors?

4. How do educators describe students who are successful and unsuccessful in CCP programs and how does race and ability factor into educator perspectives of student success?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to Literature Review

The review of literature that I have conducted for this research proposal supports the need for a more in-depth understanding of CCP educators' beliefs, experiences, and efforts in implementing equitable practices for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings. A theoretical framework that includes Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), and Career and College Readiness for Students with Disabilities (CCR-SWD) is described and critiqued in relation to the problem and this research. To build capacity for effective implementation of EBPs to prevent Pushout and improve accessibility in pathway settings, there is a necessity to gain a clearer understanding of educator experiences. This includes the internal and external barriers and supports they experience within school systems collectively and individually. The review of literature has contributed to the shaping of the research questions, which evolved throughout the course of the study. The idea that race and ability are social constructions used to maintain the dominance of white normative bodies (Annamma, 2018) was a constant consideration throughout the review of literature. The literature included in this review consists of evidence-based research in the form of books published by educational researchers and critical theorists/activists, peer-reviewed journal articles of qualitative and quantitative studies, and evidence-based research publications.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by multiple frameworks (see Figure 2): Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) (Annamma et al., 2016), CRP (Gay, 2002, 2010; Ladson-Billings 1995, 2014), and a CCR framework for SWD (Morningstar et al. 2017). Below is a further explanation of how this research was shaped and by critical theory.

Critical Research and Disability Critical Race Theory

Power dynamics and power structures are foundational elements of Critical Research. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) a goal of critical research is to analyze, critique, and challenge power dynamics that exist within current structures. A DisCrit theoretical lens was used to analyze the intersection of race and ability of BIPOC-SWD in CCP classroom settings and how these perceptions and beliefs could act as barriers to access and success within these settings. As stated in the introduction, Annamma et al. (2016) described DisCrit as a combination of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Disability Studies (DS) (Disability Critical Race Theory) to form a framework that dually analyzes race and ability and is used to examine the impact of social constructions of race and ability on education and society. According to Annamma et al. (2016), "DisCrit seeks to understand ways that macro level issues of racism and ableism, among other structural discriminatory processes, are enacted to the day-to-day lives of students of color with dis/abilities" (p. 15) and describes seven tenets of the DisCrit framework as a(n):

1. Focus on how common notions of normalcy are upheld by the interdependence of race and ableism.

2. Value of multidimensional identities such as any combination of: race, dis/abiltiy, class, gender, or sexuality

3. Emphasis and recognition of race and ability being social constructions and the impact that such labels have on an individual.

4. Emphasis on amplifying marginalized voices that are not traditionally recognized within research.

5. Consideration of how race and ability have both historically and legally been used to segregate, exclude, and separate people or deny their rights.

6. Recognition of how whiteness has been centered in disability advocacy and progress, and is thought of as owned by the white, middle-class community.

7. Requirement of resistance and activism and is in support of all forms of resistance.

Throughout this research, these seven tenets of DisCrit were used to guide data collection and analysis. Attention to these seven tenets forced attention to the competing interests and conflicts that continue to perpetuate inequities, whether they are intentional or unintentional practices, or internal or external barriers. Annamma (2018) argued that DisCrit can be utilized to examine how the intersection of multiple marginalized identities (in this case race and ability) is used to maintain anti-Blackness and the criminalization of BIPOC-SWD. DisCrit serves an important purpose in understanding why BIPOC-SWD are continuously excluded from CCR educational opportunities. Annamma et al. (2016) stated that Du Bois and many critical scholars that followed him (Gutierrez & Stone, 1997; McDermott et al., 2006; Oakes, 1995; Rubin & Noguera, 2004), have contributed the marginalization of people of color to the interdependence of race and disability. In addition to the intersection of race and ability impacting

marginalization, DisCrit can be utilized to further examine how racism and ableism impact CCP programming and systems.

Annamma et al. (2016) explained that when marginalized groups claim that they, themselves, are not disabled, they are subscribing to the medical definition of disability and not the idea that disability is socially constructed. Approaching this topic from the understanding that disability is socially constructed supports a more in-depth investigation of access to these particular programs. The DisCrit theory acknowledges that students of color with disability labels have different experiences than their white peers (Crenshaw, 1993; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; as cited by Annamma et al.2013), and that structural power systems which are supported by racism and ableism can be addressed using a DisCrit lens (Connor, 2008, as cited in Annamma et al.2013).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Civitilo et al. (2019) identified several educational research scholars have contributed to the concept of culturally relevant/responsive teaching/pedagogy, specifically Geneva Gay (2002, 2010) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014). According to the Center for Leadership Equity and Research (CLEAR) (2020), "in 1992, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings coined the term culturally relevant pedagogy to describe 'a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references'' and "some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching include: positive perspectives on teachers and families, communication of high expectations, learning within the context of culture, student-centered instruction,

culturally mediated instruction, reshaping the curriculum, teacher as facilitator" (para. 2).

Samuels (2018), in reference to Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995), explained CRP

as teachers consistently reflecting on cultural competence, holding high expectations, and

maintaining a balance of being a facilitator and a learner interchangeably. This outlines

how major components of CRP include having humility, self-reflection, and high

expectations are necessary to foster the learning of BIPOC students.

Zhu and Peng (2019) explained that Ladson-Billings (1995) expressed three

criteria for CRP as: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must

develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical

consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order

(1995, p. 160). This means that students must be held to high academic expectations, but

also be provided with support for accessing high academic standards, as well as

opportunities to develop their own personal critical consciousness. Civitilo et al. (2019)

explained that CRP has varying conceptualizations, but that overall, CRP incorporates (a)

the cultural knowledge and experience of students, (b) the maintenance of students'

cultural identity and native language throughout pedagogical practices, and (c) provides

multiple opportunities for students to connect to their culture to empower sociopolitical

consciousness. Although there are a variety of interpretations of CRP, scholars

consistently focus on cultural identity, language, and expectations and supports.

Career and College Readiness Frameworks

Multiple scholars have researched CCR education and outlined frameworks for best practices. Below is an exploration and examination of the various versions of CCR. As stated earlier, CCR occurs in core classes as well as CCP settings. The multidimensional construct of CCR includes academic and non-academic skills which are necessary for success in any career, college, or post-secondary setting (Monahan et al., 2020; Conley, 2010; Farrington et al., 2012; Morningstar et al., 2017). The Oregon Department of Education (ODE, n.d.) described CTE as providing students with the skills for lifelong learning and future career paths. Throughout high school, every student has course selections that might relate to their specific interests related to career and college.

Career and College Readiness (CCR) education is driven by national and local policy, but CCR as a construct carries additional complexities for students who experience complexities of exclusion. According to the NCES (2020), students who concentrate in CTE programs in high school have higher rates of earning a credential in an occupational field than their peers who did not complete a CTE program in high school. Therefore, the importance of enrolling and completing CCP courses successfully is an important piece in changing the postsecondary trajectory for BIPOC-SWD. If the collective goal of schooling is to prepare students to become engaged in career and college, more attention needs to be given to equitable instruction within CCP classroom settings to ensure that BIPOC-SWD have equal opportunity to achieve their career and college goals.

For decades, there have been debates in the field of education about whether CTE was used to improve postsecondary opportunities or whether it was a framework that manifested into another mechanism to perpetuate existing school inequities (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016). Overall, debate about who CCR is for and where it should be offered are factors embedded into these existing inequities. The NASBE (2019) suggested that recognizing CTE's conflicting history must be recognized to tear down systemic barriers that impede CCR equity. The shift in CCR and equity initiatives have shed light on the inequities that are pervasive within various CCR pathways, especially as inclusive practices push for SWD to be included in general education programming.

Monahan et al. (2020), stated that CCR frameworks heavily focus on college, without much clarity around whether career readiness is considered, or an entirely separate concept. This is related to the ongoing discussion of whether career and college tracking still exists. Of the CCR frameworks, the Conley (2010) CCR framework is widely referenced. Conley's (2010) CCR framework was based on four dimensions of skills that students must have to be successful in the postsecondary setting: (a) cognitive strategies, (b) content knowledge, (c) academic behaviors, and d) contextual skills and awareness.

In addition to Conley's CCR framework, Morningstar et al. (2017) proposed a CCR framework to include SWD. The Morningstar et al. (2017) framework was based on the work of Conley (2010) and Farrington et al. (2012) and included best practices for SWD. Morningstar et al. (2017) outlined the domains of the CCR framework for SWD

as: (a) academic engagement, (b) mind-sets, (c) learning processes, (d) critical thinking, (e) interpersonal engagement, and (f) transition competencies. The addition of practices specifically for SWD made the existing CCR frameworks more readily accessible for providing CCR education to SWD in the inclusion setting, however, the still missing from the CCR frameworks were components addressing race and cultural responsiveness.

Castro (2013) argued that white supremacy has a direct impact on our perception of CCR frameworks, thus existing frameworks, specifically Conley's (2010) CCR framework, leaves out cultural and racial inequities. The lack of attention to racial and cultural needs within CCR education perpetuates the exclusion of CCR education and pathways for BIPOC students. Tomasello and Brand (2018) stated that SWD are better prepared for college and the workplace setting when they are expected to meet state standards and earn a high school diploma, and that access to multiple pathways in high school ensures progress toward their personal postsecondary goals. Research supports the inclusion of SWD in general education as a best practice for preparing them for their postsecondary goals.

The use of CRP and CCR for SWD can be overlapped to ensure the integration of CCR education and transition IEP programming. Tomasello and Brand (2018) outlined the following as guidelines to link ESSA (2015) and IDEA (2015) for CCR instruction: (a) high expectations and access to general education curriculum, (b) well-rounded education, (c) career pathways and transition planning, (d) personalized learning and competency-based learning, (e) subgroup accountability, (f) alignment across policies

and programs. Figure 2 displays each of the frameworks included in the theoretical

framework for this research study.

Figure 2

Theoretical Framework for Research
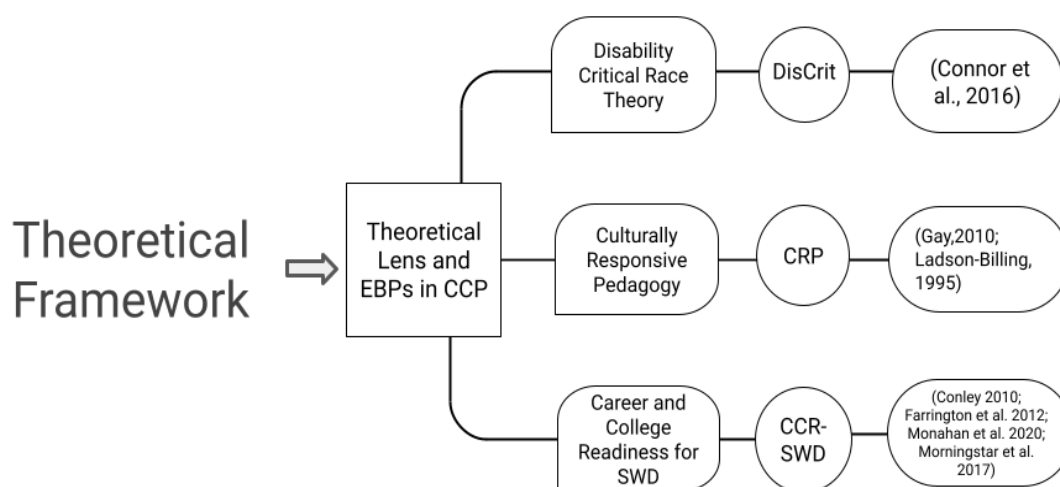
Note. This figure contains three theoretical frameworks used to build this research.

Rationale and Critique of Theoretical Frameworks

      The components of DisCrit, CRP, and CCR for SWD are theoretical frameworks

that hold components which could be applied to CCP planning and pedagogy. The

DisCrit framework is based on the work from scholars in both Disability Studies (DS)

and Critical Race Theory (CRT), however, DisCrit is not widely accepted by scholars in

both fields (Connor et al., 2016). Due to there still being existing tensions in various

critical research groups, DisCrit could be perceived as an unreliable theoretical framework for research. DisCrit could be perceived as unreliable because it is based on the idea that race and ability are social constructs and that is not necessarily a widely accepted idea within the institution of education. Approaching this topic through the lens of DisCrit could automatically cause some readers to dismiss any findings from this study.

As mentioned, a DisCrit lens assumes that race and disability are socially constructed, as well as racism and ableism being interconnected processes (DeMatthews, 2020). Under the assumption that race and disability are socially constructed, rather than concrete experiences that people experience universally, the social validity of findings could be impacted. Using the DisCrit framework as the driving theory behind this research could also cause difficulties in working with school districts due to the discomfort that discussions of racism and ableism sometimes cause for educators and administrators. Incorporating components of DisCrit leads to this study becoming political in nature, which could be rejected by district and/or building administration.

The CCR framework for SWD (Morningstar et al., 2017) was not necessarily promoted as a framework intended to increase CCR education for SWD in inclusionary settings, but more so for reaching better outcomes for SWD and their postsecondary planning (wherever that might occur). Historically, students labeled with a special education identification receive some or all their education in segregated settings, including education related to their transition goals, and career and college planning.

Therefore, CCR for SWD might be assumed to be happening outside of general education CCR classrooms. While this framework has been heavily researched and adapted from earlier CCR frameworks (Conley, 2010; Farrington et al., 2012), its interpretation is subjective, which might mean that existing CCR programs do not have the capacity to incorporate these components, or school systems might not support the implementation. Additionally, within this framework, there is emphasis on SWD, but not on race or culture.

The collective resistance to CRP has also been historically documented. Neri et al. (2019) stated that some contribute CRP resistance to individuals, and some contribute resistance as being organizational and situational to context. Like the CCR frameworks, CRP is interpreted differently by various communities within the silos of education. Individual resistance could be attributed to educator bias. Organizational, and/or situational, resistance could be attributed to the conditions that educators experience throughout their teaching day: workload, school systems, administrative demands and pressure, and teacher evaluation components. Although these are identified reasons for the resistance of CRP, researching how educators interact with the components of the framework could lead to more equitable solutions to the problem.

Review of Literature

Evidence Based Practices for BIPOC-SWD in Career and College Pathway Courses

Equitable Instructional Practices. The College and Career Academy Support Network (2018) described a variety of EBP for CCP settings to address equity issues;

specifically, they addressed culture, instructional practices, and access and supports. Within their symposium report there are a variety of research studies that have contributed to the compilation of EBP for a variety of underserved students in CCP programs. Below are some of the studies that have an emphasis on the EBP that support equitable CCR education for students in CCP type settings. Alfeld et al. (2013) described equitable instructional practices in CCP settings as providing students with opportunities for Work-based learning (WBL), apprenticeships and internships, and school-based enterprise/work-experience operations. These opportunities would be offered in each high school setting and be continuously adjusted to students' needs, goals, and interests, to meet the needs of every student and address equity disparities.

Athananses et al. (2016) stated that to engage underserved students in effective career and college education, there needs to be a school-wide culture which encourages rigor, meaning, and must be infused throughout the entire school. Intentional actions from CCP educators would include rigorous CCP curriculum and planning, with a consideration of how the planning impacted and engaged every student throughout the school. This means that intentional planning would include collaboration across school venues instead of siloed CCP programs occurring in isolation.

Welton et al. (2014) described culturally responsive approaches to college and career readiness and access as being built on establishing relationships, encouraging opportunities for dual credit and Advanced Placement throughout high school offerings, and demonstrating authentic care for students. Incorporating intentional practices which

focus on relationships, authenticity, and offering dual credit and advanced placement for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings would contribute to a disruption of stereotypical narratives. These EBP for CCP settings align with the tenets of DisCrit and CRP to address equitable instructional practices and career and college systems.

Practices that Support Access and Success for BIPOC-SWD in CCP Settings. A variety of researchers continue to address equitable instructional practices for underserved student groups in CCP settings as mentioned by The College and Career Academy Support Network (2018). Below is a synthesis of EBPs that were outlined by researchers who have centralized their research on equitable and accessible CCP programming. Flores et al. (2012) suggested that helping EL labeled students exit language programs could be a predictor of better postsecondary outcomes and supporting underserved and diverse student groups in enrollment of dual credit will also improve college enrollment. Garcia and Seltzer (2015) explained that educators could invest in different pedagogical approaches to not perceive culturally and linguistically diverse students as a threat to current practices, interrogate their own ideologies about language and ability, and incorporate learning gaps into existing curriculums. Okhremtchouk and Jimenez (2013) suggested that educators could utilize CRP to support the language and identity development of diverse student groups.

The literature review on EBP for culturally and linguistically diverse students in CCP settings supports the need for additional research in this topic area, specifically in understanding systems and processes that interfere with educators executing these EBP

successfully. By addressing the purpose, accessibility, and systems and processes within CCP programming, specific barriers around supporting BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings can be uncovered.

Implementation of Evidenced Based Practices (Barriers and Supports)

    Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. In efforts to understand the difficulty that teachers have in implementing the components of CRP, researchers have reported a variety of reasons for the lack of successful implementation. Siwatu et al. (2016) stated that sources of self-efficacy doubts around CRP are: (a) lack of knowledge of diversity and CRP, (b) negative experiences in diverse settings, (c) lack of experience or classroom placement to practice CRP, and (d) a disconnect between their coursework and field experience. According to Mellom et al. (2018), educator beliefs impact their expectations of students and themselves, have an impact on their own actions, and have an impact on student behavior. Furthermore, educators' perspectives could possibly dictate the outcome of instructional planning and course taking for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings.

    Min et al. (2021) explained that supporters of culturally responsive practices are support from administration, being able to observe the positive outcomes from CRP, and choosing to foster an environment where student agency is encouraged. Min et al. (2021) also explained that the factors that weaken teacher ability in implementing CRP are pushback from school administration, colleagues, and parents, lack of time, lack of cultural competence, and lack of knowledge and skill within CRP. These barriers and supports are specifically around educators implementing EBPs related to CRP.

A variety of scholars have pointed out that teachers do not necessarily feel equipped to manage student behavior and implement evidence-based teaching strategies, which lead to negative outcomes for diverse students (Skiba et al., 2013, as cited by Green & Stormont, 2018). Although CRP and inclusionary practices remain a large part of educator Professional Development (PD), there is variation in how educators view their own abilities in implementing the strategies. Samuels (2018) found that lack of resources, time, and difficulty and discomfort in navigating potentially controversial topics during times of highly tense political and social climates, were the biggest reasons that educators struggled with implementing CRP. These trends highlight the need to gain a deeper understanding of what might impede or encourage the type of CCP programming that would support the needs of BIPOC-SWD.

Gatekeeping. As explained in Chapter 1, Gatekeeping is a concept that exists in many fields. In terms of this research, Gatekeeping is in reference to educators acting as gatekeepers to CCP programs specifically for BIPOC-SWD. According to Shoemaker and Vos (2009), gatekeepers "determine what becomes a person's social reality, a particular view of the world" (p. 3), meaning that information is withheld or presented in a way that changes the understanding of the situation. In this case, Gatekeeping would entail withholding information about a pathway until it is too late to become involved, presenting information in a certain way to influence the student's decision about whether they can enroll or be successful in a pathway, and utilizing prerequisites as the

gatekeepers themselves. In this specific context, Gatekeeping can come in the form of policies, processes, or practices, but are ultimately always performed by the educator.

Pushout. Pushout, which was also previously defined in Chapter 1, is a concept that has been utilized in the field of education to explain the process of students being pushed out of public education. In this context, Pushout is in reference to BIPOC-SWD who are pressured or forced to leave the CCP program of their interest due to policies or educators who feel they are not able to perform according to their standards. For example, students who surpass the Gatekeeping part of CCP scheduling might get enrolled in a CCP program only to find that the expectations of the course are not accompanied with appropriate support for the course, which then leads to a student receiving a failing grade or other difficulties. Experiencing this lack of success in multiple pathway introductory courses could lead to a student being pushed out of one, many, or all the CCP programs, resulting in the forced scheduling of an alternative senior project class. The process of Gatekeeping and Pushout could be related to factors that educators experience due to organizational structure, policy, or working conditions.

Career and College Readiness. Lindstrom et al. (2020) found that barriers to successful CCR education for underserved youth was connected to limited resources and options available at the school, lack of in-depth information about postsecondary options within CTE classes, and difficult home environments of students. The barriers discussed are all connected to resources, working conditions, and uncontrollable home situations of students, which subsequently still leave underserved students without access to CCR. In

addition to barriers that have been identified by educators and students, research around

access to high-quality CTE has emerged with additional trends around equity and

segregation. According to the National Association of State Boards of Education

(NASBE) (2019), concentrated wealthy areas are where the most high-quality CTE

programs will survive and be sustained, along with a majority of the CTE teaching force

remaining white. This is relevant because the school district being studied has a majority

white teaching staff while the student population continues to become more diverse.

While CTE and vocational education was previously created for students on a non-

college track, CTE has now become inaccessible for various underserved student groups

(NASBE, 2019). With a predominately white teaching force in CTE and BIPOC-SWD

not having access to rigorous CTE programs, more investigation is needed in the areas of

disaggregated data, equitable school systems and practices, and educator working

conditions.

   Evidence Based Practices for BIPOC-SWD. The current literature on the use of

CCR and CRP frameworks is lacking multiple components that support the

implementation of equitable support and instruction for BIPOC-SWD in pathway

settings. The cross-examination of intersecting categories, such as race and IEP status are

missing in many of the federal and state reports that have concluded results about CCR

and equity progress. The use of disaggregated data is not necessarily enforced or

respected in evaluations of systems and progress toward equity goals. Due to the lack of

disaggregated data, schools are not able to draw conclusions about progress toward

equity without considering the intersection of race and dis/ability, and individualized circumstances. In addition to policy, practice, and disparities in the use of data, working conditions of educators heavily impact their ability to implement new initiatives. Understanding the working conditions of educators from their perspective, will lead to a greater understanding of what is missing from equitable CCR programming.

Review of Methodological Literature

Critical Comparative Case Study. The focus of this research was to understand how the perceptions of CCP educators, counselors, case managers, and administrators drive their pedagogical choices and actions. This research took place within a K-12 school district, with the focus being on 3 of the 4 comprehensive high schools. Each high school was considered its own case and was compared with the other high school cases. In addition to each high school location, job role was also used as a comparative factor.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that in critical research, regardless of the research design, there is an effort to address whose interests are being served by the systems that currently exist. Within this critical comparative case study (see Figure 3), methods were utilized to uncover any competing interest or unequal distributions of power between each role and location considering its relationship to the systemic exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCPs. According to Yin (2014) (as cited by Gutterman & Fetters, 2018), case studies are intended to help the researcher gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena that is occurring within the targeted setting. To gain a firmer understanding of the systemic exclusion of BIPOC-SWD from CCPs in this

district, this research included participants from multiple locations and multiple roles, instead of just one location or one role.

Interviews and Documents. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were the main data collection method used in this study. According to Weiss (1995), interviewing people allows the researcher to have access to perspectives and settings that might otherwise be closed off, to learn about a person's interior experience, and to learn about how people perceive their own perceptions and experiences. Gathering the experiences and perspectives of the educators who teach and support BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings was the main goal of this study.

Throughout the interview process, there were attempts to gain a deeper understanding of how participants from each role viewed the CCP experience of BIPOC-SWD. Participants were asked to walk through scenarios of their experiences as educators supporting all students in CCP settings, including SWD, and BIPOC-SWD. Spradley, as referenced by Leech (2002), discussed the concept of "grand tour questions" which is where interviewees might describe a typical day or walk the researcher through a situation that commonly occurs. Within this research, it was beneficial for each participant to engage in multiple interviews so that rapport could be established, and the participant gained the comfort to safely tell their story from their perspective. Throughout the first round of interviews, "specific grand tour" questions (Leech, 2002) were utilized to address the complexities of how educators might describe specific situations related to BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings. Specific grand tours from interview participants could

include a physical walkthrough of a space where situations might occur, an overview of documents that the person uses in engaging in the process of CCP scheduling and student support, or a verbal explanation of their perspective of the process.

The second round of interviews was meant to be a continuation of the topic. Jamboard sorting tools with EBPs, along with probing questions related to the tenets of DisCrit, were included to dive deeper into the relationship between Race and Ability and how that might be present in CCP settings. Throughout the interview process, documents were collected from the interview participants. Documents included snapshots of the sorting tools completed during interviews on the google drive platform. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), documents show insight into a participant's attitude, beliefs, and view of the world. Participants were given the opportunity to do an interactive Jamboard to provide deeper insight into their beliefs and view of diverse students in CCP settings.

Summary of Literature of EBP and Methodology. In summary, the research-based frameworks of CRP and CCR for SWD are EBPs that could be utilized by CCP teachers, counselors, case managers, and administrators to support accessibility and success within CCP spaces. Although policy is being used to suggest more equitable practices in the field of CCR, specifically for student groups such as BIPOC-SWD, there is no guarantee that EBPs are being implemented effectively. Interviews were conducted as the primary data collection in this study to gain a deeper insight into what educators' experience and how these experiences influence their own behaviors and choices.

Utilizing a multiple case study design within a school district will create more opportunities for triangulation of data and conceptual ideas that are transferable across settings. In addition to being transferable across settings, understanding the similarities and differences between each case (location and role) will allow district administration to have information which could lead to more transformational change in the systemic planning and implementation of EBPs within the CCP programs.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the varying perspectives that educators have about BIPOC-SWD accessing and being successful in CCP settings. This critical comparative case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) research design incorporated qualitative data collection and analysis in the form of interviews and document review. The theoretical components of DisCrit (Connor et al., 2016) was the foundation of this study. The following research questions were addressed with this study:

1. How do educators perceive the purpose of CCP BIPOC-SWD?

2. How do educators describe the accessibility of CCP? What factors lead to gatekeeping, pushout, and/or support of BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings?

3. How do educators describe the barriers and supports that influence their decisions and capability in implementing EBP for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings? What are the internal and external factors?

4. How do educators describe students who are successful and unsuccessful in CCP programs and how does race and ability factor into educator perspectives of student success?

Research Design

This critical comparative case study was built around the Critical Paradigm of research. Figure 3 is a diagram based on Maxwell's (2013) research design format, which aligns research goals, concepts, validity, and methods to the research questions. This diagram displays a through-line between the research questions with all other components of the study. The research questions evolved throughout the design process and throughout the study. The goals of this study were to gain a greater understanding of

educator perspectives about BIPOC-SWD within CCP settings and how they view their roles, abilities, and influence with equity. The theories that have driven this research are CRP, CCR for SWD, and DisCrit, and the concepts that were included in the conceptualization of this problem and research are: Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), Gatekeeping, Pushout, and internal and external barriers to EBP and pedagogy.

Strategies used to support the credibility and validity of the findings include triangulation of multiple data sources and multiple cases. Within their work, Brown and Dueñas (2019) adapted axiological and ontological categories based off Chilisa's (2011) work on research methodologies; within this work Brown and Dueñas (2019) describe critical theory as having an axiology around empowering people to make change and an ontological assumption of the existence of multiple realities influenced by lived experiences. My axiological approach to this research was to empower participants to challenge their own beliefs and understandings, as well as the systems and processes, regarding BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings. In addition to challenging participants to think more deeply about their role in this issue, I wanted to engage in a project that would also challenge my beliefs and understanding of both the problem and the participants. I attempted this by assuring participants that I was not engaging in this research to pass judgment on them based on their understandings of racism or disability, but to learn how they think about the topic and the complexities of CCPs. I also explicitly told participants that I wanted to understand what they need and that this research could be utilized as a mechanism for educator advocacy.

Brown and Dueñas (2019) also explained that epistemology within the Critical paradigm assumes that "knowledge is subjective, but created and negotiated between individuals and within groups" (p. 548). Within this research, I assumed that educator perspectives about BIPOC-SWD were subjective and that pressures from individual influences, as well as social influences from peers and the school community, have the potential to shape an educator's knowledge of the subject.

Figure 3

Research Design
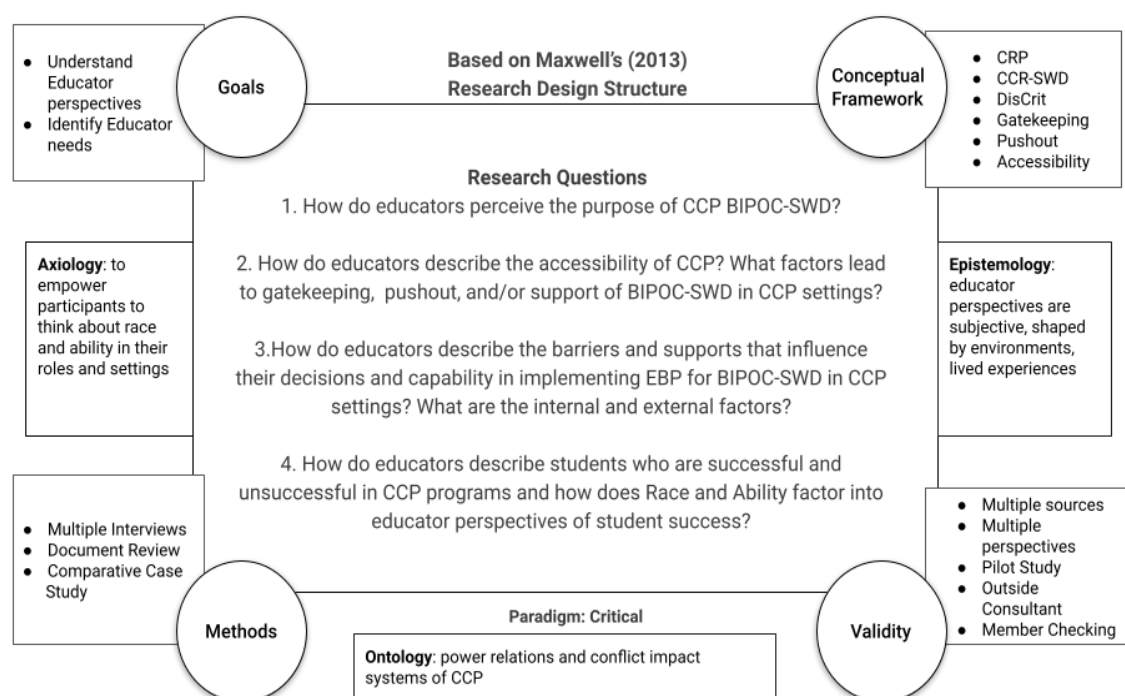
Note. This figure is based off Maxwell's (2013) Research Design

Participants and Setting

I conducted this study in an urban, public, preK-12 school district in the Pacific Northwest, with a focus on three high schools within the district. Educator participants were selected based on purposive sampling (Palys, 2008, as cited by Maxwell, 2013), otherwise known as Purposeful Sampling (Light et al., 1990, as cited by Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) explained that purposeful sampling is when the selection of participants is deliberate due to their ability to provide the most relevant information for the study. For this study, purposeful sampling originally included high school educators that fall in the following categories: CCP/CTE teachers, Special Education Case Managers, Counselors, and Administrators. These specific educator roles were selected based on their involvement with diverse student groups and CCP settings.

Following several attempts to recruit participants from the roles identified, the sampling was then opened to Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) and district administrators who were willing to participate. Building administrators from each of the three high school locations were not willing to participate. None of the building administrators gave a reason for not wanting to participate, and two of the three of them did not respond to my messages at all. The lack of response to the inquiry could have been related to the district having hesitation about this study due to its political and controversial nature. Only one of the building principals supported me in sharing my promotion of the research study in their weekly communication to staff. Educators who teach core subject areas, such as English, Math, Social Sciences, and Science classes

were not included because this research focused on the CCP classroom setting and the systems and practices that directly impact BIPOC-SWD in accessing and being successful in that setting.

Each high school contains a different variety of pathway programs and offers a different variety of courses. When participant recruitment began, there were approximately 55 CCP teachers, 41 special education case managers, 12 counselors, and 12 building administrators within the pool of desired participants. Within the targeted roles listed, the intention was to have each CCP cluster represented from each school and each job role with a representative from each location. For example, if "High School A" had 9 CCP programs, it would have been ideal to interview all 9 teachers. CCP and CTE educators were the primary population of desired participants due to their central role in CCP settings. Special education case managers, counselors, CCP teachers, district administrators, and TOSAs were included in the sampling due to their roles in supporting BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings. Additionally, individuals in these job roles are included in the district's initiative to diversify CCPs. Below, I discuss how participants were recruited and how challenges were addressed in the recruitment process.

The sample size consisted of 10 participants across four locations as represented in Table 1. These locations were three comprehensive high schools (School A, B, and C) and the district office. I interviewed six participants from school A, which included three case managers, two CTE teachers, and one CCP teacher. School B had one participant whose role is counselor. School C had one participant whose role is CCP teacher. The

district office had two participants, including one Teacher on Special Assignment

(TOSA) and one district level administrator. All 10 participants identified as white. There

were three participants who had been in their current role for 5-9 years and three who had

been in their current role for 10-14 years. One participant had been in their current role

for 0-4 years, another for 15-19 years, and another for 25-29 years.

Table 1

Participant Quantity and Location

	School A	School B	School C	District Office	Total in Each Role
Case Manager	3				3
Counselor		1			1
CTE Teacher	2				2
CCP Teacher	1		1		2
TOSA				1	1
District Admin				1	1
Total in Each Location	6	1	1	2	10

Procedures and Justification of Methods

Data Collection

Participant Recruitment. In August of 2021, I emailed the building principals in

each of the three high schools included in the study. One principal responded to the initial

email and put an announcement in their weekly communication to staff about the study.

As I stated above, the other principals did not respond to any of the inquiries for support with this research. Within the announcement, there was information on how to sign up for the study by emailing me directly.

I sent a follow up email to the staff identified within the targeted roles. The email that I sent returned a few potentially interested participants who were willing to set up a date for the first interview over Zoom. Due to a lack of willing participants, snowball sampling was also utilized after a few participants started interviewing. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described snowball sampling as a common form of purposeful sampling. Participants and colleagues recommended staff they thought would be interested and they were sent a recruitment email about the research study.

A total of 10 participants were willing to participate, and they included three special education case managers, two CCP teachers, two CTE teachers, one counselor, one TOSA who supports CCP, and one district administrator who oversees CCP. Among the participants there were six participants from school A, one participant from school B, one participant from school C, and two participants from the district office. There were no building administrators that were willing to participate in the study. The reluctance from participants could be due to hesitancy in saying the wrong thing when discussing topics of race and disability, or potentially due to the workload and stresses of COVID and the return to in-person school after the shutdown. School A had many willing participants, and they were generally easy to schedule interviews with, but the other

locations did not have willing or interested participants and it took much more effort to gain just one participant.

Table 2 represents the role and location of each participant. Below in the results and discussion sections, participants were given a pseudonym for their identity to remain protected. Pseudonyms are also noted in Table 2.

Table 2

Individual Participant Roles and Locations

P1 Beatrice	P2 Jane	P3 Amelia	P4 Bette	P5 Tina	P6 Harold	P7 Andrea	P8 Tom	P9 Sandra	P10 Ryan
CM-1 School A	CM-2 School A	CCP-1 School C	CM-3 School A	C-1 School B	CTE-1 School A	Admin District Office	CTE-2 School A	TOSA District Office	CCP-2 School A

Interviews. Interviews were the primary source of data for this study. Interviews were semi-structured and were built from the theoretical frameworks of DisCrit, CRP, and CCR-SWD (see Appendix A). Within Appendix A is a synthesis of the components of each of the theoretical frameworks that were used to design this research study and interview questions. There were not different protocols for each role, but I took the participant role into consideration when asking them interview questions. For example, if I asked a participant to explain when a student doesn't do well in a CCP, I framed it toward the participant's role as a teacher, counselor, case manager, or admin.

In addition to the components of the theoretical frameworks being incorporated into the interview questions, EBPs (instructional practices) from the review of literature are also captured in the interview components. Semi-structured interview questions were used to allow for flexibility during the interview. Interview questions were intended to capture an in-depth account of the experiences and perceptions of each role of each participant. Appendix B contains the interview protocols for both interviews conducted for each participant. The interview protocols were designed to be used interchangeably for participants with varying job roles.

Relationship building remained a central focus throughout the interview process, which was especially important due to the sensitive topics of race and ability. Trust and rapport were vital components throughout data collection. Leech (2002) recommended gaining rapport by showing participants they are being heard and emphasized that the order of questions mattered. The semi-structured interview protocols allowed for me to change the order of my questions based on the participant's responses, making the conversation more natural and driven by their experiences. This style of interviewing also created space for me to build trust throughout the interview. Leech (2002) also stated that the use of the grand tour questions can sometimes take up some or all the interview time, which means strategically including the most important questions somewhere in the middle. The grand tour questions included in the first round of interviews were simplified down to four major guiding questions and room to probe between each question.

Participants were told at the beginning of each interview that there would be four major guiding questions.

Interviews occurred over Zoom due to the concerns around the ongoing COVID pandemic. Zoom (2022) is a video conferencing website that allows for video conferencing and recordings. The Zoom video conferencing website records the interviews to the cloud and the host of the meeting receives the recordings and the audio transcripts. I gave participants a consent form to sign prior to the video conferences being recorded and I notified them of the recording upon beginning each interview.

The proposal for this research originally incorporated in-person interviews, but that was no longer an option at the start of the 2021-2022 school year due to COVID protocols and concerns. The first round of interviews was conducted with each of the 10 participants in the months of October and November of 2021. All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. The participants opted to schedule interviews during their planning periods throughout the workday, and during evenings and weekends outside of work hours. Interviews were scheduled for a period of one hour in length. Throughout the interview process, participants were given a pseudonym on my researcher notes and electronic documents so that their identities were protected throughout the study.

After the first round of interviews were conducted, all the second-round interviews were scheduled for December 2021 and January 2022. I invited participants to share documents that were related to any of the topics discussed in the interview process

through a google form in the follow up member checking email. I also asked participants if they had any documents they wanted to share during the interviews. The second-round interviews were focused on the sorting tools created on Jamboards and interview questions. A Jamboard is a collaborative digital whiteboard created by Google.

The second-round interviews were also scheduled for up to one hour in length. As mentioned above, the interviews were originally meant to be held in person, however, due to the switch to online interviews over Zoom, the participants worked with the sorting tools on a Jamboard instead of with paper. There were two pre-made sorting activities created for each participant and the link to their sorting tools was shared with them in the chat during the Zoom interview. The participants did not see the sorting tools prior to the interview. I created the sorting tools based on the EBPs that were synthesized from the literature review on equitable practices in CCP settings, CRP, and DisCrit.

Initially, the first sorting tool was meant to be sorted three different times, once each for students, SWD, and BIPOC-SWD; however, that process proved to take too long in the first two interviews, which lasted one and a half to two hours. While it is commonly known that qualitative interviews are usually 1-2 hours, most participants were only willing to meet for 30 minutes to an hour. Participants also appeared to disengage when I asked them to use the sorting tools repeatedly. After learning from the first two interviews with the sorting tools, during the rest of the interviews, participants were asked to sort the first sorting tool based on all students and then we discussed what they might change or if anything would change for SWD and then BIPOC-SWD. I also

created a second sorting tool, which was a synthesis of the tenets of DisCrit, however,

due to time constraints and the length of the interviews, only a few participants were able

to make it to the fourth sorting tool.

Lastly, participants were given a chance to look over the data analysis from their

interviews and to request data from the entire research study. Participants were not given

the option to see other participants' transcripts but were given the option to see data from

the whole study in the form of the spreadsheet with codes related to each role and

location. Participant identities could not be found through the spreadsheet. They were

labeled in numbers only. Only one participant responded to their data with feedback, and

they confirmed the findings were accurate. The rest of the participants did not wish to

follow up about the interviews or the data after I sent out the follow up communication.

Data Analysis

Interview Transcripts. Throughout each interview, field notes were recorded

during and immediately following the interview. These notes were added to the

participant profiles that were utilized in the data analysis phases. Audio transcriptions

were downloaded from the Zoom recordings and then edited for correctness. Initial

coding began before the second interview was conducted with each participant. The

coding and data analysis occurred in four phases: (a) Structural and Versus Coding, (b)

Code Mapping, (c) Code Charting, and (d) Document and Artifact Review.

Coding and Analysis Phases. The transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose® for

initial coding and analysis procedures. Dedoose® (Version 8.3.17) is a qualitative data

analysis platform. Dedoose® was used to code final interview transcripts and analyze patterns. In Dedoose®, each transcript was linked to a participant, which was also linked to demographic descriptors and indicators. The demographic descriptors consisted of: Job Role, Job Location, Years in Current Role, and Race. In its entirety, the data from this research study went through five stages of coding and analysis: (a) Structural and Versus coding in Dedoose®, (b) Code Mapping (Saldaña, 2016) in Google Sheets, (c) Code Charting (Saldaña, 2016) in Dedoose® and Google Drive Platform features, () Document review, and (e) Major findings. Figure 4 displays a visual representation of the coding and analysis phases.

Figure 4

Coding and Analysis Phases

Structural Coding and Versus Coding	Code Mapping	Code Charting	Document Analysis	Major Findings
Phase 1 Codes created based on Research Questions	Phase 2 Categories created within each Initial/ Structural Code	Phase 3 Charting codes in order to compare data by Role, Location, and Individual participant	Phase 4 Analysis of Documents in relation to codes, categories, and themes that arise	Phase 5 Synthesis of Major Themes based on significance across Role and Location

Coding and Analysis Phases (Saldaña, 2016)

Initial Coding (Phase 1)

Structural Coding and Versus Coding. Structural coding was utilized for initial coding of the data. According to Guest and MacQueen (2008), for large amounts of data from semi-structured interviews, it is useful to "begin by coding text according to specific research questions used to frame the interview; we label this type of index coding as Stage 1 or structural coding" (p. 118). Additionally, Saldaña (2016) stated that the coded segments from the structural coding process can be utilized for more detailed coding and analysis. Versus coding was also utilized in the initial coding process due to its relationship to the DisCrit framework. Saldaña (2016) explained that versus coding is appropriate for studies which include critical theory as a basis for analysis in order to capture conflicts, competing goals, or an imbalance of power between stakeholders. Within the coding, I included one code related to conflict and competing resources as a structural code and that contributed to one of the other structural codes. Later I went back and looked at the data from that code to see if there were any significant findings related to conflict and competing factors. Overall, structural codes were chosen based on the components of the research questions because the interview transcripts provided an overwhelming amount of data. The structural codes were applied first and that helped me to organize the data into smaller chunks for further analysis.

Initial codes for the structural coding process were created based on the research questions. The initial structural codes consisted of the following:

- Perceived purpose of CCP

- Perceived accessibility of CCP

- Supporting student in CCP

- Hinders educator in EBP

- Supports educator in EBP

- Lack of understanding of EBP

- Internal factors of influence on educator

- External factors of influence on educator

- Gatekeeping

- Pushout

- Supports educator in EBP

- Student characteristics of failure in CCP

- Student characteristics of success in CCP

- Conflict or competing interests.

Conflict or competing interests were included in the initial round due to its connection to studies based on power dynamics and DisCrit. Versus coding was applied in Dedoose® as part of the initial round of coding to capture conflicts, competing goals, and competing resources to support the theoretical framework based on DisCrit. Within the Structural Coding process conflict and competing interests were used to categorize data from the interviews based on conflict. A code based on a lack of understanding of EBP was created in the initial phase due to that being a common occurrence in interviews early in the study. I developed this code as a marker so that I could track where I, as the

researcher, felt that the participant did not clearly understand the EBP, or for when they clearly stated they did not have clear understanding.

Code Mapping (Phase 2)

I utilized Code mapping after I applied structural and versus codes. Saldaña (2016) explained that code mapping can help the reorganization, credibility, and trustworthiness of observations within the data and can be used to prepare the data for further analysis. After I coded all of the interview transcriptions with the initial codes in Dedoose®, I created a Google Sheet Spreadsheet to synthesize categories within each initial code group. Google Sheets is spreadsheet software housed in the Google suite. Sub-categories were organized under the following major groups: Perceived Purpose of CCP, Perceived Accessibility of CCP (Gatekeeping, Pushout, and Supports), Hinders Educator with EBPs (Internal, External), Supports Educator with EBPs (Internal, External), Student Traits for Success in CCP, Student Traits for Failure in CCP, and Competing Factors. Competing Factors was based on versus coding (Saldaña, 2016) and is further explained below. Below in the interpretation of findings, the identified categories and themes that arose from the structural coding process are outlined and described. The subcategories that I came up with under the versus code of conflict and competing interests were:

- Supporting students to stay on track v. encouraging pathway
- Parent preference v. student preference v. teacher recommendation
- Case manager responsibilities v. CCP teacher responsibilities

- Support classes v. pathway enrollment

- CTE v. CCP (access to funds and supports)

- Special education v. general education

- Counselors v. classroom teachers

- Competing programs (EL, Sped, IB/Dual Credit/AP/Honors)

- CCP/CTE v. general education core classes

Code Charting (Phase 3)

Following code mapping, code charting was utilized to further analyze the data

and to find major themes, as well as to compare findings based on role and location.

Profiles were created to summarize the themes and categories for each participant, each

group of participants by job role, and each group of participants by location. Each

participant profile included a paraphrase or summary of the interview data under each

initial code created in the structural coding process, along with direct quotes from the

interview. Profiles of participant themes and categories by job role and job location were

also created to allow for a variety of comparisons between participants, role, and location.

The comparison between participants, roles, and location allowed for increased

trustworthiness of the decided upon themes and categories.

Document/Artifact Review (Phase 4)

I conducted Document analysis to further develop an understanding of findings.

The documents consisted of the sorting tools that participants completed throughout their

second interviews. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that researchers could create

documents, or participants could create documents for the researcher, to further explain the information that has been investigated throughout the study. Although participants were asked to share documents, the documents that I chose for document review were only the sorting tools.

The final products of the sorting tools were captured as documents for document review. All documents were uploaded and captured on the google drive folder where interview data were stored. The documents that were collected throughout the interviews were snapshots of the Jamboard sorting tools which occurred in the second round of interviews. In the review of the Jamboards, participant answers were documented on a spreadsheet and on each participant profile, there are notes about how participants said their answers might have changed when asked about the sorting responses and applying them to SWD and BIPOC-SWD. Although I included a separate document review of sorting tools, most of the data were derived from the interview discussions and transcripts. I used the sorting tool documents as supplemental to the interviews.

Major Findings (Phase 5)

As a final step, I put the data into a new Google Sheets spreadsheet. The code mapping categories were placed into major themes of: Staff beliefs and actions, student actions and characteristics, policies, procedures, and processes, community influence, and COVID related. Additionally, instead of a numerical count, the structural, versus codes, and code mapping categories were marked with an "X" to identify whether at least one participant within that role or location has mentioned that category within their interviews

or document analysis. After this was completed for all job roles and locations, it was identified whether a category was mentioned across all locations, all roles, all locations and all roles, and all locations and all roles except administrators. I cross referenced categories between role and location to assess the trustworthiness and significance of the categories that I found present.

Credibility, Validity, and Trustworthiness

Design Based on Pilot. This research study was designed based on a pilot study that I conducted with educators who fall in the categories of the targeted roles outlined in this study. Originally, this study was going to incorporate a survey based on the theoretical frameworks and literature review of EBPs. After meeting with educators to discuss the components of the surveys, it became clear that interviews, rapport building, and multiple meetings with participants would be a more effective way to gather rich information about this topic. Pilot participants verified that this is a very important topic which continues to be heavily discussed across high schools in this region. Pilot participants also confirmed that they enjoyed talking about these issues and would prefer to talk and explain the complexities rather than have their perceptions be captured on a survey that might not allow for their individual input. These factors led to the development of my final research design, which incorporates interviews instead of a survey and an interview.

Qualitative Research Standards

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), multiple approaches improve validity within qualitative research; Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended triangulation, member checking, rich and thick descriptions of the findings, clarification of biases, presentations of negative or discrepant information, extended time in the field, peer debriefing, and having an external auditor. Creswell and Creswell (2018) also mention that reliability of findings lies in the checking of correctness in transcriptions, clear definitions of codes, and careful attention to particularity and generalization.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that the best way to ensure credibility within qualitative research is to include triangulation, member checks, and adequate engagement in data collection. In this study, I used triangulation by interviewing each participant multiple times, and collecting relevant documents. I also conducted an analysis of themes between educator role and location. Themes that were established through data collection were shared back to participants to offer them a chance to give feedback on the findings. Participants were emailed a snapshot of their individual interview results in the form of a spreadsheet. They were also provided with an optional google form to give any additional feedback and/or request access to the overall data from the study.

According to Glesne (2011), in qualitative research, trustworthiness is established in reference to a set of standards to make sure the findings are plausible. Glesne (2011) summarized Creswell's (1998) eight procedures that contribute to trustworthiness as

prolonged engagement with participants, triangulation with multiple data collection methods and perspectives, peer review and input, negative case analysis, clarification of researcher bias, member checking with participants, rich descriptions within writing, and an external auditor.

I included two interviews with each participant to provide the opportunity to build rapport and go deeper into the topic. I was able to gather data through interviews, documents, and a sorting tool activity, and to interview participants in different roles with varying perspectives. I consulted with fellow researchers who acted as peer reviewers and auditors along my data collection and coding process. I provided a clear researcher positionality statement throughout my proposal, results, and discussion.

Throughout this research I reflected on my bias and positionality as a white educator and special education case manager. I often considered how my experiences as a case manager, often in conflict with general education counterparts, might influence my data collection and analysis. Some of the participants were acquaintances, and some I had never met before. Of all the participants in this study, I had not previously had conflict around this topic with any of them. Throughout the study, I continuously reflected on my own whiteness. Participants were given the chance to provide feedback on the findings after the data analysis phases were completed. Within the optional google form, they were given the chance to opt into another conversation, give feedback on the data, and request to see the overall categories and findings from the study. Participant transcripts were not shared to other participants. Finally, throughout this research, clear and

descriptive findings were presented with attention to particularity to location and role, as well as generalizability across CCP settings.

Researcher Positionality

In critical research especially, the researcher must be aware of their own power and bias throughout all the steps of the research process. Throughout this study, I made conscious attempts to remain aware that my own personal connection to this topic could influence my analysis and interpretation of data. Throughout the design of this research, I was impacted by power structures that limited my ability to pursue the type of research that I had originally intended to conduct, which was intended to center the voices of BIPOC-SWD. Additionally, because of the nature of the questions regarding educator perspectives on the race and ability of students having access to existing programs, I was careful not to come across as accusatory in my language and interview protocols. Although I had set out to empower participants to think about race and ability within their role and setting, and in relation to CCPs, it occurred to me throughout each interview that some participants were not yet at a place to have those conversations or challenge their thinking around it. Simply asking the interview questions put some participants at their edge with race and disability. At times, participants shared speculations about whether their intentions were being questioned, and within those conversations I assured participants that I wanted to understand their experiences as they would describe them without personal judgments.

Throughout my career, I have worked with BIPOC students who have been labeled with a disability. Over the span of the last 15 years, I have been a special education case manager and teacher, both in specialized programs and within inclusionary program models. As a special education teacher and case manager in high school, my role has been to facilitate course scheduling, IEP supports, specially designed instructions (SDI), access to general education classes, and transition planning. It is within my role as a special education teacher that bias around race and ability in CCPs was brought to my attention, specifically when supporting BIPOC-SWD. Anecdotally, I have experienced educators commenting on the ability of students, student labels, behavior history, or the list of accommodations that support their learning as factors that stand in the way of student opportunities in CCPs. As a special education case manager, I have been trained to write IEPs from the deficit perspective, which has impacted my approach to course planning and inclusion. Challenging these practices was not part of this study, but will remain future issues to problem solve. My own unsuccessful attempts to support educators in the growth and expansion of inclusive practices has impacted my ability to advocate for students to take classes where they could be subjected to unintentional harms such as racism or ableism. As our schools shift to more inclusion and BIPOC-SWD being in classes that they were not previously allowed to be in before, case managers are posed with the choice of encouraging students to enroll in a pathway of a teacher that they know to have bias around race and disability, or engage in gatekeeping in order to protect students from enduring situations that can be avoided.

I have also encountered a variety of barriers when advocating for equitable practices at the building level, including philosophical differences with administrators, classroom teachers, and special education colleagues. Furthermore, I have participated heavily in union organizing to advocate for manageable workloads for teachers and for school systems that support equitable and inclusive practices. While participating in union organizing, it became apparent to me that some educators, in every role, weaponized union support to resist equitable practices that went against their personal beliefs. For example, if a teacher feels that students with an IEP or behavior challenges should not be allowed to enroll in their class, they could utilize union support as a workload issue. This is an additional barrier that exists within the web of equitable CCP programming.

Through my experiences, I have witnessed a variety of situations that have opened my eyes to the complexities of racism and ableism in CCPs. An understanding of the complexities allowed me to look at the data through multiple lenses. I intend to use the findings of this research to advocate for the needs of teachers who support BIPOC-SWD in CCP classrooms to improve the experiences for both educators and students and I hope that with these findings I can meet with district leadership to discuss better ways to support teachers through these complexities.

Chapter 4 Results

Re-Introduction and Connection to Results

Over the course of six months, I conducted a qualitative interview study to explore educator experiences and perspectives around the purpose, accessibility, and practices of CCPs, of a specific school district in the Pacific Northwest. This comparative case study was intended to capture the perspectives and experiences of CCP and CTE teachers, special education case managers, counselors, and administrators. The following research questions were addressed throughout the course of this study:

1. How do educators perceive the purpose of CCP BIPOC-SWD?

2. How do educators describe the accessibility of CCP? What factors lead to gatekeeping, pushout, and/or support of BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings?

3. How do educators describe the barriers and supports that influence their decisions and capability in implementing EBP for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings? What are the internal and external factors?

4. How do educators describe students who are successful and unsuccessful in CCP programs and how does race and ability factor into educator perspectives of student success?

Analysis of Data

Results of this study are organized by job location and job role. Therefore, each case being studied could be each role and each location. By organizing data based on job role and job location, educational leaders can see what individual schools might need, as well as groups of educators based on role. By looking at both role and location, it also helps to know if this problem is seen differently from different roles and locations. Through multiple rounds of data analysis, categories were generated under the initial

Structural codes (Saldaña, 2016) of: Purpose of CCP, Accessibility of CCP, Barriers and Supports in Implementing EBP in CCP settings, and Student Traits of Success and Failure in Accessing and Completing CCP. In addition to the structural coding, versus coding (Saldaña, 2016) was utilized throughout the initial structural coding process to provide a category around conflict and competing resources as a through-line to the DisCrit framework. As mentioned in the methods section, after the initial structural coding, I engaged in code mapping, code charting, document analysis, (Saldaña, 2016) and then the identification of major themes. CCP teachers and CTE teachers are differentiated due to participants providing input on the large differences between the two teaching roles, despite the district clumping them together under the umbrella of CCP.

Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

Structural Coding. The numerical count of structural codes that were applied in Dedoose® are displayed in Appendix D. The numerical count was not statistically analyzed for significance due to there being an inconsistent number of participants within each role and location, and most importantly, because this was a qualitative research study intended to capture educator experiences, as opposed to quantifying their experience. Throughout the results section, results are organized first by research question and major categories that I found based on participant roles, and lastly, by the cases being compared which are the locations of each school and the district office: School A, School B, School C, and District Office.

Research Question 1: How do educators perceive the purpose of CCP for BIPOC-SWD?

Perceived Purpose of CCP. The structural code that aligned with the perceived purpose of CCP was *Perceived Purpose of CCP*. The categories throughout the code mapping process underneath the structural code of Perceived Purpose of CCP, were (a) Career Exposure/Career Training/Exploration, (b) Connect Industry to Classroom, (c) High School Focus Area of Study, (d) Learning Job skills, (e) Planning for future/career/college, (f) State Graduation Requirements, and (g) SEL/Talents/Strengths. Considering both participant location and role, a major theme throughout the conversations around the purpose of CCP was strongly centered around students planning for their future. Participant role influence how participants viewed CCPs.

Research Question 2: How do educators describe the accessibility of CCP? What factors lead to gatekeeping, pushout, and/or support of BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings?

Perceived Accessibility of CCP. The structural codes that supported the perceived accessibility of CCP were *Gatekeeping, Pushout, and Supports*. The perceived accessibility of CCPs is in reference to diverse students, specifically BIPOC-SWD. Data were analyzed throughout interviews 1 and 2 to determine factors of accessibility related to BIPOC-SWD. Gatekeeping is in reference to students being kept from CCPs due to educator actions, beliefs, and school systems and policies. Gatekeeping leads to the reality of options and opportunities that the students experience (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). As mentioned in the literature review, educators of all roles can act as gatekeepers (Siuty, 2019). Pushout is defined as policies and practices that lead to students being

pushed out of specific settings and opportunities. Pushout can occur due to educator bias and can lead to students dropping out (Burbach, 2018). These terms are sometimes used interchangeably due to the strong relationship between the two concepts.

The major categories that were identified within perceived accessibility under the structural code of Gatekeeping were: (a) 4-year planning and prerequisites, (b) class size, (c) dependent upon CCP teacher, (d) dependent upon CM or Counselor, (e) parent influence, (f) scheduling conflicts, (g) staff influence, (h) student ability, (i) student behavior, (j) systems and processes for scheduling, and (k) pathways do not fit student needs or interests.

The major categories that were identified within perceived accessibility under Pushout were: (a) 4-year planning and prerequisites, (b) dependent upon CCP teacher, (c) dependent upon CM or Counselor, (d) lack of appropriate accommodations or modifications in CCP settings, (e) scheduling conflicts, (f) senior seminar as fallback, (g) student ability, (h) student behavior, and (i) students not signing up for the pathway and the reputation of the pathway.

The major categories that were identified within student supports were: (a) 4- year planning, (b) forecasting being open to all, (c) messaging and promotion, and (d) school to career staff. The statements from participants were generally about all students without considering diverse student groups specifically. There was not much consideration or emphasis from participants of how race and ability are interdependent and how accessing the programs that exist for *all* students, might be harder for some students than others.

Considering participant role and location, the major theme that I found within gatekeeping was that each individual CCP teacher carries heavy influence on whether a student accesses a CCP program. Within pushout, the major theme that I uncovered was that participants perceived that students were not signing up for advanced CCP courses and that could be due to the reputation of the CCP as being too difficult. Within the sub-category of student supports, there were no common themes across participant discussions, but participants mentioned how forecasting being open to all, messaging and promotion of CCPs, and 4-year planning supports students in being enrolled and completing CCPs.

Research Question 3: How do educators describe the barriers and supports that influence their decisions and capability in implementing EBP for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings? What are the internal and external factors?

The structural codes that supported educator barriers and supports were *Hinders Educator (Internal and External) and Supports Educator (Internal and External).* A variety of researchers (Green & Stormont, 2018; Lindstrom et al., 2020; Mellon et al., 2018; Min et al., 2020; Samuels, 2018; Siwatu et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2013) have referred to barriers that hinder educators from successfully implementing EBPs for diverse learners including lack of knowledge, lack of experience, lack of resources, negative experiences, lack of support, and educator beliefs. Among supports that were pointed out as helping teachers implementing EBPs were administrator support and the experiences of positive outcomes (Min et al., 2020).

Throughout the code mapping process for the structural code of *Hinders-Internal*, the categories that emerged were (a) beliefs about student ability, (b) beliefs about student race, (c) color-blindness, (d) doesn't recognize disability, (e) personal beliefs and values, (f) personal/lived experience as white educator, and (g) unclear understanding of EBP. The categories that presented themselves throughout the code mapping process underneath the structural code of Hinders-External were: (a) class size, (b) COVID slowing down processes, (c) dependent upon community participation, (d) dependent upon other staff, (e) funding, (f) grading systems, (g) graduation requirements, (h) inconsistent building support, (i) inconsistent district support, (j) language barriers, (k) pathways inconsistent, (l) PD doesn't support EBPs, (m) student labels and needs, (n) time, and (o) workload.

Throughout the code mapping process for the structural code of *Supporters-Internal*, the categories that emerged were: (a) educator acknowledges disability, (b) educator acknowledges race, (c) educator chooses to support diversity in CCP, (d) educator has confidence in supporting diverse students, (e) established and ongoing school based businesses, (f) evolving perspectives about purpose of education and learning, (g) personal beliefs and values drive decisions, (h) educator prioritizes student interests and input, (i) educator has self-awareness, and (j) educator has willingness to advocate for diverse student needs.

Throughout the code mapping process for the structural code of *Supporters-External*, the categories that emerged were: (a) 4 year planning, (b) building support, (c)

district support, (d) CCP continues to improve organization, (e) community partners, (f)

district equitable grading practices, (g) PD focused on equity and CRP, (f) school

community/policy, (g) state policy, (h) staffing/classroom assistance, (i) time to

collaborate with coworkers, (j) transition IEP process, and (k) use of data to make

decisions.

Overall, a participant in every role spoke about internal barriers as being related to

vague and unclear understanding of EBPs, or explained the EBP in a way that

demonstrated they may not know what it means. Within the subcategory of external

barriers, including competing resources, participants explained that their success in

implementing EBPs was heavily reliant on other staff. Within the subcategory of internal

supports, the major themes that were identified based on participant responses were the

significance of acknowledging disability and race, carrying an evolving perspective about

teaching and learning, carrying self-awareness, and the educators' willingness to

advocate for and support diverse learners. Within the subcategory of external supports,

there were not many consistent statements or comments from participants. Most

participants had difficulty identifying any external supports that helped them with EBPs.

A few participants mentioned professional development and strong messaging from their

administration as supporters for carrying out equity based EBPs.

Internal and External Barriers and Supports by Participant Location. School

A had the most participants and within school A, all participants indicated that an unclear

understanding of EBPs was an internal barrier to implementing EBPs. Like the results

explained by role, all participants in every location mentioned that having an unclear understanding of EBPs was an internal barrier for implementing EBPs. Additionally, and like the results by role, all participants in all locations described how having a willingness to advocate for diverse students and collaborate with coworkers was an internal support for implementing EBPs.

The results from School B are the same as the results shared for the counselor role due to that participant being the only counselor and the only representative from School B. The results from School C were centered around educator beliefs about race and ability and the supports that are offered from both in-building and at the district level. There was only one participant from School C, and data from that participant was also represented in the CCP teacher data. The results from the district office, which included two participants, carried emphasis around staff collaboration and how internal supports were more prominent in supporting the implementation of EBPs.

Document Review

The documents reviewed were the sorting tools from each of the participants' interview 2. The sorting tools assisted in collecting data that would answer research questions 3 and 4, which focused on barriers and supports of implementing EBPs and the description of student traits around race and ability in CCPs.

Table 3 displays a summary of how participants sorted their EBPs based on the categories of *Yes/Definitely*, *Sometimes,* or *No/Not at This Time*. This sorting tool was conducted in the second round of interviews with each participant. Each participant had a

variety of responses to the EBPs when discussed. There were no EBPs that had responses of Yes from every participant. There were also no EBPs that had responses of No from every participant.

Table 3

Results from Sorting Tool 1 by Participant

_____

Sorting Tool 1	P1 CM A	P2 CM A	P3 CCP C	P4 CM A	P5 C B	P6 CTE A	P7 Admin D	P8 CTE A	P9 TOSA D	P10 CCP A
Challenge definitions of rigor	S	Y	Y	S	S	Y	Y	S	S	Y
Carry sympathy for student experiences	Y	Y	S	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Include school-based businesses	S	S	N	S	S	N	Y	S	Y	S
Include work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities	N	N	N	S	S	S	Y	Y	Y	Y
Build relationships with students	Y	Y	S	Y	Y	Y	S	Y	Y	S
Reflect upon beliefs	Y	Y	Y	Y	S	Y	Y	Y	S	Y
Integrate college into all courses and supports	Y	N	Y	S	S	S	S	S	Y	Y
Utilize Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	S	Y	Y	S	S	Y	Y	Y	S	S
Perceive diverse culture and languages as positive attributes	Y	Y	S	Y	S	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Encourage dual credit/AP/Honors	S	S	S	N	S	S	S	Y	Y	N
Challenge my own ideologies	Y	Y	Y	Y	S	Y	Y	Y	S	Y

Note: Y=Yes, S=Sometimes, N=No, not at this time and all of these are in relation to implementing EBPs

Table 4 displays how participants changed their answers around EBPs when they discussed SWD and BIPOC-SWD. After participants were asked to sort the EBPs based on all students, they were then asked if any of their answers would shift or change if they considered SWD or BIPOC-SWD specifically. Overall, only participant 10 mentioned changes. Participant 10 noted that relationship building changed based on student race and/or ability.

Table 4

Results from Sorting Tool 1 by Participant and Regarding SWD/BIPOC-SWD

Sorting Tool 1	P1 CM A	P2 CM A	P3 CCP C	P4 CM A	P5 C B	P6 CTE A	P7 Admin D	P8 CTE A	P9 TOSA D	P10 CCP A
Responses based on SWD	same	same	same	same	same	same	same	same	same	relationship building
Responses based on BIPOC-SWD	same	same	same	same	same	same	same	same	same	relationship building

Table 5 is a display of how participants sorted their answers for sorting tool 2. Not every participant was able to get to this sorting tool during the second interview. There were some interviews where the first sorting tool took up the entire interview. Like sorting tool 1, participants had varying answers for sorting tool 2. There was not enough time in the interviews to extend the concepts in sorting tool 2 to specifically SWD and BIPOC-SWD as we did with the first sorting tool.

Table 5

Results from Sorting Tool 2 by Participants Who Were Able to Complete

Sorting Tool 2	P1 CM A	P2 CM A	P3 CCP C	P4 CM A	P5 C B	P6 CTE A
Believe all students can learn	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Connect culture and career goals	S	S	S	S	S	S
Empower students to challenge the status quo	Y	Y	Y	Y	S	Y
Provide high expectations and high supports	Y	Y	Y	S	S	Y
Integrate student interests into curriculum and scheduling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Understand the difference between difference and disability	Y	Y	Y	Y	S	Y
Ensure students think they can succeed	Y	Y	Y	S	S	Y
Support opportunities to develop culture and language	Y	Y	N	Y	N	S
Support students' career and college planning	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	S
Consider learning gaps when making decisions	Y	Y	Y	Y	S	S
Support identity, culture, and language development	Y	Y	Y	Y	S	S

Research Question 4: How do educators describe students who are successful and unsuccessful in CCP programs and how does race and ability factor into educator perspectives of student success?

The structural codes that supported this research question were *Student Traits for Success and Student Traits for Failure* (in accessing and/or completing CCP). The purpose of asking educators to describe student traits of success and failure in CCP settings was to explore if there were any noticeable patterns in their answers about student race and ability, and to understand how they perceive students who both experience success and failure in CCP.

Overall, considering participant role and location, a major themes that I found within student traits for success in CCP were that participants thought successful students depended upon a students' ability to identify their interests, make decisions, and advocate for themselves. Within the subcategory of student traits for failure in CCPs, participants identified that students who struggle academically are likely to not do well in CCPs.

DisCrit Analysis

Throughout the interview process and through analysis of post-interview notes, I generated a summary of how each participant spoke about race and ability regarding the DisCrit Tenets. As noted in the literature review of DisCrit, the DisCrit Tenets are:

1. Focus on how common notions of normalcy are upheld by the interdependence of race and ableism.

2. Value of multidimensional identities such as any combination of: race, dis/ability, class, gender, or sexuality

3. Emphasis and recognition of race and ability being social constructions and the impact that such labels have on an individual.

4. Emphasis on amplifying marginalized voices that are not traditionally recognized within research.

5. Consideration of how race and ability have both historically and legally been used to segregate, exclude, and separate people or deny their rights.

6. Recognition of how whiteness has been centered in disability advocacy and progress, and is thought of as owned by the white, middle-class community.

7. Requirement of resistance and activism and is in support of all forms of resistance.

Individual Participants and DisCrit. Below are snapshots of how participants informally spoke about these issues without them being directly addressed:

Participant 1, case manager, location A (Beatrice):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate

- expressed value of multidimensional identities as they remained separate

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned of amplifying marginalized voices based only on ability

- acknowledged the segregation of students based only on ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- expressed desire for activism based only on ability only

Participant 2, case manager, location A (Jane):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate, but mentioned dual identified students

- expressed value and relationship between multidimensional identities

- recognized dual identified students and the complexities of the labels

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on ability only

- no mention of race or ability being used as tools of segregation

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- expressed activism based on individual student need

Participant 3, CCP Teacher, Location C (Amelia):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate

- expressed value and relationship between multidimensional identities

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on race and ability

- mentioned segregation both being related to race and ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- expressed activism based on individual student need

Participant 4, Case manager, Location A (Bette):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate

- expressed value of multidimensional identities as they remained separate

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on ability only

- acknowledged the segregation of students based only on ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- expressed desire for activism based only on ability only

Participant 5, Counselor, Location B (Tina):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate

- expressed value of multidimensional identities as they remained separate

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on race and ability

- mentioned segregation both being related to race and ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- expressed activism based on individual student need

Participant 6, CTE Teacher, Location A (Harold):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate, but mentioned dual identified students

- expressed value and relationship between multidimensional identities

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on race and ability

- mentioned segregation both being related to race and ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- advocacy based on what staff need to support students

Participant 7, Admin, District Office (Andrea):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate

- expressed value and relationship between multidimensional identities

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on race and ability

- mentioned segregation both being related to race and ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- advocacy based on what staff need to support students

Participant 8, CTE Teacher, Location A (Tom):

- mentioned not recognizing race or ability

- mentioned all students are valued without acknowledging race or ability

- mentioned not acknowledging labels

- amplifying voices was not mentioned

- segregation of students was not mentioned

- disability advocacy was not mentioned

- advocacy based on what staff need to support students

Participant 9, TOSA, District Office (Sandra):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate

- expressed value of multidimensional identities as they remained separate

- spoke of race and ability as definite factors instead of socially constructed

- mentioned amplifying marginalized voices based on race and ability

- mentioned segregation both being related to race and ability

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- advocacy based on what staff need to support students

Participant 10, CCP, Location A (Ryan):

- spoke as if race and ability were separate, but mentioned dual identified students

- expressed value of multidimensional identities as they remained separate

- spoke about impact of labels based on race and ability

- amplifying voices was not mentioned

- segregation of students was not mentioned

- mentioned whiteness, but not as being centered in disability advocacy

- advocacy based on what staff need to support students

The benefit to explaining how participants indirectly discussed factors relating to race and ability is to acknowledge that everyone is on their own journey. Participants had varying understandings of the socially constructed concepts of race and ability, which came through in conversation about access and student success.

Results Compared by Case

School A. The participants from school A consisted of three special education case managers, two CTE teachers, and one CCP teacher. The student demographics of School A were approximately: 16% students on IEPs, 6% dual identified (both special education and EL), and 37% white. Below is a synthesis of how participants from school A discussed factors related to each research question.

School A Purpose of CCP. Overall, participants at school A spoke of the purpose of CCPs as being to direct students to their passions, give them a focus area of study, and help them gain work skills or get a job. Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, claimed that CCPs are to "offer opportunities for kids to pursue their passions . . . some kids that will go through this program will discover that [subject] are their passion . . . I think this program can lead to all kids of different things . . ." This participant highlighted how experience in a CCP can lead to greater things for the student. Jane, a Case Manager at School A, emphasized how CCPs are "basically their focus of study," which was interesting considering there were many mentions of students on IEPs not being connected to a specific field of study. Harold, a CTE teacher at School A, said, "my goal is that they go out and get a job" and they intend to show students "it's not as scary as it

seems." This statement supports the idea that joining a CCP leads to students gaining job skills or confidence to apply for jobs.

School A Accessibility of CCP. When discussing issues around gatekeeping, participants from school A had a variety of perspectives about access to CCPs. Harold, a CTE teacher at School A, explained that recruitment of CCPs is "about encouraging it for the kids that it's appropriate." This comment highlights how much influence and power CCP/CTE teachers have when it comes to identifying candidates that are good for their program. Jane, a Case Manager at School A mentioned that enrollment of students on IEPs in CCPs "has a lot to do with the teacher that is kind of like head of the college and career pathway to recruit students and get them involved." Bette, a Case Manager at School A stated that "some of it is predetermined views of students." Jane, Case Manager at School A explained that they "act as a kind of a bridge between the counselors and t the student to kind of make sure it's an appropriate one for them." These statements stood out in terms of gatekeeping due to the potential differences individual CCP teachers might have about ability and competency in their specific classes.

Some participants directly spoke about factors that would lead them to keep students from enrolling in a CCP. Beatrice, a case manager at School A, explained that if a student is "going to lose their cool, then I won't recommend them for the program." When discussing barriers to enroll in the introductory class, Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, stated that "probably the only thing would be maybe if they applied late and it's already full, that would probably be the biggest excluding factor."

Scheduling factors and confusion around CCPs were also mentioned when participants discussed issues that could lead to gatekeeping. Jane, a Case Manager at School A said, "it takes a little bit longer to figure out which college and career pathways we offer because they change all the time." Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A said, "not sure I would say it serves anyone well" when speaking about the process for scheduling and forecasting students in CCPs.

When discussing issues and factors related to pushout, participants shared the following thoughts and comments. Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A teacher at School A explained that "a lot of times I get students because it is an elective . . . I get drop ins . . . that maybe have an interest in it, but have no interest in the pathway . . . really don't know why they're there." This comment was in reference to students signing up for CCPs, but not necessarily being invested in them, and then not signing up for the more advanced classes in the sequence.

Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A also recalled a situation where they had to support a student who decided too late. The participant recalled this conversation with a student: "It's junior year . . . and you need to have a capstone . . . and you haven't chosen anything yet and we're like well, that would have been great two years ago." This highlights how students might be pushed out of pathways simply because they did not decide during their 9th grade year. Beatrice, a Case Manager at School A mentioned that "you end up in this final senior class where you do your senior project . . . if they haven't done all of those prerequisites they're excluded from that final class, and that means

you're in a standalone senior project class." This statement relates to situations of students on IEPs who are excluded from CCPs and end up doing their senior project with their case manager or in the standalone senior project class.

When participants talked about how they support students in CCPs, they mentioned getting creative with supports for diverse learners and making the choice to choose diverse groups of students to represent their program. Beatrice, a case manager at school A, said that they "support students in doing final assignments to get to a passing grade" and that they "find like a twisted path that will get them to this senior project" This comment highlights how case managers have to creatively maneuver the requirements of graduation and CCPs in order to help students get their diploma. When describing how they try to promote their CTE program, Harold, a CTE teacher in school A, said "I've tried to pick diverse, just a diverse group of kids, I don't want to have two white boys or white girls or two brown girls, I want two people who are unique and different so I can show sort of the variety of people who are in the pathway." This statement draws attention to how teachers have the ability to choose to represent their program in order for it to appeal to diverse student groups.

School A Barriers and Supports in Implementing EBPs. When discussing internal barriers around implementing the EBPs from the sorting tools, participants from school A discussed confusion and varying understandings around some of the terms, difficulty with being culturally responsive, and difficulty with factors around race and ability as white educators.

Bette, a Case Manager at School A said, "I'm looking at their IEPs and I'm looking at their strengths and I'm looking at their challenges . . . it sounds trite to say I'm not looking at their color, but I'm not." This statement helped me understand that every staff is in a different place in their equity journey and that some staff are still refusing to see student race when working with diverse learners. Beatrice, a Case Manager at School A explained, "I don't think that I always know when I'm hitting the mark with being culturally responsive." This participant was able to identify that they still had much work to do in being culturally responsive and that they are not always sure if they are approaching it correctly.

Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, mentioned, "I don't pay a ton of attention to IEPs unless the kid's really struggling . . . I really don't care about any of that." This statement highlights how this participant does not necessarily consider disability or learning needs. Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A recalled, "my relationships with sped students are lower than they should, and it kind of falls into . . . same with the culturally responsiveness . . . is that . . . when a student is carrying more . . . it's hard to unpack . . . this is something that I always could do better." This statement alludes to the difficulty that educators might have when trying to connect with students who have higher needs in their classes, as well as the difficulty educators have in relationship building and culturally responsiveness. Bette, a Case Manager at School A said, "I think one of the challenges is that some teachers think by learning, it's a certain standard." By pointing out that some teachers thinking learning is one rigid standard, this participant was

discussing how instruction is not always individualized based on the students' needs. This statement also supports that educators perceive EBPs differently and implement them differently. Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A explained, "education has completely lost rigor . . . there is no such thing as rigor . . . we throw that word around all the time, but we absolutely have no regard." This comment highlights how rigor is understood differently by different staff and how educators might not have a clear understanding of the concept in relation to teaching, learning, and supports.

When discussing external barriers, participants from school A often discussed competing resources, conflict, and tension between roles and responsibilities. Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A explained, "there is very much a lot of times, I believe, an us v. them mentality, where . . . traditional core content is seen as the most important because it is the tested and it is the data that is presented." This comment was an emphasis on how CTE teachers might feel they are not respected or as important as the core academic subject teachers. When discussing the external pressures of students on their caseload to graduate, Bette, a Case Manager at School A mentioned that "it's easier for us case managers . . . to do a senior project and call it done." Case managers from school A spoke about how the pressure to help students graduate and just complete the senior project became a priority over helping students get connected to CCPs and finish through a capstone course. Ultimately, the case manager chose to do what they felt was realistic for their workload over the goal of getting students connected to CCPs.

When discussing how student populations in their program, Harold, a CTE teacher at School A, mentioned "how did your counselor let you take [this course] . . . there's no way [student] is ready for this." This comment outlines the tension and struggle between the role of the case manager and the counselor role. There is also emphasis on beliefs about student ability and who has a right to be in which classes based on that ability.

Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A, also referenced the Perkins V Act, stating, "whatever your percentage of completers, is how much money you get in Perkins funding through the state," which presents the issue of CTE teachers feeling pressured to accept and support students who will most likely do well in their program, rather than creating an equitable CCP with supports for diverse learners. When discussing how to support students on IEPs who are also EL learners, Beatrice, a Case Manager at School A stated, "I find myself more able to communicate with the parents that speak the same language that I do, I can add more details." Ryan, a CCP teacher at School A explained, "I generally do not get bilingual support for my students, unless I have more than five students assigned in a class . . . where in math . . . if there are non-English speaking students, they will have a bilingual assistant." These comments help bring to light the importance of bilingual supports and training for classroom teachers, as well as how educators are influenced by their personal lived experiences and culture.

COVID also presented external barriers for participants, and some spoke about the impact. Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, stated, "teaching online, I think . . . I feel

like I've lost some rigor in my program, which is not good . . . need to figure out how to add that back in." Although this participant was discouraged at how COVID impacted their ability to create a rigorous curriculum, they acknowledged they would work on building it back.

When discussing internal supports that helped with implementing EBPs, participants from School A talked about how being open to equity growth, recognizing diversity in students, reflecting, and evolving in teaching and learning practices, and a willingness to try new strategies supported their positive experiences. Harold, a CTE teacher at School A, claimed, "more than half of our students are Latino . . . and if I thought having a diverse culture was bad, I really am in the wrong place." Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, shared, "I'm constantly trying to improve my practice, I mean that's just what I do." These comments reflect the importance of participants choosing to acknowledge the need for equity work and choosing to reflect and work on improvements.

When talking about having culturally responsive curriculum included in special education supports, Jane, a Case Manager at School A explained, "I feel like it's really important to have that in my curriculum." This comment draws emphasis on the importance of educators thinking an EBP is important to try to implement them. Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, claimed, "I think you have to think about what you're doing with kids all the time," which highlights how they attempt to remain aware of their actions and how it impacts students.

Harold, a CTE teacher at School A, emphasized, "I built in sentence frames and . . . graphic organizers, one of those things that you learn if it's good for an EL student it's probably good for everybody, same with sped students." This comment stood out to me as significant because this participant was able to acknowledge what was good for diverse learners is good for all students.

While discussing external supports for implementing EBPs, there were not many comments, but some participants mentioned how building and district messaging and encouragement helped them see the importance of EBPs. When discussing the emphasis on culturally responsive practices, Harold, a CTE teacher at School A, mentioned, "it's a real emphasis for our district, especially because we have such a high Latino population in our school, specifically, that if and most of the teachers are white." This participant was able to recognize the significance of a mostly white teaching staff and how the district's messaging was clear about the importance of EBPs such as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Beatrice, a Case Manager at School A claimed, "it's coming from multiple places, but that I have to say it comes from the top down . . . very strongly worded from the principal." This participant pointed out how much impact the building principal carried in supporting and encouraging staff to try new methods to support diverse learners and work on equity.

School A Race and Ability in CCPs. While discussing student traits who are often successful in CCPs, participants from School A mentioned the abilities and executive functioning capabilities of students. Tom, a CTE teacher at School A, mentioned students

"gotta pay attention to detail and be able to follow complex directions." Beatrice, a Case Manager at School A, explained that students who are successful in CCP are "kids who are academically focused, academically prepared, academically successful, you know the ones that have confidence . . . they maybe have a little support at home." These statements highlight how it could be thought of as a prerequisite for CCPs to already be a successful learner. Jane, a Case Manager at School A explained that CCP "serves the students that understand themselves and understand what they want for their future well and the ones that are really involved." This statement highlights how students who might struggle with making decisions, or who are not sure about their future yet, are often not going to be successful in CCPs. Consequently, students who have these soft skills and who have a lot of support outside of school are thought of as doing well in CCPs.

When discussing student traits of those not often successful in CCPs, participants from School A often discussed behavior, ability, and executive functioning. When discussing students placed in a specialized program for emotional and behavioral disorder, Beatrice, a Case Manager at School A mentioned, "they can't find the bathroom . . . how are we going to get them to pick something" and they "can hardly manage basic classes." This comment stood out to me because behavior and adaptive functioning of the student is acting as a pre-determining factor in whether they can access and be successful in a CCP. Jane, a Case Manager at School A explained that students who struggle to access CCPs are "the ones that have difficulties understanding the process or don't even know what career and college pathways are" or have "like zero interest in anything that

we offer." This comment highlights how students who are not connected to school, or dialed into school systems, might be less likely to be successful in CCPs.

Overall, in School A, race was not mentioned when talking about success and failure in CCP. There were not any connections made by participants about race, ability, and behavior. Behavior and ability were often mentioned when discussing success or failure in the CCP setting.

School B. The participants from School B consisted of one counselor. The student demographics of School B were approximately: 12% students on IEPs, 2% dual identified (both special education and EL), and 44% white. Below is a synthesis of how the participant from School B discussed factors related to each research question. The counselor at school B went by Tina. Below are quotes only from Tina due to Tina being the only participant from school B.

School B Purpose of CCP. The counselor from School B explained that CCP is "to give students opportunities to try out things they think they might be interested in or have a passion for." Tina also mentioned that "some of our students don't have a lot of opportunities of experience outside of school . . . we try to provide opportunities to learn more about what's out there." These statements support the idea that the purpose of CCP is to help students gain exposure to interests.

School B Accessibility of CCP. When discussing factors around gatekeeping, Tina, a Counselor at School B, mentioned that "some of our CCP is seeming to be more flexible or welcoming than some, is it the content, is it the teacher . . . some of them are

like I'll take anybody, and some . . ." are not as willing to take any student. This comment carries an emphasis on the influence that CCP teachers have on helping students get involved in their CCP. Tina, also claimed, "I probably wouldn't bring any of this up when we're forecasting for our students in life skills . . . I don't know if that's like right or wrong, probably not great." Tina's comment about being hesitant about forecasting for CCPs for students placed in the life skills program highlights how staff who support students on IEPs, either with scheduling or academic and behavior support, might not feel that CCPs are a place where students with ability levels below grade level might not be supported.

When discussing off campus CCPs, Tina explained that the receiving school figures out "how many spaces" are available for students to attend if they are traveling from another high school. It was alluded to that there are really no clear guidelines around this and that the receiving school makes the decisions. Tina also explained that if students "don't get into it by 11th grade, it's hard to get all the classes in" and complete the sequence for the CCP. This could mean that the 4-year planning process and the required sequencing of CCPs acts as a tool for gatekeeping or pushout.

When discussing factors that lead to pushout, Tina stated, "in my experience, those students don't access those things well, maybe it's not appropriate the way we're teaching it" and questioned "is it too hard on the adult to modify?" This comment was in reference to students with varying learning abilities on an IEP or a modified diploma. Tina was speculating about the cause of the pushout of CCP. Tina also stated that "one of

our CCP is like super rigorous" and that "a lot of our students on IEPs are like not overly successful in that class and a lot of students don't access that at all." This statement highlights how the reputation of some CCPs is so rigorous without supports that it is well known in School B that students with IEPs will not take that pathway.

When discussing supports that help students get involved in CCP, Tina said "it's part of my job to make sure they're in a pathway, hopefully, something that they're passionate about," which highlights how this participant makes it a priority to help students get involved. Tina also stated that "we really try to connect students to CCP and don't use like the senior seminar as a default which they can get their project done there, but . . . it's not as in depth." This comment is in relation to the stand-alone senior project class that students get forced into if they are not enrolled in a CCP for their senior year of high school. This is significant because this participant makes a conscious effort to make sure students are just placed in there because it might be easier. When discussing the language they use when discussing CCPs with different students during forecasting, Tina stated, "I feel like I have been more mindful of being careful about my language and not talking in a limited way to students . . ."

School B Barriers and Supports in Implementing EBPs. When discussing the internal barriers to implementing EBPs from the lens of the counselor role and while working in School B, Tina mentioned that they were unsure of some of the common EBPs that come up in our equity trainings from the district, such as Culturally

Responsive Teaching. Tina stated "I'm not sure I can give you a totally . . . great . . . definition of that"

When discussing external barriers that impact their ability to implement EBPs, Tina claimed that they "think we're still just really grounded in like old school education . . . our systems aren't set up to be equitable across all the spaces . . . it takes a long time to change systems that are rooted in like this historical . . . oppressive system." This statement carries emphasis on how our equity training is meant to encourage staff to use new, evidence-based strategies and practices, but that our school systems make it difficult.

When discussing internal supports related to implementing EBPs, Tina explained, "I've gotten more comfortable in my own skin." When discussing working with students of color, Tina stated that "I feel comfortable with asking with a curiosity of and letting them be the experts and teach me because I'm like white middle class, like privileged person." These statement brings a connection to their awareness of their white lived experience and their willingness to continue their equity journey.

When discussing external supports that help in implementing EBPs, Tina spoke about attending conferences. Tina explained that going to conferences might open up eyes to "like maybe how poorly we're doing it (being culturally responsive) in some areas." This statement carries emphasis on how outside trainings might help educators find awareness in their current implementation of a practice.

School B Race and Ability in CCPs. When discussing student traits that lead to success in CCP, Tina stated that students are successful when "They understand what I am talking about and they're on my Google Classroom and they have parents that can help them." This statement was in reference to counseling and the forecasting process. Ultimately, Tina shared that she felt students who already understood the scheduling process, and who had support at home, were more likely to do well and get engaged with CCPs. When discussing student traits that lead to failure or not being connected to CCPs, Tina often spoke about student ability levels and connectedness to school. Tina spoke about students with asset based language and often just pointed out what skills students had to have to do well in CCPs. Race was not explicitly mentioned as a student trait for success or failure in CCP. Tina also did not talk much about behavior, but mostly about academic and functional ability to access high rigorous courses.

School C. The participants from School C consisted of one CCP teacher. The student demographics of School C were approximately: 13% students on IEPs, 2% dual identified (both special education and EL), and 51% white. Below is a synthesis of how participants from school C discussed factors related to each research question. Amelia, a CCP teacher at School C, was the only participant from School C. Therefore, the responses below for School C are based on her statements only.

School C Purpose of CCP. When discussing the purpose of CCP, Amelia stated that "a CCP program is basically a chance for a student to kind of try on a career . . . . and kind of halfway commit to the career before they actually go to college." Amelia often

spoke about the connection to career and college and how CCPs help students prepare for their future interests and careers.

    School C Accessibility of CCP. When discussing factors related to gatekeeping, Amelia, mentioned "I think the reputation of CCP programs and CTE programs . . . I don't think it's accessible . . . and I don't think kids know what it is." This statement emphasizes the reputation of the CCP as the actual gatekeeping factor, in addition to the lack of understanding students might have about CCPs. Amelia also explained that in their CCP they "don't get a lot of like cold forecasting for students on an IEP to come to AP . . . it's generally like there's an established relationship with the teacher before they opt to take that risk." This statement carries emphasis on the influence that the CCP teachers have on whether a student gets connected to the CCP or not. This comment alludes to the idea that students engaging in a CCP is more about relationship and connection and less about content area interest. There is also emphasis on how students on IEPs are not forecasting for AP classes unless encouraged by the teacher, so if there is a required AP class in a pathway, that could alone exclude a student on an IEP from completing the pathway or signing up at all.

    When discussing factors related to pushout, Amelia explained that their pathway is "a very selective group of people who represent this program and like you need to participate or I need you out." This comment carries strong emphasis on how CCP teachers do not want students to represent their pathway if they are struggling in a

significant way. There was not mention of how supports could change to make this better for students.

When discussing student supports for CCP, Amelia mentioned that Kids just sign up for classes where they feel comfortable with the teacher rather than their interests. Amelia said that kids might think things like, "this teacher doesn't scream at me."

School C Barriers and Supports in Implementing EBPs. When discussing internal barriers to implementing EBPs, Amelia claimed, "I'm almost afraid to be rigorous." This comment was regarding the fear of students not doing well in their class. I interpreted this as an unclear understanding of rigor. There were no mentions of the supports that might help students reach high rigor. Amelia also stated "I feel so isolated, like it's all so island-like" when discussing what it's like to be a CCP teacher. Amelia explained that this impacted their ability to implement some of the expected practices.

When discussing external barriers to CCP, Amelia explained that it feels as if the district staff "communicate with CTE teachers, but like the CCP wing kind of gets dropped off . . ." Amelia was explicit in stating how CTE gets more support due to the credentialing and funding. This was mentioned as an impact that affects their ability to do some of the suggested EBPs. Amelia also explained, "CTE means money and CCP means you attempt to do the best you can with your department budget." Additionally, Amelia also mentioned, "I don't feel that the systems we have in place and our grading structures encourage enough self-efficacy in kids that could meet rigorous demands." This aligns with their beliefs about rigor in relation to grading. Amelia also stated that

they feel "CCP is massively confusing" and explained "we offer all these different programs and it's like . . . they overlap and contradict." Amelia ultimately stated, "I feel like the district is so confused on what direction they want to go." Overall, Amelia expressed frustration about the external systems and structures that overlapped and contradicted each other.

When discussing internal supports in implementing EBPs, Amelia mentioned "I would say that integrating college is really important for me" and "I think I like I give space for kids to fail, which and like make mistakes and I don't think we do that enough," which highlights how their personal beliefs drive which EBPs they are more willing to implement. When discussing external supports in implementing EBPs, when discussing external factors in implementing EBPs, Amelia stated "I would probably need more from kids," which points out how their perspective about student effort and ability impacts their willingness to implement EBPs. Amelia also mentioned that "the district office seems very hands off unless you're in violation of something," alluding to the idea that there are not much external supporters for implementation of EBPs.

School C Race and Ability in CCPs. When discussing students on IEPs in their CCP, Amelia stated "I would not encourage those kids to take AP simply from the standpoint, I think it would ruin their self-esteem and I think it would be a struggle," which emphasizes how student ability is a factor when suggesting courses. Amelia also stated that "like maybe the IEP reached too far, and they got more accommodations and they really needed, and so they learned that they can work significantly less." This

comment suggests that the student accommodations are a hindrance to them accessing and engaging in high rigor, rather than the focus being on supports that help students access rigor.

When discussing student traits for success in CCP, Amelia often mentioned academic behaviors of students, such as effort, work ethic, etc. When discussing student traits that lead to failure in CCP, Amelia stated "just because the kid wants to do [that pathway] that doesn't mean that they're like super AP." Amelia also stated "my assumption would be is students who are on an IEP don't really feel comfortable taking academic risks . . . . and I think that CCP and CTE are seen as an academic risk, like you're entering into a two year program that you don't know anything about and like it has a fancy acronym to it and that's got to be something terrifying." These statements are heavily referring to students on IEPs and how being on an IEP might determine their academic behaviors and choices. The reputation of the CCP seems to carry heavy influence on how this participant views student willingness to take the risk and sign up or stay enrolled. Overall, there were not any connections between race, ability, and behavior, and how that might connect to CCPs. Most comments were heavily focused on student behavior and willingness, which puts the focus on student responsibility instead of school systems.

District Office. The participants from the District Office consisted of one Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) and one district administrator. Below is a synthesis of how participants from the district office discussed factors related to each research

question. All the comments below are from Andrea, the district administrator, and Sandra, the TOSA.

District Office Purpose of CCP. When discussing the purpose of CCP, Andrea mentioned that CCP "really unlocks students, not only social emotional skills and aptitudes, but also their talents." Sandra stated that CCPs "invite students to a place of belonging in the academic setting that they don't always have with these standalone classes in the high school experience." Both statements suggest how CCP offers something that other courses or core classes may not.

District Office Accessibility of CCP. When discussing factors related to gatekeeping, Sandra explained that CCP staff "get to personalize those conversations for students" and that they think "it opens up to bias, it opens it up to not every student getting the same message or opportunity." These statements carry heavy emphasis on the variations between staff and how that is hard to manage from the district level. Andrea stated, "I think unintentionally we start to message to different students, different opportunities, based on what we know," which aligns with the statements above about the variations in student messaging and the impacts it has on different student groups.

Sandra explained that they "don't know that we've done enough yet to expand access . . . and that is kind of the next step for us . . . we've been looking at our data, it is not showing equal access." This statement shows that the district is looking at accessibility of CCPs for diverse student groups, but that it might not yet be happening at the building level. When discussing students on an IEP or in the EL program, Sandra

explained that "sometimes those students might have less/fewer electives available, depending on how their schedules are set up." Andrea, the administrator explained that "most students start to select their pathway more into their upperclassmen years." These comments are significant because students on an IEP and students with EL services might have less chances to take electives early on in their high school career due to their schedule being filled with support classes. If students who require IEP and EL services have schedules filled with support classes, they . . . not yet be ready to commit to a pathway in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade because they will have missed the chance to take the prerequisites.

Sandra also stated, while referring to their time as a CTE teacher "I also wonder too if sometimes students who experience disabilities, maybe they didn't even sign up for my class in the first place." Sandra also mentioned "if our teachers had a little more professional development and a little bit more support around accessibility in their programming," which alludes to the idea that CCP teachers might not be getting explicit professional development in these areas at the building level.

Pushout- When discussing factors that lead to pushout, Sandra pointed out that "many of our program completers are white students" and that some CCPs "maybe don't do as well as they could to offer modifications for students or accommodations for students . . . and so students might get kind of pushed out of a pathway that they actually could have engaged with." Andrea, mentioned that "students who are supported by an IEP or who are supported through ELD . . . they are entering a program of study at the

same rate as their peers, but they're not completing the program of study at the same rate." These statements suggest that race and ability are determining factors in whether students get pushout out of CCPs as they are currently functioning.

When discussing supports of students in CCPs, Andrea stated "students can take a course outside of their full program of study," which means that students can explore the different classes without committing. Sandra mentioned that when they supported kids in CCPs, they didn't "wait for students to ask for help" and they made an Effort to "make sure students always feel welcome and supported in school."

District Office Barriers and Supports in Implementing EBPs. When discussing internal barriers to implementing EBPs, Sandra explained "when I think about students with disabilities, I do think that they were probably underserved in my classroom." Andrea, the district administrator said, "it is clear that we still have some work to do, specifically around messaging to families on what this means, and so even though . . . career tech ed . . . they are all rigorous and amazing in their own way." These comments suggest that the outcome for implementing EBPs related to race and ability are connected to the internal struggles that educators might have in relation to their race and culture, such as language and lack of knowledge about disability.

When discussing how personal identity impacts the implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the CCP setting, Sandra mentioned "the skin I am in . . . because of my lived white experience." Andrea explained that another barrier educators might experience in implementing EBPs that are culturally responsive is the "time it takes to

unpack the narrative . . . of potentially the educator." The barriers that were described here are around how the white lived experience of educators really impacts their ability to approach EBPs that are around racial equity.

When discussing external barriers to implementing EBPs, Andrea mentioned that the "consequence for a CTE teacher for students who don't complete their program is funding . . . that's the biggest consequence . . . and it comes down to career pathway dollars and Perkins funding." Andrea also explained, "a CTE program is also harder because you have to have an instructor that comes from industry . . . they have to have a certain amount of hours and a teaching license." These comments suggest that CTE teachers carry pressure to only support students who will be successful in CCPs, which could mean that students who struggle, for whatever reason, might not be welcomed or supported in attempting to complete the program.

When referencing their time as a CTE teacher, Sandra recalled "we kind of had old school ways of measuring competence or performance for students . . . so standardized tests . . . big essays . . . thinking that when students could accomplish these big things, that would prove that we achieved a high level of rigor." This statement carries emphasis on how teachers feel pressure from outside standards or *old school* ways of assessing student learning.

When reflecting on how programs and educators collaborate, Andrea expressed, "we aren't quite there, we're still operating in silo, and we have a little conflict." This comment highlights how staff are not yet working together to collectively support equity

in CCPs. Sandra mentioned, "classes are full . . . teacher bandwidth is low," when discussing a potential external stressor that impacts an educator's ability to implement an EBP.

When discussing internal supports in implementing EBPs, Sandra shared, "I did pursue a lot of professional development, I was often taking classes, I had a lot of relationships with colleagues, you know that might share a new perspective." While discussing leaving old assessments behind, Sandra, a TOSA, explained, "I did find a lot of projects that elevated student choice and voice, which I felt was helpful for them to bring in their own culture and the experience." In both cases, Sandra felt compelled to seek out support and improvement in areas of equity, rather than support coming from an outside source.

When discussing external supports for implementing EBPs, Andrea claimed that the district is "working on being the first district in our entire state to offer apprenticeship opportunities for students, not youth apprenticeships, but registered apprenticeships," which means that there will be more offerings for students. However, specific student groups were not mentioned in this conversation.

District Office Race and Ability in CCPs. As mentioned above in the areas of gatekeeping and pushout, many comments about race and ability came into the conversation. When discussing student traits for success in CCP, neither participant focused on what the students should or could be doing differently. They instead focused on what we could change for them. This was drastically different than the participants in

the building level. When discussing traits of students who might not succeed in CCPs, Andrea did mention that "it's so overwhelming to be a high school student just in general, like navigating high school," which highlights how the social and emotional impact might keep some students from succeeding in programs that are considered extra and not required. Overall, the conversations with staff from the district office were much more explicit around race and ability, but there were no mentions of how race and ability are interconnected.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Re-Introduction and Connection to Conclusion

This critical comparative case study was conducted to collect educator experiences around the topic of equitable practices in Career and College Pathways (CCPs). The intention was to explore what educators experience regarding the implementation of EBPs for diverse students in CCPs within comprehensive high schools. The following research questions were addressed throughout the course of this study:

1. How do educators perceive the purpose of CCP BIPOC-SWD?

2. How do educators describe the accessibility of CCP? What factors lead to Gatekeeping, Pushout, and/or support of BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings?

3. How do educators describe the barriers and supports that influence their decisions and capability in implementing EBP for BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings? What are the internal and external factors?

4. How do educators describe students who are successful and unsuccessful in CCP programs and how does race and ability factor into educator perspectives of student success?

Discussion

Theoretical Framework for Analysis

Data were analyzed through the theoretical lens of DisCrit (Connor et al., 2016) and the frameworks of Career and College Readiness (CCR) for students with disabilities (SWD) (Conley 2010; Farrington et al. 2012; Monahan et al. 2020; Morningstar et al. 2017) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Throughout the data analysis process race and disability were consistently thought of as interdependent as it is considered through the DisCrit lens.

Research Question 1: The Purpose of Career and College Pathways. Through a series of interview questions and sorting tools, participants were asked to provide input on the purpose of CCPs for all students. Perkins V (2018) and the WIOA (2014) most recently placed emphasis on CCR for underserved student groups, with the purpose of increasing skills and employment opportunities for student groups who are chronically unemployed. When participants were asked about the purpose of CCP, there were not significant mentions of underserved student groups or populations. CCPs are generally spoken of as being *for everyone*.

While these statements may suggest vague undertones of the diverse learning needs of students, there was still an emphasis on CCPs being accessible to *every* student. If BIPOC-SWD are not connected to a focus area of study or a CCP that helps them prepare for their goals, that could negatively impact their future opportunities. As referenced in the literature review, BIPOC-SWD are not accessing courses that prepare them to pursue their post-high school goals (Lombardi et al., 2018).

Throughout conversations with participants, it was mentioned often that training and support have been offered around racial equity within our district and within their work location. Many participants referenced these trainings within the district; however, it is possible that educators are not making the connections between the purpose of CCR within the CCP setting and the specific needs BIPOC-SWD. Mentions of equity trainings

appear to have helped participants acknowledge some inequities, but not specifically in the CCP settings. There appears to be a disconnect between the racial equity professional development, inclusionary practices, and the purpose of CCP for diverse students and how they are all connected. Many participants displayed discomfort or confusion when BIPOC-SWD were mentioned as a population within CCP, and many participants had difficulty recalling if any of their students fell into this category. It was unclear whether participant discomfort was around the topic itself or just discomfort in talking about race and disability.

Purpose of Career and College Pathway Results and the Connection to Literature. Researchers have explained this version of CCP programming, which is utilized in this district, is thought of as being an agent to improve career and college readiness, student outcomes, and that it relies on a culture of equity and inclusion (Hoachlander, 2021). This CCP structure is also considered an EBP for Career and College Readiness (CCR) education (Career and College Academy Support Network, 2018). However, the results from this research question suggest that the idea of CCPs being a place where equity and inclusion can thrive is a message that is not yet being received by educators at the building level.

Research Question 2: Accessibility of Career and College Pathways: Gatekeeping, Pushout, Student Supports. Gatekeeping (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) and Pushout (Burbach, 2018) are results of systems and practices within the educational system that either prevents or limits students from accessing CCP programs and

opportunities. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, Gatekeeping and Pushout might not occur intentionally, but are consistently occurring, nonetheless. There were some participants who used language around Gatekeeping and Pushout and others who spoke of requirements for CCP as matter of fact. To avoid drop out and Pushout epidemics (Burbach, 2018), the recognition of these concepts should be addressed at the district and building level of CCP programming.

According to Kim et al. (2021) to obtain more equity in CCP type settings, a student's "subgroup membership," (p. 365) such as race or disability, should not be associated with their availability of CCP programs, and that CCP programs should match the demographics of the school population. Some participants acknowledged the need for CCPs to be diversified and accessible to historically oppressed student groups. Some participants reacted to questions about BIPOC-SWD as if they had not previously thought about the topic. A few participants expressed that they had not previously thought about this specific student group. Some participants expressed having a difficult time identifying if they knew any students who fell into the category of BIPOC-SWD.

Accessibility of Career and College Pathways and the Connection to Literature. Although policies continue to evolve in efforts to improve inclusion in general education spaces (IDEA, 2015; ESSA, 2015; USDE, 2015) Gatekeeping, Pushout, and specific student supports regarding CCPs are not outlined. The USDE (n.d.) has claimed that underserved student groups should be held to higher standards in CCPs settings to allow them to compete in the evolving economy. While a student's IEP transition goals are

meant to be centered on their goals and input around their strengths, interests, needs, and

preferences (Cavendish, 2017), it does not appear to be connected to CCPs in their high

school process. The results presented address how educators view the accessibility of

CCP for BIPOC-SWD and it is important to point out that Gatekeeping and Pushout of

CCPs is occurring regardless of increasing equity initiatives related to CCPs and

Transition IEPs.

Exclusionary discipline and low academic achievement are factors that have been

proven to be related to the School to Prison Pipeline (STPP). Although there were

varying reasons that educators provided for the actions that lead to Gatekeeping and

Pushout, participants did not mention what these actions or outcomes might lead to for

students. The responses around Gatekeeping and Pushout align with field of Disability

Studies (DS) due to factors related to race and ability being used as tools for exclusion

from CCPs (Baynton, 2001; Bell, 2006; Ben-Moshe, 2013; Blanchett, 2010; Chen, 2013;

Erevelles, 2011; Ferri & Connor, 2006; Adams & Erverelles, 2016; Samuels, 2014).

Although participants did not name race as a factor in excluding students, they did name

behavior. Researchers (Olmsted et al., 2019; Slesaransky-Poe & Garcia, 2014) have

noted that BIPOC students are historically subjected to harsher discipline than their white

peers. This means that educators could be using behavior alone to justify exclusion from

a CCP, but the historical outcome of those practices ultimately make it about race.

Participants in this study did not mention how race and discipline are tied together

throughout any of the interviews. Additionally, participants often mentioned how ability

was a factor in completing rigorous CCPs, which concludes that exclusionary practices based on ability are still occurring. Therefore, BIPOC-SWD are more likely to be excluded for factors related to race or ability.

Research Question 3: Barriers and Supports for Educators Implementing EBPs in CCP Settings. The EBPs that were identified in the literature as supporting diverse student populations in CCP settings were synthesized from research around CRP (Siwatu et al., 2016; Mellom et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2013, as cited by Green & Stormont, 2018; Samuels, 2018) , CCR-SWD (Morningstar et al., 2017; Conley, 2010; Farrington et al., 2012) and equitable instructional practices as outlined by a variety of sources (Alfeld et al., 2013; Athanases et al., 2016; Welton et al., 2014; Flores et al., 2012; Garcia and Seltzer, 2015; Okhremtchouk and Jimenez, 2013; The College and Career Academy Support Network, 2018) . Unclear understandings of the EBPs were present throughout the interviews, leading to a halt in the conversation about equity. Not only were there individual unclear understandings of the language and terminology, but oftentimes, participants identified the EBPs as "buzzwords" that have unclear representations.

Barriers and Supports for Educators Implementing EBPs in CCP Settings and the Connection to Literature. Multiple researchers have contributed to the literature on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002, 2010; Samuels, 2018; Zhu and Peng, 2019). Additionally, multiple researchers have contributed to the literature on Career and College Readiness Frameworks for students with

disabilities (CCR for SWD) (Monahan et al., 2020; Conley, 2010; Farrington et al., 2012; Morningstar et al., 2017). The EBPs discussed throughout interviews were synthesized from these frameworks. Participants expressed unclear understandings of the EBPs that were discussed in relation to CRP and CCR for SWD. While district equity professional development trainings were mentioned often, there is not a clear connection to the equity trainings and the CCP setting for BIPOC-SWD. Additionally, it became clear that strong messaging from the district and building level, in addition to the individual being willing to make intentional choices, were major factors in helping educators implement EBPs. Some participants were able to point out how their white lived experience impacted their ability to carry out EBPs related to race, and some were not yet there in their equity journey.

Research Question 4: Student Traits of Success and Failure/Race and Ability. DisCrit (Connor et al., 2016) carries strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of race and ability as tools of oppression and segregation. Additionally, DisCrit is used to approach this conversation with the assumption that Race and Ability are social constructs. Participants were asked to describe the traits of students who were successful and unsuccessful in CCP settings, either in accessing the pathways or completing them successfully. Depending on the role of the participants, the understandings of race and ability varied. When participants interacted with the sorting tool activity, they first sorted the EBPs while considering "all" students.

When participants were asked about how their answers might change for SWD or BIPOC-SWD, there were many situations of confusion, embarrassment, or hesitation. It appeared that educators aren't asked to think about the intersectionality of race and ability often, and some even shared they hadn't thought about that specific category of students on their own. Participants who had thought about it prior to the conversation had varying degrees of understanding about how that applies to their teaching practices and school policies.

When participants described student traits, there were often not connections about the interconnectedness of race and ability. Understanding this conceptualization of socially constructed labels would aid educators in breaking down barriers for students. There were frequent mentions of executive functioning as a determinant for success in CCPs, however, there was not much talk about how educators foster executive functioning skill development. Executive functioning was generally spoken about as if it is something students have or don't have.

Race and Ability in Career and College Pathways and the Connection to the Literature. Monahan et al. (2020) stated that career readiness is often missed in CCR planning, however, educator often discussed college and career planning regarding students who were enrolled in CCPs. Educators did highlight how work-based learning and school-based businesses were a challenge to maintain, organize, and get students connected. Castro (2013) argued that CCPs have the potential to uphold white supremacy and racial and cultural inequities. Based on educator responses to their capabilities in

implementing equitable EBPs for BIPOC-SWD, it appears we are continuing to uphold a white-centered CCP model.

Major Categories of Significance

In addition to the categories generated through code mapping and code charting, there were significant findings recognized after all the data were compared by role and location. Below in Table 6 are the significant findings within the structural categories. Identified within the chart are categories identified by at least one participant in every location, by at least one participant in every role, by every participant except administrators, and by every single participant in the study. Further explanations of each category are below.

Table 6

Significant Findings From Code Charting

Perceived Purpose CCP	Significance of Category Mentioned by at Least One Participant
Career Exposure/Career Training/To explore/experience	every location
Plan for future/Prepare for college and career	every role and every location
Perceived Accessibility CCP-Gatekeeping	
Dependent upon CM or Counselor	every role and every location
*Dependent upon CCP teacher	every role and every location
Perceived Accessibility CCP-Pushout	
4-year planning/prerequisites	every location
Students not signing up/reputation of CCP	every role and every location
Perceived Accessibility CCP-Supports Students in CCP	
4-year planning/prerequisites	every role
Forecasting open to all	every role and every location
Messaging/promoting	every location

Table 6 (continued)

Hinders Educator in Implementing EBP-Internal	
Beliefs about student ability	every role and every location except admin
Personal beliefs and values drive decisions	every location
Personal/lived experience/White experience	every role
*Unclear understanding of EBP	every role and every location
Hinders Educator in Implementing EBP-External	
Dependent upon other staff	every role and every location
Workload	every role and every location except admin
Supports Educator in Implementing EBP-Internal	
Acknowledges Disability	every role and every location
Acknowledges Race	every role and every location
Choosing to support students in CCP enrollment/Makes effort to diversify CCP	every role and every location
Evolving perspective about purpose of education and learning	every role and every location
Personal beliefs and values drive decisions	every role and every location
Prioritizes student interests and input	every role and every location except admin
Self-awareness	every location
*Educator Willingness to advocate for diverse students' needs/collaborate with coworkers self-reflect try new things	Every location
Student Traits Success	
Students able to identify interests, make decisions, advocate	every role and every location
Understanding forecasting and pathway process	every role and every location except admin

Note*: category mentioned by every participant in the study

Categories Mentioned at Every Location and Role. The following categories were mentioned by at least one participant in every location and each role: (a) Perceived Purpose of CCP is to plan for the future and prepare for college and career goals, (b) Gatekeeping within CCP is dependent upon the case manager or counselor and also dependent upon the CCP teacher, (c) Pushout within CCP is related to students not signing up for pathways and the reputation of the pathway, (d) Supports of students in CCP is related to forecasting being open to all students, (e) Internal barriers to implementing EBPs were related to unclear understanding of EBPs and the fact that staff feel they need to depend on other staff to implement an EBP successfully, (f) Internal supports for implementing EBPs were related to educators acknowledging disability and race, making the choice to support diversity in CCP, and maintaining an evolving perspective about education and learning, and (g) Student traits of success in CCP was dependent upon students being able to identify their own interests, make decisions independently, and advocate for themselves.

Categories Mentioned at all Locations. The following categories were mentioned by at least one participant in every location (but not in every role): (a) Perceived purpose of CCP is to provide career exposure, training, and exploration, (b) Pushout within CCP is related to the importance of the 4 year planning and forecasting process, (c) Supports of students in CCP is related to educators messaging and promoting of the CCP, (d) Internal barriers to implementing EBPs were based on how personal beliefs and values of educators drives their decision making, (e) Internal supports for

implementing EBPs were related to educator self-awareness and educator willingness to advocate for diverse student populations within CCP.

Categories Mentioned by all Roles. The following categories were mentioned by at least one participant in every role (but not at every location). (a) Supports of students in CCP is related to 4-year planning and forecasting and (b) Internal barriers to implementing EBPs were related to educators' personal lived experiences as a white educator.

Categories Mentioned by all Roles and Locations Except Administrators. The significance of pointing out things mentioned in this category is to provide insight into the differences between practitioners functioning within this situation and administrators functioning outside or over top of the situation. The following categories were mentioned by at least one participant in all roles and locations except by the participant who was in an administration role: (a) Internal barriers to implementing EBPs are related to workload, (b) Supports of students in CCP is related to educators prioritizing student interests and valuing their input, and (c) Student traits for success in CCP are related to students understanding the forecasting and scheduling process as it relates to pathways.

Categories Mentioned by Every Participant. The following categories from the code mapping and code charting stages were mentioned by every single participant: (a) Gatekeeping: dependent upon CCP teacher, (b) Internal Barrier to Implementing EBPs: Unclear understanding of EBPs, and (c) Internal Supports to Implementing EBPs: Educator willingness to advocate for diverse student needs or collaborate with coworkers.

Situated in Larger Context

The code mapping process lead to the organization of the following categories. In addition to using the following categories to just better digest this information, school leaders can approach their school teams by considering the following topic areas in relation to BIPOC-SWD accessing CCPs.

Staff Beliefs, Actions, Experiences

Staff beliefs, actions, and experiences were identified as one major category of smaller sub-categories. Oftentimes, educator actions and beliefs relied on other educators and their actions and beliefs, or student supports were heavily reliant on other staff. For example: case managers might have to rely on the willingness of a CCP teacher to provide support for a SWD to be successful in a CCP class, or a CCP teacher relies on the counselors to properly forecast diverse student groups into their program, or the entire school relies on the School to Career (STC) counselor to make sure students get their career development credits toward graduation. The effective implementation of accommodations and modifications were often mentioned as defining factors in the success of diverse student groups within CCP, both by CCP/CTE teachers and by educators outside of CCP who only support BIPOC-SWD in CCP classes.

Educator beliefs, knowledge, and lived experiences also seemed to have carried an influence on their efforts to recruit and educate students about pathways. The choices to message and promote specific pathways was influenced by perspectives about

students, the job industry, and the believed purpose of schooling. Internal factors such as beliefs about student ability, study race, or not recognizing disability or race (color-blindness) were described by many participants as factors in their decision making about students and pathways. Additionally, personal values and lived experiences, specifically white, middle-class experiences, were mentioned throughout interviews. Simultaneously, educators described internal supporting factors as being able to acknowledge race and disability, making the choice to support diverse students, making efforts to connect to the community and industry, remaining self-aware and self-reflective, and maintaining an evolving understanding of teaching and learning of diverse populations.

Student Actions, Characteristics, Behaviors: According to Staff

In addition to staff describing their own actions, beliefs, and behaviors, there was a major occurrence of staff describing students and how their actions, characteristics, and behaviors lead to their outcomes within CCP settings. Although staff were asked to describe students who were successful and unsuccessful in CCP settings or pathways, there were deeper explanations of student characteristics beyond the questions asked in the interview. Educators described student behavior, ability, learning needs, and labels as interfering with accessibility and success within CCP settings. It was also noted that educators described the purpose of CCP as what the students needed to do rather than what educators were expected to provide.

Overall, educators described students who are successful in CCP as self-motivated, organized, driven, academically capable or accelerated, as having a supportive home, engaged parents, and able to make long term decisions by the 9th grade. And overall educators describe students who were not successful in accessing or succeeding in CCP as students who struggled with attendance, who struggle to navigate school, with emotional and behavioral challenges, with unsupportive families or unfortunate life circumstances, who struggle with English Language Development, and who struggle academically.

Policies, Practices, Procedures, and Processes

In addition to staff and student traits, school policies, practices, procedures, and processes related to CCP planning, forecasting, and implementation often emerged throughout the interview data. Educators identified the importance of 4-year planning for student schedules, scheduling and forecasting procedures, class size, workload, grading practices, funding, and district and building support as the major systemic factors within supporting BIPOC-SWD in CCPs. Educators also mentioned needing time to collaborate and having appropriate PD to support equity initiatives. Additionally, educators mentioned that the continued growth and organization of CCPs impacted them in both negative and positive ways. The transition IEP process required for all SWD was also mentioned as being a substantial tool that can be utilized to support students with career and college.

Community, Industry, Parent Influence

Educators identified that connecting Industry to the classroom was an important piece of CCP successes and the implementation of EBPs such as apprenticeships and work-based learning. Community, local businesses, and families all carry influence within CCP development and student engagement. Overall, it was continuously mentioned that community partners have a huge impact on the school's ability to offer some of the EBPs referenced in the literature for equitable CCP. This means that educators are reliant on outside resources, which they have little to no control over.

COVID Related Impact

Lastly, there were frequent mentions of the ongoing COVID pandemic that has continuously impacted schools across the world. Educators identified that COVID has slowed the process for internships and apprenticeships, school-based businesses, and work-based learning. Throughout the interview process, educators also expressed the fatigue and burnout that COVID has caused, leading to unclear understandings of concepts such as rigor or CRP.

White Supremacy

When trying to diversify CCPs, it's important to recognize that industry partners are looking to do the same. Concurrently, there are diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within public and private industry companies, but the bridge between the

companies and the CCPs are not currently aligning. Additionally, it could be argued that by advocating for equity in CCP still encourages students to conform to the existing systems of capitalism and colonialism. Without the proper training and implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Career and College Readiness for SWD in the CCP setting, the same patterns could possibly keep repeating themselves.

School to Prison Pipeline

According to Fujimoto et al. (2013), educational leaders need to utilize alternative approaches to disrupt the STPP and support college-going culture in their schools. Educators are forced to encourage, or funnel, students to pathways based on their knowledge of the pathway and their understanding of the student. This could create an environment where educators are assuming which students should and should not aim to go to college. Frequently, participants talked about high school requirements, college requirements, and job requirements. It appears that their lived experiences within high school, college, and industry lead them to steer students in different directions. Expanding the equity conversation to higher education and connecting the K-12 and higher education settings in addressing the issue collectively could lend to the disruption of the STPP.

School as a Sorting Tool for Students

Figure 5 is a representation of potential forecasting differences for students based on their labels. On the left side of the figure, there is representation of a general education student who does not have the label of EL or IEP. While this could be a BIPOC student who is not receiving any EL or special education services, it's important to note that racial bias could stand in the way of general forecasting procedures. However, as the district has the system set up, they *ideally* have a clear choice to any pathway.

In the center is an example of how students receiving IEP services have scheduling conflicts. Students with IEP supports are often placed in special education support classes, which take up electives in their schedule. This could mean that they don't have access to some pathways until 11th grade. Members on a student's IEP team can recommend they take all general education classes while receiving supports in the general education setting, but decisions like that vary depending on the philosophies of the team members.

Lastly, on the right side of the figure is an example of a BIPOC-SWD who might also be receiving EL services. If a student is receiving both EL and special education services, those two programs often recommend, or require, support classes in a student's schedule. If a student who is receiving EL services and IEP services has half of their schedule taken up by support classes, this might be a student who does not access a pathway until 12th grade. BIPOC-SWD are not assumed to always be dual-identified, but

as mentioned above, BIPOC-SWD face biases based on their race and ability, which can impede on their access to preferred pathways.

Figure 5

Visual of Forecasting Paths
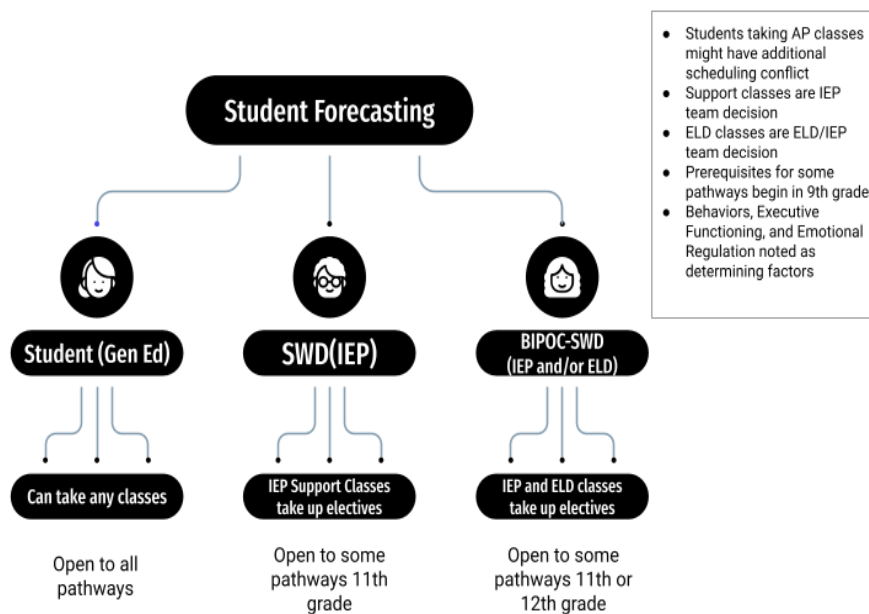
Recommendations and Implications

As stated in the literature review, Tomasello and Brand (2018) outlined the following as guidelines to link ESSA (2015) and IDEA (2015) for CCR instruction: (a) high expectations and access to general education curriculum, (b) well-rounded education, (c) career pathways and transition planning, (d) personalized learning and competency-based learning, (e) subgroup accountability, (f) alignment across policies

and programs. These recommendations highlight the need for inclusive and culturally responsive practices within CCP settings for BIPOC-SWD. The suggestions below are based on systems and practices that could be utilized together to support BIPOC-SWD in enrolling and succeeding in CCPs.

Student and Educator Collaboration. Facilitating an environment where staff students and educators who are involved in implementing and supporting CCP programs would benefit both educators and BIPOC-SWD in being successful in CCPs. Bragg (2017) emphasized how recent CTE-related legislation has recognized special student populations but failed to specifically address racial and ethnic minorities. Bragg (2017) also mentioned that practitioners and students are often left out of program improvement initiatives and suggested that involving practitioners and students to analyze outcome data and be involved in the improvement process would improve equity outcomes. A student committee that works in collaboration with the educators would be beneficial in addressing the equity issues within the individual programs. Within this collaboration, student voice, student outcomes, and demographics of students enrolled and completing CCPs would be analyzed, and decisions would be made based on data, as well as student and staff input.

Cross Collaboration Between Roles and Programs. The results of this study suggest that more efforts to cross collaborate between programs (subject area, role, location) would increase student support and diversify student success in CCP. Cross collaborative efforts between general education and special education around increasing

enrollment of BIPOC-SWD into CCPs would allow educators to collectively interrogate any biases related to racism and ableism. Cross collaboration between general education and special education around transition planning, work experience, and connection to industry might also provide a more comprehensive approach to supporting BIPOC-SWD into a variety of CCPs.

Cross collaboration between high schools and middle schools to plan for more consistency across programs and messaging could improve student understanding of the process and the opportunities available. Cross collaboration between CCP programs within building could help to align common requirements that are required in all pathways for graduation. Cross collaboration between CCP and core classroom teachers could open learning opportunities and eliminate barriers for students. There may be things that can be done in core subject areas that support standards-based learning requirements, but also connect students to CCPs. Lastly, cross collaboration between high schools to align practices would create more consistency across programs and supports.

Additionally, and most importantly, it would be beneficial for special education and EL departments to collaborate to eliminate barriers for students who are dual identified. Working together to create more equitable scheduling, increased access to pathways, and creative student supports could help dual-identified students in being successful in CCPs.

Conflict/Competing Resources. The district would benefit from addressing the conflicts and the competing interests that participants identified. The competing programs

and conflicting scheduling factors could be sustaining some of the inequities. Specifically, conflict and competition between programs, and for resources. Students are being put in the position to choose between the competing programs, and staff are being put in the position to steer students toward one of them. This could potentially send confusing messages to students and place unnecessary workload burdens on staff. Multiple participants mentioned that unless they chose to take on extra unpaid work to make CCPs equitable for BIPOC-SWD, that opportunities would not be available to BIPOC-SWDs. This draws emphasis on the fact that regardless of teacher intent or individual willingness, the educator who is willing to disrupt equity disparities is forced to engage in unpaid labor.

Professional Development. Throughout this study, participants emphasized that racial equity professional development opportunities, in addition to strong in-building messaging about its importance, has initiated and supported efforts to eliminate disparities for students based on race. Providing training on ableism and how ability and race are interconnected could be a next step in the effort to address equity issues for BIPOC-SWD. Addressing the intersection of race and ability and addressing the EBPs that have been presented in the literature for equity in CCP settings, would assist educators in improving in their knowledge and implementation.

Due to the frequent mentions of executive functioning being a determining factor of success for students in CCP, it could be beneficial for educators to receive more training in this area. Educators often spoke of executive functioning for high school

students as something that they should already have, but many students require support in this area through their high school years. CCP teachers and students could improve success for BIPOC-SWD in CCPs by building in executive functioning supports with a culturally responsive lens. This would include educators having the understanding that executive functioning might look different across cultures, and potentially identifying whether their lens of executive functioning is white centered.

Educator Needs. Educators most often emphasized how student success in CCP was dependent upon themselves putting in the effort, as well as their collaboration with colleagues. Both actions are initiated by individual educators. This highlights the importance of cross collaboration between various roles to support students in CCPs and a need for the district to encourage and support educators in cross collaboration. Additionally, because every participant expressed in some way that they had an unclear understanding of EBPs that support BIPOC-SWD in CCPs, creating opportunities for educators to strengthen understandings of EBPs could improve consistency and implementation.

School Improvement and Data-Based Decision Making. Ultimately, BIPOC-SWD would benefit if schools and districts made analyzing completer data a part of their daily practice to improve and refine CCPs. In addition to CCP teachers heavily analyzing their completer data to look for disparities, this data-based decision and planning should be a part of the school improvement process. All roles involved in supporting BIPOC-SWD need to be aware of the implications of their beliefs and actions regarding career

and college for diverse student groups. School districts could utilize Improvement Science could be utilized in professional learning communities (PLCs) to improve the equity goals within CCP settings (Woodland, 2016).

Future Research

Most importantly, the input of BIPOC-SWD is missing from this discussion. It would be beneficial for future research to include student participants to identify their experiences and needs. Specifically, research including the input of dual-identified students, students both on an IEP and receiving EL services, would highlight the major areas of improvement that are needed in EL services, special education services, and in CCPs in general education. Incorporating action research to empower students to challenge the status quo and white supremacy within CCPs would set the stage for BIPOC-SWD to ask for what they need and create avenues for student influence into CCPs.

Additionally, future research could include a study that looks at the improvement of EBPs for BIPOC-SWD in CCPs. This would allow school leadership and educators to take personal accountability of the goals they are working toward in increasing BIPOC-SWD success in CCP settings. This type of research could also lead to action and empowerment.

Limitations of Study

There are a variety of limitations to the methods used within this qualitative interview study. Campbell et al. (2013) explained an overview of concerns around

reliability of coding in semi-structured interviews, including inter-coder reliability and defining units of analysis. Because the interviews varied in length and depth of information, as well as order of questions, the unit of analysis was not necessarily consistent throughout each interview. Glesne (2011) pointed out that power and hierarchy are present in interview conversations and the researcher is tasked with eliminating that hierarchy as it relates to the purpose and theoretical framework of the study. Due to this study being grounded in Critical Research and the components of DisCrit, it was important to make sure hierarchical structures were eliminated within the interview process.

However, Glesne (2011) also pointed out that interviewers must have careful discernment of when they are open to interviewees and when they keep their opinions to themselves to make sure access to others' beliefs are not denied. Because of the dynamic nature of online interviews, I had to make every effort to eliminate any possibility of the interviewee feeling as if there was judgment based on their answers to the interview questions. Additionally, because the Zoom interviews were recorded that increased the level of vulnerability that participants had to endure while discussing personal topics such as race and ability.

Additional limitations to this study include the participating district having hesitations about interviews with staff around the topics of racism and ableism in CCPs, and how that might interfere with educator performance. Because the district was hesitant to allow interviews of vulnerable student groups during COVID and school closures, this

study was focused only on educator experiences and perspectives, leaving out the voices of BIPOC-SWD. Without the input of BIPOC-SWD, improvement initiatives for equitable CCP programming are missing the most valuable input.

Participants and Recruitment. The COVID pandemic started in the spring of 2020. This led to school closures and school being shifted to an online format until the following spring of 2021. My proposal for this research was approved in the spring of 2021. Upon completion of the proposal, there was hope of the mask mandate being ended due to positive signs of the pandemic coming to an end. As the school year began in the fall of 2021, the pandemic was still occurring and masks and COVID variants were still causing stress, sickness, death, and inconsistency within schools and communities. The working conditions caused by COVID led to a difficulty in finding participants for this study. Overall, building Principals were not willing or eager to assist in the participant recruitment process for this study. There were participants from each desired role except building principals, however, there were an inconsistent number of participants from each role, which impacts the trustworthiness of the results.

Additionally, all participants were white educators, leaving out any perspectives from staff who identify in the BIPOC community. For example, there were 3 CCP teachers and 3 CTE teachers who participated in the study, but there was 1 participant who was a counselor, 1 participant who was a TOSA, and 1 participant who was a district administrator. There were 6 participants from school A, but there was only 1 participant from school B, school C, in the TOSA role, and from the administration center at the

district office. While this led to multiple sources for data, it also weakened the ability to cross reference data between roles and locations to gain a numerical value.

Participants also struggled to schedule the second interview due to the fatigue that educators were experiencing throughout the COVID pandemic. At one point during the scheduling process for round two of interviews, there were a substantial number of staff out sick with COVID, leading to educators being pressured to fill in for other staff and take on extra duties. This led to many interviews being rescheduled.

Transition to Online Format. Due to the COVID pandemic, interviews were switched to an online format over Zoom. While this was accessible for all the participants, it did change the dynamics of the interview process. Originally, interviews were planned to be held in person, in the space of the educator. The hope for in person interviews was for the process to be more interactive and exploratory within the educator's space. The sorting tools that were meant to be a hands-on activity with paper, were forced to be switched to an online format in google docs. The sorting tools were switched to Jamboard activities. This made the sorting tool activity a bit more cumbersome for participants and we were not able to get through the activity as efficiently as it would have been if it were a paper sorting activity. This was a major limitation due to the time constraints it caused during the interviews.

Additionally, switching to online added to the fatigue that educators were experiencing due to a full year of online/hybrid teaching. Many educators did not express excitement about doing the interviews, but they were invested in the topic and hoped to

be able to voice their concerns. It was observed that the COVID pandemic impacted educator willingness for many extracurricular activities. Anything additional seemed like a burden.

Conclusion

Due to the variety of educators that support BIPOC-SWD in accessing and succeeding in CCPs, it will remain important for school administrators, policy makers, and educators to remain aware of their beliefs, actions, and choices, and how it might impact BIPOC-SWD. Additionally, there is much work to be done in educating educators on EBPs, as well as providing them with an environment that supports them in implementing them successfully. The successful implementation of EBPs might be best presented to educators with opportunities to apply it specifically to their job role and building location.

Opportunities for educators to cross-collaborate to tackle this problem collectively will increase the chances in eliminating systemic barriers. Cross collaboration between subject areas, programs, and student support teams will allow for all students to receive the same messaging and universal supports despite the setting. It is imperative that systems are created to ensure the capability of the cross collaboration and planning to support BIPOC-SWD in CCPs settings. It is also imperative that the systems eliminate equity within CCPs as being person dependent.

Ultimately, BIPOC-SWD will continue to face barriers in accessing and completing CCPs if educator barriers and supports are not addressed consistently. School

districts bear the responsibility to make data-based decisions in hopes to improve the outcomes for dually oppressed student groups. To summarize, the areas that were most significantly identified by participants were how the individual CCP teacher's beliefs and actions influence whether a student might experience gatekeeping to that specific CCP program, educators either expressing an unclear understanding or describing variations in understandings of EBPs related to Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Career and College Readiness for SWD is a main barrier to supporting BIPOC-SWD in CCP settings, and educators sharing success in implementing EBPs being most supported by their individual choice and willingness to advocate for diverse learners, improve their practice, and collaborate with coworkers to support BIPOC-SWD in CCPs.

Educators would benefit from having a more clearly presented goal of providing equitable supports for BIPOC-SWD in CCPs. The goal in providing equitable supports could address the refined purpose of CCP. Support for educators in working toward this goal can assist educators who are not yet willing, or not yet able, to implement equity based EBPs in CCPs. In terms of accessibility, educators might benefit from having time to reflect on how their beliefs and practices impact Gatekeeping and Pushout of BIPOC-SWD in CCPs. Educators will also benefit from having clear explanations of the EBPs, including Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Career and College Readiness for SWD. Lastly, educators might require time and support in unpacking how they view race and ability in CCPs to address how the intersection of race and ability are used to exclude

BIPOC-SWD from CCP settings. Overall, race and ability as interdependent constructs are not identified explicitly in CCP planning.

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Appendix A: Synthesis of Theoretical Frameworks

CRP	CCR+SWD	DisCrit
curriculum and teaching practices that empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically	educators holding high expectations of students regardless of race, ability, or socially constructed label	focus on how common notions of normalcy are upheld by the interdependence of race and ableism,
educators as facilitators of learning communities that embody cross-cultural communication	every student having access to general education CCR curriculum regardless of race, ability, or socially constructed label	a value of multidimensional identities such as any combination of: race, dis/abiltiy, class, gender, or sexuality etc.,
educators as facilitator and learner interchangeably	career and college transition planning occurring in the general education setting	an emphasis and recognition of race and ability being social constructions and the impact that such labels have on an individual,
educators maintaining and demonstrating a continuous care for cultural awareness	personalized and competency based CCR instruction	an emphasis on amplifying marginalized voices that are not traditionally recognized within research
a focus on continuously developing critical consciousness of culture for educators and students	alignment for CCR education across programs	a consideration of how race and ability have both historically and legally been used to segregate, exclude, and separate people or deny their rights,
a classroom climate that empowers students to challenge the status quo	students obtaining cognitive strategies in preparation for college and career readiness	a recognition of how whiteness has been centered in disability advocacy and progress, and is thought of as owned by the white, middle-class community
a classroom climate with practices that provide opportunities for students to develop	students obtaining content knowledge related to career and college goals	a requirement of resistance and activism and is in support of all forms of resistance.

and maintain cultural competence, identity, and language		
classroom instruction and practices that provide opportunities for students to connect their academic experience with their culture	students embodying academic behaviors that allow for success in career and college settings	
educators carrying an awareness of the difference between diversity, difference, and disability as social constructs	students maintaining contextual skills and awareness for a variety of career and college settings	
educators holding high expectations of students regardless of race, ability, or socially constructed label	students are academically engaged regardless of race, ability, or socially constructed label	
	students have the mind-set that they can reach their career and college goals	
	students understand their personal learning processes	
	students engage in critical thinking in any classroom setting	
	students engage interpersonally with their peers	
	students are aware of their transition goals and the skills they need to reach them	

	student work toward transition competencies for their transition goals	

Synthesis of EBP (from DisCrit, CRP, CCR-SWD)
Condensed for Jamboard Sorting Tool 2 and Interview #2 Protocol

Combination of indicators for interview question development in relation to EBPs
Educators holding high expectations of students for CCR regardless of Race, Ability, or socially constructed labels
Career and College transition Planning and Education happens in the general education classroom within cross cultural learning communities and is facilitated with cultural awareness
CCR curriculum that intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically empowers students to challenge the status quo
Classroom climate that is built around student cultural competency and CCR goals, bridging culture and CCR
Classroom practices allow for students to obtain cognitive and behavioral awareness for success in CCR settings, while developing and maintaining their personal cultural competence, identity, and language
Educators believe BIPOC-SWD are able to be successful in CCR settings
Educators are aware of the difference between diversity and difference, and disability, as social constructs and attempt to challenge their own bias in CCR planning
Students are aware of their learning needs and believe they can succeed in CCR settings.

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

Interview 1 Protocol

Main questions	Probes	Research Question Alignment
Explain the purpose of Career and College Pathway programs	-how does your role fit into this process -how do you influence students to connect with CCPs?	1
Walk me through how a student enrolls in a Career and College Pathway	-what is the process for a student on an IEP/receiving IEP services? -what is the process for a student who receives EL services? -how does that work for your pathway? -who does this process serve well? -who does this process not serve well? -how do you feel about this process?	3
Walk me through a time when a student has not been able to enroll or stay enrolled in your Career and College Pathway	-what did you do when . . . -what do you think about . . . -how do you handle it when . . . -who did you consult about these factors . . . -what actions did you take when . . . -what gets in your way of supporting students like you described . . .	2, 3
Walk me through how students are successful in your Career and College Pathway	-is this pathway designed for a specific type of student	1, 3, 4

Interview 2 Protocol

Educators will sort the following EBP for all students in CCP settings, following the sorting for all students, the participant and researcher will discuss how it might change for SWD and then BIPOC-SWD.

EBPs that will be sorted (synthesized from the literature review on equity in CCP/CCR settings)

- Challenge definitions of rigor
- Carry sympathy for student experiences
- Include school-based businesses
- Include work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities
- Build relationships with students
- Reflect upon beliefs
- Integrate college into all courses and supports
- Utilize Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
- Perceive diverse culture and languages as positive attributes
- Encourage dual credit/AP/Honors
- Challenge my own ideologies

After each round of sorting, the following questions will be asked about the EBP that educators identify as being more difficult for them in their CCP setting:

- what do you need to incorporate . . . ?
- how do you feel about these . . . (the EBP that were identified as difficult)?
- what is preventing you from incorporating these . . . ?
- what helps you incorporate these . . . ?

Components on Hand for Probing Additional Questions:

- DisCrit components
- CRP components
- Knowledge of SWD transition needs
- Knowledge of the intersection of Race and Disability for BIPOC-SWD

If time allows, there is a second sorting tool with simplified components from the tenets of DisCrit and CRP specifically. The additional sorting tool has the following on it:

- Believe all students can learn
- Connect culture and career goals
- Empower students to challenge the status quo
- Provide high expectations and high supports
- Integrate student interests into curriculum and scheduling
- Understand the difference between difference and disability
- Ensure students think they can succeed
- Support opportunities to develop culture and language
- Support students' career and college planning
- Consider learning gaps when making decisions
- Support identity, culture, and language development

Interview #2. sorting tool 4

Set background   Clear frame

In my CCP course, or in the CCP courses I support students in, I:

Yes, Definitely

Sometimes, Not Sure

No, not at this time

believe all students can learn

connect culture and career goals

empower students to challenge the status quo

provide high expectations and high supports

I integrate student interests into curriculum and/or scheduling

understand the difference between difference and disability

ensure students think they can succeed

support opportunities to develop culture and language

support students in career and college planning

consider existing learning gaps when making decisions

support identity, culture, and language development

Appendix C: Snapshot of Jamboard Sorting Tools

Insert images here . . .

Chart of Notes, Quotes, and Observations from Structural Coding:

Perceived Purpose of CCP		
Perceived Accessibility of CCP		
Hinders/Barriers of implementing EBP in CCP	Internal	External
Supporters Educator in implementing EBP in CCP	Internal	External
Gatekeeping factors		
Pushout factors		
Student traits for success in CCP (either in accessing or completing)		
Student traits for failure in CCP (either in accessing or completing)		
Competing Interests or Conflict		
Supporting Students in CCP		

Appendix D: Structural Code Counts

Structural Code Count by Interview

	Conflict	Gate keeping	Hinders	Lack of understanding EBP	Purpose	Access	Push out	Student failure in CCP	Student success in CCP	Support student	Supports	Totals
P1 #1	0	4	0	0	6	15	9	12	4	4	0	54
P1 #2	0	5	11	0	0	4	0	12	1	3	23	59
P2 #1	0	1	0	0	1	7	2	1	3	10	0	25
P2 #2	0	4	3	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	17	29
P3 #1	13	4	1	0	6	18	3	9	4	20	0	78
P3 #2	1	0	14	2	0	1	0	3	3	5	4	33
P4 #1	1	4	1	0	1	4	5	5	5	3	1	30
P4 #2	1	2	18	4	0	1	0	1	0	1	13	41
P5 #1	2	6	1	0	2	8	2	7	6	14	0	48
P5 #2	2	4	23	3	1	6	3	1	3	1	34	81
P6 #1	5	1	1	0	5	5	5	5	5	6	1	39
P6 #2	11	4	15	1	2	2	1	3	1	0	28	68
P7 #1	16	3	0	0	1	19	4	3	1	16	0	63
P7 #2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	5	6	17
P8 #1	1	4	0	0	4	8	1	1	8	3	0	30
P8 #2	1	0	10	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	17	35
P9 #1	1	2	0	0	5	5	5	10	8	7	0	43
P9 #2	4	3	15	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	14	38
P10 #1	15	2	2	0	3	4	1	6	4	13	0	50
P10 #2	5	0	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	29
Totals	80	53	125	22	37	109	42	80	59	112	171	0

Structural Code Count by Participant Role

Structural Code	Case Manager (CM)	Counselor (C)	CCP	CTE	TOSA	Admin
Conflict or competing interests	2	12	42	38	15	51
Gatekeeping	20	30	12	11	15	9
Hinders educator in EBP	33	72	45	37	45	3
Lack of understanding of EBP	5	9	6	9	3	6
Perceived purpose of CCP	8	9	18	14	15	3
Perceived accessibility of CCP	32	42	57	19	18	57
Pushout	17	15	9	8	15	12
Student characteristics failure CCP	32	24	36	15	30	9
Student characteristics success CCP	13	27	21	19	24	9
Supporting student in CCP	22	45	75	22	21	63
Supports educator in EBP	54	102	12	59	42	18

Structural Code Count by Participant Location

Structural Code	School A	School B	School C	District Office
conflict or competing interests	40	24	84	66
gatekeeping	31	60	24	24
hinders educator in EBP	70	144	90	48
lack of understanding of EBP	14	18	12	9
perceived purpose of CCP	22	18	36	18
perceived accessibility of CCP	51	84	114	75
pushout	25	30	18	27
student characteristics of failure in CCP	47	48	72	39
student characteristics of success in CCP	32	54	42	33
supporting student in CCP	44	90	150	84
supports educator in EBP	113	204	24	60