

# Community Action Poverty Simulator (CAPS) : Connect for Change – Empowering Action Against Poverty

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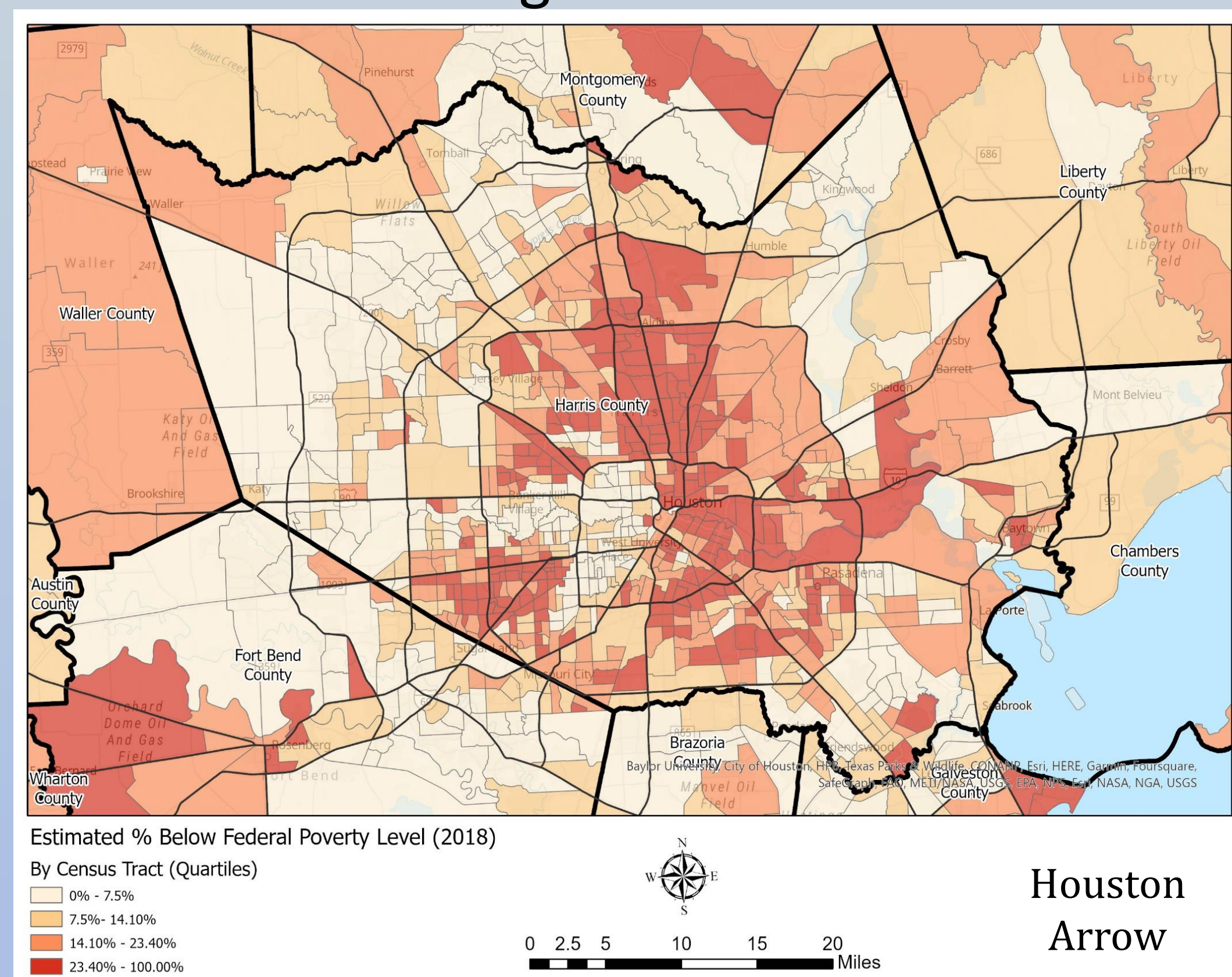
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## INTRODUCTION

Poverty persists as a pervasive challenge, with the United States exhibiting an 11.5% poverty rate. Houston's poverty rate at 14.3% is higher than similar U.S. metros. The socioeconomic disparities are palpable, with many residents facing barriers to essential resources and healthcare access, exemplified by significant poverty rates in certain neighborhoods. This highlights the critical need to equip healthcare professionals with the skills to understand and address non-medical drivers of health (NMDOH), such as poverty, essential for comprehensive patient care, with empathy playing a pivotal role in providing equitable healthcare to marginalized communities.



## MATERIALS

The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS), developed by Missouri Community Action Network (CAN), aims to illuminate the realities of poverty. UTHealth Houston has integrated CAPS into its clinical curriculum to train future clinicians, offering them a firsthand experience of the challenges faced by individuals living in poverty.

## PURPOSE

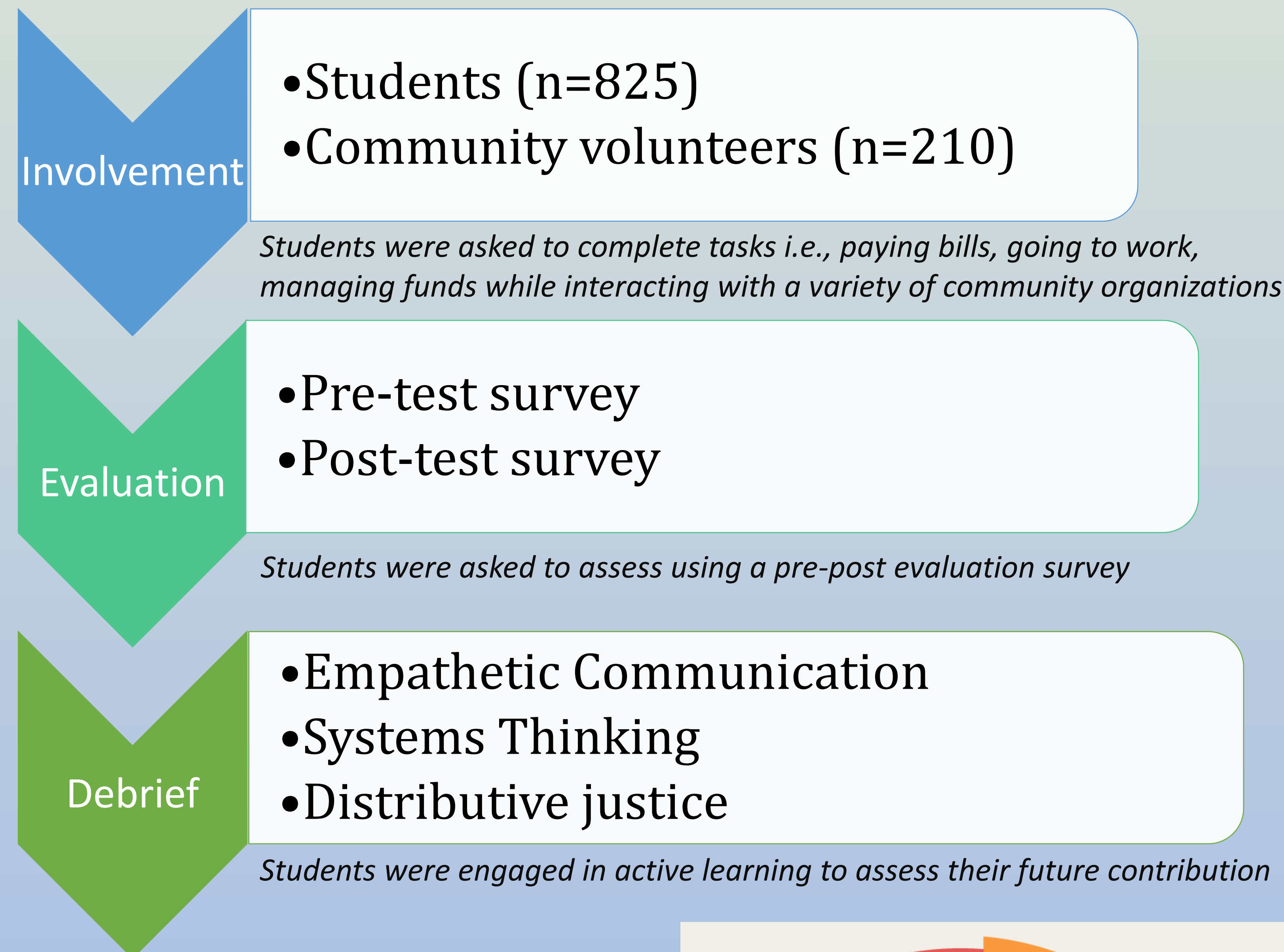
### Objective 1: Enhancing Empathy and Understanding

The first objective of the CAPS is to foster empathy and a greater understanding of the non-medical determinants of health and poverty among students and community workers.

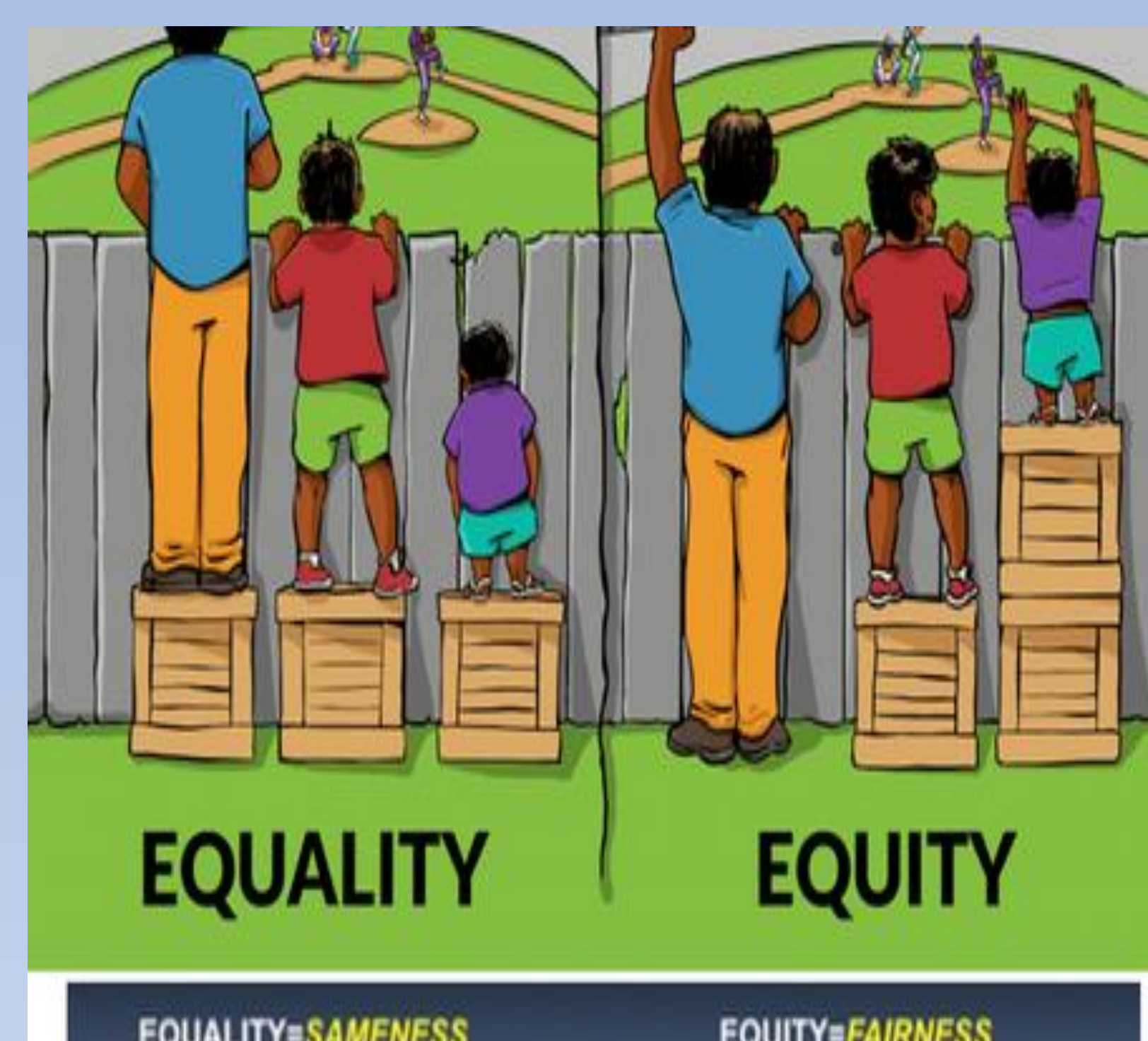
### Objective 2: Educational Effectiveness and Impact Measurement

The second objective of CAPS is to assess and demonstrate its effectiveness as an educational tool.

## METHODS

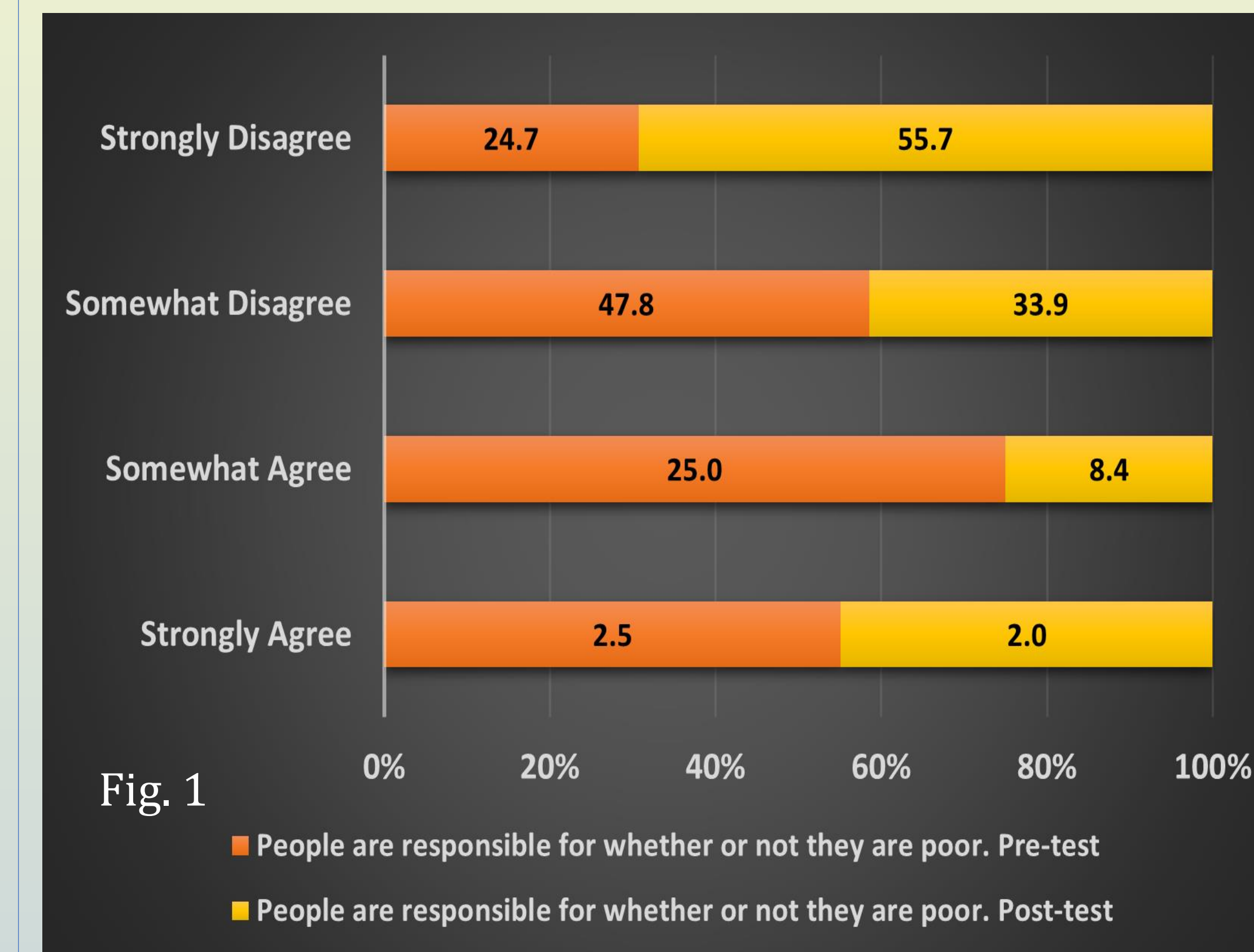


### Systems Thinking →



### ← Distributive Justice

## RESULTS



- Increased ability to understand the experience of those living in poverty (Fig. 1).
- Increased ability to direct individuals living in poverty towards correct resources (Fig. 2).
- Collaborative efforts increased (15%) belief in societal change towards justice and fairness.

- There is a 15% improvement in always considering mine and other person's perspective simultaneously.
- There is a substantial increase (17%) in the belief that adults who are poor deserve social assistance between the pre-test vs. post-test survey.
- The poverty simulator has positively influenced participant's attitude towards community engagement.
- The poverty simulator resulted in increased empathy and knowledge gain



## CONCLUSIONS

- The Community Action Poverty Simulator by UTHealth Houston is recognized as an effective tool for engaging communities and tackling poverty-related issues.
- Its community-driven approach and emphasis on experiential learning makes the CAPS program uniquely effective.
- CAPS has increased empathy and collaborative efforts.
- CAPS foster understanding and collective action for a more equitable future.
- Future plans to expand CAPS for a broader scope of training opportunities.
- This expansion will extend beyond academic settings to external organizations and community agencies, further amplifying its impact.

**Acknowledgements:** 1.) Houston Arrow → Dr. Ryan Ramphul, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health 2.) Google Images