

# PIPE

Program Improvement Process for Equity™



## Techno Bag Exercise

### Purpose

To have workshop participants experience what it is like to not know the names of technology-based items because they have not had any early exposure to them. Often this exercise can be easily done by men and not so easily by women further illustrating the lack of exposure women have to technology tools and supplies.

### Materials

In zip lock bags place one of each of the following items. These items and many others are available at any electronics store:

- Piece of fiber optic
- Capacitor
- Transistor
- Resistor
- Telephone jack
- Piece of coaxial cable
- Coaxial cable connector
- Female wire clamp
- Flexible computer cable ribbon
- Ear plug (these are items to confuse them!)
- High tech tooth pick (these are items to confuse them!)
- Zip tie
- Rubber grommet
- Anything small related to technology that most people don't know the names of

### Introduce the Exercise

A root cause for the lack of participation and completion of students in nontraditional CTE programs is a lack of early exposure to many of these fields. Without this exposure, a student will not have sufficient knowledge of, and may even be fearful of, the career field to make an informed decision.

Only introduce the exercise briefly, because much of what the exercise illustrates will become apparent after its completion.

### Give Instructions

Provide a bag to small groups (three is ideal), and ask the groups to name each of the items in the bag. Allow about 5 minutes. Encourage sharing within a group but not between groups. Walk around the room, observe, and listen carefully. Note people's frustrations, who easily knows the names of the items, and the comments made to one another.

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### Process the Exercise

When it appears that each group has completed the exercise, ask the group members to reflect on the process they used and how they felt about it. Were they frustrated, discouraged, or embarrassed because they didn't know the names? Or proud, powerful, and happy because they did?

Ask the group to imagine a teenager enrolling in a nontraditional CTE program in which he or she is immediately exposed to things (e.g., tools, equipment, materials) that are unfamiliar and surrounded by students of the opposite sex who are already knowledgeable about these things. Ask the group to explore how a student who is considering a nontraditional CTE program but lacks exposure to the related field might access basic knowledge about the program and field before enrolling to raise his or her comfort level before enrolling and staying.

Once the groups have processed the experience, don't forget to identify the names of the items and their uses. It can be fun to hear the names that some people give to the items in the bag!



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