

# FFA, Why are we here? The Hispanic/Latino Perspective

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*The rising STAR of Texas*

# Introduction

## The FFA Mission

❖ The National FFA Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education.

## The Pledge

❖ To practice brotherhood, honor agricultural opportunities and responsibilities and develop those qualities of leadership which and FFA member should possess.

# Code

- ❖ We will conduct ourselves at all times in order to be a credit to our organization, chapter, school and community by:
- ❖ Dressing neatly and appropriately for the occasion.
- ❖ Showing respect for the rights of others and being courteous at all times.
- ❖ Being honest and not taking unfair advantage of others.
- ❖ Respecting the property of others.
- ❖ Refraining from loud, boisterous talk, swearing and other unbecoming conduct.
- ❖ Demonstrating sportsmanship in the show ring, judging contests and meetings.
- ❖ Being modest in winning and generous in defeat.
- ❖ Attending meetings promptly and respecting the opinion of others in discussion.
- ❖ Taking pride in our organization, activities, supervised experience program, exhibits, and the occupation of agriculture.
- ❖ Sharing with others experiences and knowledge gained by attending national and state meetings.
- ❖ Striving to establish and enhance my skills through agricultural education in order to enter a successful career.
- ❖ **Appreciating and promoting diversity in our organization.**

# Background of the Study

- ❖ Society is changing at such a rapid rate in the United States with diversity being one of the most contributing factors. When individuals leave their country of origin they will have a larger opportunity to interact with other cultures (Bell, 2000; Avery, 1992).
- ❖ “Teacher preparation programs must recruit (and support) students of color who bring diverse worldviews and discursive fields of reference to the teaching force,” (Johnson, 2015, p.153)
- ❖ “The FFA may have more cultural appeal to rural and white students as opposed to diverse, urban, or suburban students,” (Martin & Kitchel, 2013; Hoover & Scanlon, 1991)
- ❖ Nichols and Nelson (1993) reported that the Hispanics population tend to view agriculture negatively
- ❖ Talbert and Larke (1993) noted that Blacks and Hispanics tend to have a more negative attitude toward the traditional components of agriculture.

# Introduction

- ❖ Since the 1980's the population has grown at the rate of nine percent per year, creating a significant increase in Hispanic, Asian, Pacifica Islanders, Native American and multiracial populations (Files, 2005)
- ❖ Given this factor, diverse students are likely to experience conflicts if schools are not sensitive to their culture, language, family background, religion, sexual orientation, and learning styles (Short & Echevarria, 2005)
- ❖ The Digest for Educational Statistics (2012) reports that the teaching workforce is comprised of 86% European Americans, 75% female.
- ❖ Pang & Sablan (1998) stated, “many pre-service as well as in-service teachers are ambivalent about their ability to teach minority children.”

- ❖ According to a recent report published by the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), it was found that for the first time in U.S. public school history a majority of students will come from minority groups.
- ❖ In The Strategic Plan for Agricultural Education, the National Council for Agricultural Education (1989) set as a priority goal of agricultural education, “To serve all people and groups equally and without discrimination”.

- ❖ The agricultural sector is the foundation of any society, but in the U.S., ethnic minority participation in areas of agriculture and related fields is scarce (Foster & Henson, 1992).
- ❖ Talbert and Larke (1995) noted that minority students tend to have more negative attitudes toward the traditional components of agriculture.
- ❖ In 2016, the Chronicle of Higher Education presented 9 Best Practices to Support Students of Color; active recruitment; exposure; developing programs to meet their needs; mentors; commitment; building communities, families, finance, and tracking of success and failure

## Previous study (African American)

- Increased emphasis need to be placed on urban schools that promote agricultural education. i.e. **professional development workshops, monies for program development and equipment, and field trips for urban students.**
- A more **positive projection** of agriculture needs to be implemented in urban school.
- Students would like to see more **minority involvement** in agriculture.
- Agricultural classes as well as the FFA may need to work toward providing more methods of increasing the **sense of belonging** for minorities.
- **Agricultural teachers** are responsible for the *recruiting* and *retention* of minorities in agriculture.
- One student responded by saying, “agriculture should inform minorities more, help them to understand and appreciate it”.

# Purpose of the study

- ❖ Since 2006, there is little documented evidence of success in engaging Latino students to pursue agricultural teacher education as a viable career path. If agriculture education is to attract a more diverse audience it is imperative for the voices of the underserved be heard from the first person's perspective (Phenomenology).
- ❖ “Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the forefront the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives therefore challenging structural or normative assumptions” (Lester, 1993).

# Philosophical Objective

- ❖ To determine how Latino students from a Hispanic Serving Institution perceive teacher education careers in agriculture as a viable option
- ❖ To document their cultural ideologies of their perceptions of agriculture through their lived experiences

# Methodology

- ❖ The model for this study is outlined by Denzin (1989), known as the interpretive process. This methodology is being used because it focuses on the lived experiences of the participants to explore different rationales of problematic events.
- ❖ The participants of the study were 3 of the 4 Hispanic/Latino students who student taught during the Spring semester (2016)
- ❖ All of the participants were Agricultural Education majors and are seeking jobs in this field.
- ❖ All participants gave their informed consent for the data to be used
- ❖ They were presented with the information that whatever is collected is a snapshot to further research. Their information will be used to help establish a triangulated set of research questions and analysis.

# Data Collection

- ❖ The information used in the data phase came from results concluded within the 2006 “Engaging the Hispanic Community in Traditionally White Ag Ed Programs” sponsored by the National FFA.
- ❖ Previous research conducted by Wakefield, et.al, in reference to Blacks in Agriculture
- ❖ Informal interviews conducted over the phone
- ❖ Open ended questions (All were asked the same questions for validity purposes)
- ❖ Tape recorded and transcribed
- ❖ Field notes were used

# Themes

❖ Through narrative analysis common themes originated within the discussions

- Racial awareness
- Equitable treatment
- School Choice
- Family
- Intrinsic motivation to succeed
- Acceptance

“People targeted by racism are patronized and treated as less competent and less intelligent. These daily events serve to keep institutionalized racism in place. They are unavoidable reminders of how deep and widespread racism is in our society” (Jackins, 2008, p.8).

# Limitations

- ❖ Due to the size of my sample (and my obligation to my interviewees) I will only provide one example for each theme.
- ❖ This study is a pilot study that will be conducted with all students who classify themselves as Hispanic/Latino in the Department of Agriculture at Texas State University and Texas A&M Commerce in the Fall of 2016.

# 2006 Report

## ❖ Part 1 – Defining the Situation

- Few success stories, but these students are often the exception and not the rule
- Hispanics are untapped
- University programs are in jeopardy due to the lack of diversity

## ❖ Part 2 – Challenges/Barriers

- Hispanic prejudices (parents don't want their kids to go into Ag)
- Caucasian prejudices – lack of awareness
- Lack of support for Hispanic students
- Barriers – SAE, Local FFA chapter, district/state/national FFA activities

### ❖ **Part 3 – Best Practices**

- Recruit
- Engage in SAE
- Participate in local/state/national FFA
- Pursue Ag as Career
- Grow leadership skills

### ❖ **Part 4 – Future Needs**

- Local Ag Teacher training and resource materials
- Change in FFA programs at local, state and national levels
- Action by the State!!!!

# Theme 1 – Racial Awareness

- ❖ I never experienced anything that made me feel discriminated against but I do feel intimidated.
- ❖ Heard comments like “Do you think he supports Donald Trump”
- ❖ Haven’t had to deal with parents
- ❖ I am hungry to prove everyone wrong because I’m Hispanic. I can go out there and teach Ag just like any other person can.
- ❖ Principal, IMPACT

## Theme 2 – Equitable treatment

- ❖ Felt like I had to find my niche and at the same time stay true to myself yet blend in
- ❖ I felt like I had to change..... I had to censor myself
- ❖ Don't feel like the true "history" is being taught. I had to be aware that though I could provide a different perspective, its best I not say anything.

## Theme 3 – School Choice

- ❖ I came to Texas State because I felt it was more accepting of me because it's a Hispanic Serving Institution
- ❖ Texas State provided me with the resources to go to school
- ❖ Texas State provided me with experiences with culture because I came from a community where 99% of the people are Latino
- ❖ Felt like a community

## Theme 4 - Family

- ❖ Jobs in Ag is a white man's job. That perception is very prevalent in the Latino community. It's sad because a lot of people accept that perception. They are not going to go on CNN and say that Ag is for the white man, but people have that perception. I wanted to do Ag because I was raised on a ranch. Ag had jobs and Ag Ed had a shortage of teachers. I took it upon myself, when my family did not support me.

# Theme 5 – Intrinsic Motivation to Succeed

- ❖ The desire to succeed
- ❖ Helping others
- ❖ To see a minority teacher is very important to us. Watching them makes me believe in myself and lets us know that we can do it too

## Theme 6 - Acceptance

- ❖ The ability to reach a more diverse group of students is very important to me. I often feel intimidated yet at the same time confidence. I don't know how well I will be accepted until I get my own school. I believe there will be some problems with parents and grandparents, but I believe once they get to know me they will be more accepting of me.

# Findings

- ❖ To determine how Latino students from a Hispanic Serving Institution perceive teacher education careers in agriculture as a viable option
- ❖ To document their cultural ideologies of their perceptions of agriculture through their lived experiences

# POSITIVE

# Conclusion

As Causey, Thomas and Armento (1999) stated, “many enter teacher education programs believing strongly in an *optimistic individualism*, the inevitability of triumph over any obstacle through hard work and individual effort” (Ahlquist, 1992; Finney & Orr, 1995; McCall, 1995; Nieto, 1998)”.

FFA Why are we here? – Because we seek to make a positive difference in the lives of others within our communities and beyond