

State Attainment Plan - Analysis Protocol – TEMPLATE

1. **The plans are institutional artifacts that are infused with meaning and value.**

a. Language, numbers, diagrams, and tables that comprise the “text” of the plans communicate specific meanings, categories, concepts, and ways of thinking (Taylor, 1997). They are strategic tools used for political purposes, and as such “represent the outcome of political struggles over meaning” (p. 26).

2. **Policy analysis is an interpretive act.**

a. As such, policies like state attainment plans are “continuously constituted and reconstituted through discussion, activities and social relationships” (Rizvi & Kemmis, 1989, p. 15, as cited in Taylor, 1997, p. 27). Put another way, “the meaning of the policy document lies not in the text itself nor in legislative intent ... but in the experienced based understanding of, for example, constituents [i.e., practitioners] on the ‘receiving’ end of [the] policy” (Yanow, 2007, p. 116).

b. Furthermore, concepts like “race” or “equity” “do not remain still for very long” (Apple, 1993, p. 43, as cited in Taylor, 1997, p. 28) and take on different meanings in different states. “Race” or “Equity,” therefore, may be conceived differently in California and Colorado. We should thus treat “racial equity” as an umbrella term and we need to extract its meaning from each plan, rather than assume a constant meaning across the plans.

c. In this way, policy is not something that exists outside of human action. Rather, “Policies pose problems to their subjects, problems that must be solved in context. Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localized and should be expected to displace ‘*ad hoc-ery*’ and messiness. Responses must be ‘creative.’ Policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do is narrowed or changed or particular goals or outcomes are set. A response must still be put together, constructed in context, offset against or balanced by other expectations. All of this involves create social action of some kind” (Ball, 1997, p. 270)

3. **As researchers, ours is an interpretive task.**

a. We are involved in a “double hermeneutic” (Giddens, 1984), or an “interpretation of interpretations” (Geertz, 1973) (as cited in Yanow, 2007, p. 117).

b. As interpreters of interpretations, we should attend to:

i. How the text of the plan—its language, numbers, figures, and overall narrative—construct specific conceptions of equity; race/ethnicity; students; practitioner and broader institutional roles, responsibilities, action; ‘solutions’ to the ‘problem’ of inequity.

ii. What is *not* explicitly stated, i.e., the silences or implicit messages, and how those silences also construct conceptions of equity, race/ethnicity, etc. For example, the text of a plan may not say outright that they seek to mitigate disproportionate impact in color-blind or gender-blind ways, but the articulation of their goals and activities is cast in “all student” language, thus suggesting no specific focus on students of color or women.

In our analysis, we are interested in *what* the plans say, as well as *how* the plans convey the “what.”

PROJECT RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do state attainment plans **discuss race, racial disparities, or racial (in)equity their goals for improving college completion?**
 - a. Are state attainment plans used as an opportunity to address racial inequities in college completion?
2. Specifically, how are **Latinx, Black, and Indigenous populations** discussed, identified, or addressed, if it all, in state attainment plans?
 - a. Do plans explicitly discuss, identify, or address ways to improve **Latinx, Black, and Indigenous** attainment rates in their state?
3. Do states with a large **Latinx, Black, and Indigenous** population (or attainment gaps) put an emphasis on them in their attainment policy or plan?

STATE-LEVEL INFORMATION

State:

Goal:

Official Site:

Legislative Info:

Plan:

Progress Updates:

General-Level Questions

Prompt	Response
1. Does the state have a degree attainment policy/plan?	(Yes/No)
2. What is the state's attainment goal?	(% by YR)
3. What is the name of the state's attainment policy/plan?	(Full Title)
4. Who is the coordinating body responsible for the attainment plan? Overseeing/Accountability for achieving plan?	
5. Availability of data, documents, informative websites (as researchers the process of finding information related to their plan)	
6. Does the state provide updates or progress reports on their attainment plan?	
7. What documents are being reviewed for this state analysis (list all documents)	

Structured-Note Taking Page

This section offers an opportunity to note any general impressions you might have related to the documents being reviewed. Feel free to note particularly striking aspects of the plan, whether positive or negative. Two things should prompt your analytic review:

1. How is college completion and educational attainment discussed?
 2. How is race or racial equity gaps discussed in the documents? Any particular attention on Latinx, Black or Indigenous students, their disparities, or ways to address the barriers they face?
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Document Level Questions

Name of Plan: TEMPLATE

Length (# of pages): XX

Prompt	Response
1. What is the imperative for improving educational attainment in the state?	
2. Do they have strategic goals to achieve their plan? [list in bullet points if so]	
3. Do they discuss (racial) demographic shifts in the state, if so, how?	
4. Are (racial) equity gaps in college completion discussed?	
5. Do the state's attainment goal materials include a goal to improve outcomes for students of color and/or close racial equity gaps?	
6. Is the state's goal to improve outcomes for students of color or close racial equity gaps supported by additional numerical targets, goals, benchmarks, and/or data analysis?	
7. Do the attainment goal materials identify strategies the state has used, is using, or will use to improve outcomes for students of color or close racial equity gaps?	
8. How is the Black, Latinx, or Indigenous communities discussed? Does the plan articulate a specific approaches or strategies to address the equity gaps faced by the these communities?	

Post-Analysis of All State-related Documents

State: TEMPLATE

Prompt	Response
1. What evidence/data does the state use to inform their attainment plans? (Structural)	
2. After reading the documents, what are the overarching goals to improve attainment? Does the state provide a level of detail where improving attainment seem feasible to achieve? (Structural)	(List the overarching goals/themes that the state provides and if there is “enough” evidence to implement them)
3. How are racially minoritized populations discussed? Does the plan articulate a specific approaches or strategies to address racial equity gaps? (Discourse)	
4. How does the state discuss its role in mitigating disproportionate impact for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students? For example, does the state seem to take responsibility for the current conditions of their educational attainment? (Discourse)	
5. Based on your review of the entire plan, would you say there is an overall, intentional, state-wide approach/strategy for improving college completion and mitigating racial disparities? Why or why not? (Action)	
6. How does the state articulate accountability aspects of the plan? Who is responsible for making this happen? (Action)	
7. Do you think that racial disparities in college completion can be addressed through the state’s attainment plan? (Action)	