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The changing racial and ethnic demographics have had a profound effect on 4-H programs. Minoritized populations have dramatically increased, and this has presented a challenge to the 4-H program. Culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education practices can contribute to a more inclusive program that uses cultural knowledge and perspectives from students of color. The future success of 4-H youth development programs will depend on the relevance and value of its educational programs for students of color.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to critically examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff regarding recruitment and retention of students of color. I examined 4-H staff perceptions on the reasons students of color chose not to participate in 4-H programs. The focus group participants and I also examined the curriculum from a multicultural perspective. Basic qualitative research provided a framework for this study because it allowed 4-H staff to share their thoughts and ideas concerning the cultural relevance of the program.

The findings from the data emphasize the fact that educational approaches of the 4-H program were not considered as effective as they could be in meeting the needs of students of color. Even though the traditional 4-H club program was a proven method for educating youth, many students of color made the choice not to participate in the program and therefore not to benefit from all it has to offer. The focus group participant highlighted the many barriers to participation as well as uncovered the misconceptions of

students of color. 4-H curriculum showed fewer instances of multicultural content integration than expected. The curriculum should be revised to include the contributions of a wide variety of ethnic and cultural groups. This requires new knowledge and an understanding of cultural differences and the history of different ethnic groups.

TRANSFORMING 4-H PEDAGOGY: EQUITY, ACCESS,
AND OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The 4-H youth development program is a national program that promotes the development of youth into productive, self-directing, and contributing members of society. 4-H began more than 100 years ago and “has become the nation’s largest youth development organization” (National 4-H Council, 2014a, para. 1). The mission of 4-H is to “empower youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnerships with caring adults,” and the vision of 4-H is “a world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change” (National 4-H Council, “4-H Mission,” 2014b, para. 1). The four “H’s” stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. These words are also a part of the 4-H pledge and emblem. This program has produced positive outcomes for youth in the areas of science, citizenship, and healthy living. Compared to other peers, youth involved in 4-H are (a) four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, (b) two times more likely to be civically active, (c) two times more likely to make healthier choices, and (d) two times more likely to participate in science, engineering, and computer technology programs during out-of-school time (National 4-H Council, 2013).

The program “serves youth in rural, urban, and suburban communities in every state across the nation and the youth are tackling the nation’s top issues, from global food security, climate change, and sustainable energy to childhood obesity and food safety”

(National 4-H Council, 2014a, para. 1). Under the direction of the Cooperative Extension program, 4-H is considered to be the youth development program for all of the 109 land grant universities in the United States. 4-H has programs in science, citizenship, healthy living and mentoring. 4-H uses different delivery modes that reach youth with hands-on experiential learning experiences. These modes include community clubs, after-school programs, school enrichment, and 4-H camps. The 4-H curriculum is used in clubs, schools, and project work. For example, 4-H curricula projects allow members to progress through a topic of their interest while developing the knowledge and skills about different subjects. For example, in a project such as Animal Science, youth learn about animals and their health and reproduction, explore career opportunities, work on team projects, and participate in public speaking, demonstrations, and judging events. This project allows for a project or volunteer leader that serves as the role of the educator. The educator creates an appropriate environment for members to learn through guidance and provides a positive environment that is meaningful. The educator organizes learning experiences and helps 4-H members achieve their project goals. School enrichment programs have become the predominant delivery mode for 4-H programs because of their ability to reach diverse students in large numbers and have gained some credibility among public school systems. Within school enrichment programs, teachers' roles move from traditional to a facilitator approach. Traditional teachers lecture to students; whereas in a facilitator role, the teacher leads the class in the discussion of the material. The facilitator allows children more freedom to be actively involved and connect to real world experiences. Through 4-H, young people have the potential to become empowered

to invest in their future, grow life skills, and to reach their full potential for becoming competent and contributing participants in their peer groups, families, schools, and communities.

Although 4-H has been successful in youth development practices, it has been difficult to reach more students of color with educational programs. The 4-H program has faced a constant struggle to adapt to the changing cultural demographics of potential participants. When 4-H was founded in 1900, “about 1 out of 8 Americans was of a race other than White,” and by 2000, “about 1 out of 4 Americans was of a race other than White” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002, p. 76). Minoritized¹ populations in the United States have dramatically increased and are growing at much faster rates than the White United States population. According to the projections by the United States Census Bureau (2012), “all in all, minorities, now thirty-seven percent of the U.S. Population, are projected to comprise fifty-seven percent of the population in 2060” (para. 12). Record levels of births among ethnic minorities in the past decade are moving the United States a step closer to a demographic milestone in which no one group commands a majority (Nasser, 2010). Even more relevant to the 4-H population, 44% of children under age eighteen and 47% of children under the age of five are now from minority families (Christie, 2009).

According to the National 4-H annual enrollment report, in 2003 4-H members of racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 31% of the 4-Hers. The racial breakdown was made up of 70% White, 15% African American, 12% Hispanic, 2% Asian or Pacific

¹ Minority has been replaced by minoritized to depict the devalued status in society and to show that this status is not necessarily related to the statistical significance of the population.

Islander, and 2% American Indian or Alaskan. At that time, 57% of the 4-H members were from large cities and their suburbs and 43% of 4-H members were from rural areas and towns with populations of 10,000 or less. I reviewed the most current data from the year 2011, which indicates that the percentage of students of color participating in the program decreased by 10% in comparison to the 2003 data. The racial breakdown includes 80% White, Not Hispanic, 7% Black and 8% Hispanic, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian or Alaskan and 2% of youth indicating more than one race or undetermined (Research, Education, and Economic Information System [REEIS], 2011). In comparison, the 2003 statistics on 4-H volunteers indicate that .8% are American Indian or Alaskan, 1.5% Asian, 6.3% Black, and 87.5% are White (REEIS, 2003).

Because of these demographic trends, 4-H youth programs have struggled to produce membership numbers that reflect national demographics (LaVergne, 2013). Additionally, over the years, 4-H has operated as if the same traditional club program addressed the needs of all people and “has been criticized for becoming too comfortable with a group of followers rather than concerning itself with a new and changing customer pool” (McKee, Talbert, & Barkman, 2002, para 1). Early 4-H clubs’ programs emphasized skills needed for farming and homemaking. In addition, “some school clubs were segregated until 1975 because schools remained segregated” (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1999, para 6). Society has undergone continual change since 4-H began over 100 years ago. If the 4-H staff can adapt to meet the challenge of societal changes, the staff will be better prepared to lead a vital 4-H program in this 21st century. The 4-H

program will face the challenge of becoming responsive to an increasing ethnically diverse population (Cano & Bankston, 1992).

In order to effectively serve diverse audiences, the 4-H staff must believe in the importance of serving students of color. As demographic populations shift, 4-H programs must take purposeful action to implement inclusive programs and assess current programs to ensure that historically marginalized groups are being encouraged to join (LaVergne, 2013). Taking purposeful action demonstrates the urgent need for educational organizations, such as the 4-H program, to embrace a true understanding that students of color need experiences that are culturally relevant because traditional 4-H practices reflect the dominant mainstream culture.

Culturally relevant programs have the potential to not only help reach more youth, but also to help 4-H staff develop skills in understanding, valuing, and bridging differences. Gay (2002b) discusses five essential elements that will help to determine whether or not culturally relevant practices exist within the 4-H program such as

- (a) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, (b) including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curricula, (c) demonstrating caring and building learning communities, (d) communicating with ethnically diverse students, and (e) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction. (p. 106)

These practices have the potential to impact the non-formal; experiential education programs developed by 4-H and can help guide 4-H to develop more responsive and relevant programs for students of color. According to the National 4-H Strategic plan (2001),

Now, more than ever before, 4-H staff must ensure that 4-H serves all communities by providing equitable access and opportunity for all youth, volunteers, and staff. 4-H staff must be aggressive in reaching unserved, under-served, and under-represented children and their families in leveraging our extension networks and technology to help people make decisions and solve problems. (p. 9)

By critically examining the thoughts, assumptions and ideas of 4-H staff regarding the recruitment and retention of students of color, we can learn information that can be used to envision the opportunities for 4-H programs and staff to reinvent themselves to meet the demographic challenges of today. In addition, a focused review of the 4-H curriculum can help determine the level of multicultural content integration.

Statement of the Problem

The 4-H youth development program served 6,210,894 youth in the year 2011 (REEIS, 2010). Of this total, approximately 20% were minorities. Although the data clearly indicates that 4-H youth development program is attempting to serve students of color, the “percentage of contacts with this population relative to the potential continues to be lower than the majority clientele” (Grogan, 1991, p. 1). There exists an educational “demographic divide” with youth of color lacking access to educational opportunities and resources (Banks et al., 2005). The disparities embedded in the 4-H program illustrate the need to address diversity and the need for culturally relevant and multicultural practices. As 4-H staff addresses the demographic divide, they must face the reality that they will come into contact with students whose cultural and ethnic backgrounds differ from their own. 4-H staff must critically analyze important issues related to race and culture and recognize how they can shape learning experiences for youth. An increase in

participation can improve and enrich the 4-H experience for all youth, regardless of color.

The United States Department of Agriculture “asserted that since 4-H had not learned how to relate the most effective dimensions of the 4-H experience to the needs of minorities and the disadvantaged, an unconscious institutional, economic, and racial discrimination pattern had developed” (as cited in Cano & Bankston, 1992, p. 23).

Students of color are underrepresented, and a plan should be developed for increased efforts to obtain adequate participation by all.

The National 4-H Strategic plan suggests that 4-H must be aggressive in reaching unserved, under-served, and under-represented children and their families and in leveraging their extension networks and technology to help people make decisions and solve problems (2001, p. 9). The already stated 4-H goals for access, equity, and the opportunity include:

1. Extension and 4-H will develop an ethic of access and opportunity for all youth (p. 9).
2. 4-H will invest in youth and their future by providing equitable access and opportunity to all communities (p. 9).
3. 4-H volunteer and staff community, at all levels, will be skilled and knowledgeable in interacting with children and families from diverse groups (p. 10).
4. 4-H will help become technologically savvy so that 4-H youth and adults will thrive in a technology-based society (p. 10).

National 4-H recommended creating a culture within 4-H that embraces all youth. Since 4-H has identified diversity as a goal, one useful tool for working toward that could be culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education practices. Culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education practices can contribute to a more inclusive program that uses cultural knowledge and perspectives from students of color. These practices are relevant based on recommendations from the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). ECOP is a committee of administrators across the nation that provides guidance to the issues that impact the program. ECOP states that “the ability of Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) to play a pivotal role in meeting educational needs in the future is dependent upon its ability to expand its programs to access both diverse and traditional audiences” (as cited in Cano & Bankston, 1992, p. 23). Although some 4-H staff recognize the importance of cultural diversity, students of color as well as White students are shortchanged of 4-H experiences where they can learn and understand the richness different cultures can offer.

Emerging demographic trends impact the 4-H program. The changing demographics “are forcing 4-H professionals to examine more closely the content and methodology of their youth programming to ensure that it addresses the needs of a changing society” (Henderson & Ellis, as cited in Alston & Crutchfield, 2009, para. 5). The 4-H youth development programs are facing a number of challenges such as the agriculture-based image and need for volunteers. These challenges are relevant to increasing the recruitment and retention of students of color because agriculture does not appeal to urban youth and volunteers support all program efforts. The future success of

4-H youth development programs will depend on the relevance and value of its educational programs for students of color. The demographic shifts in the youth population, along with accountability measures, have “raised diversity to a new level of importance on the organizational agenda” (Ingram & Syversten, 2005, p. 1). Youth development professionals are being held accountable for developing strategies to reach students of color. The “federal and local governments expect reports to address how appropriated money satisfied constituents and provided a positive cost benefit” (Taylor, 1998, para. 10). Competition for public funds is ever increasing and 4-H needs to show that dollars spent benefit all youth.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to critically examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff regarding recruitment and retention of students of color. I examined 4-H staff perceptions on the reasons students of color chose not to participate in 4-H programs. The focus group participants and I also examined the curriculum from a multicultural perspective. This examination was useful in this study because the results can provide 4-H staff with the information needed to develop culturally appropriate and effective curricula. I used culturally relevant and multicultural measures to assess the issues under investigation. The participants in the study include 4-H staff with a range of one to over twenty years of experience. The data was obtained through in-depth focus group sessions, a multicultural rating scale survey, and 4-H curriculum review in an effort to ascertain the experiences, actions, and perceptions related to the recruitment and retention of students of color.

The lack of participation from students of color was becoming a re-occurring theme across the many 4-H programs. Addressing the research problem matters because it was clear those 4-H needs new strategies to reach students of color. For example, lack of parental volunteers, the program's rural image and youth representation on policy-making groups were all considered barriers to a more inclusive organization (McKee, Talbert, & Barkman, 2002). My discussion with focus group participants on cultural relevance and multicultural education addressed the recruitment and retention of students of color and was, in fact, addressing the larger matter of opportunity, access and equity within the 4-H program. Students who feel empowered as a result of participating in 4-H can create a chain reaction that positively impacts the 4-H program and society as a whole. Ethnic and cultural diversity should permeate the total 4-H program. The overall research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do 4-H staff know about the history and foundation of 4-H?
2. What knowledge, attitudes, skills, and beliefs do the 4-H staff have regarding working with students of color?
 - a. How do they feel about working with students of color?
 - b. How do they feel about the program curriculum in terms of meeting the needs of students of color?
 - c. What are their thoughts about why more students of color are not involved?
 - d. What assumptions do they bring that might hinder their work with students of color?

3. What do 4-H staff feel they need in order to recruit successfully and work with students of color?

In an era of globalization and diversity, 4-H organizations are looking for ways to reach students of color and make 4-H programs more effective. One process that may support these efforts is culturally relevant practices.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant for many reasons. First, using culturally relevant pedagogical practices may offer a very promising solution for the recruitment and retention of students of color. Because culturally relevant practices use the knowledge of students' backgrounds and incorporate this knowledge into quality learning experiences, students of color can feel more welcomed. Neglecting to consider these practices can diminish the chance that students of color will be attracted to and/or remain in the program. Lack of interest was significant because there was a need for 4-H to empower students of color by developing their awareness of their unique strengths and abilities. When programs transform to be relevant to the lives and cultures of students of color and not shaped by traditional standards, participation in 4-H has the potential to increase. This study will add to the body of knowledge that drives new thinking about the importance of providing an inclusive environment and approaches regarding transformative practices to reach students of color. Lastly, the research conducted helped to clarify the perceptions of 4-H staff in working with students of color. When 4-H staff members begin to reflect on their program practices, their cultural lenses may be widened, and I hope that staff will begin to identify systemic inequalities in practice and

policies that favor some youth groups over others. This study questioned, probed, and pushed the thinking of current 4-H staff about their educational practices.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical works of scholars Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2002) on culturally relevant pedagogy, Banks's (2010) multicultural education and the 4-H model of experiential learning, based on Carver (1996), Kolb (1984), and Enfield (2001) have contributed to my understanding in helping to address how 4-H can strive to increase participation and sustainability of students of color. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) has been proven to address the needs of students of color. For example, Ladson-Billings (1995) proposed a culturally relevant theory based on the practices of exemplary teachers of African American students.

These theoretical foundations are concerned with connecting the student's life experiences in the program or activity, which makes learning more meaningful and impactful for the student learning. Research suggests that "culturally relevant pedagogy offers a model of theory to practice and examples of how such instruction can be delivered" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 71). In addition, the pedagogical principles of experiential education will be used to determine if there are any correlations between multicultural integration and experiential education. The Barr Foundation (2006) stated that experiential programs "designed with a culturally competent foundation succeed at reaching, engaging and drawing on these youth's own cultural diversity" (p. 4). I will address the literature in more detail in chapter two; here I briefly describe the theoretical concepts and discuss how they were useful to my research.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Gay (2002b) defines culturally relevant pedagogy as “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (p. 106). In addition, culturally relevant pedagogy has been described by Ladson-Billings (1995) “as a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment” (p. 160). I used the principles and practices of culturally relevant pedagogy as the basis for developing the questions to ask 4-H staff members. The questions helped 4-H staff to examine their assumptions about the recruitment and retention of students of color and to discuss specific 4-H practices that impacted their work with students of color.

Experiential Learning

According to the Association of Experiential Learning (2014), experiential education is a “philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities” (p. 1). Experiential learning is more than just doing activities; it involves discussing the activity, drawing conclusions from the activity and applying them to real world experiences. “Experiential learning can be used to raise awareness about multicultural issues, to challenge students’ personal frameworks about cultural diversity, and to help them develop cultural empathy” (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002, p. 2). The experiential learning contributes to this research study because the 4-H

curriculum and programs are designed around this model; therefore, it must be considered when examining the 4-H curriculum. Learning in 4-H is defined as a change in behavior and this structured experience provides a framework in which this process can be facilitated. Experiential programs then become more of what educators can do to enhance the well-being and improve the achievement of those students whose families have the fewest resources.

Multicultural Education

According to Banks (2001a),

multicultural education is a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporate, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women's studies. (pp. 1–2)

Banks's (1997) level of multicultural content integration was used to evaluate the 4-H curriculum. I chose Banks's model to multicultural integration because it provided 4-H staff with an opportunity to build upon previous levels with hopes that youth would identify a social issue and take action to resolve that issue. I felt it was important to work with the focus group participants in doing the curriculum analysis to see what areas participants identified, if any, as needing transformation to accommodate the perspectives of the different race and ethnic backgrounds. To achieve this purpose, through my research, I hoped to learn whether or not 4-H staff contemplates the possibility of aligning the principles of experiential learning with culturally relevant practices. Through the focus groups in my research, I gave 4-H staff a chance to reflect critically on how programs have the potential to be adjusted to meet the needs of students of color and

address those concerns; this critical reflection can be the first step towards establishing culturally relevant practices. The reflection process was necessary because when the staff looks back on their experiences, attitudes, and actions taken, they can gain a deeper understanding of the issues concerning the recruitment and retention of students of color. The outcome of this study will serve as a basis to guide the work of future 4-H youth development programs. There was a need to identify and develop successful recruitment strategies. However, before addressing this need, 4-H staff must first understand what the current strategies entailed and what efforts, if any, were being made to recruit students of color. The knowledge gathered in this study can be used as a foundation for future program development. My ultimate goal is to increase awareness and understanding of the factors that contribute to successful recruitment and retention of students of color in the 4-H program. I collected data from the 4-H staff about the factors that influenced their program development, the challenges they encountered, and the factors that helped them determine how to move forward when considering the needs of students of color. I also used a multicultural rating scale survey to assess the skills and knowledge of 4-H staff about working with students of color. I completed a curriculum analysis of the 4-H curriculum to determine the level of content integration. As 4-H programs explore the needs of students of color, a crucial task for 4-H staff members will be creative thinking that reflects an organization that is fully accepting and embracing, which promotes diversity inclusion at the county, state, and national levels (LaVergne, 2013).

Positionality

As an African American female, my race, culture, and social class have influenced how I view our society and the world around me. I come to this research project with my perspectives, preferences, and assumptions that are mostly based on who I identify with socially and the histories behind those identifiers. The issues of race and class, as I have come to realize, are an everyday existence on the job, in the public schools, and in my community. This double consciousness of race and class is at the forefront of who I am and how I position myself within society. I view the ailments of society from a race and class lens because the issues are always apparent in my life, and there seems always to be some type of work in progress. Whether it is advocating for my children or maneuvering through this consciousness of oppression in society, it has become routine, a way life—something I do to survive. Climbing the ladder to success while being weighed down by prejudice, racism, and discrimination can only make me a stronger advocate for the future students of color to carry the torch for justice and equality. I have reached a point in my life that it is time to challenge the status quo, and bring the issues of race and discrimination to the forefront. It is time to allow the voices of oppressed people to be heard. My research study is only the first step in advocating for a more inclusive 4-H program. Advocacy for me means opening new doors of opportunity so that my children, as well as other students of color, can become part of the educational system that values equity.

My journey over the past ten years as a 4-H Extension Associate has informed and shaped my understanding of the importance of equal opportunity for all, regardless of

race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. I have witnessed many students of color who have been disappointed with the lack of inclusiveness within the 4-H program. As an Extension Associate, I work closely with the 4-H Agriculture program leaders and specialists to create new initiatives and programs that align with the national 4-H mandates. I am responsible for designing subject matter curricula for 4-H programs, evaluating impacts and program activities, and coordinating 4-H opportunities for 4-H youth, staff and volunteers. My position allows me the opportunity to evaluate the issues concerning the 4-H program; therefore, this study contributes to my work in supporting 4-H staff across the state. When presenting workshops, I began to concentrate more on the relevance to the audience and content and less on meeting training and workshop quotas. What I found, however, was that no matter what I did to accommodate the program needs of staff, nothing seemed to address the ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum.

I witnessed the growth and development of many young people. I also experienced the impact that experiential educational opportunities can bring with my previous work as a 4-H staff member. Nothing is more rewarding than to see young men and women grow in confidence and succeed academically as students and professionally as adults. As a woman of color and mother of African American children, my goal is to not only break down the cultural barriers in society, but to teach my children how to maneuver successfully in a society that I feel fails to recognize who they are as individuals. Breaking down cultural barriers is important to me because of the lack of inclusiveness my children experienced in the public schools. I define the breakdown of

cultural barriers as a de-socialization in order to empower them to become critical thinkers, observers of societal ills, and challengers of the status quo.

My children have participated in aspects of the 4-H program, and I very quickly discovered their lack of interest in participating. I believe some of the activities did spark their interest; however, they felt no genuine connection to the 4-H experience. Therefore, this research study is significant for me personally and professionally. Although the 4-H program has work to do as far as cultural relevance, because I have witnessed so many students benefit from it, I believe in the 4-H program as a vehicle to help students feel empowered. Students of color can benefit from having access and opportunities in the 4-H program. Unfortunately, very few students of color have benefited from what 4-H has to offer. I feel as though the traditional program lacks the cultural content needed to draw diverse audiences. It is my hope that 4-H can provide a bridge to empower students of color by using inclusive practices within 4-H programs and activities. Based on my past and current experiences with 4-H programs, as a researcher I bring knowledge of experiential education and how instructional methods such as inquiry and discovery in the learning environment are well suited for students of all ages.

The knowledge I gained from my leadership and classroom experiences has contributed to my argument for redefining the extension's role in serving students of color. As an organization, 4-H continues to fall into the trap of seeing only the obstacles rather than the windows of opportunity to achieve change. Perceiving only obstacles can be problematic because if the 4-H program does not adjust program needs to meet societal changes, it may not play a significant role in future youth development practices.

Reaching new generations of students of color will demand inclusive programs, and not meeting that demand could be detrimental to the future of 4-H. Despite the challenges, opportunities for innovation and reform do emerge. Youth from diverse backgrounds have unique strengths and perspectives, which can benefit the 4-H program by giving youth a balance view of culture and society. In addition, educational 4-H programs can be implemented to not only teach subject matter material, but enable all youth to view programs and curriculum from the perspectives of students of color. I ultimately aim to become an advocate for change, a catalyst for a paradigm shift, in ways that can put CRP at the heart of future 4-H programs.

Definition of Terms

I have provided a list of 4-H terms relevant to this research study. These specialized terms, adapted from the 4-H Encyclopedia, describe the components of the 4-H program along with their definitions (Cloverpedia, 2011). These terms assist those who are not familiar with 4-H to grasp a clearer understanding of the 4-H program.

4-H Member—A youth who is enrolled in a 4-H learning experience. Any person who is a least 5 years of age or in Kindergarten by December 31st of the program year is eligible to be a member. The learning experience may be club, special interest group, or school enrichment.

4-H Staff—“Provide trainings, resources and support to county club and project leaders and members. Staff are responsible for ensuring the educational quality of 4-H, making sure that county, state, and national policies and procedures are followed” (Cloverpedia, n.d., p. 2).

Community 4-H Club—A 4-H group organized with officers and a planned program, which meets over several months of the year in a local community or school.

Cooperative Extension Service—“Cooperative effort between the USDA, the individual state and county programs. The goal is to bring the benefits of the land grant university to the community; 4-H work is one part of this effort” (Cloverpedia, n.d., p. 5).

Delivery Mode—A way to deliver a service or project that serves as a form or pattern including clubs, school enrichment, short-term programs, camps, and special interest.

Experiential Learning—Experiential learning takes place when a person is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity.

Judging—A formal process for helping 4-H students to learn how to recognize quality, develop skills in decision-making, and verbally express the decisions they made and reasons behind them. This may involve contests such as livestock, land, and horticulture judging.

Model—A program that is easily replicated and worthy of replication.

National 4-H Youth Conference Center—“Located in Chevy Chase, Maryland, the center hosts many national 4-H events and activities” (Cloverpedia, n.d., p. 8).

Program—A comprehensive planned education cycle including audience identification, resource development, marketing, curriculum and activities selection, training, recognition and evaluation.

Project—A project is a method for teaching girls and boys many new life skills. A variety of topics are offered. Members share in setting goals, making decisions, learning, and evaluation.

School Enrichment—A program whereby groups of youth receive a series of learning experiences in cooperation with school officials during school hours to support the school curriculum, which involves direct teaching by Extension staff or trained volunteers, including teachers. One copy of project books will be provided free for teachers working with school enrichment in the classroom.

Special Interest/Project Club—A 4-H group organized and/or coordinated by the Extension for specific learning experiences.

State 4-H Office—“The collection of paid staff that provides leadership to the delivery of a statewide program at the county level in a given state. The staff in the State 4-H office helps to plan, and provide leadership and resources to guide the 4-H programs within the state” (Cloverpedia, n.d., p. 10).

Summary

As the country’s diversity increases, the Cooperative Extension 4-H program will have to develop ways to create productive multicultural environments to accommodate students of diverse backgrounds. Addressing the issues requires transformative culturally relevant practices. Rising to the challenge, 4-H staff members must reflect on their thoughts and ideas related to the recruitment and retention of students of color. They must also consider new strategies to create a culturally-rich environment to reach students of color. Critically important to the future of the 4-H program is its willingness to

address new approaches to program activities and curriculum that build inclusive environments that are representative of the voices and experiences of students of color. In addition, experiential learning is a way of thinking about and approaching the planning and implementation of curriculum and instruction with an understanding that learners differ in important ways. These concepts together can positively impact the 4-H program, potentially resolving the issues of recruitment and retention of students of color.

The next two chapters discuss the literature review and the qualitative research design and methodology used for this study. Chapter II reviews the framework for this study by incorporating the relevant research and theories that are key sources for describing how culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education can impact the 4-H program. Chapter III describes the research paradigm, descriptions of the participants, data collection and analysis. Chapters IV and V will discuss the findings from the focus group sessions, survey, and curriculum review. The final Chapter VI will discuss the conclusion.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

4-H is the youth development program of the Cooperative Extension System of land grant universities. 4-H provides learning experiences and opportunities for youth, which will help them grow and develop to their fullest potential. Through experiential learning activities, thousands of young people learn new skills and serve their communities each year. Some of the programs offered by 4-H include clubs, special interest programs, summer camps, school enrichment, and after-school programs. Although all youth should have the opportunity to participate in 4-H programs, efforts to recruit and retain students of color have been challenging due to the lack of interest. Cano and Bankston (1992) state that the 4-H “organization will face the challenge of becoming responsive to an increasing ethnically diverse population” (p. 23). As the nation becomes more and more diverse, reaching and serving students of color will require deliberate effort on the part of the 4-H program to become relevant in the future.

My objectives in this study are to (a) examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff in order to recruit and retain students of color; (b) review 4-H curricula from a multicultural lens. To accomplish these objectives, I developed three research questions:

1. What do 4-H staff know about the history and foundation of 4-H?
2. What knowledge, attitudes, skills, and beliefs do the 4-H staff have regarding working with students of color?
 - a. How do 4-H staff feel about working with students of color?
 - b. How do 4-H staff feel the program curriculum meets the needs of students of color?
 - c. What are 4-H staff's thoughts about why more students of color are not involved in 4-H?
 - d. What assumptions do 4-H staff bring that might hinder their work with students of color?
3. What do 4-H staff feel they need in order to successfully recruit and work with students of color?

To begin answering these research questions, this literature review examines the research on the participation of a minoritized youth population in 4-H programming, particularly focused on the issues surrounding recruitment and retention. This literature review supports the premise that infusing multicultural practices into the 4-H program can be beneficial.

The literature review is divided into three key parts. The first discusses information about the 4-H program and defines its purpose for working with youth. The 4-H program is complex in nature; therefore, understanding the history of the program provides the basis on which to examine recruitment and retention efforts. In order to grasp the complexity of the 4-H program, it is important to understand why it was

developed and how youth participate in the program. Second, I examine 4-H curriculum based on the literature on experiential learning. Experiential learning is the foundation of the 4-H curriculum—the experiential learning model is included in each 4-H project book and curriculum manual—therefore, it is important to consider when reviewing the curriculum from a multicultural perspective. Third, an overview of previous research on 4-H participation will provide the context for the research this study. I selected recent 4-H studies because they were relevant and directly related to this study. Lastly, I set the educational context of the study by examining the literature on multicultural education. Multicultural educational practices provide an overarching umbrella for examining equity and social justice practices.

History of 4-H

According to National 4-H Council (2014a), A. B. Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio, in 1902, which is considered the birth of 4-H in the U.S. Within the next few years, the passing of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 created the Cooperative Extension System at USDA and nationalized 4-H. The goal of the 4-H program was to bring educational resources from land grant universities to local youth, families, and communities. Researchers at the land-grant system realized that adults were not accepting new agricultural practices. Therefore, youth were recruited to experiment with these new practices and share experiences with adults to introduce new agricultural technology. As a result, youth programs became a way to introduce new agricultural practices to adults. Established over 100 years ago, the heart of the 4-H program was designed to give youth an opportunity to develop the life skills and assets they need to

succeed in life. This program targeted youth between the ages of 5 and 18, and created opportunities for parents and adult volunteers to participate. Teens worked with younger youth, became role models, and gave back to the organization by volunteering or contributing resources. This cycle of experience from the child to adult is what makes this program unique in its efforts to make a difference and lay the groundwork for positive societal change. Research shows that youth involved in 4-H excel in civic engagement, academic achievement, and healthy living. For example, a longitudinal study from the National 4-H Council (2013) discovered that in comparison to their peers,

- 4-H'ers are nearly 4 times more likely to make contributions to their communities (Grades 7–12),
- 4-H'ers are about 2 times more likely to be civically active (Grades 8–12),
- 4-H young people are nearly 2 times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time (Grades 10–12),
- 4-H girls are 2 times more likely (Grade 10) and nearly 3 times more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out-of-school time activities,
- 4-H'ers are nearly 2 times more likely to make healthier choices (Grade 7) (p. 2).

The 4-H longitudinal research study demonstrated the benefits youth receive as a result of their participation, yet too few students of colors get that opportunity. As the nation's ethnic diversity increases, the 4-H program will have to develop ways to create

productive, multicultural learning environments to accommodate students of color. A promising practice for meeting the demands of diverse students is multicultural education theories and models. Those principles and practices can inform experiential education initiatives, such as the 4-H youth development programs and curricula. 4-H programs and curriculum are discussed in the following section.

4-H Program and Curriculum

The 4-H Youth Development program and curriculum initiatives are based on the philosophy of experiential education. The principles and practices of multicultural education have the potential to inform experiential education initiatives. The framework for this study is based on the belief that these multicultural practices can make a difference in meeting the needs of diverse students within the 4-H youth development experiential programs. In the following section I will discuss the experiential learning model and theories that have supported the 4-H program and curriculum for decades.

Experiential Learning

The 4-H curriculum was built on the foundation of experiential learning. Experiential education refers to learning activities that engage the learner directly in the phenomenon being studied (National Society for Internship and Experiential Education, 2011). Experiential opportunities can take the form of service learning projects, internships, cooperative education, wilderness adventure programs, volunteer activities, and art education. A wide variety of experiential learning activities exist, including embryology, gardening, energy use, science and technology, and environmental resources, such as water quality, rockets, aerospace, entomology, and food science.

According to the Association for Experiential Education (2014), experiential education is a philosophy and consists of methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. They identify the following principles of experiential education practice:

- Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis.
- Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for the results.
- Throughout the experiential learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative and constructing meaning.
- Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically.
- This involvement produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
- The results of learning are personal, and form the basis for future experience and learning. (para. 5)

Experiential education was based on the assumption that educational goals can be effectively met by allowing the nature of the learner's educational experience to influence the educational process (Neill, 2004).

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory draws on the work of scholars such as Dewey (1938) to create a holistic integrative perspective toward learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior (Kolb, 1984). David Kolb was an educational theorist who wanted to explore the process of making sense of concrete experiences. According to Smith (2001), "David A. Kolb created his famous model out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract

concepts and testing in new situations” (p. 1). His now famous model is the reason 4-H utilizes experiential learning theory in their curriculum.

Although various models of experiential learning exist (Honey & Mumford, 1982), for the purpose of this research, I highlight the model adopted by the 4-H program. Enfield (2001) described Kolb’s (1984) “graphic representation of experiential learning which stresses the points of learning that occur after each completion of a circular set of processes, identified as impulse, observation, knowledge and judgment” (p. 7). The underlying philosophy of the experiential learning model emphasizes the nature of experience as being of fundamental importance and concern in education and training. The experiential learning model became easier to understand and test out and implement within the school curriculum by separating the learning process into distinct stages. This educational model allowed students first to learn by doing and then process the experience. The stages used in Kolb’s experiential learning model include a series of purposeful, “real life” learning experiences. The stages in the learning model allowed time for sharing the experience, using open-ended questions to stimulate thinking, creating connections between the activity and real life, and using what they learned in new situations. Experiential education aimed for learners to be actively engaged, pose questions, investigate experience, be curious, solve problems, assume responsibility, be creative, and construct meaning. It is essential for anyone in the position of facilitating experiential learning to have a conceptual foundation or model upon which to test the nature of the learning activity.

Although experiential learning provides unique experiences for students, problems associated with the model need to be considered in program planning. Experiential learning can be time and resource intensive. In addition, activities must accommodate the different backgrounds and perspectives of all students. The five phases include experience, share, process, generalize, and apply (Norman & Jordan, 2012). Though I acknowledge the benefits of the experiential learning model, I still insist that the final application phase should help youth deepen and broaden their understanding of sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique institutions that produce and maintain social inequities. In the application phase, youth apply what was learned to a similar or different situation. This kind of application is currently not required because the learning that takes place from their experience does not address the broader community unless the curriculum subject matter requires it, such as citizenship. In the application phase of the experiential learning model, questions are structured to address, “how what they learned, relates to other parts of their lives, how they can use what they learned and how they can apply what they learned to future situations” (Norman & Jordan, 2012, p. 3). It is also important to note that the stages of reflection and application are what made the experiential learning model different from any other learning models. Moreover, adding a more critical focus for social change within the experiential model can also make this model more powerful. This connects with Ladson-Billings’s (1995) philosophy that in culturally relevant pedagogy, students must develop cultural competence and critique society and oppressive structures through critical consciousness.

The potential for experiential education and multicultural education to achieve the 4-H programs' intended aims would strengthen through the examination of ways in which to turn theory into purposeful practice. Programs must help all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender to develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to participate in a multicultural society. In addition, programs must be structured to assist youth in understanding and affirming their culture. Multicultural education affirms the importance of educators who make a significant difference in the lives of students and commit to the ideals of equity and excellence for all students. The following research studies will shed light on the issues and problems concerning the level of participation of students of color.

4-H Problems in Reaching All Youth

There are many contributing factors to the lack of participation from students of color. Although 4-H has been successful in its youth development practices, such as the National 4-H Council longitudinal study (2013), the studies discussed below have shown that some students of color choose not to participate. These research studies have focused on identifying factors that either motivate or discourage students of color from participating in the 4-H program. Some researchers have made recommendations for targeting diverse audiences, which includes recruiting minoritized staff and volunteers to fill the void of necessary role models for youth (Cano & Bankston, 1992), providing diversity-focused educational opportunities for 4-H staff (Ingram, 1999), and obtaining input from youth to keep 4-H program youth focused and relevant (McKee, Talbert, & Barkman, 2002).

In their 1992 study, Cano and Bankston (1992) offered insight into the barriers to participation in 4-H programs. They explored two specific questions with regard to diversity in 4-H programs: What factors were perceived by ethnic minority youth as positive influences and barriers to participation in 4-H programs, and what factors were perceived by parents of ethnic minority youth as positive influences and barriers to participation in 4-H programs. The focus of their investigation was on factors associated with participation and nonparticipation of ethnic minority youth in the 4-H program, using focus group interviews. They conducted focus group interviews with parents and youth in eight different counties in the state of Ohio. Their findings indicated several themes and issues:

1. "Concern was noted regarding the inequity of judging activities exhibited through criteria and treatment during events" (p. 25).
2. "Some minority youth expressed feelings of isolation experienced at the state fair and other events. They explained that very few minority youth were present at some events, and they had limited interaction with Whites" (p. 25).
3. "Parents also reported discrepancies in judging at events. Parents at several focus group sessions discussed inconsistencies in judging at the state fair; inequitable treatment by other parents and leaders at the state fair, and lack of minority role models" (p. 28).

However, beyond these key points, Cano and Bankston's (1992) study acknowledged the importance of exposing students of color to all facets of the 4-H program, offering equal opportunities for non-traditional youth. These findings are critical to the success or

failure of the 4-H program because if students of color do not feel welcomed, they will be less likely to participate. The researchers recommend that the “materials and activities used in some urban areas must be adapted, or new material developed to address concerns and social circumstances of urban youth” (p. 2). This study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Although, this study gathered input from students of color and their parents, it would have been equally important to understand the thoughts of the traditional White youth participants and their parents. Therefore, this study would gain diverse perspectives from all youth that may help understand the bigger picture of issues related to participation.

Building on the results of the previous research, Alston and Crutchfield (2009) analyzed the perceptions of 4-H extension personnel regarding minority participation. This study was consistent with the previous study in that the students’ perception of agriculture play a significant role to participation and the students of color displayed negative perceptions of agriculture rather than rural minorities. Specifically, Alston and Crutchfield examined the perceptions of 4-H agents on why minority youth do not participate in agriculturally based programs, 4-H agents’ opinions on how to increase minority participation, and the demographic characteristics of 4-H agents and the ethnic demographics in their county. The survey instrument was sent to all county level 4-H extension agents in the state. The strengths of this study were the use of using expert judges as a means of establishing content validity for the survey instrument. The findings suggest that,

... 4-H agricultural programs are not fully meeting the needs of a growing diverse population, it demonstrated the need to improve 4-H agricultural program curricula by taking minority perceptions into account when determining how to meet the needs of minority youth, and the need to provide professional development workshops for 4-H Extension personnel concerning diversity. (Alston & Crutchfield, 2009, p. 8)

In addition, the findings also suggest a need to include minority adult role models who work in the field of agriculture for program efforts. This finding is consistent with Cano and Bankston (1992), who identified the lack of minority adult role models as a significant barrier to participation. Alston and Crutchfield (2009) recommended revising agriculturally based 4-H curriculum, taking into account the attitudes and backgrounds of minority students in order to more effectively address their unique needs and provide training for 4-H staff.

LaVergne (2013) conducted a similar study examining the perceptions of 4-H youth professionals toward diversity inclusion in 4-H programs. First, he examined the perceptions of the 4-H staff with regard to the *benefits* of diversity inclusion in 4-H programs. Second, he examined the perceptions of the 4-H staff of the *barriers* to diversity inclusion in 4-H programs. He used a diversity inclusive model as a framework to determine if students of color and youth with disabilities can benefit from participating in 4-H programs. LaVergne distributed a questionnaire to the 4-H youth extension professionals in the West Virginia Cooperative Extension office. Findings from this study reported that students of color lack of information about 4-H opportunities and programs; this was identified as the biggest barrier to diversity-inclusive programs for youth with disabilities and youth of color. This informs the Alston and Crutchfield

(2009) study, who found that the perception of agriculture plays a significant role in relations to the participation for students of color. The respondents in the LaVergne study also reported that the benefit of youth of color and youth with disabilities in 4-H programs would be an increase in positive social relationships among the different groups. This study, however did not engage in the assessment of agriculture-based programs, as did the Alston and Crutchfield study. Although LaVergne described the perceptions of the benefits of diversity inclusion of 4-H staff, one limitation of this study was to review the programs and curriculum from a multicultural education perspective

These three studies raise questions of whether programs are serving students' of color needs effectively. While these research studies, along with Ingram (1999), Hobbs (2001), and Jones, LaVergne, Elbert, Larke, and Larke (2013) highlight the lack of participation from students of color, very few explore reasons for this lack of participation from the perspective of diverse youth and adults not currently enrolled in programs. In an attempt to gain input from the underrepresented youth populations, researchers in a Pennsylvania State University study of 4-H (Ingram & Syvertsen, 2005) summarized the concerns and needs expressed in focus group interviews related to youth, family, community, nutrition, and health programs. Results showed that although programming was available in those areas, it "was important to note that even these programs would need to be adjusted in terms of content and teaching delivery to be accepted by, and meaningful to, some low-income and diverse audiences" (pp. 8–9). This study has significance because the program assessed community needs first, then sought to align its programs with the value and needs of the local communities. One

limitation of this study is that the findings in this study are specific to these particular participants and their communities, with less broad application. However, Ingram and Syvertsen's (2005) study provides a basis for 4-H to conduct needs assessments that can lead to culturally relevant programs with for diverse youth.

The existing literature highlights a number of barriers to participation, some of which connect across different studies, and some of which are specific to the participants in each study. All used qualitative research methods seeking to find meaning from youth and adults interpretations. These studies identify recommendations for the recruitment of students of color. For example, evidence suggests that if students of color received more information about 4-H programs, the level of participation will increase; however it may also lead to a decrease in the participation of youth if the programs are not relevant to their needs. These findings can be helpful in understanding the process needed to identify the needs of local communities first before planning programs. The programmatic lessons demonstrated the need to look at alternatives to the traditional 4-H programs. Also, it was imperative for 4-H staff to have a very solid understanding of the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of youth.

Each study supports the growing concern for reaching students of color. Empirical results consistently show that 4-H programs are not fully meeting the needs of students of color. Although research has been conducted on reaching more diverse youth audiences, the reforms of the last decade have had little impact. While the majority of the literature focuses on barriers to participation, far less attention has been focused directly on integrating multicultural education approaches into traditional and non-traditional

programs, curriculum, and evaluated the 4-H program from a multicultural perspective.

Therefore, the goal of this research study is to begin to fill in some of these gaps.

Previous research on outreach efforts (Ingram, 1999; LaVergne, 2013) may prove beneficial; however, this study provides information regarding a possible viable alternative to educational outreach for students of color. The literature review has highlighted some key issues regarding the participation and non-participation of student of color. This study includes an evaluation by the 4-H staff of the 4-H program from a multicultural educational lens in; thus, in the next section I explain the key tenets of multicultural education as related to my research.

Multicultural Education

I believe that be an effective youth organization, the 4-H program must consider multicultural practices. In this study I use the field of multicultural education as a lens through which to examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff and evaluate the 4-H curriculum. This examination provided an opportunity to learn more about the 4-H program and the conditions under which multicultural approaches can be used. 4-H staff needs to develop a theoretical framework that will prepare them to work with diverse audiences. In seeking to understand how multicultural education can increase participation of students of color within the 4-H program, I discuss multicultural education, examine the dimensions of multicultural education, and review the literature on multicultural education.

What is Multicultural Education?

Multicultural education is a movement toward cultural pluralism, and this movement acknowledges the need for equity and inclusion in educational institutions. Bennett (2006) defined multicultural education as “an approach to teaching and learning that is based upon democratic values and beliefs and that affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse society in an interdependent world” (p. 14). Hernandez (2001) stated that “multicultural education was about creating educational institutions that provide dynamic teaching and learning environments reflecting the ideals of equity and excellence” (p. 6). Multicultural education is a transformative process that challenges traditional educational practices so that all students have opportunities that are personally meaningful.

Multicultural education is an approach that can assist 4-H in responding to the diverse needs of students. It helps to eliminate stereotypes, biases, and reduce the potential fear that the 4-H staff may have in stepping outside of traditional 4-H program practices. In order for 4-H staff to be successful with students of color, they must have a multicultural lens in order to adjust instructional practices and program planning. The defining characteristics of multicultural education theories heavily inform this study. The literature on multicultural education informs the understanding of diversity, inequality, and processes for initiating change through education. Multicultural education can establish linkages between students of color and programs and curriculum used in the 4-H program. These practices can foster an appreciation for diversity, and promote inclusive environments that are significant in helping students of color feel welcome. In

this section, I provide an overview of multicultural education, research on multicultural education, and describe its potential to impact on the 4-H program.

Background on Multicultural Education

The multicultural education movement emerged from the African American struggle for civil rights. According to Banks (2007),

the consequences of the civil rights movement had a significant influence on educational institutions as ethnic groups, first African American and then other groups, demanded that the school and other educational institutions reform curricula to reflect their experiences, histories, cultures, and perspectives. (p. 26)

In response to the demand for civil rights, diverse courses, programs, and practices were developed at educational institutions. With that said, the multicultural movement that has evolved over the years has led to the development of several approaches to multicultural education. Advocates for the integration of multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 2007; Gay, 2002; Jenks et al., 2001) have proposed theoretical frameworks for multicultural education. A framework used to help educators to encourage equitable access for students of color is James Banks's (1997) dimensions of multicultural education. The dimensions are discussed in the next section.

Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Developed by James A. Banks, this educational reform movement strives to create equal opportunities for students by changing the learning environment to reflect the diverse cultures within the society. In the attempt to have curriculum reflect the experiences and perspectives of different cultures, the dimensions of multicultural education was developed. Banks (1997) used dimensions of multicultural education as

an alternative to mainstream centric curriculum. The dimensions include (a) content integration, (b) knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) equity pedagogy, and (e) empowering school culture and social structure (p. 20). In order to implement multicultural practices effectively, educators must focus on each of these five dimensions. The dimensions allow the 4-H program to build on this model to improve 4-H diversity. This framework served as a guide for helping focus group participants evaluate the 4-H curriculum based on the four levels of integration. Defined below is a brief summary of each dimension.

Content integration. Content integration was used in this research study to evaluate the 4-H curriculum from a multicultural perspective. Banks (1997) states, “Content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline” (p. 20). The four approaches to content integration are (a) contributions, (b) additive, (c) transformation, and (d) social actions. Each approach builds on the previous one. These multicultural approaches offered a unique lens with which to examine the current 4-H curriculum. The focus group participants in my study looked for evidences of these approaches in the review process.

The contributions approach is when the “content about ethnic and cultural groups is limited primarily to holidays and celebrations” (Banks, 2007a, p. 18). For example, Black history month is celebrated only one month during the year. If the focus group participants in my research identified this approach during the curriculum review, this

will demonstrate that 4-H has made some effort to adjust the curriculum. The problem with this approach is that, “individuals who challenge the dominant society’s ideologies, values, and conceptions and advocated radical social, political and economic reform are seldom included in the contributions approach” (Banks, 1997 p. 119). Therefore, the mainstream curriculum remains unchanged.

The second approach that is frequently used by teachers in education is the additive approach: “In this method, cultural content, concepts, and themes are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structures, purposes, and characteristics” (Banks, 2001, pp. 18–19). Examples include adding an extra unit or book to the lesson plan. Most educators prefer this method because it can be implemented within the existing curriculum structure. The third approach was the transformative approach. Banks (2001) suggested using a transformative approach that “changes the canon, paradigms, and basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from different perspectives” (p. 19). This transformation may require adjusting traditional pedagogy and curriculum. Programs developed to reach minority students must be culturally relevant and empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically (Hanley, 1999). Transforming curriculum involves more than developing new curricula or replacing what was insufficient. It requires a pedagogical strategy that makes culture central to the learning process. Gay (2001) endorsed the principle of multicultural infusion, which means “the information about and responsiveness to the cultures and experiences of different ethnic groups should be incorporated into routine educational operations” (p. 25). The focus

group participants would be looking for a transformation in the structure of the 4-H curriculum if this approach was present.

The last content integration approach is social action. The social action approach allows students “to take personal, social, and civic actions related to the concepts, problems, and issues they have studied” (Banks, 2001a, p. 22). An example of this approach would be to study environmental justice issues and propose a plan to take action to improve environmental conditions in the local community. Helping students to take an interest in societal issues and understand the realities of those issues was also a concern of curriculum development. Similar in context to the social action approach, Gay (2004) suggested approaches to filter multicultural education through two categories of curriculum development: reality/representation, and relevance. For the reality/representation category, “a persistent concern of curriculum development in all subjects is helping students understand the realities of the social condition and how they came to be, as well as adequately representing those realities” (p. 33). A good example of this is a history class in which topics such as war and slavery were not taught. Students in the history class are taught to be good citizens and to be proud of the country’s heritage. However, if students were completely aware of the detail in how slave owners unfairly gained economic advantage through free labor, students may have deeper understandings of the complexities of the positive and negative aspects of people’s actions in the country’s history. For relevance, “many ethnically diverse students do not find schooling exciting or inviting” and “many students of color are bombarded with irrelevant learning experiences” (Gay, 2004, p. 33). The concept of

relevance was based on connecting the students' lived experiences to what is learned in the classroom, which makes learning more meaningful and impactful for all students. Similarly, Sleeter and Grant propose single group studies as models of multicultural education that is critical in structure (as cited in Leistyna, 2002). Single group studies provide information about specific groups and the experiences with oppression and discrimination. This approach "attempts to change attitudes and provide a basis for social action by exposing information about particular groups and about the effects of discrimination on that group" (Leistyna, 2002, p. 11). The single group study was the first model that focuses on developing a critical consciousness concerning a need for change.

Knowledge construction. The knowledge construction process is the second dimension of multicultural education. This approach relates to the extent to which "teachers help students understand, investigate, and determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it" (Banks, 2007, p. 20). In this dimension, it is important that the 4-H staff and youth work together to understand how knowledge is influenced by society and how knowledge can be biased by assumptions and perspectives. For example, youth could analyze the knowledge construction process by examining the history and establishment of the 4-H program. The 4-H youth could examine the arguments made by legislators in the establishment of land grant universities, their assumptions, and how their conclusions relate to the political climate during that time. This is similar to Ladson-Billings's (1995) criteria for critical

consciousness. Critical consciousness requires going beyond traditional notions of developing knowledge and skill to foster a critical awareness of the world and a commitment to addressing those issues. This relates to content integration in that the ultimate goal is to empower students to become social critics and advocate for social change. Bennett (2006) states, “Cultural consciousness is the recognition or awareness on the part of an individual that she or he has a view of the world that is not universally shared and differs profoundly from that held by many members of different nations and ethnic groups” (p. 32). Through experiences, students become skeptical about these social norms, and as they grow older, they become more conscious of societal ills. Developing this consciousness leads to an in-depth understanding of the world. If students are given the opportunity to criticize the world around them, they can maintain a critical consciousness, grow as individuals, and take action. Growth is a lifelong experience and their lived experiences help students to understand the world. Educational curriculum must be implemented to address critical issues from a holistic perspective.

Prejudice reduction. Prejudice reduction describes lessons and activities teachers use to help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (Banks, 1997, p. 21). This dimension explores how attitudes and misconceptions can be changed by modifying educational methods and materials. Sleeter and Grant propose a similar model of multicultural education known as cultural pluralism (as cited in Leistyna, 2002). Cultural pluralism exists when students of color participate fully in the dominant society, yet maintain their unique cultural differences. My research

study examined the attitudes and misconceptions of the 4-H staff in order to understand how current practices can be modified to reduce unconscious biases and prejudices. In this dimension, administration and 4-H staff could work together to decrease stereotypes and prejudices in order to change racial attitudes. This study allowed 4-H staff to discuss the activities they use to create positive attitudes toward students of color.

Equity pedagogy. Equity pedagogy involves “analyzing teaching procedures and styles to determine the extent to which they reflect multicultural issues and concerns” (Banks, 2007 p. 22). In this method, staff would be encouraged to modify lessons and programs in ways that will facilitate success for students of color. These modifications translate to understanding learning styles and language of students of color. This is similar to culturally responsive teaching which is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Cultural relevant pedagogy is when educators translate cultural knowledge into instructional practice. To improve the education of students, 4-H must acknowledge the different cultures, appreciate the repertoire of experiences minority students bring to the table and engage parents and communities as leaders. Culturally relevant teaching practices show potential promise for informing how future experiential education youth development programs can include culturally relevant structures and maintain their fidelity. Culturally relevant pedagogy practices of culturally relevant teaching have the potential to inform experiential education initiatives.

I contend that the 4-H curriculum needs to facilitate learning experiences that draw upon the perspectives of students of color and promote equity. This is consistent

with the literature in that culturally relevant pedagogy utilizes the background, knowledge and experience of student of color (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Ultimately, what is at stake here is the recruitment and retention of students of color. If the 4-H program wishes to increase its chances for success, it will be useful to consider how the already powerful experiential learning techniques might be combined with a critical multicultural approach in program development. The next section describes how multicultural education can inform experiential learning practices.

Empowering school culture. Empowering school culture is when the “organization promotes gender, racial, and social-class equity” (Banks, 2007, p. 22). This dimension involves examining current educational practices and interactions of staff and youth in order to create a more inclusive environment. In this research study, it involves examining the entire 4-H organization and how the curriculum, programs, and activities are interconnected. For example, it involves reviewing practices to understand who participates in traditional and non-traditional programs? Who are the volunteer leaders and 4-H staff? Are they diverse?

Banks’s arguments appear to be consistent with other scholars in the field. Some of examples of authors advocating for multicultural education reform as essential to the needs of students of color include Grant and Sleeter (1997), Gay (2004), and Ladson-Billings (2000) who have proposed similar multicultural education models. Taken together, they complement the models of Banks’s multicultural curriculum and pedagogy.

The literature demonstrates the strong connections between the application of multicultural practice and potential positive student outcomes. Multicultural education

literature is relevant to my research study because the 4-H programs are not approaching the education of diverse participants from the most effective perspective when they focus merely on students of color access to programs. In evaluating Banks's argument, he successfully supports the claim that the dominant, mainstream-centric curriculum ignores the experiences and cultures of students of color. With mainstream curricula, it is important to determine whose knowledge it is, who selected it, and who designed the measuring stick to determine success or failure? Although the mainstream-centric curriculum is presented from a Eurocentric perspective, it should not be totally disregarded. All students should be allowed to engage in meaningful dialogue about how to examine the pros and cons of the mainstream centric curriculum and to be given an opportunity to challenge existing structures. Another strong point that Banks makes is that the "political resistance to multicultural curriculum is closely related to ideological resistance" (Banks, 1997, p. 231). Multicultural education represents a threat to the mainstream centric curriculum, which is maintained by the dominant culture. Similarly, there may be some resistance in changing the traditional 4-H curriculum and programs. If people were empowered by their culture, it could challenge the existing power structure. This would disrupt the common culture and common values, causing the dominant culture to lose power. This is important in this research study in that the structure of the 4-H program needs to be examined to break up existing power structures in order to have a more inclusive 4-H program. Multicultural educational strategies may be the key to solve the issues for recruitment and retention within the 4-H program.

Summary

The studies described above are not exhaustive, but highlight important aspects of multicultural education for students of color that could be considered when planning 4-H programs. The research presented indicates the multitude of findings regarding the importance of multicultural education. Results consistently show that these strategies can create positive inclusive environments for all students. While the above studies provide relevant information regarding reaching students of color, caution needs to be considered before applying these strategies to the 4-H program. One should not assume that all 4-H staff members are willing to break away from traditional practices into unfamiliar program strategies. Change takes time, and the 4-H staff needs to understand the impact the lack of students of color can have on the future direction of 4-H. These varying multicultural approaches provided insight into how 4-H staff can modify program efforts to reach more students of color. The research on multicultural education provided vital information into how 4-H can progress toward increasing participation of students of color.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed provided evidence that the five dimension of multicultural education—content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture—when applied within an educational setting, can have positive effects on learning for all students. The dimensions of multicultural education were relevant to my study because they offered recruitment strategies that may attract students of color to the 4-H programs. Many students of color experience a

variety of institutional barriers that result in limited or no access to 4-H programs. Many students of color are attracted to programs with a racially diverse climate and an appreciation for their perspectives. Therefore, programs such as 4-H that desire to increase participation will need to evaluate their curriculum and programs to determine the extent to which the 4-H program is culturally inclusive. The dimensions of multicultural education provide the strategies and tools needed to evaluate the 4-H program.

Multicultural education and experiential learning are two dynamic, pedagogical processes that can exponentially build upon one another, transforming 4-H education, as many know it, by allowing for authentic learning experiences. All approaches to multicultural education provide an alternative to traditional educational practices. Best practices for transformative pedagogies move toward engaging students in the active application of relevant, hands-on experiences, connecting them to their cultural roots to affirm their identity and appreciation for their heritage. Educational outreach and program focus efforts at the land grant university 4-H program must implement educational programs that address critical issues from a holistic perspective through research, education, and extension outreach. The 4-H program initiatives need to be mutually proactive and anticipate issues of diverse audiences to avoid the possible disconnect between 4-H educators, students of color, and their families. Multicultural educational theories can provide a foundation for the 4-H program to develop and implement an inclusive program to reach more student of color. To understand the extent to which change is needed, 4-H staff must examine their own knowledge and behavior;

and second, they must examine the history and underlying causes of inequities within the program. Multicultural practices provided the vision for transforming the educational practices of the 4-H program. These factors influence the success of students of color and are necessary if 4-H staff are to respond adequately to the needs of a changing population. Serving students of color and their families requires educational programs that work under the assumption that diverse students possess the potential to excel and succeed if provided with proper guidance and support in a culturally-affirming environment.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

My objectives in this study were to (a) examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff related to recruiting and retaining students of color; and (b) review 4-H curricula from a multicultural lens. To accomplish these objectives, three research questions were developed.

Research Questions

My research attempts to answer the following questions about how 4-H staffs view their work with students of color.

1. What do 4-H staff know about the history and foundation of 4-H?
2. What knowledge, attitudes, skills, and beliefs do the 4-H staff have regarding working with students of color?
 - a. How do they feel about working with students of color?
 - b. How do they feel about the program curriculum in terms of it meeting the needs of students of color?
 - c. What are their thoughts about why more students of color are not involved?
 - d. What assumptions do they bring that might hinder their work with students of color?

4. What do 4-H staff feel they need in order to recruit successfully and work with students of color?

Research Paradigms

Burrell and Morgan (1979) noted that different ontologies, epistemologies, and beliefs about human nature lead researchers to consider using different methodologies. The research paradigm that helped to guide and establish the practices for this study was the constructivism paradigm. The aim of constructivism revolves around the understanding and reconstruction of knowledge that people initially hold. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the “aim of constructivism concerned the understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretation as information and sophistication improve” (p. 113). Associated theorists or philosophers of constructivism include Geertz, Harbermass, Husserl, Kant, Herbert, and Mead, who are idealists who believe that the world cannot exist independently of the mind (Glesne, 2011).

I chose the constructivism paradigm because I wanted to understand how the 4-H staff constructed individual and shared meanings about working with students of color. Because 4-H staff works closely within their individual communities, I felt it was important to listen to the voices of the 4-H staff and understand how they view the issues concerning the recruitment and retention of students of color. The constructivist paradigm generally operates using predominately qualitative methods (Glesne, 2011). Therefore, the basic qualitative study was chosen to elicit and understand the lived experiences from the point of view of 4-H staff who work with youth daily. As a

constructivist researcher, I relied on qualitative data collection methods and analysis, such as focus group interviews and document reviews. Qualitative methods enabled me to apply the data collection and analysis most appropriate for the research study.

The distinguishing characteristics of constructivism also led me to conclude that because of the 4-H program's experientially based format, this paradigm can also inform and guide this research study. Experiential learning provides opportunities for youth to experience, share, generalize, process and apply knowledge gained to new real-world experiences. This type of learning helps students gain and develop knowledge by interacting within their environment. As with the constructivist paradigm, experiential learning also allows the individuals to share knowledge, work together, and relate experiences to their lives. In this situation, the learner constructs knowledge based upon background knowledge, cultural frames of reference, experience, instructional influences and reflective processes. Experiential education requires the learner to be actively engaged, posing questions, and investigating, experiencing, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative and constructive meaning.

From my experience, traditional 4-H audiences are empowered by the organization's curriculum. Students of color should have the same empowering experience within the 4-H program. Instead of students elevating cultural pride through their 4-H experience, I have seen how these students of color lose their cultural identity. In addition, some students of color unconsciously learn to be seen as an insignificant in relation to the dominant culture. It is my hope that the knowledge gained through this work changes policies and procedures and lays the groundwork for a commitment to

address disparities through actions, not merely conversations. For this reason, a qualitative approach represents the ideal method of investigation.

Subjectivity

My journey within the 4-H program has encouraged me to create opportunities for students of color and overcome inherent challenges of the traditional 4-H program image. I began my career as a young 4-H agent in a predominately White rural county. I had very little experience with rural 4-H programs such as raising and showing cattle. Therefore, I had to prove that I was not only capable of doing my job but willing to learn more about 4-H rural programs. I rode horses, tagged swine for local farmers, and showed cows at the county fair. I cannot put into words how proud I was when I was able to accomplish tasks that were common place for any child who was in a rural setting. Just the mental reward from that simple accomplishment made it evident to me that many students of color would benefit from any and all experiences like that one. Because I was a minority 4-H agent, I had to prove constantly that I was willing to go the extra mile for all youth in urban and rural communities. I felt as though someone was always watching and critiquing my program efforts because of my race and ethnicity. I felt that there was no room for error. I have invested over ten years of late nights, weekends, and even overnight camps to dispel the stereotypical mindset and show that students of color have much to contribute. I worked with a young African American student who was displeased with the traditional 4-H program; he believed that the program fell short in significance and meaning. Empowering him to continue became one of my most-rewarding moments as a 4-H agent. I was able to watch a young African American male

embrace the 4-H program benefits and grow from that. For example, he participated in public speaking and presentation contest on a county, district, and state level. He embodied the motto of 4-H “to make the best better.” It was as if I had a small hand in helping this young boy become a man. Knowing that the African American community is often underserved, I am motivated to step in the gap using a proven program designed by 4-H to help others reach their ultimate potential. I am committed to empowering youth, and I hope to be in a leadership position that can address what I see as a much-needed reform for 1890 and 1862 land grant institutions and their respective 4-H programs. In a time where it is evident that the minority will soon be the majority, the need for educational intervention is at an all-time high. There is a critical need to look at 4-H programs and work toward solutions that are impactful and relevant to the needs of diverse audiences.

4-H is proud of its accomplishments over the years, and no one wants to put a damper on such a historic youth development program. For that reason, it was difficult to confront the issues and concerns from the same organization where I have worked for over ten years. This research was necessary because I felt it was important to address the need to reach more students of color. Working through various power dynamics within the organization, I hope that 4-H staff members will see this study as evidence of the need for more methods to reach out to new audiences versus reviewing this study as an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the 4-H program.

Program development by 4-H staff members must move beyond their traditional practices to reach more students of color. The expected outcome from this study is that

some 4-H staff members will be willing to look at transformative practices. Changing the 4-H program to address the needs of students of color appears to be complex and far-reaching. For some traditional 4-H program leaders, the task seems almost too daunting to approach. These leaders prefer to use their programs the same way over and over again while expecting different results. However, addressing complex problems requires new approaches for program planning. An additional plan for me is to assist in creating new innovative approaches to reach students of color within 4-H programs. My goal is to use the knowledge and inspiration I gain from this study to implement new culturally relevant strategies for 4-H programs. Going forward, I want to take deliberate steps to ensure that perspectives from different cultures are incorporated into all 4-H programs. I want to plan, design, develop and implement a more inclusive program for students of color, to highlight the uniqueness of their background and experiences and demonstrate how these can be beneficial to any audience.

Research Design

My research design involved three phases to examine the thoughts and assumptions of 4-H staff members. The phases included (a) three online focus group sessions to obtain perceptions about the current 4-H program, (b) a multicultural rating scale survey, and (c) a curriculum review (conducted by the researcher and staff). Data collection lasted a total of four months.

Research Participants

Two separate groups of research participants were recruited to participate in this research study. The first group, the focus group participants, was recruited to participate

in the online focus group sessions and curriculum review. The second group of research participants, the survey participants, was recruited to participate in an online survey.

Focus Group Participants

The 4-H staffs from two extension districts were invited to participate in the online focus groups sessions and curriculum review. Both districts have a large minority youth population and the potential to reach more students of color. My target was to select 4-H staff members from two land grant universities. Land grant universities are often referred to as 1862, 1890 and 1994 universities based on the date and legislative Act that established them. The Morrill Act of 1890 saw the start of Black land grant universities to focus on agriculture, mechanical arts and military tactics. Traditionally Black land-grant universities are located in 18 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, 2012). North Carolina has both 1862 and 1890 land grant university. In this state, the two institutions collaborate to offer 4-H youth programs. It is important that 1890 university staff have a voice because they are federally mandated to reach underserved youth populations.

I sent an email letter to 25 4-H staff members asking them to participate in all of the focus group sessions and curriculum review. I tried to find staff members in various urban districts who met a particular criterion and were involved in administering 4-H programs or services. I required participants to: have at least three years of experience in 4-H, have an understanding of experiential learning, be interested and visionary about the potential personal growth youth may attain through participation, and have some experience in developing lessons plans and programs for youth audiences.

The email letter explained the purpose of the research. It provided a brief description of the nature and extent of involvement in the study. I also let potential participants know what type of inclusion/exclusion criteria existed. In the letter, I shared information about confidentiality, a brief list of participation benefits, the time or other commitment required of the participants, and my contact information for further questions (see Appendix D for a copy of the email letter). I made follow-up phone calls to verify staff members' receipt of my email.

Finding staff to participate in my study was a challenge because many 4-H staff members were out of the office implementing summer camps and programs. Their absence made it difficult to find staff that met my criteria. To boost participation, county extension directors advocated with their 4-H staffs on my behalf. After potential participants had been identified, they provided enough focus group and curriculum review data for a successful qualitative analysis. Their responses were detailed, and in some instances, they provided a descriptive vision of their 4-H program.

The four focus group participants worked at either the 1890 or the 1862 universities. The pool consisted of four women (two White and two African American). Pam and Betty are White. Rhonda and Kim are African American. Each woman had a minimum of ten years of work experience in the 4-H program. Two of the women grew up in 4-H as a child. In addition, two of the women worked in the same county for over ten years. All of the participants valued making a difference in the lives of youth. Each of the subsequent focus group sessions used this same group of women.

Survey Participants

I created a multicultural rating scale survey that I sent to every 4-H staff member who works in the North Carolina 4-H system using the NC Cooperative Extension website. To be in the survey pool, a person only needed to work within the 4-H program. Their work experience ranged from newly employed to veteran 4-H staff members. The participant pool consisted of 4-H agents, 4-H assistants, 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) staff and special program staff. The role of 4-H agents is to provide overall leadership. They are responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating programs. Whereas, program assistants work with agents in planning and presenting programs, in general, EFNEP staffs educate youth and families on how to get nutritious food at the best value. Special program staff may include grant funded 4-H positions for specific programs in the county. During the time of my study, there were 137 employees listed on the Cooperative Extension website that met my pool criteria. Each of them received an invitation to participate in my research. Out of the 137 4-H staff members, only 28 fully completed the survey.

Survey Participant Demographics

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show a summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants who started the survey. Table 1 displays the gender characteristics of the participants. Participants were predominately female at 97% and the male participants account for only 3%.

Table 1

Gender



#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		1	3%
2	Female		37	97%
	Total		38	100%

Table 2 shows the number of years survey participants have worked with 4-H. Their work experience ranged from one to over 20 years. The data indicates that a larger number (37%) of the respondents had five to 10 years of experience. Another 29% had between 1 to 3 years. The remaining 13% had 15 to over 20 years of experience. Hence, the wide range of work experience added richness to the data. It gave me some insight into the perspectives of working with diverse youth. As might be expected, 4-H staffs have different perspectives and means for understanding and describing their experiences.

Table 2

Number of Years in 4-H









#	Answer		Response	%
1	1 to 3 years		11	29%
2	5 to 10 years		14	37%
3	10 to 15 years		3	8%
4	15 to 20		5	13%
5	20 and above		5	13%

Table 3 displays the race/ethnicity of the survey participants. Eighty-two percent of respondents were White, whereas 16% were Black and 3% were Hispanic. It is important, however, to note the limitations of the Qualtrics survey. The only difficulty I experienced was the inability to separate data from those who did and did not complete the survey. Out of 56 respondents, 19% ($n = 26$) completed all of the questions. The remaining 30 surveys were not considered useable. In short, surveys needed to be completed to be included in the pool. In an effort to receive more responses, I sent reminder emails and follow-up invitations to everyone through the Qualtrics mailer.

Table 3

Ethnicity

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Caucasian		31	82%
2	Black/African American		6	16%
3	Hispanic		1	3%
4	Asian		0	0%
5	Native American		0	0%
6	Other		0	0%
	Total		38	100%

Data Collection

I collected data from the following sources: three audio-recorded focus group sessions; a multicultural online surveys, and 4-H curriculum review process to access the integration of multicultural content.

Focus Group Sessions

According to Krueger and Casey (2009), focus groups are used to gather information through carefully planned discussions. The discussions are conducted in a non-threatening environment and designed to not only capture what is said, but to also obtain perception. I used Krueger and Casey's definition as a basis for constructing the focus groups in this study. I began the first session by asking a series of ten critical thinking questions. This, and subsequent sessions, lasted between one and a half to two hours. I selected the Blackboard Collaborate communication tool because participants were familiar with it from training sessions and workshops. This method also expanded geographical outreach to increase participation and provided access for all, regardless of location. Blackboard Collaborate, an online learning tool designed for distance collaboration, was used to allow the staff to critically explore the values, assumptions and beliefs that fortified their knowledge in their current approach to using 4-H curriculum and programs. I uploaded a power point presentation in Blackboard Collaborate software with the purpose of the research study and each slide listed a research question. The focus group sessions allowed staff to debate issues and understand how peers interpreted terminology and issues within 4-H. The focus group also helped me to communicate with research participants in a "chat-like" forum. Blackboard Collaborate provided a polling feature that allowed participants to quickly respond to verbal and written questions. The Blackboard method also allowed group members an opportunity to communicate verbally via the Internet.

Though the Blackboard Collaborate was selected for its familiarity with participants there were network connectivity and server problems. When this happened, 4-H responded to questions in the chat box instead of commenting verbally. The chat box, however, was helpful in that the participants could look back over what they had previously written, reflect on their responses, and consider adding to their responses.

During the focus group sessions, I served as the moderator. I respected the participants, communicated and listened carefully to their responses. I took notes, summarized the main points, and audio-recorded each focus group session. A well-designed interview protocol (see Appendix A) helped me keep the conversation and dialogue in line with the research questions. The protocol included semi-structured interview questions that allowed for flexibility of the topics discussed. The discussion questions were designed to obtain perceptions about participant's current 4-H programs. This session also included questions about the 4-H staff members' experiences and challenges. Moreover, staff members were also asked how they have facilitated the growth and development of students of color. In addition, questions were asked about the inclusivity of diverse perspectives in the 4-H curriculum. Participants were also asked about their ideas for changes in the 4-H curriculum.

The last two Blackboard Collaborate sessions were used to get feedback on the quantitative results from the multicultural rating scale survey. The survey data was shared with the focus group participants. Their thoughts in response to historical foundations were discussed. Their thoughts and ideas about working with students of color were also discussed, along with how this was linked to 4-H programs curriculum

and staff development. Open-ended questions helped to encourage conversation among the participants. They explained how they perceived or understood the issue under investigation

At the beginning of all focus group sessions, I listed ground rules and asked participants for their agreement. These were the ground rules: (a) Listen actively—respect others when they are talking; (b) speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (i.e., use “I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”); (c) participate to the fullest of your ability; and (d) the goal is not to agree—it is about hearing and exploring divergent perspectives (Gorski, 2013). The ground rules provided a respectful community among participants. I also promoted group interaction by watching and using cues from the participants (i.e., silence, lack of participation). We kept a comfortable pace to examine thoughts, question assumptions, reflect on ideas and generate possible actions. In the end, the focus group sessions helped me to clarify ambiguous answers and to seek follow-up information.

Multicultural Rating Scale Survey Data

To explore and evaluate a multicultural perspective of the existing 4-H program, this study used a multicultural survey. This survey used a rating scale adapted from the curriculum guidelines for multicultural education (Hernandez, 2001). Hernandez (2001) adopted the rating scale from the Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education and the scale from the Checklist for Assessing a School’s Foreign Language Council for the Social Studies. The survey instrument was based on a previously used instrument adding validity to the research study (see Appendix E). In the survey, participants were asked to

evaluate the 4-H program from a multicultural perspective. Participants were also asked to rate each statement using a Likert-type scale. The scale was used to rate the strength or degree of emphasis placed on multicultural education. The scale also captured data about the respondents' opinions concerning the recruitment and retention of students of color.

The survey included 30 questions that were used to determine the level of awareness, knowledge, skills, and confidence participants had regarding working with students of color. For example, the questions concerned issues such as do the learning materials reflect the cultures and cognitive styles of the various ethnic and cultural groups within the program and does the 4-H program provide a variety of instruments and techniques for working with students of various ethnic and cultural groups? Other questions were open-ended allowing for a variety of possible answers (see Appendix B).

Responses to the questions highlighted how the participants felt about working with a diverse population as well as indicating areas they may want to develop or enhance. The questions encouraged 4-H staff members to reflect upon the traditional educational practices being used in their 4-H program as they relate to multicultural education practices.

Curricula Review

In addition to the focus group sessions and the survey, the 4-H curriculum was reviewed from a multicultural perspective. 4-H staff can influence curriculum needs and provide input on how to revise an established curriculum. The staff use curriculum in 4-H clubs, school enrichment and after-school programs, therefore providing the ideal

feedback on its usefulness. This study concentrated on content integration through a curriculum review because 4-H staff members rely so heavily on 4-H curriculum when doing outreach to youth. Banks and Banks (1996) reported, “content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations and theories in their subject area or discipline” (p. 20). Content integration is a widely used model and can offer a positive impact on the need for and practice of multicultural education. In short, 4-H can use these dimensions as a guide to reform curricula when trying to implement multicultural education.

A random sample of the curricula was selected from the County 4-H office. Each curriculum group was given a random number so that either one of them had an equal chance of being selected. Thereafter, I reviewed ten curriculum modules to look for integration content at either a contribution, additive, transformational or social action level. The focus group participants were also given the opportunity to review the curriculum for multicultural integration. The review process included four steps: (a) review the four key curriculum elements; topics and issues, activities, people studied, and evaluation; (b) review the definitions of content integration; (c) complete the curriculum matrix by determining the level of integration for each element; and (d) describe the evidence used to assess level on integration.

The curricula selected for the review include ten member manuals and three adult leader guides. The leader guides include Electric, Woodworking, Project Butterfly, and Exploring Your Environment. The curriculum book for ages 9–12 included Celebrating

4-H Health, Robotics, Money Fundamentals, and Eco Wonders. In like manner, the curriculum books randomly selected for youth ages 13 and older included: Teen Talk, You're the Chef, Staying Healthy, Explore the Deep Woods, and Growing in Communities.

The complete series of curriculum used was designed, developed and published by a national collaboration of state Extension personnel. Each of the resources was to provide youth with experientially based learning and activities.

Data Analysis

For this research study, I used a systematic process to describe and evaluate data collected for the focus group sessions, multicultural survey, and curriculum review.

Focus Group Sessions Analysis

For the focus group sessions, I used a coding system to organize data into smaller, meaningful categories or themes that reflected participants' assumptions and ideas. I referred to the literature by Saldaña (2008). Saldaña (2008) states, "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). The first cycle consisted of reading through my transcribed data and marking the data with meaningful words or phrases. The second cycle became a continuous process; I looked for relationships between words, terms, phrases, responses, or concepts and organized the information into specific thoughts or themes. I considered questions during the coding process, such as "What are the participant's concerns?"; "What are some key issues that are consistent among staff?" And "What did I learn?"

I anticipated finding 4-H volunteer development because a similar theme had emerged from previous studies. I then reread the data, looking for additional codes that may have been missed the first time. A code that I did not expect to emerge was the misconceptions 4-H staff members have of working with students of color. Then I looked for repetitive patterns of actions and consistencies in the data. I noted the importance of building relationships and key limitations of reaching students of color. Using a color-coded Excel file, I kept all codes and analyses in an electronic format for ease, accessibility, and organization.

The next part of the analysis involved searching for relationships among the terms (Spradley, 1980). I did this by looking for words or phrases that reflected the same meaning among the participants' responses. It was important for me to condense data into smaller analyzable units through the creation of themes and categories. Throughout the coding process, I interpreted the data by looking for new meanings, new questions, and connections between themes and identified dimensions of the 4-H program.

Multicultural Survey Data Analysis

The multicultural rating survey enabled me to explore data about the program from a multicultural perspective. The Qualtrics software enabled me to summarize the data, browse individual responses and create data charts and graphs. The initial summary report from the Qualtrics software included each survey question, the number of responses from each participant, the relating percentage of each response, and the total number of responses.

I prepared graphs and charts to get a visual representation of the data. During the survey, 4-H staff provided a host of open-ended responses. The Qualtrics software highlighted each participant's comments. I used several Qualtrics filter rules to focus on specific subsets of data. For example, cross tabulations allowed me to examine whether there were any relationships within the data that might not be readily apparent when analyzing the total responses. I also used this method to compare answer choices to one question across the rest of the survey. Eventually, I grouped the survey results by gender and race and searched for patterns.

Curricula Review Analysis

For the curricula review, the 4-H focus group participants and I used a multicultural assessment tool that was applied to the selection of 4-H curriculum materials I chose (see Appendix C). The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) produced a self-assessment guide for Culturally Responsive curriculum. I chose this self-assessment guide because it had a simple format that was easy to adapt to the components of the 4-H curriculum. This guide also helped us to conduct a self-assessment of the 4-H curriculum in four domains of contribution, additive, transformational, and social action.

The multicultural review included identifying the level of multicultural content and perspectives found in the selected curriculum. According to his 1997 work, Banks reported how the integration of multicultural content and the assessment of the curriculum determined whether infusion of multicultural content is at level one, two, three, or four. He gave the following details about each level:

1. Contributions Level: Heroes, cultural components, holidays and other discrete elements related to ethnic groups are added to the curriculum on special days, occasions and celebrations (p. 244).
2. Additive Level: This approach consists of the addition of content, concepts, themes and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its structure (p. 244).
3. Transformation Level: The basic goal, structure and nature of the curriculum are changed to enable students to view concepts, events, issues, problems and themes from the perspectives of diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups (p. 244).
4. Social Action Level: In this approach students identify important social problems and issues, gather pertinent data, clarify their values on the issues, make decisions, and take reflective actions to help resolve the issue or problem (p. 244).

After randomly selecting the 4-H curriculum, the focus group participants and I began the review process. We engaged in an in-depth analysis of the 4-H curriculum and identified the levels in which the 4-H curriculum demonstrated multicultural content using the multicultural assessment tool. It was important to evaluate the curriculum in order to determine if 4-H is enhancing youth experiences by providing content that is not only current and appropriate to their needs but also culturally relevant for them.

Four curriculum elements were selected as a guide when reviewing the 4-H curriculum. These elements were closely aligned with the 4-H curriculum. Therefore, the elements can be measured. NCCRESt (2008) elements included the following:

1. Topics/Issues: To what extent does the curriculum guide provide time to anchor instruction to the student's current knowledge and background? (p. 28)
2. Activities: What kinds of activities are students expected to complete, with whom, and where? (p. 28)
3. Peoples studied: Is there a variety of racial, ethnic and abilities represented in the curriculum? What socio-economic backgrounds are assumed? How are students encouraged to actively use new concepts? (p. 28)
4. Evaluation: Guidelines for assessing program in the curriculum unit (p. 28).

I analyzed the cultural elements that were present: the frequency, where they occurred, and the level of integration of multicultural content. Then, each element was placed in a curriculum matrix (see Appendix C), and I reviewed the curriculum to find out if the curriculum element integrated content at a contribution, additive, transformative or social level. I made some notes to help explain conclusions drawn. Finally, I used a curriculum profile to summarize the data generated from each matrix. The focus group participants were asked to follow the same procedure. They reported their opinion on the level of multicultural integration obvious within the 4-H program curriculum. Each focus group participant was given a description of the levels of content integration, and eventually reviewed all of the curriculum modules. Afterward, each was asked to rate the level of

content integration found within the curriculum collection. Ultimately, four people reviewed the curricula, including the researcher, and the data was collected and analyzed.

When the examination was completed, the focus group participants and I made some notes on possible suggestions to expand the level of content integration within the 4-H curriculum units. There were discrepancies in the agreement on the level of content integration between focus group participants. Those discrepancies were reviewed and the cause was discussed to conclude that the differences were in the way the focus group participants define how they work with students of color. The focus group participants and I did not encounter any major challenges with this process, and I found the measurement tool easy to follow and implement.

Trustworthiness

I employed three main strategies to ensure trustworthiness in my study: triangulation, member checking, and peer review. Triangulation means finding corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 2007). I chose this strategy because it maximized the range of data that contributed to the research study. For example, I used multiple data sources to support the analysis, such as multiple focus group interview sessions, the multicultural rating scale survey, and curriculum review.

Member checking involves taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account (Creswell, 2007). When the multicultural survey was completed, I took the findings back to the focus group participants and asked them to review the outcomes and provide

feedback. There was also an opportunity to gain follow-up feedback on questions that were not clear. The follow-up step was helpful because any additional participants' comments strengthened existing data. Therefore, conducting more than one focus group session supported my analysis and interpretation.

Lastly, the peer review provided an external check of the research process. Creswell (2007) suggested that such reviews include an individual who asks hard questions about methods, meanings and interpretations. I recruited a colleague to code transcriptions independently from the focus group sessions. Then we compared notes and came to a consensus on the major themes and issues.

In addition to the strategies above, I also kept a journal to capture germane thoughts, ideas and questions as they occurred throughout the focus group sessions. This strategy was helpful because writing down phrases or notes reminded me of the key ideas that were discussed during the focus group session. I was able to compare my notes to the recorded version to ensure the accuracy. These collective strategies helped me to increase the trustworthiness of my research.

Ethical Considerations

This research effort involved a great deal of cooperation and coordination between 4-H staff in different counties. Ethical values that are essential with collaborative work are trust and mutual respect. Glesne (2011) reported, "ethical considerations should accompany plans, thoughts, and discussions about each aspect of qualitative research" (p. 162). In my research, a consent form was used to explain to the

participants the purpose of the study (e.g., voluntary participation, confidentiality, and benefits).

This study confronted many issues surrounding the 4-H program. For that reason, confidentiality was essential. For example, I took confidentiality into consideration to protect the interest of my fellow colleagues. For example, I used participant codes during the online focus group session and on data the documents. I kept a separate document that links the participant code to subjects' identifying information in a secure location. Therefore, only the researcher can identify the responses of participants. The online surveys offered minimal risk to participants, where the signature on the consent is the only piece of identifying information being collected.

It was important to show respect to the colleagues who participated in this study. To that end, I informed them about the aim of the study and what I expected them to do if they decided to participate. For the 4-H staff to be engaged in self-reflection and critical consciousness was significant as well. Members of the focus groups challenged each other to think about their current program and challenge traditional 4-H program practices. Obviously, some were unclear about their efforts to reach students of color and curriculum components.

As a former 4-H agent, I drew upon my experiences by being sensitive to time constraints and availability for the research participants. Currently, I am in a position to help design future programs from the state level point of view. For that reason, it was important for me to consider carefully what I was doing, how and why. Additionally, I needed to consider both the similarities and differences between the research participants

and myself. I presently assist in determining new 4-H program goals and objectives as well as contributing my peer's ideas and opinions in that effort.

Limitations

Various limitations existed in this study. My first limitation was the focus group sample for my study. I made a conscious exclusionary decision in regard to the sample. I felt that experienced agents could provide more feedback and in-depth answers to questions after I made the decision for the selection criteria. After three years of experience, 4-H staff should have adequate knowledge of their program and county demographics. Moreover, they should be at a point in their 4-H career where they are trying to take programs in a direction that is beneficial to the needs of youth they serve (regardless of race or ethnicity).

Noting the compelling nature of my study, I consciously restricted participants to 4-H staff who had at least three years of experience in 4-H, had an understanding of experiential learning, would be interested and visionary about the potential personal growth youth may attain through participation, and had some experience in developing materials for youth audiences.

Accordingly, of central concern, is the fact that only four people participated in my focus group sessions. This limitation, unfortunately, implies that my sample size may not be a good representation of a larger population. As a result, I deduce that some of the respondents felt pressured into giving similar answers during the sessions. Conversely, some veteran staff members contributed excellent input based on their abundant knowledge and exceptional experience. In the light of the noted limitations in this study,

similar research studies may choose to use a different criterion for selecting research participants.

Despite my noted limitations, the survey became problematic because some of the 4-H staff struggled with on-the-job time constraints. Undoubtedly, they were less likely to respond to the survey because they did not have the time to complete it. To have 59 start the survey and only 26 complete the survey moved me to review the point where participants stop answering the questions. I noticed that after answering the open-ended questions five and six, most of the participants did not continue the survey. If I had to do it over again, I would rephrase the question to a Likert scale format therefore increasing the probability that all questions could be answered. I also reviewed the time each participant took to complete the survey. Some survey participants completed the survey in 12 to 20 minutes, while others took 30 to 45 minutes. This was relevant because the consent form stated that the survey would take 20 to 25 minutes. Such a time requirement may be a contributing factor to the reduced number of people completing the survey. Perhaps the incomplete survey participants only read the online consent form and did not continue to answer any of the survey questions. On the contrary, I designed the online survey to be convenient and available to complete on a person's own time. In order to overcome this in the future, I would revise the survey to a shorter format or look for potential incentives for 4-H staff to complete all survey data.

Conclusion/Chapter Formulations

This qualitative research study granted me the opportunity to bring multicultural education to the thoughts and minds of 4-H staff in North Carolina. The following

chapters discuss the findings and conclusion to this qualitative study. The next chapters represent the findings in the form that aligns best with my research study. Chapter IV describes the findings from the participant survey. Chapter V describes the findings from the focus group sessions. Chapter VI discusses the conclusions.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY FINDINGS

Minoritized populations across the state have significantly increased, and these changing demographics will influence how 4-H staff will develop and implement curriculum and programs to meet the needs of students of color. This research study was conducted to address the need of 4-H staff to reexamine their efforts to reach more diverse students, particularly students of color. The purposes of this study were to (a) examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff related to recruiting and retaining students of color; and (b) review 4-H curricula from a multicultural lens.

Quantitative Survey Data Findings

This chapter will summarize the presentation of the findings and analyses derived from the online survey. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequencies and percentages of item responses. Data were analyzed to identify and describe the relationship between the 4-H staff and their efforts to reach students of color. The survey analysis comprised four sections, with the data generated presented as follows. The first section discusses the history and foundation of the 4-H program. The second section discusses the ability of 4-H staff to work with students of color. The third section discusses the importance of diversity in relation to programs and recruiting efforts. The fourth section includes findings related to staff discussions about training needs.

History and Foundation of the 4-H Program

Addressing the history of the 4-H program and the land grant system was important because the land grants provided a framework for the establishment of the 4-H program. “Land grant universities were established with a tripartite mission: to educate, to conduct research, and to disseminate information to the public through the Cooperative Extension Service” (Arnold, Hill, Bailey, & Meyers, 2012, para. 1). Understanding the historical foundation of 4-H program development informs the challenges 4-H faces today. Giving the 4-H staff members the opportunity to reflect on the 4-H history and its integration with the land grant mission provides information about respondents’ understanding of the present condition of the program.

The survey participants responded about their knowledge of the history of 4-H. The overwhelming majority commented on the establishment of the first 4-H club program, and they discussed historical dates and made note of the 100-year history. Regarding the history of the 4-H program, more than half of the respondents spoke about their knowledge. The most prevalent theme included the establishment of the first corn clubs. Below are the responses of four participants. These responses are representative of all the responses received:

Response 1: 4-H began as agricultural clubs, focusing on corn and tomatoes.

Response 2: 4-H began over 100 years ago as corn and tomato clubs as an effort to have young people utilize new research thru the universities when adults were resistant to changes.

Response 3: Started in Corn and Tomato Clubs in Ahsoskie in North Carolina; Jane McKimmon was the first Home Agent in North Carolina.

Response 4: Program began in 1902 with the formation of Corn Clubs for boys and Tomato Canning Clubs for girls.

The results of these findings connect with the research question: What do 4-H staff know about the history and foundation of the 4-H program? Out of the 26 4-H survey participants, 74% were familiar with the history of 4-H and provided detailed information about the establishment of the land grant system. The remaining 23% did not know or responded not applicable to this question. The establishment of the land grant universities was the main point mentioned by survey participants, and they responded with in-depth answers concerning the establishment of the land grant system. Some of the respondents' comments are presented below:

Response 1: The next round of land grant colleges was created in 1890. These schools were to be located in the southern states and were traditionally for the black population.

Response 2: The first 1862 land-grant institutions were for your traditional majority-white enrolled students in which government gave land and money for states to start college/university in 1862. Following, in 1890, funds and land were set aside to grant majority-black enrolled students the opportunity to build and attend a college/university.

Response 3: Subsequent acts have established LGUs that are Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Response 4: Then in 1890 it was decided that similar universities needed to be established for African American males in the South (Confederate States).

The data imply that many of the 4-H staff were able to acknowledge the establishment of the 1890 and 1994 land grant universities. However, the data also imply that they failed to articulate the separatist model in which 1862, 1890, 1994, and HIS institutions served

their separate (and separated) targeted audiences (Dorsey, 2001). The participants' comments are consistent with the literature in that "most are not familiar with the entire story of how the 1890 land-grant came to be" (Comer, Campbell, Edwards, & Hillison, 2006, p. 1). A reasonable explanation for the inadequate response may be that the story of the establishment of the land grant system was taught from one perspective, and the experiences and historical events of different ethnic groups were ignored. This finding is consistent with the literature in that the "history books hardly ever mention Extension in regards to the 1890 land grant" (Comer et al., 2006, p. 1). The findings also suggest that the 4-H staff lacks understanding of the historical injustices that have not been resolved and have continued to significantly impact subsequent years of 4-H programs. If 4-H staff members make those historical connections, they can better understand not only the significance of this study, but the need to change existing programs and policies to meet the needs of students of color.

Working with Students of Color

The first objective of the study was to examine thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff members that pertain to the recruitment and retention of students of color. Survey participants rated statements in terms of their ability to work with students of color. Staff members came to the 4-H organization with a broad range of knowledge, skills, and beliefs that influenced how they worked and designed their educational programs. I assessed the cultural competencies of the 4-H staff members, which helped me to understand their ability to negotiate successfully across cultural differences: What knowledge, skills, and resources can one build on? Where are the gaps? Where can

opportunities and any potential barriers to progress be identified? Understanding the cultural competencies sheds light on the depth of knowledge 4-H staff members have about different cultures. It also revealed what might be helpful for staff members to learn in respect to reaching more diverse youth. As discussed in Chapter III, I used the multicultural rating scale survey adapted from the curriculum guidelines for multicultural education (Hernandez, 2001) to evaluate staff member skills concerning their cultural competence and readiness to work more effectively in a culturally diverse world. These findings correspond to the research question: what knowledge, attitudes, skills and beliefs do 4-H staff members have regarding working with students of color?

Competence Skills

Each of the questions was intended to measure the components of cultural competence. According to the National Education Association (2008),

Cultural competence entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching; such as valuing diversity, being culturally self-aware, understanding the dynamics of cultural interactions, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. (p. 1)

Therefore, the measure of cultural competence was obtained by computing the index of the five component subscales as an initial assessment of a staff member's ability to successfully work with students of color and to develop educational programs for diverse youth.

Question 1: Cultural competency skill level. Table 4 captures participants' responses when asked to rate their skill level in providing services to culturally different

students and their families. Fifty-four percent of them responded “good” and 31% responded “very good.” Twelve percent of the participants responded as “fair” and “poor” while the remaining 4% responded as “excellent.” Although the majority of the survey participants responded positively, there were a few that noted a real need to improve their skill level. When asked to rate their ability to accurately assess the educational needs of students of color, 54% responded “good” and 35% responded “very good.” Lastly, the participants were asked to rate their ability to effectively assess the needs of youth and families having a cultural background different from their own. Fifty-four percent responded “good” and 38% responded “very good.”

Table 4

Cultural Competency Skill Level

Scale	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Skill Level in Providing Services	4%	8%	54%	31%	4%
Ability to Assess Needs of Youth	4%	4%	54%	35%	54%
Ability to Assess Needs From a Different Cultural Background	0%	8%	54%	38%	0%

The findings suggest that a large percentage of staff members felt confident in their skills and abilities to meet the needs of students of color. However, these findings also reveal that some lack confidence and skills. When staff lacks the skills to provide services and access needs, this can be a significant risk to the 4-H organization. The risk is the realization that if the 4-H staff members do not improve their skills, they are asking

for organizational and cultural standstill in which the 4-H will continue to operate the way it has always operated; that is, reaching a majority of traditionally White youth. This finding is consistent with a research study that concluded that 4-H staff did not have the culture-specific skills to communicate effectively with diverse groups (Schauber, 2001). Therefore, 4-H staff members must build on prior knowledge and skills to make a commitment to learning about differences. When staff members begin to build cultural competencies skills, the chances for developing a more diverse environment increase.

Question 2: 4-H program work with students of color. The survey participants were given the opportunity to respond to how they felt about their work with students of color within their local 4-H programs. The survey respondents were asked a three-part question to rate the success of the 4-H program in its effort to work with students of color (see Table 5). From the responses, a high number (14 participants) “agreed” that 4-H creates positive images of students of color. The survey respondents were nearly equal in agreeing that 4-H teaches youth that the cultures of all groups are relevant in society. Twelve participants “agreed” and eleven participants “strongly agreed.” The survey participants also responded to a statement that 4-H teaches about the world in a way that incorporates the perspectives of people of color. Twelve participants “agreed” and eight “strongly agreed.”

The findings reveal that there were divided opinions on the ways in which the 4-H program works with students of color. The majority of the participants responded that the portrayal of students of color was positive. Although a small number of respondents disagreed, the positive images of students of color can challenge notions of inferiority

and systems of inequality. However, the participants' positive responses drop when referring to whether 4-H teaches if cultures are relevant and incorporates the perspectives of people of color. This decline may suggest that 4-H staff lack evidence that the perspectives of people of color were incorporated within the 4-H program. This finding is in contrast with the literature in that goals and the structure of the 4-H program should enable students of color to view concepts, events, issues and problems from the perspectives of diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups (Banks, 1997).

Table 5

4-H Program Work with Students of Color

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses
1	4-H creates positive images of students of color.	0	3	3	14	6	26
2	4-H teaches youth that the cultures of all groups are relevant in our society.	1	1	1	12	11	26
3	4-H teaches about the world in a way that incorporates the perspectives of people of color.	2	0	4	12	8	26

Question 3: Working with students of color. Table 6 displays the responses from a four-part question about working with students of color. The survey asked the participants if they have similar expectations of all youth regardless of race. Nineteen

responded “always” while the remaining seven reported “most of the time.” The survey asked the participants if they provide equal learning opportunities for all youth.

Table 6

Working with Students of Color

#	Question	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Most of the Time (4)	Always (6)	Total Responses	<i>M</i>
1	I have similar expectations for all youth regardless of race.	0	0	0	7	19	26	4.73
2	I provide equal learning opportunities for all youth in my county.	0	0	0	5	21	26	4.81
3	I connect my programs to real world events and experiences related to more than one diverse culture.	0	0	5	10	11	26	4.23
4	Do you adapt your materials to meet the needs of students of color?	2	4	11	3	6	26	3.27

Twenty-one answered “always” and five reported “most of the time.” Survey participants were also asked if they connected their programs to real world events and experiences. Eleven noted “always,” ten noted “most of the time,” and five responded “some of the time.” Lastly, the participants were asked if they adapt materials to meet the needs of students of color. Two participants stated “never,” four commented “rarely,” eleven participants stated “sometimes,” three “most of the time,” and six participants indicated “always.”

The findings suggest that 4-H staff members who responded to the survey have similar expectations for all youth regardless of race. Having similar expectations for all youth may mean that 4-H staff members can provide activities that are engaging and that increase confidence and self-esteem. The staff members also indicated that they provided equal learning opportunities for all youth. The findings reveal that there was a slight difference of opinion on the ways in which the 4-H programs connect programs with diverse cultures. Programs should encourage 4-H youth to share, reflect on, and better understand experiences related to different cultures. The findings suggest that on average, 4-H staff members are making efforts to create equal opportunities for students of color. When asked if the staff member could adopt 4-H materials to meet the needs of students of color, the participant’s response options expanded across each scale item. Some 4-H staff do adapt materials, however doing so may raise questions as to how they are adapting materials, how research supports this adaptation, and does adapting materials make a difference in their ability to recruit and retain students of color. The findings also suggest that because 29% of the participants had 1 to 3 years of experience,






whereas 37% had 5 to 10 years, the disbursement of scores may reflect the disparities in years of work experience.

Question 4: 4-H traditional program audience represents all people of color.

To get feedback from staff concerning the diversity in traditional programs, the survey asked the participants if the 4-H traditional program audience represented all people of color. In Table 7, 15% strongly agreed, 35% agreed; however 31% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed.

Table 7

4-H Traditional Program Audience Represents All People of Color

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		2	8%
2	Disagree		8	31%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		3	12%
4	Agree		9	35%
5	Strongly Agree		4	15%
	Total		26	100%





The findings concerning whether the traditional program represents all people of color are scattered across the Likert scale. The negative responses suggest that students of color may not have full and equal access to participate in the 4-H traditional program. This finding may suggest many staff members believe students of color are marginalized, and the 4-H program should make provisions for students of color to have the same opportunities as traditional youth audiences. However, the finding that 50% of

respondents agree or strongly agree that students of color are represented may suggest discrepancies in staff understanding when coupled with figures on recruitment and retention of students of color.

Question 5: 4-H climate is supportive of students of color. In Table 8, the survey participants responded to whether or not the 4-H climate was supportive of the participation of students of color in traditional 4-H programs. The overall perception of the 4-H climate was in the high-to-moderate range. Thirty-five percent selected “most of the time” while 27% of the participants stated “sometimes” and 31% stated “always.”

Table 8

4-H Climate is Supportive of Participation of Students of Color in Traditional 4-H Programs

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		0	0%
2	Rarely		2	8%
3	Sometimes		7	27%
4	Most of the Time		9	35%
5	Always		8	31%
Total			26	100%






This finding may indicate that some staff members who responded to the survey feel that traditional programs support a climate that is supportive of students of color. However, the findings also suggest a need to create a culture of inclusion and support around the existing traditional programs. The 4-H program should always have a supportive environment. When youth find themselves in a supportive and caring environment, they are more likely to participate in programs. The results suggest that

some change may be needed to create a supportive climate. The findings were contrasted with the 4-H program focus, which is to create a supportive environment for culturally diverse youth and adults to reach their fullest potential (National 4-H, 2014b). The 4-H program is advertising that they have a supportive environment; however the participants' responses indicate that some staff members across the state do not have the same viewpoint.

Question 6: Difference between traditional 4-H audiences. In Table 9, the respondents determined there was no difference between the way traditional 4-H audiences and students of color were treated: 42% “agreed,” while 19% of the respondents “strongly agreed.”

Table 9

Difference between the Way Traditional 4-H Audiences and Students of Color Are Treated

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		3	12%
2	Disagree		5	19%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		2	8%
4	Agree		11	42%
5	Strongly Agree		5	19%
Total			26	100%


Even though the traditional programs have achieved some level of diversity, the findings suggest that there is some evidence that students of color are being treated

differently. It is important to define how the 4-H staff perceive “treated differently” in their response to this question. It is important to recognize differences in youth while not condemning them for their difference. The 4-H staff should plan programs that respect not only racial differences but ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, or disability.

Question 7: 4-H activities. In Table 10, the respondents were asked to rate whether the 4-H activities were multiethnic and multicultural. Thirty-five percent of respondents answered “neither agree nor disagree.” Twenty-seven percent answered “agree.”

Table 10

4-H Activities Are Multiethnic and Multicultural

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		2	8%
2	Disagree		4	15%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		9	35%
4	Agree		7	27%
5	Strongly Agree		4	15%
Total			26	100%

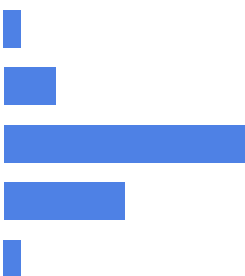
The participants noted that some of the activities in the 4-H program are multicultural and multiethnic. Whereas, others disagreed that the activities did not lend themselves to multicultural approaches. How 4-H staff members defined multicultural and multiethnic activities may determine the discrepancies in the findings. In addition, the findings may suggest inconsistencies in what is considered multicultural education. With no foundational guidelines on multicultural education, some of the 4-H staff may

host special events in their county and may consider those appropriate multicultural cultural activities when they serve only certain groups.

Question 8: Programs ability to promote values. Table 11 shows how participants responded to the 4-H program’s ability to promote values, attitudes, and behaviors that support cultural diversity. Fifty-four percent of the respondents rated the program “good” in promoting cultural values. Twenty-seven percent of respondents rated the program “very good.”

Table 11

Program’s Ability to Promote Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors that Support Cultural Diversity

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Poor		1	4%
2	Fair		3	12%
3	Good		14	54%
4	Very Good		7	27%
5	Excellent		1	4%
Total			26	100%


The findings suggest that some of the participants were knowledgeable about the 4-H program’s ability to support cultural diversity. However, the program may not be as effective as it could be in promoting cultural diversity if 16% of respondents rate the program fair and poor. When programs have values, attitudes and behaviors that are perceived as not supporting cultural diversity, those programs limit the participation of students of color. This finding is consistent with the literature that describes how

educators develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic groups by the activities they use (Banks & Banks, 2006). The findings suggest that 4-H staff members who indicated that programs are fair or poor in promoting values that are supportive of cultural diversity may likely to be receptive to improvements and are willing to offer programs inclusive of diverse audiences. In contrast, responders who indicated that programs were already good, very good, or excellent toward cultural diversity may have made efforts to promote diversity within their individual programs.

Question 9: Learning materials. In Table 12, respondents were asked if learning materials reflected the cultures and styles of various ethnic groups. Thirty-eight percent “neither agreed nor disagreed.” The next highest response was “agreed” at 27% of the responses.

Table 12

Learning Materials Reflect the Cultures and Styles of Various Ethnic Groups

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		2	8%
2	Disagree		2	8%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		10	38%
4	Agree		7	27%
5	Strongly Agree		5	19%
Total			26	100%

Most of the participants were unsure of learning materials, and data suggest that many may not have considered whether or not the materials reflect different cultures. A

curriculum that focuses on the experiences of mainstream Americans and largely ignores experiences and cultures of other groups can have negative consequences in the recruitment and retention of other groups.

Question 10: Influences to include multicultural content. What would influence you to include multicultural content in your 4-H program was measured by their responses to the open-ended question. In question 10, the survey respondents were given the opportunity for a text response to the question “What would influence you to include more multicultural content in your 4-H program?” In reviewing the responses, four main points emerged from the data regarding what would influence people to include more multicultural content (see Table 13).

First, fifteen percent of the participants stated that more funding is needed with statements such as, “people of color may not able to pay our user fees/registration fees for some 4-H events.” This statement demonstrates a huge assumption that people of color lack the financial resources to participate in 4-H programs. This participant was making the assumption that race dictates socioeconomic class, when it is possible that fees can deter White audiences as well.

Second, fifteen percent of the participants mentioned that resources are needed to develop new programs. One participant stated, “Program materials and resources.” Third, eleven percent of the participants mentioned if they had more participation from students of color that would influence them to include multicultural content in their program.

Table 13

What Would Influence You to Include More Multicultural Content in Your 4-H Program?

Theme
<p>A better connection with community representatives to help me recruit children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to the 4-H program</p> <p>I would include more multicultural content if there was a need. Ninety seven percent of our clients are White; we have very few clients from other cultural.</p> <p>I like diversity in my programs and providing youth with more multicultural content helps them see the beauty and variety in the world around them</p> <p>If there was a need in my county I would address it</p> <p>The funds to do so</p> <p>More resources</p> <p>Based on current 4-H participation, there is a need to diverse participation. However, participation differs from year-round to summer. During the summer, mostly whites and few people of color participate in 4-H. Yet, throughout the year, 4-H participation is strongly represented by Blacks. I would like a more diverse group throughout the entire year, not solely during specific seasons. Therefore, the diversity of the participation of my 4-H program will be influenced by those currently participating.</p>

Finally, 8% of the participants stated a concern about how to increase participation from students of color. One participant stated that “I would include more multicultural content if there was a need. Ninety-seven percent of our clients are White; we have very few clients from other cultures.” One participant states concern of including multicultural content and speaks to the biases of the current participants,

I would love to include more multicultural content and have tried. I am met with a lot of resistance from the parents who think I am trying to move their children away from their traditional (read: White and Christian) values. I brought apples and honey today to introduce Rosh Hashanna. No one ate any.

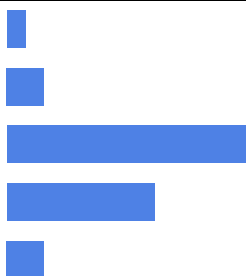
The themes that emerged included needing more funding, program materials and resources, more participation, and need. The comments such as needing more resources and funding demonstrates how the 4-H staff is focusing only on current resources and are not exploring ways to leverage the resources they do have to benefit all youth. Their comments suggest that there are no other alternatives, and no plan B therefore the staff appeared to be content with traditional program practices. It is important to note that some participants stated “if there was a need” they would then consider including more multicultural content. This comment demonstrates how the process of becoming a more inclusive 4-H program can be complicated by the fact that some 4-H staff live in sparsely populated areas where social change is slower and they do not understand why the issue is important. The findings highlight the misconception that diversity is not in every community. Although some “staff feels that their community may be relatively homogenous in terms of race and ethnicity, there are other distinct groups whose need must be taken into consideration” (Lam & Cipparrone, 2008, p. 4). Youth in all communities, including rural communities, will attend diverse colleges and participate in a diverse workforce. Therefore, if 4-H youth are not introduced to differences, they may fall victim to biases and prejudices and will not be prepared for a culturally diverse world.

Question 11: Does cultural background make a difference? The survey participants were asked if they think that the 4-H staff’s ethnic, racial and/or cultural background makes a difference in how they connect with students of color. Fifty-percent of the responded “sometimes” and 31% responded “most of the time.” A majority of the

participants agreed that the staff racial and ethnic background can impact how they connect with youth. These data have raised questions about a possible need for a more representative of different racial and or cultural background of the 4-H staff population.

Table 14

Do You Think That the 4-H Staff's Ethnic, Racial, and/or Cultural Background Makes a Difference in How They Connect with Students of Color?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		1	4%
2	Rarely		2	8%
3	Sometimes		13	50%
4	Most of the Time		8	31%
5	Always		2	8%
	Total		26	100%






For question 11, there were mixed results regarding whether or not the 4-H staff's ethnic, racial, and cultural background made a difference in how they connect with students. A large majority of the participants agreed that on occasions, they felt that their race and ethnicity impacted how they connected with students of color. This impact may determine how long students of color participate in the 4-H program. This finding supports the literature in that "serving culturally diverse audiences suggest that some minority participants persist in educational programs longer when they are instructed by individuals who share the same cultural background" (Grogan, 1991, p. 1). This is important because based on the racial demographics of the 4-H staff participants and the demographics across the state, if it is assumed that staff will connect better with students

of the same racial background, then students of color may not connect as well with the predominantly White staff in 4-H. Researchers Reyes-Blanes and Daunic (1996) suggest that cultural differences between educators and youth may account for key differences between experiences of traditional White audiences and students of color. When they do not share a common culture, educators need to use equitable pedagogical practices that vary according to student needs and the educator's preferred style (Reyes-Blanes & Daunic, 1996). In a perfect world, the race of a 4-H staff member should not matter. When 4-H staff connect with students of color, they can establish patterns that engage youth in participation.

Question 12: Recruitment efforts. In Table 15, respondents particularly agreed that recruiting efforts in their county 4-H program encourages students of color to enroll in 4-H: a majority 62% of respondents reported that they agreed, while 15% strongly agreed and 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Table 15

Recruitment Efforts in My County 4-H Program are in Place to Encourage Students of Color to Enroll in 4-H

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		1	4%
2	Disagree		1	4%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		4	15%
4	Agree		16	62%
5	Strongly Agree		4	15%
Total			26	100%


The majority of the 4-H staff have some type of recruitment policy in place to enroll in 4-H. This is a positive in that some effort is taking place. Their recruitment policy should be a comprehensive process with administration support. Many students of color experience a variety of institutional barriers that result in limited or no access to 4-H program. However, the 4-H staff needs to consider why their efforts and attempts sometime fail to reach students of color. The staff should ask themselves if their recruiting efforts respond to specific needs and barriers of diverse youth. It does not matter how the materials are designed, but if the materials are not reflective of students of color it is unlikely that youth will participate.

Question 13: Adequate role models. In Table 16, the respondents were asked if 4-H had an adequate presence of role models from different ethnic groups. Twenty-seven percent responded “neither agreed nor disagreed” and 35% disagreed.

Role models are important in that they inspire and encourage youth of all ages. The findings suggest that there is some presence of role models from different ethnic groups. The results of this finding are consistent with past findings that suggest that “adult minority role models in the agricultural industry should be incorporated into 4-H programs” (Alston & Crutchfield, 2009, p. 8). On the other hand a larger majority of the participants disagreed. The 4-H staff that disagreed could look for new opportunities to incorporate role models of color. This is important because youth of color want to see themselves in these roles because they can enhance their perceptions of 4-H programs and boost their confidence participation.

Table 16

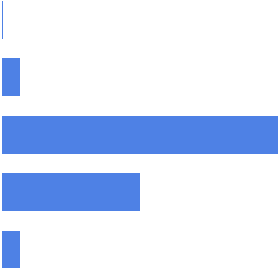
4-H Has Adequate Presence of Role Models from Different Ethnic Groups

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		3	12%
2	Disagree		9	35%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		7	27%
4	Agree		5	19%
5	Strongly Agree		2	8%
Total			26	100%

Question 14: Awareness of culture. When respondents were asked to rate their awareness regarding the different cultures, and overwhelming 62% responded “good” on their level of awareness. The remaining 31% responded “very good,” and 4% responded “fair” and “excellent” (see Table 17).

Table 17

Awareness Regarding Different Cultures





#	Answer		Response	%
1	Poor		0	0%
2	Fair		1	4%
3	Good		16	62%
4	Very Good		8	31%
5	Excellent		1	4%
Total			26	100%

In this study, a majority of the participants demonstrated some awareness of different cultures. The finding connect with the literature in that in a research study by Williams (2001), she determined that 4-H staff should “increase their knowledge base of different cultures to begin the journey to accomplishing cultural competence so programs may be designed for cultural inclusion of diverse youth and volunteers” (p. 2). However, awareness alone does not necessarily result in acceptance of cultural differences. Therefore, the findings suggest that the 4-H program needs to build upon this knowledge in creating a more inclusive environment. In addition, the 4-H program with awareness the 4-H staff should acknowledge that students of color have diverse perspectives although the 4-H programs are not influenced by these perspectives.

Question 15: Importance of diversity. When respondents were asked if diversity was important in their 4-H program 42% both “strongly agreed” and “agreed.” Surprisingly, another 12% strongly disagreed (see Table 18).

Table 18

Diversity is Important in My 4-H Program






#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		3	12%
2	Disagree		0	0%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		1	4%
4	Agree		11	42%
5	Strongly Agree		11	42%
Total			26	100%

An overwhelming majority of the participants indicated that diversity was important to their county 4-H program. However, some noted that it was not important. The participants who agree will likely promote diversity; however those who disagree will likely generate resistance. Those participants that disagreed may work in rural counties and feel that diversity may not be as important. This finding connects with the findings in question 10. Diversity programs should be a priority in preparing all youth a diverse society. The resistance to change can be critical to the 4-H programs survival. The 4-H organization should consider the lesson learned from the business sector; adapt to the changing society and technological advances or go out of business. The findings suggest that 4-H staff should pick up on the subtle cues that society is changing and remember what business they are in; the business of providing positive experiences for all youth. When I think about why I entered this profession it was not about the money I could make, but to make a difference in the lives of all youth.

Question 16: Efforts made to increase diversity. In question 16, respondents were asked if efforts are being made to increase participation of students of color. Fifty percent “agreed” and 23% “strongly agreed.” Most of the respondents felt positive about their efforts to increase participation (see Table 19). The findings indicated that efforts are taking place to increase participation of students of color. The 4-H staff effort provides an indication of the positive perceptions they have of students of color. This finding is consistent with the literature in the “positive perceptions toward multicultural education, inclusion, and will influence the motivations and actions of adults toward creating a diversity-inclusive environment” (LaVergne, 2013, p. 2).

Table 19

Efforts Are Being Made to Increase Participation of Students of Color

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		1	4%
2	Disagree		1	4%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		5	19%
4	Agree		13	50%
5	Strongly Agree		6	23%
Total			26	100%

Question 17: Planning 4-H programs. In question 17, respondents were asked when planning your 4-H program, how important it is for you to include multicultural content. Fifty-percent thought was ‘very important’ to include multicultural content in planning their 4-H programs. Six percent thought it was ‘neither important nor unimportant’ and extremely important (see Table 20).

The findings suggest that the majority feel that including multicultural content in their programs was important. Although the staff was making strides in to include multicultural content, their values and beliefs must be consistent with their behaviors. In comparing some of the findings, there is a little conflict between what the staff say is important and what actions they are taking to reach students of color. This may indicate a need for 4-H staff to seek resources and new opportunities in preparation for a diverse society. In addition, when including multicultural content, the question lies in how

effective are these efforts because if the content fails to validate the culture of students of color, their work and effort are in vain.

Table 20

When Planning Your 4-H Program, How Important Is It for You to Include Multicultural Content?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Not at all Important	0	0%
2	Very Unimportant	0	0%
3	Neither Important nor Unimportant	6	23%
4	Very Important	14	54%
5	Extremely Important	6	23%
Total		26	100%

Staff Development

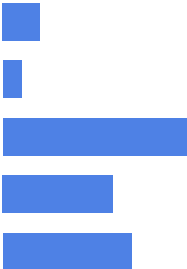
Assessing the training needs of 4-H staff helped to determine and identify any gaps between knowledge, skills and abilities needed to recruit and retain students of color. This assessment served as a diagnostic tool for determining needs to help staff and the 4-H youth development program to accomplish their goals. These results were more in agreement regarding training needs.

Question 18: 4-H support services. 4-H survey participants responded to their training needs. In question 18, the participants were asked if the 4-H State staff provided support services to recruit and retain students of color once they enroll in 4-H. The rating scale ranged from “never,” “rarely,” “somewhat,” “most of the time,” and “always.”

Thirty-eight percent responded “sometimes,” 23% responded “most of the time” and 27% responded “always” (see Table 21).

Table 21

4-H State Staff Provides Support Services to Retain Students of Color Once They Enroll in 4-H






#	Answer		Response	%
1	Never		2	8%
2	Rarely		1	4%
3	Sometimes		10	38%
4	Most of the Time		6	23%
5	Always		7	27%
Total			26	100%

This finding demonstrates how unprepared some of the 4-H staff are in retaining students of color. The findings suggest that the state and 4-H staff could do more to contribute to the development of support services to retain students of color once they enroll in the 4-H program. Based on the findings, the 4-H program has no defined set of principals or strategy in place that enable staff to work effectively with students of color. The 4-H state office should provide resources where 4-H staff can seek skills and strategies to support all students.

Question 19: Instruments and techniques. In question 19, the survey participants were asked if the state 4-H staff provided a variety of techniques for working with students of color. Fifty percent “neither agreed nor disagreed,” 23% “agreed,” and 12% “strongly agreed” (see Table 22).

Table 22

4-H State Staff Provides a Variety of Instruments and Techniques for Working with Students of Color

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		2	8%
2	Disagree		2	8%
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree		13	50%
4	Agree		6	23%
5	Strongly Agree		3	12%
Total			26	100%

Considering the many training opportunities offered to 4-H staff during the year, based on the findings very few focus on key multicultural practices. This may also be deemed worrying given that efforts to train 4-H staff are not inclusive of the perspectives and backgrounds of students of color. This finding also suggests that the State office has not considered working with students of color a priority in its programming efforts. This speaks volumes to why the 4-H program continues to struggle with reaching students of color. If there are not support services and training opportunities, the staff will not assume that working with students of color is a priority.

Question 20: Classes to train staff. In question 20, the survey participants were asked if the 4-H state office offered classes to help train staff in program from a multicultural perspective, would you take them. Forty-six percent of the participants would “likely” take classes from a multicultural perspective if the 4-H state office

provided them. Twenty-four percent were “undecided” and 27% were “very likely” to participate in additional opportunities (see Table 23).

Table 23

If the State 4-H Office Offered Classes to Help Train Staff in 4-H Programs from a Multicultural Perspective, Would You Take Them?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very Unlikely		0	0%
2	Unlikely	■	1	4%
3	Undecided	■■■■	6	23%
4	Likely	■■■■■■■■■■	12	46%
5	Very Likely	■■■■■	7	27%
Total			26	100%

The findings suggest that although many staff members responded positively about working with students, this question demonstrate that the limited enthusiasm among some staff willing to participate in trainings. This is in total contrast to previous responses. The 4-H staff value diversity, but are unwilling to initiate a change. This connects with the literature in that avoidance of or reluctance to initiate or participate in a culturally diverse coalition, due to fear mistakes, competition or conflict must be overcome (Smith, Miller, Archer, & Hague, 2013). Introducing cultural relevance can be difficult because existing assumptions about ways to work with youth need to be changed. This change is essential if the 4-H program want to remain relevant in the future.

Question 21: Staff development. In question 21, the survey participants responded to a series of questions regarding staff development. First the participants were asked if the 4-H staff represented a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Nine of the 26 participants responded “disagreed” and 5 “strongly disagreed” meaning that the 4-H staff across the state is not as representative as it should be. Second, the participants were asked if the 4-H program had a systematic multicultural staff development program only three out of 26 agreed. When asked if the 4-H provided opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding about racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, only seven agreed. Last, the participants were asked if 4-H provided opportunities to incorporate multicultural content into curriculum materials only eight agreed (see Table 24).

Table 24

Staff Development

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	<i>M</i>
1	4-H county staffs are from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.	5	9	6	4	2	26	2.58
2	The 4-H program has a systematic comprehensive, multicultural staff development program.	3	7	13	2	1	26	2.65

Table 24

(Cont.)

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	<i>M</i>
3	Staff development program provide opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding about racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.	2	3	14	5	2	26	3.08
4	4-H provides opportunities on how to incorporate multicultural content into curriculum materials.	2	5	11	7	1	26	3.00

Because the highest numbers for most questions are in the “neither agree nor disagree” column, the respondents appear to be unsure about what resources were available, what training was available, and lack of awareness concerning the race and ethnicity of their colleagues across the state. The responses made it evident that the staff needed clarity on what resources, if any, were available.

Question 22: Training needed. In reviewing the responses, one main point emerged regarding what training is most needed to equip 4-H staff to work with a culturally diverse population. First, 27% stated more training on different areas of diversity such as, “training on different cultures.” Second, 15% stated “not sure” what training is most needed. The remaining responses varied, however they strongly focused on the need for understanding how to make connections with diverse youth and their

families. One participant stated, “Blending youth of various races and cultures in a non-confrontational way, in rural counties sometimes our programs are stereotyped as being only for this race or this cultural group when that is not the case at all” (see Table 25).

Table 25

Training That is Most Needed

We need to focus on the learning styles of our public . . . not every culture responds the same.

Better understanding of just common/every day family life amongst populations of color (how to better relate to the youth on their level). I am a white female and I've learned more from my black female coworker about her color than any other training - her work/relationship with youth has been the best asset as I learn how to better work with youth of color in my county :)

I believe in order to understand a culture; there must be face-to-face interaction and exposure

Stop hiring small minded people who have no desire for cultural diversity. I get asked several times a week if I'm a Christian. It's weird. Be bold and make the statement that cultural, religious, ethnic, sexual, and gender are important to our program and are expected. People need to know how to listen and appreciate other cultures without assuming that listening means someone is trying to convert you. It's not a war; we can all win.

Blending youth of various races and cultures in a non-confrontational way, in rural counties sometimes our programs are stereotyped as being only for this race or this cultural group when that is not the case at all.

These findings shows how unprepared the 4-H staff are in recruiting and retaining students of color and illustrates those efforts to provide training for staff need to be elevated. These findings clearly show that the majority of the participants feel that they lack in the necessary resources needed to recruit and retain students of color. This is consistent with the literature in that 4-H staff “perceived that new approaches to reaching

diverse clientele were necessary for success” (Schauber, 2001, p. 2). However, it is clear from the responses that some realize there is a bigger issue concerning staff wanting to maintain the status quo. One participant stated,

Stop hiring small minded people who have no desire for cultural diversity. I get asked several times a week if I’m a Christian. It’s weird. Be bold and make the statement that cultural, religious, ethnic, sexual, and gender are important to our program and are expected. People need to know how to listen and appreciate other cultures without assuming that listening means someone is trying to convert you. It’s not a war; we can all win.

This was suggested in the literature that 4-H should “hire professionals who already value differences and have the skills to work with culturally diverse groups” (Schauber & Castania, 2001, p. 2). The above results connected with the research question, what do 4-H staff feel they need in order to recruit successfully and work with students of color? The results are going to be meaningful to 4-H staff in the sense that they will assist in improving training opportunities. The results of this study are consistent with past findings and may suggest that 4-H needs to make more effort to provide the resources for staff. This finding has important ramifications for future training especially in light to working with students of color.

Summary

In this chapter, the data analysis results and discussion of the findings have been presented. The 4-H program can benefit from the research findings to better understand how staffs assess their abilities and resources related to recruiting and retaining students of color. The 4-H staff attitudes; whether positive or negative are likely to influence how multicultural education is received in the future. Some of the findings from this study

have been found to be consistent with the findings of another related study on the recruitment and retention of students of color such as Cano and Bankston (1992) that recognized that materials and activities should be adapted to address the needs of youth. Moreover, some of the findings have brought new knowledge to the body of research such as the disconnect between 4-H and state staff support services available to the increase participation within the 4-H program. In the next chapter, the implications of the findings from the focus group sessions and curriculum review research will be discussed.

CHAPTER V

FOCUS GROUP AND CURRICULUM REVIEW FINDINGS

This chapter will incorporate the findings and analysis derived from the focus group sessions and curriculum review. As stated in Chapter III, four people participated in the qualitative focus group sessions and curriculum review. Findings related to the research questions that guided the study will be discussed. Data were analyzed to identify and describe the relationship between the 4-H staff and their efforts to reach students of color. The focus group data analysis was comprised of four sections and the data generated will be presented as follows. The first section discusses findings from the focus group participants during the initial focus group interview. The focus group participants were subsequently given the opportunity to review the results of the survey data. The second section discusses comments and examples from the focus group participants regarding the survey data. The third discusses the 4-H programs and curriculum. And the last section discusses the review of the 4-H curriculum from a multicultural perspective.

Qualitative Focus Group Findings

Qualitative data analysis revealed four overarching themes that emerged from the focus group interview sessions. Each theme is listed below followed by its description. Additionally, the comments from the participants are presented as excerpts to illustrate the essence of each theme.

Theme 1: Barriers to Participation

In the focus group session, the participants discussed a variety of barriers that hindered the participation of students of color in 4-H programs. These factors include a lack of resources and volunteers and language barriers. Understanding participants' perceptions can guide decisions regarding how the 4-H state office can provide support and possibly remove these obstacles.

Lack of resources and volunteers. According to the focus group participants, the 4-H program lacked the resources needed to recruit volunteers or hire staff to adequately serve diverse audiences. Volunteers were important because the shortage of human capital can make or break a 4-H program. For example, the ratio between 4-H paid staff and the potential number of youth that 4-H may reach can be 1:72,000 in large urban counties. With the statistical odds against 4-H staff, volunteers are needed to reach youth in summer programs, schools, and communities. Volunteers provide the foundation of the 4-H program, keeping programs going and youth active. The focus group participants indicated that the need to recruit and sustain volunteers was not only critical to their program efforts, but time-consuming, as well.

Focus group participants mentioned the possibility of providing a stipend. Betty asked: "Wouldn't it be great if we could give a stipend to 4-H leaders?" Rhonda added, "I like the idea of a stipend or some support, not necessarily like a salary, but some type of support that a volunteer could have if it is professional development." Kim stated, "We need to invest in staff, and we need to invest in resources to build a volunteer system."

The 4-H staff should be cognizant that offering a stipend may change the dynamics of the 4-H program, including subjecting volunteers to laws that govern employees. In addition, for evaluation purposes, the 4-H staff calculates the value of time volunteers give and reports the economic impact of dollars saved. If 4-H staff provided a stipend, they would lose the economic impact and justification for why the program is needed. Pam adds:

Because once we have a volunteer system in place the children will come, we never lack in children who want a place to belong; young people want a place to belong, a place to master, a place to be independent. We need that place where they can learn generosity. Those are the essential elements that we talk about every day. Also, the only way we get to that is by putting them in situations where they have that trusted volunteer leader, so if I could revamp the 4-H program, I would throw a lot of money at it so we could pay people to help us with outreach.

The findings suggest that the 4-H staff must develop and sustain an effective volunteer system. Because volunteers are needed for 4-H programs, selecting volunteers who have the requisite skills and abilities was often challenging, frustrating, and perceived as a time-consuming process. I agree that volunteer management does require more time; however, the 4-H staff must realize that volunteers can provide support in areas where staff may be lacking in skill level or lacking the time to implement programs. This type of effort can free critical staff time. The participants revealed that the motivation and the retention of volunteers were just as important as retaining students of color. Volunteers lead clubs, present workshops, and plan and conduct events. Volunteers increase the capacity of the 4-H workforce and limited volunteers impact the ability of 4-H programs to reach more youth.

Volunteers can enhance the connections between ethnic groups and can build a bridge to reaching more diverse youth. These findings also suggest the critical need for improved volunteer management practices to help alleviate issues with recruiting and recognition. This is consistent with the literature in that volunteer management practices have not kept pace with the changing volunteer climate (Lynch & Russell, 2009). Pam discussed a recent meeting she conducted to recruit volunteers and diverse students. She stated:

I had a meeting with the housing authority yesterday, and they kept asking the question “When can you come out and do this?” My response was that I needed resources as in manpower. There has to be a volunteer that does this. I will be willing to train a volunteer, but that person would have to be a club leader. Sometimes as a 4-H agent, no matter what the audience looks like, the biggest challenge is finding a volunteer that can give of their time.

Rhonda shared that “trying to find someone as a volunteer that could be an extension of you and who is accepted in the community does not happen overnight.”

These findings suggest that the problem may lie in the image 4-H was conveying to potential volunteers. The 4-H staff needs to evaluate where they are placing recruiting materials. For example, if they want 4-H volunteers who are bilingual in Spanish, then place recruitment materials at a library branch that serves Spanish-speaking youth and adults. Most importantly, the 4-H staff does not have to look like the audience they are trying to recruit. Therefore, the 4-H staff needs to be careful of the image they portray to potential volunteers.

Pam shared, “Many times people want the services, but not many want to step up and take the lead.” This finding suggests that commitment is an issue and recruiting

long-term volunteers may be a challenge. The literature states that today's volunteers are far less likely to stay in volunteer roles for extended periods of time (Lynch & Russell, 2009). The findings also suggest that the 4-H organization should provide a variety of short-term opportunities for volunteers to get involved in the 4-H programs.

Language barriers. The focus group participants discussed language as limitation to the recruitment and retention of students of color. Language was important because without a shared method to communicate, involvement in 4-H can be a difficult pathway to reach students of colors and their families. For example, Pam stated, "Language can be a barrier—maybe not so much with the kids, but sometimes with their parents. That is when we run into some issues." Kim said, "The challenge that I had this summer is a language barrier. I did not have many Hispanic/Latino youth, but I did have an Asian youth that did not speak a lot of English."

The focus group participants were discouraged with the lack of financial resources to translate materials to a different language and hire someone to interpret. The findings suggest that the language barriers may generate negative feelings and prevent students of color from seeking the necessary information needed to participate. More importantly, no one mentioned alternatives that they may have worked through or around to reach more students of color. Evidence also showed that staff needs strategies to overcome language barriers. This finding is consistent with the literature in that 4-H staff had "perceptions that language and culture was a barrier to delivering educational programs to culturally diverse groups" (Schauber, 2001, p. 2). Without the ability to

communicate in English, 4-H registration procedures, programs and activities can overwhelm students of color and their families.

The 4-H staff explored the key issues and limitations for the recruitment and retention of students of color. 4-H staff must understand these barriers and respond by adjusting their programs (Etling, Reaman, & Sawi, 1993). It was important to identify the barriers that limit or deny participation and equal access to 4-H programs.

Accessibility is important because the staff cannot design effective strategies without identifying and understanding the barriers. The extent to which students of color face multiple barriers impacts the level of participation. These findings are consistent with the literature in that “capturing the volunteer potential of diverse community members will enrich organizations by expanding the number of volunteers, by making services more culturally appropriate, and by bringing diverse viewpoints to inform practice” (as cited in Hobbs, 2001).

This is an important step in identifying the gap between current practice and recommended practices to reach more youth. However, it is equally important to note that no one mentioned adapting new strategies or techniques to address these barriers to participation. An explanation for this may be the lack knowledge, skill level, motivation, or even an unwillingness to entertain any ideas that do not fit with previously held beliefs or to challenge what has been done over the past decade. All of these potential explanations are factors that were revealed throughout the findings.

As a former 4-H agent, I found myself in their shoes facing the same challenges and yet expecting different results. This became self-evident to me as the researcher as I

compared my personal experiences with the literature and what is taking place today.

Analyzing the findings of this study has demonstrated that 4-H has not changed. These patterns seem to be consistent with previous studies, and yet no one has a solution. 4-H staff can now reflect on the issues and search for culturally relevant and multicultural solutions that encourage participation. The staff can reflect on these findings because no one has reviewed the 4-H program from a culturally relevant and multicultural perspective, identifying important shortcomings within the overall 4-H organization.

Theme 2: Assumptions That Might Hinder Work with Students of Color

Another major theme that emerged from the data concerns the assumptions 4-H staff has that might hinder their work with students of color. Three subthemes become apparent from the findings: breaking down stereotypes, the misconceptions of 4-H staff, and the importance of cultural awareness.

Stereotypes. All focus group participants concurred that stereotypes can be harmful because they judge a person solely on his or her inclusion within a particular group. Acknowledging stereotypes was important because this helps break down the prejudices and biases to create an environment that brings people together. The participants indicated the need to know the youth that they work with and their abilities rather than relying on racial or ethnic stereotypes or prior experiences with other students of similar backgrounds. Although they did not acknowledge their stereotypes, they provide examples of some that were mentioned by others in the field. Betty stated that

Stereotypes can be limiting factors in our work because we have to take those glasses off and then work with people where they are. Having that said, sometimes kids come to us with stereotypes and they think a certain way and it

takes us some time to help them think differently and look at things from different viewpoints.

This finding suggests that the kind of stereotyping to which the staff is referring assumes a dominant and subordinate role, when in fact, as Betty suggested, everyone can be a victim of stereotyping. Therefore, both youth and adults can feel the consequences. From a reversal of circumstances perspective, the focus group participants can begin to understand the impact stereotyping can have on students of color. Rhonda suggested a need to "help break down the stereotypes and work with youth to bring their comfort level to a point where they see me there to help and assist." Kim added, "I agree with breaking down stereotypes, but it is always easier said than done." The participants defined breaking down stereotypes as a method to challenge assumptions made about a group's character or attributes. Betty explained her interpretation of stereotypes, "Maybe a stereotype would be that all 4-H'ers who are from black families are Low Resource—or that they live in section 8 type housing. Another stereotype may be that the A&T agents work with black 4-H families." When it comes to breaking down stereotypes, Rhonda suggested "allowing and getting youth to have a better understanding of others." This is consistent with the literature in that "managing diversity involves going beyond stereotypes and developing authentic relationships with diverse others" (Gear, 1992, p. 2). The finding suggests that the 4-H staff is becoming aware of tendencies to hold negative stereotypes of students of color. What is also suggested is that although the participants are in agreement concerning stereotypes, there was little evidence that they have made a conscious effort to correct any inaccuracies within their 4-H program.

Misconceptions about working with students of color. There are misconceptions about how to work with students of color that include disregarding racial differences, program needs for students of color, and opinions of affirmative action policies. First, the 4-H staff discussed the misconceptions concerning racial difference. The idea of ignoring or overlooking racial and ethnic differences to promote harmony was a strategy one 4-H staff person stated she used in working with diverse youth. Betty stated, “One of the biggest things I’ve done is programmed without seeing color. In other words, what I have done, I would do for anybody.” By not acknowledging ethnic differences, Betty may have denied the youth she was trying to reach their cultural identity and unconsciously ignored the contributions and perspectives of students of color. In contrast, Pam stated, “It is important to notice the differences and use that to educate others about how important it is that we are all different.”

The 4-H staff also revealed how their unconscious biases influenced their expectations and actions. The data revealed that some 4-H staff members have blind spots when it comes to their beliefs and values. Pam stated, “As a White woman, sometimes I have a White blind role, and I do not see discriminations—not because I do not want to, but because I do not know what to look for.” These finding suggest that the 4-H staff needs to learn to recognize when discrimination occurs and respond to it. The literature tells us that forms of discrimination are embedded into the way organizations and society run and are therefore harder to detect (Lam & Cipparrone, 2008, p. 4). Interestingly enough, although the staff claims that they do not see discrimination, subtle instances have been discussed throughout this study, such as: unequal access to services

because of language, inaccessibility of 4-H programs, and no reflection of diverse cultures in traditional programs. Becoming aware of blind spots and how they affect the interactions with students of color was the first step in providing a more inclusive 4-H program.

Second, the 4-H staff also had misconceptions about what types of programs were needed for students of color. The findings suggest that many times agents planned programs assuming they knew what was best for students of color. Pam stated, “At one time I was thinking I knew before asking what the best thing was for people.” Conducting a need assessment can provide valuable information to 4-H staff, enabling them to develop programs relevant to students of color. This means that the potential consequence of not completing an assessment is wasted time, money, and resources vital to the 4-H program. It is important to note that in the survey, most of the staff were comfortable with assessing the needs of students of color, and yet the evidence suggests that they may choose not to, resulting in wasted time and resources in program planning for students who are less likely to participate.

The last misconception noted regards the expectations for affirmative action to achieve balance participation and civil rights compliance. The 4-H programs have an “all reasonable efforts” statement to ensure that all people can participate and to increase the level of minority participation in 4-H Clubs. However, clarity on what “all reasonable efforts” means was unclear to these veteran 4-H staff members. At one point, Betty stated, “I’ve made all reasonable efforts to make my programs diverse and acceptable to all.” However, later in the conversation, she mentions, “We are required to make all

reasonable efforts, but I think it stops there. I don't know what a reasonable effort is. What does that really mean and can anybody help me make all reasonable efforts, more meaningful and more intentional operations?" Betty's comments indicate that just because there was an affirmative action policy in place, there is no need to do more. The affirmative action policies do not cover the work that the 4-H program must do to address systemic discrimination. The minimum guidelines for making all reasonable efforts to publicize the acceptance of diversity within the 4-H program should leverage media, including newspapers, Facebook, radio, and TV programs. In addition, minimum guidelines should include sharing the non-discriminatory message on all publications and including statements of accommodation on print materials.

Cultural awareness. Awareness of different cultures was significant when interacting with people from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It influenced how staff interpreted the world around them and influenced how they plan programs for youth. Pam stated, "It is important that we notice differences in people so we can take whatever culture this person has and not only celebrate it but say this is cool – it is different from what we do at home." Kim added it involved "helping people feel comfortable with our program and helping them feel welcomed by our program." Betty suggested "building those relationships and trying to find places where people of color meet and where they are comfortable, and to be invited into their circles."

The findings on the importance of cultural awareness are consistent with the literature. "An awareness and understanding of these different intercultural lifestyles will help Extension staff work more effectively with the racial minority groups and people in

their communities” (Yep & Hollenbeck, 1979, p. 7). Rhonda stressed the importance of marketing to new audiences who have not had prior connections or experiences to programs. “Marketing more of the leadership, volunteerism and community service components and what all they would be able to do in those areas would work better to me when working with students of color” and “we have to market our programs to a wider market,” said Rhonda. These findings also bring attention to what type of programs the 4-H staff are marketing to reach more youth. One reasonable explanation of these results could be that the programs they are marketing may not have the cultural appeal needed to reach students of color. When I was a 4-H staff member, I can remember reaching out through local newspapers and radio to recruit youth to participate. However, I did not realize at the time that I was marketing a Eurocentric educational model that only appealed to traditional 4-H audiences. Furthermore, it saddens me to realize that I, like most staff, worked hard to reach all youth while unconsciously pushing other youth away.

4-H staff also stressed the importance of the changing demographics and the need for 4-H to review the 4-H program and practices to address the needs of students of color. Pam states, “Going to any meeting or youth group, there is going to be a variety of color in the audience. Demographics are changing; the face of North Carolina is changing; and I think that we can expect that down the road, we are going to be seeing a variety of colors in our programs.” Along that same thought, Betty stated,

It is important to notice the differences and to use those differences to educate others about how important it is that we are all different, and I think that is important. So as we design and create experiences for young people, we create

them for the people that are there, not for the color of our skin or our ethnic heritage. Race matters and we should put ourselves in their shoes. However, (we should) create (experiences) with awareness that we are not cut from the same cloth, and we are not all the same culture.

Within the changing demographics, 4-H staff also discussed the need to change its image. Kim stated, “I would change how 4-H is viewed on the state and local level. Many people still see 4-H as more of an agricultural led program, and today that is not how to get youth of color involved.” Staff also stressed the importance of how increasing diversity within the 4-H program benefits the organization as a whole. Diversity brings new ideas and different perspectives from youth and adults from many different cultural backgrounds.

Thus, based on the findings, engagement was critical to the recruitment and retention of students of color. At the same time, the findings suggest that 4-H staff should invest in learning more about the unmet needs of students of color while diversifying their practices in response to those needs.

Theme 3: Training Needs to Successfully Recruit and Work with Students of Color

The last theme that emerged from the data was rethinking traditional training opportunities for 4-H staff to develop more inclusive programs. The focus group participants all agreed that the more knowledge they have about students of color, the more likely they will be able to provide educational programs to meet their needs. Comments suggested that education and training about different cultures would help them to understand, appreciate and respect differences. The results of this study are consistent with past findings in that training for 4-H staff to value diversity and develop skills is essential in bringing about organizational change (Schauber & Castania, 2001).

Kim commented, “I hope you continue to offer more opportunities for training—opening our eyes to how we can be more culturally sensitive.” Rhonda added “I would love to see more in service training.” Although the participants agreed on the need for training, finding time in their busy schedule adds to the limitations for reaching diverse audiences. Pam stated, “The training may be offered—we have to find more time to participate—or it has to fit the already overloaded schedule that 4-H has.” 4-H staff perceptions across the board were that their workload did not allow time needed to reach out to culturally diverse groups or to attend training. This finding is consistent with the literature in that 4-H perceptions of their current workload did not allow the time needed to reach out to culturally diverse groups (Schauber, 2001). The participants indicated that 4-H staffs tend to overload their working schedules. Kate stated, “We recruit and train volunteer leaders, conduct educational programs, lead discussions, evaluate programs, develop and maintain public relations, access community needs, and obtain financial resources.”

The 4-H program encourages staff to increase participation of youth in its programs, which may require more than a 40 hour work week. When I was an agent, the job required working at night and on weekends to plan, organize, supervise staff, and evaluate the local 4-H program. Because of the way the 4-H system is designed, 4-H staff had a tendency to try to be all things to all people, making managing the program a challenge. 4-H has specific programs; however individual counties may require agents to step outside traditional programs to meet the urgent needs of the youth. Therefore, the 4-H organization should narrow its focus, clearly define its programs and build on the strengths of the program. The findings from this study support the literature in that the

4-H program needs a more focused approach to maximize decreasing numbers of personnel and limited resources (Porter & Christenbury, 1999). Betty commented from reviewing the data:

I just wanted to say that I always go back to what's going to happen. As a result of taking this multicultural training, I am going to be a better agent; I am going to be more functional; I am going to be more intentional about how I speak to people, how I recruit people, how I create programs, and how I create opportunities for my own kids . . . We always have to ask ourselves, okay as a result of me doing this, what's the outcome on something else? I am getting input from training, what's my output going to look like and how can I intentionally created that output? I think we should do that for lots more things in our world of work.

These comments suggest that the 4-H staff was looking for reassurance that the 4-H organization and administration are committed to reaching out to students of color and adjusting the workload to make it more manageable. Support from administration is critical to the success of multicultural education. The findings suggest that 4-H staff lack a foundation on which to build a culturally relevant program. All programs must receive some level of support from administration because staff are accountable for the success or failure of any program initiative. Therefore, the training they do receive should not consist of the traditional diversity awareness trainings, but training should consistently strengthen, empower, and prepare the 4-H staff to provide meaningful learning experiences for all youth regardless of their race. Traditional diversity awareness trainings include publications and handouts on defining and valuing diversity. They also include policies on Affirmative Action, civil rights and equal employment opportunities. The diversity trainings do not focus on the ways staff might support students of color, but

educate staff about the value of diversity. Diversity trainings should not be a separate policy or handout, but practices should be embedded within the total program. Training should be on multicultural applications of existing curricula and programs to integrate multicultural education and diversity issues into the curriculum. To promote an equity-oriented 4-H program, training should provide support for skills needed to facilitate discussions about biases, stereotypes, as well as justice and equality.

This finding has important ramifications for future training, especially in light of culturally relevant practices. Professional development and training opportunities for the 4-H staff were important, but providing those resources to volunteers could benefit the program as a whole. Betty commented that “making sure that we not only have professional development for ourselves as 4-H professionals but we also do that for our volunteers is important because 4-H operates through trained volunteers, and if we think that we should do it all, we are crazy.” Based on the comment, providing training for staff and volunteers can make for a better-rounded program and therefore impact more students across the state. In Betty’s final comment she stated:

I am just hoping that we continue to keep the spotlight on cultural diversity and/or be sensitive in how we create programs, how we evaluate programs, and how we work with our general public. As we see the face of the state, we are more and more and more multicultural . . . being sensitive is going to be key to keeping our numbers current and keeping our numbers strong. We cannot continue doing business as usual, so I hope that maybe we will see the stronger efforts towards helping everyone get comfortable, and that is going to take time. Everyone is not comfortable, so we just have to forge forward and I think your study will be a continuation of getting comfortable, getting the information of where we are currently, and the reason why we need to move forward . . . thank you for helping us get to where we all need to be.

Adapting to change will require new skills that 4-H staff may not have mastered as yet. Developing and enhancing skills increases an awareness and understanding of how to accept differences. Training should not be viewed as a last ditch effort to meet the civil rights compliance but should be embedded into the everyday planning and programming needs of staff. This outcome is significant in that 4-H needs to stay ahead of the emerging trends and anticipate change. It is crucial to build these competency skills before it becomes essential for the organization's survival. The results of this study are consistent with the literature in that "as society changes, we must be ready to respond to those changes and ideally influence the direction of change" (Schauber, 2001, p. 2).

In summary, the focus group sessions revealed key areas the 4-H staff discussed that limit their ability to recruit and retain students of color. They include barriers to participation such as the lack of volunteers and language differences; assumptions that might hinder 4-H staffs' work with students of color, such as stereotypes and program needs; and the need for more training opportunities. The 4-H staff felt as though they were doing their best with the resources they had available, but in reality their unconscious biases have limited their outreach efforts. Examining possible biases was an important step in understanding how to reach more students of color. These findings suggest there is a need for increased understanding in this area.

Theme 4: Educational Approaches to Programs

The 4-H program provides educational programs that provide activities for youth within traditional and nontraditional settings. The information from this section was gathered from the focus group participants

Traditional 4-H programs. The 4-H staff members expressed concern that the 4-H program is perceived as a traditional agricultural based program. They perceived the rural image as problematic when attempting to recruit new audiences to the 4-H program. The focus group participants identified traditional programs as lacking diversity. For example, Pam stated, “In the 4-H Clubs, the majority of the youth are White.” Betty echoed the same sentiments when she stated that “our community club programs look pretty White.” Although these club programs continue to reach the traditional youth audiences, a focus group participant made the statement that 4-H clubs were still considered effective in youth development practices. Kim stated that 4-H clubs were “proven effective in developing life skills” and “traditional programs were the foundation of the 4-H program.” The effectiveness of the traditional program built on the fact that these youth participate on a long-term basis, therefore providing more time to enhance life skill development. All participants in the focus group agreed that the traditional program has a positive impact on youth involved although the programs lack diversity and interest for students of color. Traditional programs have always provided the foundation for the 4-H program, and research revealed that long-term traditional programs increase positive outcomes for youth. This means that the most effective 4-H programs have the least amount of diversity.

Non-traditional programs. The second subtheme that emerged from the data and linked to educational approaches was the 4-H non-traditional program focus. The characteristics of non-traditional programs included activities that were not long-term and non-community based. Non-traditional programs were based in public schools, after-

school activities, and summer enrichment programs across the state. All of the focus group participants made statements about the diversity being greater in the non-traditional programs. For example, Pam stated that "diversity is more even in the school programs or summer programs." Betty stated, "I would say that in summer programs we are more diverse in our population than in our community club program." Kim also stated, "Diversity is more even in summer programs and school enrichment programs." This means that because programs are located in public school classrooms, the demographics of the school will match the demographics of the 4-H participants. This is consistent with the literature in the "school enrichment is efficient for 4-H in reaching diverse youth in large numbers" (Tochterman, Carroll, & Steele, 2004, p. 1).

The findings spoke to the importance of considering other delivery methods to reach students of color. An area that did appear to have strong significance was how the 4-H traditional programs have been proven effective; however, focus group participants devote efforts to non-traditional programs. The participants consistently stated that the traditional programs produced positive outcomes. The findings suggest that school students who participate in less effective programs are not reaping the benefits of the long-term 4-H club programs. The findings suggest that the 4-H program tends to provide students of color with fewer quality experiences. However, the participants must consider the consequences of focusing time and resources on non-traditional programs because of the limited measurable impact. This is significant because research shows that kids who participate in traditional 4-H clubs are "more likely to be educationally motivated, have higher self-esteem and communicate more maturely than their peers"

(Cornell University Cooperative Extension, 2014, para. 3). There appears to be some resistance or fear to moving beyond traditional practices. Schaubert (2001) suggests that the 4-H organization may “fear putting effort into working with culturally diverse groups, because traditional audiences would perceive that it would be at their expense, and that traditional clientele have the power to affect performance evaluation and ultimately affect funding level” (p. 2). In addition, these findings suggest that there may be political influences on the level of engagement with students of color. Although there was some diversity in traditional programs, it was clear from the findings that school and summer programs became the predominant 4-H delivery mode and provided the only avenue to reach a large audience of diverse youth. The data also uncovered that the 4-H staff had not pursued any other delivery modes to reach diverse audiences. This seems to be a consistent pattern throughout the findings and appears related to the barriers of participation.

There was a general agreement among the participants that non-traditional programs currently provide the best method to reach students of color. These findings support the literature in that non-traditional programs are the most effective way to reach diverse audiences (National 4-H, 2010). One reasonable explanation may be that non-traditional programs presented in schools and after-school programs have a captured audience of diversity based on the diversity of the school. The findings also suggest that the youth who are currently using the 4-H curriculum are the traditional youth audience involved in the 4-H club program.

These findings are just as significant as the issues I faced ten years ago when I was a 4-H staff member. The traditional audience uses the 4-H curriculum, and the non-traditional programs were easy and required less time and effort. Moreover, ten years later the struggle to reach more diverse youth continues. This revelation speaks volumes for the need for culturally relevant practices. The findings also suggested the possible next steps to review the 4-H curriculum competencies so that at the very least, 4-H staff can work towards designing more culturally relevant program materials

Qualitative Focus Group Survey Feedback

The focus group participants were asked to review the multicultural rating scale survey adapted from the curriculum guidelines for multicultural education (Hernandez, 2001) and to provide feedback on the quantitative results. The focus group participants provided examples of working and establishing relationships with students of color; of how 4-H creates positive images of students of color; of how 4-H teaches youth that all cultures of all groups are relevant in society; and of their perspectives on expectations of, and recruitment efforts for students of color.

Working with Students of Color

Overall, participants made statements that indicated that they “didn’t have problems” when it came to working with students of color. There was no evidence to suggest that 4-H staff members in this study were resistant to working with students of color. However, based on previous comments, they may not truly recognize what the real problems and issues are concerning working with students of color. Pam stated, "There has never been a problem. The kids all learn and have fun, and they remember you for

years.” Kim added, “I’ve had very good participation with all groups, and I have not run into any serious problems or situations with any student of color.” She also stated that the youth she works with “work well together, they play well together, they talk, they communicate and in my particular county, when we have had a diverse population working together, it has been very positive. I have just not had any significant problems across the board.” The finding suggests that no major issues have evolved during their work with students of color.

The focus group participants valued the fact that their colleagues have similar expectations for all youth regardless of race. This finding connects with the literature in those communicating high expectations lets students of color know that you expect them to engage, perform, and achieve at high levels (Kozleski, n.d.). However, Betty wanted to bring attention to one comment in particular:

As you notice question number four “adapt your materials,” I feel like as an agent we do not know how to adapt materials adequately. You are also going to hear from agents who say it is not my job to adapt them; it is somebody else’s job to adapt the materials.

These findings demonstrate the lack of knowledge and motivation to reach more students of color. The notion of resistance seems to be an inevitable consequence of change, and it appears that the 4-H staff need time to work through change. The search for solutions may include a combination of organizational change, staff training, and revamping programs and curricula. The 4-H staffs are encouraged to meet the needs of all youth, which allows them flexibility to adapt materials. Many 4-H staffs’ work schedules can be overwhelming and may not allow time to adapt materials. Therefore, the 4-H

organization as a whole must see value in adapting materials and make reaching students of color a priority. If not, most will continue to follow the traditional programs they are given, even if they may fail to meet the needs of students of color.

Establishing Relationships

The focus group participants discussed the importance of establishing relationships and trust among diverse youth. Rhonda stated that “relationship building helps to gain trust” within the organization. Betty added that “relationship building is critical in helping them understand the backdrop for the 4-H program.” The perceptions of the 4-H staff members were that relationships and trust building, which take considerable time to accomplish, were essential as a means to establish credibility and understanding before delivering programs. Participants shared that relationships were the emotional scaffolding necessary to cross linguistic and cultural divides. Betty stated,

The cultural divide is so great—how we raise our children is probably somewhat different, and how they let their children participate in our programs is culturally different and so sometimes crossing that divide is difficult; therefore, relationship building is critical.

Their comments are consistent with the literature in that the “perceptions that relationship and trust building, which take considerable time to accomplish, were essential as a means of establishing credibility and mutual understanding, before attempting to deliver educational programs to diverse groups” (Schauber, 2001, p. 2).

Positive Images of Students of Color

The focus group participants were given the opportunity to discuss the survey results in order to obtain more elaborate explanations of the important issues. For

example, the focus group participants provided feedback in response to how 4-H creates positive images of students of color. Rhonda provided some examples. She stated, “Students of color held state offices, were ambassadors representing North Carolina 4-H at National Conferences, and were being selected to speak on panels about today’s issues and current events.” Betty added, “4-H creates these images each time they take a digital photo and upload it to facebook or other media outlets. Today, the opportunity to include images is so widely available and using people of all races, colors, and ethnicity is important.” Kim stated, “Positive images are created when programming includes children of color and is captured through voice, pictures or word of mouth.” These findings suggest that the 4-H staff is trying to create positive images of students of color. These positive images illustrate the importance of the accuracy of the portrayal of students of color without stereotypes and biases.

How 4-H Teaches Cultural Relevance in Society

The focus group participants were asked to respond to their colleagues’ answers to the question “How does 4-H teach youth that all cultures of all groups are relevant in society?” Rhonda stated, “Many workshops are offered to professionals and youth to learn about cultures outside of their own. The International Exchange program was one of the best ways I have seen for the educating of youth and cultures.” Betty added,

The opportunity to join the 4-H club that is inclusive of all is one of the first ways we teach youth about all cultures. No one is excluded based on his or her culture, race, heritage, religious affiliation, or financial status. In other words, we are an organization that will include any member five years of age and older.

Kim suggested, “Group relevance is taught during summer programming efforts, which are inclusive to all individuals regardless of their color.” This finding is in contrast with the literature in that cultural relevance is taught through the strengths of students of color by using cultural knowledge and prior experiences to make learning effective (Gay, 2000). Offering workshops and giving everyone the opportunity to join was a great start; however, programming efforts should also emphasize all students’ strengths.

Perspectives of Students of Color

The focus group participants provided examples of how 4-H teaches about the world that incorporates the perspectives of students of color. Rhonda stated that 4-H’s “use of diverse curriculum and materials creates and implements programs on diversity.” Betty added, “We do this by hosting events for all 4-H clubs. The 4-H citizenship focus, state 4-H congress and other citizenship, leadership and ambassador trainings help to open the doors to learning about all citizens. Some of our Juntos programs help us learn about the growing population in North Carolina’s Latino families.” When 4-H programs host days like Days of Caring and Martin Luther King Day, others are made aware of minorities who have made significant contributions to our nation. These methods are easy to implement, however they reinforce misconceptions about students of color because heroes are stemmed from the mainstream society and the individuals selected do not challenge the dominant society’s values. These findings are consistent with the literature in that these type of activities “result in a superficial understanding of ethnic cultures” (Banks, 1997, p. 224). The 4-H staff will need to consider other approaches

and the value all individuals can make, acknowledging gender, race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

Recruitment Efforts

The focus group participants shared the type of recruitment efforts that were in place to encourage students of color to enroll in 4-H. Rhonda stated, “Enrollment forms are in English and Spanish, brochures for summer programs are delivered to all schools, and all county-wide programs are advertised in our county newspaper.” Betty mentioned several strategies she has used to recruit students of color. She states,

We work alongside our Extension Advisory Council in identifying pockets of neighborhoods that could benefit from 4-H and then work with a church or community member to explore the development of the 4-H club. We have a monthly 4-H article in the Liberty Leader and a weekly article in the Courier Tribune. We have a weekly radio program. Each of these is ways we can encourage anyone to join 4-H, including people of color.

Kim added, “Recruitment efforts include leaving 4-H flyers in different locations throughout the county, having a Facebook presence, and utilizing the county website. Many efforts come from afterschool programs that ask for 4-H to provide leadership efforts.” Pam commented,

I lucked up on the county. In the county I was in, I had an A&T 4-H Agent and an NCSU Agent, and I am White and she is African American. So, I always ask if I make you feel uncomfortable asking you questions, please let me know. I do not need to speak for your race or your culture, but how to ask questions and go from there. There are times when both of us went into an after school program that had a lot of children of color, and you know neither one of us were rejected because we both spoke differently. I guess it does make a difference when another person sees someone who looks like them or someone that does not look like them, but (that person) can go in and treat them with the respect that they deserve.

I interpret this quote to mean that this staff person would confide in her African American colleague about issues concerning how to work with students of color and felt comfortable asking her colleague about what is appropriate in the African American culture. The finding suggests the dominance and insensitivity in asking someone of a different race what is appropriate for a group of people, as if one person can speak for the majority. This is consistent with the literature in that “frequently, people of color find that when they are in the minority in an organization, they are asked to teach others about their culture, or to explain racism and oppression—rather than everyone taking an active part in educating themselves. Members of a culturally competent organization do not approach fellow members with stereotypical attitudes or generalize about an entire people based on an experience of one person” (Brownlee & Lee, 2014, p. 1). Pam commented,

We are just very lucky. I am in an urban county and so we got a lady on staff who is Hispanic and we have a very diverse staff, but it is because we have a very large staff. So I think it depends on where you are and the resources that you have on staff. We talked. I’ve been in this county for ten years and it’s only been three years since we had a Hispanic person on staff. She is EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) but in an urban county where people who come to our office speak Spanish as their home language. How far is that when we have someone that can communicate with them, so I think that we are very blessed but other counties may not have those resources.

It is evident that the 4-H staffs appreciate the diversity of their colleagues. The 4-H program should use diverse staff as an essential resource for optimizing educational programs and moving towards collaborative approaches. Diverse staff can help shape the 4-H culture and make it align with a changing society. The question lies in whether they are using staff to their full potential or are they still conforming to traditional program

practices. If this is the case, diverse staff will not fully address the need to reach students of color. A truly diverse 4-H program should include the perspectives of from all races and ethnicities.

Multiethnic and Multicultural Activities

In response to whether the 4-H activities were multiethnic and multicultural, Betty commented,

I was thinking that maybe when we look at our own programs as being multiethnic; we always have the feeling that we can do better. So, maybe that's where negative responses that we need to try harder or that we are just never quite where we want to be in order to start. Maybe, even though we are doing well, we always think we ought to be doing better and I think that is where the negativity comes in.

The 4-H staff seemed uncertain about the level of diversity within the 4-H activities. The participants' responses conveyed a lack of knowledge of whether or not the activities would be considered multicultural activities.

Including Multicultural Content

The focus group participants responded to the comments from their colleagues about what would influence them to include more multicultural content in their 4-H program. Based on the responses, Kim pointed out one key comment, "What stood out in my mind was the one that said if there is a need in my county I would address it. I mean I do not know how to take that. If I am not looking to expand what we are doing or whatever there is to do, I will do the best that I can." Kim added, "What popped out to me . . . I'm just trying to understand and if you are serving youth in general, why do you need more funds to serve more populations than you do other populations instead of

combining the populations together.” The literature suggests that “current educational programs and methods did not transfer directly to culturally diverse audiences and that they lacked the knowledge of what was culturally appropriate educational design” (Schauber, 2001, p. 2). Some participants were particularly surprised at the responses of whether or not staff adapts program materials to reach students of color. A possible explanation may be that staff appears to be hesitant regarding the role they should play in adapting educational materials. When I was a 4-H staff member, the 4-H State Office was responsible for developing curriculum because they had the expertise and the research background. In this study, some 4-H staff adapted materials, but this also raised the question as to how they are adapting materials, how is research supporting this adaptation, and is it making a difference in their ability to recruit and retain students of color.

The feedback from the survey brings to light the importance that certain 4-H staff placed on promoting diversity within their 4-H program. The focus group participants’ reflections revealed that 4-H has made some efforts to reach students of color, however current practices demonstrate that most do not have a clear understanding regarding what multicultural education entails. These results suggest that the 4-H staff should approach diversity efforts through a culturally pluralistic lens by gaining experiences and perspectives of students of color. While these results show effort, they also provide a baseline of data and suggest a need to redirect recruitment and retention efforts to reach more students of color.

Curriculum Review

The purpose of the curriculum review was to assess the effectiveness of the 4-H curriculum in meeting the needs of students of color. One participant commented on the process. Pam stated, "It has been a while since I've opened a curriculum or project books just to look at the pictures or to see if it was diverse in the people or the people in the book or if the activities touched on culture." Her comments raised questions about program effectiveness and suggested the need to check curriculum integrity from program development to implementation. Given that concern, the focus group participants and I analyzed the 4-H curriculum to determine the curriculum elements and level of integration of multicultural content.

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems produced a self-assessment guide for measuring a culturally responsive curriculum (see Appendix C). I chose this self-assessment guide because it had a simple format that was easy to adapt to the components of the 4-H curriculum. The review process consisted of two major steps. First, a review of the curriculum was based on curriculum elements such as topics, activities, people studied, and evaluation. Second, the focus group participants reviewed the curriculum based on Banks' (1997) four approaches to multicultural content integration: (a) contribution, (b) additive, (c) transformation, and (d) social action. The curriculum review determined the extent to which the curriculum featured culturally relevant ideas from a multicultural perspective.

Curriculum Elements

Topic/Issues. The focus group participants noted the variety of the 4-H curriculum topics, and all participants thought this was positive. Because of the variety in topics, they discussed how the curriculum was used primarily with 4-H clubs. Rhonda stated, “I have some 4-H clubs that use the club curriculum like the Bible, and some groups that come in are home school groups.” I interpreted this comment to mean that the 4-H curriculum, like the Bible, was considered to be an important foundational base to the belief system. The curriculum is to the 4-H program as the Bible is to Christians. She also stated, “Some groups that use the curriculum are home school groups, and sixty to seventy percent are affluent White.” The findings suggest that most of the youth that use the curriculum are home schooled groups. Users of the curriculum demonstrate an example of the youth audience that benefited from the 4-H club and curriculum program. As I reviewed the topics I noticed how the 4-H curriculum made a connection between experiential learning and inquiry-based learning. The participants noted that the 4-H projects are designed to help youth generate their questions and guide their learning. From robotics to gardening, the 4-H program offers a wide range of subjects in its curriculum.

Activities. The participants commented on how the curriculum was attractive and colorful and focused solely on subject matter projects and activities. Project curriculum books include member manuals, records and volunteer leader’s guides. The focus group participants all agreed that the quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The kinds of activities that youth are expected to complete were as different as the curriculum modules

themselves. Depending on the subject matter, 4-H youth are expected to set goals, build life skills, expand their vocabulary, and participate in service-learning activities. The 4-H activity guides filled with engaging experiences grow life skills youth need to be successful in life. The participants commented that the youth are expected to complete activities within their 4-H community-based clubs, at home, or possibly at school. Some project series come with a leader guide. The leader guide is designed for the 4-H traditional club volunteer leader in preparation for working with youth. This guide provides additional group activities and helpful hints for teaching about life skills and prepares volunteer leaders to understand the developmental stages of youth. The volunteer leaders use these activities to strengthen the understanding of content and reinforce project skills in individual project books. One participant commented on the use of the 4-H curriculum activities. Betty stated,

We use the curriculum in terms of designing some experiences at the county level and even at the cluster level in programming. We use some curriculum, but on the whole, I do not know that lots and lots of our community club members are using it. We use it in school enrichment but I just do not know how many people are actually using the curriculum. It is there as a basis, it is there as our support, but I would be curious to know what percentage are really using it.

The findings suggest that the 4-H staff are unsure of how often the curriculum is used in their county and those youth who do use the curriculum are home schooled. The literature suggests that curriculum from any subject area may be altered to include multicultural content (Gorski, 2013). It is great that the 4-H program offers a variety of subject matter topics; however in reviewing the topics, the curriculum did not include a variety of perspectives from students of color.

People studied. People from a variety of races, ethnicities and abilities were represented through pictures and graphics used in the curriculum modules. The focus group participants commented on how students of color are well represented in pictures throughout the pages of the curriculum. Pam stated, “It has been seven years since I have been on the curriculum committee. But, we would actually pick a curriculum and go through looking at pictures and looking at the processing to make sure that it was inviting or invited anyone to feel comfortable that they could associate with the people in the book.” One participant mentioned the fact that the 4-H curriculum may not be as representative as it should be in relation to meeting the needs of diverse students. Kim stated, “I think the 4-H curriculum was not as representative as it should be. Making materials more culturally friendly for all youth and updating cover photos all together will help.” This response demonstrated the need for the curriculum to reflect the experiences of diverse youth more broadly. The participants mentioned no other comments concerning the diversity of the curriculum. For people studied, the findings suggest that images of different ethnic youth within the curriculum demonstrate a conscious effort; however, pictures that depict the diversity are not adequate to support access and participation for students of color.

Evaluation. The focus group participants noted that the current 4-H curriculum was designed for and focused on three primary mission mandates: science, healthy living, and citizenship. The information and activities are arranged using the experiential learning model. This learning method was important because it allows students to solve problems, create practical applications, and make decisions in a controlled learning

environment. In each curriculum book, the youth was introduced to the topic through experience. The experience was followed by reflection, allowing the youth to explore the deeper meaning of the topic. Next, the youth generalizes what they have learned to other topics. Lastly, the youth applies what they learn to real-world experiences. This process is designed to encourage critical thinking to help engage in a more deliberate thought process. The participants noted that the experiential learning process contributes to an evaluative approach where youth are encouraged to answer questions to evaluate their understanding of the key concepts and life skills practiced in each activity. The focus group participants valued the experiential learning element of the curriculum but admitted that it was time consuming to complete. Betty stated, “I think our curriculum is pretty top notch; I like our curriculum, but my bigger questions is who uses it. What percentage of our clientele uses the 4-H curriculum?” To some extent, this uncertainty added to the questions of validity; is the 4-H curriculum reflective of diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds?

Multicultural Integration

The focus group participants spent time reviewing the curriculum from a multicultural perspective. Their interpretation of the 4-H curriculum was excellent, until they reviewed the curriculum from a multicultural lens. At this point, the participants’ perceptions of what is and what should be sparked discussions on the cultural relevance of the curriculum. The approaches for multicultural curriculum transformation range from slight curricular changes to a fully revised approach that includes social awareness and action conceptualizations (Banks, 1993). Using Banks’s four levels for the

integration of multicultural content, the focus group participants and I reviewed each level of content integration within the 4-H curriculum and identified at which level the curriculum constructs the students' knowledge.

Contributions approach. In the contributions approach, the curriculum structure should reflect mainstream knowledge and ethnic heroes, holidays, and themes. This approach reflected the least amount of multicultural education. In reviewing the 4-H curriculum, when Rhonda (a focus group participant) was asked to comment about the level of multicultural integration, she felt that the current curriculum was on the contributions level. Kim stated, "I have a very young group of youth in my current program, and I feel that this is the best level to start with and then move up from there. It seems easier to teach the young ones about this because many of their perceptions have not been swayed like older youth." As Kim stated, this is the first step and provides an easy way to incorporate some multicultural content, but the basic structure of the curriculum remains unchanged. The weakness with this approach "results in a superficial understanding of ethnic cultures. Focuses on the life-styles and artifacts of ethnic groups and reinforces stereotypes and misconceptions" (Banks, 1997, p. 130). In addition, it focuses on the success of heroes and fails to validate the experiences and struggles of students of color.

When asked to provide examples of this approach, Betty stated,

By celebrating particular holidays like Veterans Day and Martin Luther King Day, we offer leadership and citizenship activities that introduce youth to others in history who have made a difference in our lives. In our community, we participate in Dia De LaRaza and children's festival celebrating Latino Families.

Betty provided additional examples when she stated, “We have some materials including Latino Cultural Arts, Walk in My Shoes, and the 4-H Awareness Project on Aging.”

Rhonda stated,

We’ve presented programs with themed cultural events like Black History Programs and Cinco De Mayo that allowed clubs to do international days where students choose a country and learn the basics about the country and its customs by presenting it and having food and handouts to give to the audience.

The findings suggest that the 4-H staff are taking steps forward toward understanding, but hosting cultural celebrations is not enough. The literature suggests that cultural celebrations do not directly counteract the prejudices we may have about one another (Lam & Cipparrone, 2008).

Additive. The additive approach was the second level for the integration of multicultural content. This approach “consists of the addition of content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure” (Banks, 1997, p. 130). The participants commented that the examples of the pictures that depict diversity were repeated through all curriculum units reviewed, particularly the newer curriculum models. Another example of the additive approach is the Adventures in Diversity and Cultural Awareness curriculum, which is the only curriculum that reflects the best elements of a culturally conscious curriculum. It is intended to help youth gain global and cultural competence needed in today’s increasingly interconnected world and culturally diverse communities.

The discussion also drew attention to the number of multicultural curricula that was added to the plethora of 4-H modules. New curriculum modules were also consistent

with the literature, which states that the additive approach is “accomplished by the addition of a book, a unit, or a course to the curriculum without changing it substantially” (Banks, 1997, p. 121). Regardless of some diverse content into the curriculum, most of the information still resonated from a Eurocentric perspective. The findings suggest that there were only a few curriculum modules that added diverse perspectives. However, integrating multicultural content in all curriculum modules instead of making it a separate content focus creates a more inclusive program for all youth. The problem with this approach is that it reinforces the idea that the culture is not an integral part of the mainstream curriculum. Also, this approach does not change the overall curriculum to allow alternative points of view and inclusiveness from students of color. The consequence is that youth will never understand how the dominant and ethnic cultures are interconnected.

Transformation. This level promotes critical thinking questions about the societal status quo, while presenting alternative points of view (Banks, 1997). This approach would require substantial revisions in design and materials written from the perspectives of different cultural groups. Betty believes that some of the curriculum takes on a more transformation approach to multicultural integration. She states, “I believe that our curriculum allows youth to view cultures and build appreciation and awareness of all.” Kim added, “The hand of opportunities (experiential learning) promotes meeting, guiding and providing limitless opportunities for children of color.” I’m in agreement with their comments. However, as stated above, 4-H has a couple of curriculum modules that I would consider to be on this level. Unfortunately, this is not

transformed throughout all curricula and the materials do not include the perspectives of students of color. During this study, there was no evidence to suggest multicultural integration into the 4-H curriculum at the transformational level. Although this method of action connects with the application phase of the 4-H curriculum, without the transformative piece, it would be unlikely that youth make meaningful contributions to address societal problems.

Social action. The social action approach was the final level and was designed to lead students' exploration of ways that they can affect social change (Banks, 1997). The focus group participants indicated that the 4-H curriculum did demonstrate work towards the social action aspect. For example, the 4-H learning materials are designed to have an intentional educational objective(s) that supports one or more outcomes of the 4-H logic models. At this level, youth gain knowledge, take action, and the outcome should be a change in societal conditions. For example, in the 4-H citizenship project, youth are encouraged to increase knowledge of problems, history, and policies; to change behavior or act upon what they have learned; to have an attitude conveying the ability to positively affect community needs; to develop skills to increase civic engagement; and to aspire to positively affect community and world issues. When there is a change in behavior or the youth act upon what they have learned, they will personally seek civic engagement for themselves and will create opportunities to affect change in the community and provide access to places where knowledge can be gained. Finally, when societal conditions were improved due to a youth action taken, environmental improvement will proceed while

individuals develop citizenship qualities. Because individuals develop personally, the civic improvements will increase.

The social action approach includes all elements of the transformation approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and take action related to the issue or problem studied (Banks, 1997). Based on the research finding, several conclusions were derived. First, concerning the curriculum elements, the findings suggest that the 4-H curriculum offers a wide variety of topics. The results of this study are consistent with the literature in that the curriculum consists of “a scope, or breadth of content, in a given subject area and of a sequence of concepts and activities for learning” (National Research Council, 2012, p. 246). Some 4-H topics suggested what it means to be an active citizen, but not in relation to how discrimination and prejudice have negative effects on society. The 4-H curriculum has solely focused on citizenship material and failed to validate the culture of minority groups. From a multicultural perspective, topics should address social context, including issues of equity and justice. Students of color should be able to ask, “Who benefits; who suffers? What practice is fair or unfair? How can change take place?” Youth can then critique society and look for possible solutions. Because the 4-H curriculum experiential learning model has an action component, ideally that action could be related to increased equity for people of all backgrounds. 4-H curriculum developers should capitalize on this phase of the model to create more opportunities for youth to participate in programs.

Conclusion

The focus group participants discussed their thoughts and assumptions regarding the recruitment and retention of students of color, and I analyzed their responses in relation to the literature regarding multicultural integration and cultural competency. Although I have gained new knowledge and insights through this research study, I am very familiar with the struggles that the 4-H staff face in trying to be all things to all youth. The key points of this chapter highlight the importance of the awareness of different cultures, the need for a curriculum that is relevant to students of color and the fact that 4-H staff need more skills to communicate effectively across diverse groups. Chapters IV and V were devoted to providing a discussion of the findings and initial analysis, when compared to the existing literature. As noted in the literature review, there is a wide body of literature that already exists which demonstrated the power of multicultural education. It is evident that multicultural education is an effective means of providing inclusive programs. It is also clear that although 4-H primarily works with traditionally White audiences who are attracted to the 4-H program, there is also a need to reach more diverse youth. These findings can contribute to 4-H educational practices in the future and will be discussed in the next chapter. Finally, Chapter VI provides final conclusions to the study and poses a series of recommendations for the 4-H program and other areas of further research.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The study was designed to (a) examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff related to recruiting and retaining students of color, and (b) review 4-H curricula from a multicultural lens. While there is some evidence that focuses on barriers to participation, far less attention has been focused directly on the multicultural education approaches of 4-H programs with regard to traditional and non-traditional programs, curriculum, and perceptions of staff from a multicultural perspective. This chapter provides a brief summary of the study along with conclusions drawn from the findings in Chapters IV and V. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the implications of these findings as well as recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

This study critically examined the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff regarding recruitment and retention of students of color. The data included focus group interview sessions, survey data, as well as a curricular review of the current 4-H curriculum from a multicultural perspective. The focus group questions were designed around culturally relevant pedagogical principles. A multicultural rating scale survey was used as a template for assessing the 4-H program from a multicultural perspective. The framework for this study included Gay (2002) for culturally relevant pedagogy and Ladson-Billings (1995) and Banks (2008) for approaches to multicultural integration.

Gay (2002) stated five essential elements of culturally relevant pedagogy: (a) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity; (b) including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum; (c) demonstrating caring and building learning communities; (d) communicating with ethnically diverse students; and (e) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction. These principles and practices laid the foundation for evaluating the access, opportunity, and equity within the 4-H program.

Overview of the Problem

The changing racial and ethnic demographics have had a profound effect on 4-H programs. Minoritized populations have dramatically increased, and this has presented a challenge to the 4-H program. The 4-H program faces the challenge of becoming responsive to a growing ethnically diverse population (Cano & Bankston, 1992). The task of providing effective programs for students with different languages and cultural backgrounds is daunting. As diversity increases, the 4-H program should develop multicultural environments to accommodate diverse students. Unfortunately, the cultural foundation of the 4-H program was largely comprised of traditional White youth and viewed by many as a program with agriculture based values—possibly leading many students of color to lack interest in the program. The 4-H staff agreed that 4-H must establish mechanisms to build a more inclusive environment; however, translating that to action has been proven to be a challenge. “For youth development professionals to be successful in our multicultural society, they must have a deep understanding of the impact of limited access and opportunities and inequities on the lives of many cultural groups living in the U.S. today” (Schauber, 2008, p. 1). Having 4-H staff critically

examine and reflect on their current practices was imperative for the 4-H youth development program.

Review of Methodology

Basic qualitative research provided a framework for this study because it allowed 4-H staff to share their thoughts and ideas concerning the cultural relevance of the program. The overall research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do 4-H staff members know about the history and foundation of 4-H?
2. What knowledge, attitudes, skills, and beliefs do the 4-H staff have regarding working with students of color?
 - a. How do they feel about working with students of color?
 - b. How do they feel about the program curriculum in terms of meeting the needs of students of color?
 - c. What are their thoughts about why more students of color are not involved?
 - d. What assumptions do they bring that might hinder their work with students of color?
3. What do 4-H staff members feel they need in order to recruit successfully and to work with students of color?

Summary of the Findings

The findings from this research study not only discussed the current 4-H practices, but also revealed overarching themes such as denial, resistance to change, and fear of the lack of knowledge about cultural differences. These themes were revealed

through the actions 4-H staff took, the words they used to describe their experiences, and the stories they shared in working with students of color. As each research question is answered, the overarching themes revealed in the findings will be discussed.

Research Question 1

What do 4-H staff members know about the history and foundation of 4-H?

The findings revealed that the 4-H staff was familiar with the traditional historical stories of the establishment of the first 4-H clubs as well as the dates in which the land grant university system was established. The participants discussed the first corn and tomato 4-H clubs established in the 1900s to teach people in rural communities about agricultural practices and how to adopt those practices to meet the needs of farm families. In addition, the data revealed that the 4-H program has essentially remained the same over the past 100 years. For example, much like today, the 4-H Clubs set the foundation of the 4-H program, and volunteers continue to be the driving force for the expansion and development of 4-H programs.

When the participants commented on the history of the 4-H program, their comments could have included the historical events that demonstrated the contributions of minority and ethnic groups. For example, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver were credited with being the pioneers responsible for establishing extension programs within the 1890 land-grant universities (Comer, Campbell, Edwards, & Hillison, 2006). Some mentioned the establishment of the 1890 Black colleges and universities. However, much of what was mentioned was from one perspective, remained on the surface level, and did not include the entire story. Given the nature of

this research study, no one discussed the struggles and obstacles in the 4-H program's development as they related to race and equity for people of color. This denial of the historical accounts may suggest a lack of understanding regarding past difficulties that occurred during the establishment of the land grant system and the present realities that continue to impact programs today. The lack of understanding that racism existed in the organization's establishment became an apparent theme among the findings. The findings also suggest that some participants were unable to face the reality or were uncomfortable to admit to an obvious truth in order to avoid a negative representation of the 4-H program. The 4-H history described focused on success and establishment with little attention to the barriers encountered during the establishment of the 1890 institutions. At a time when addressing diversity is on everyone's agenda, it is important for staff to know the history and to be able to tell the story without excluding important people and events (Comer, Campbell, Edwards, & Hillison, 2006). The data revealed that the history was an important reminder of where the 4-H program stands today and how 4-H came into existence. The mindset of "If it is not broke, don't fix it" and the continued use of traditional program practices can threaten the program's survival. This is significant because the future of 4-H will depend on its ability to adapt and stay attuned to the needs of a changing youth population. The world is much different than it was over 100 years ago, and the 4-H staff must realize that the current program needs to change in order to progress, move forward, and meet the needs of students of color.

Research Question 2

What knowledge, attitudes, skills and beliefs do the 4-H staff have regarding working with students of color?

The response from this question was broken down into several sub questions (2A, 2B, 2C and 2D) that will each be discussed separately.

Research Question 2A

How do 4-H staff feel about working with students of color?

In the survey, 4-H staff reported that they felt comfortable with working with students of color. However, the findings also suggest that some staff feared working outside of traditional 4-H program's practices. Because the traditional program practices do not always fit the needs of students of color, if the staff do not feel comfortable altering traditional 4-H program practices, they may not be best serving students with diverse needs. Although the 4-H staff welcomed the possibility of creating new relationships, moving forward would require learning new skills to build those relationships. Banks et al. (2005) state that one way to get to know the youth is to spend time with them and time in their communities paying careful attention to who they are, what they know, and what is the context for their experiences. In order to create these relationships, the 4-H staff must take a considerable effort to get to know the communities in which they work and the youth they are trying to reach. The 4-H staff would need to find time out of their busy schedules to spend time in diverse communities, participate in events, and stay connected with key community leaders. This would require a systematic change in how the staff work within their local communities.

Research Question 2B

How do the 4-H staff feel about the program curriculum in terms of it meeting the needs of students of color?

The findings from the data emphasize the fact that educational approaches of the 4-H program were not considered as effective as they could be in meeting the needs of students of color. To arrive at this conclusion, the participants discussed the traditional and non-traditional programs as well as the 4-H curriculum in terms of meeting the needs of diverse students.

Traditional vs. Non-traditional 4-H programs. The data revealed the significant impact traditional and non-traditional programs have on the recruitment and retention of students of color. Current research studies confirm that the traditional 4-H club program provided positive youth development opportunities to meet the needs of youth to experience belonging, independence, and to foster educational opportunities tied to the land grant university knowledge base (National 4-H, 2011). The 4-H staff clearly understood the benefits of the traditional 4-H club program; however, they also noted that very few students of color participate in the traditional club program. According to the focus group participants, the primary audience that truly benefited from the 4-H club experience was White, middle-class youth. Additionally, non-traditional programs provided the primary resource in reaching diverse youth audiences. The non-traditional program not only reached more youth, but it was the only major delivery mode reaching students of color. Even though the traditional 4-H club program was a proven method for

educating youth, many students of color made the choice not to participate in the program and therefore not to benefit from all it has to offer.

As the population of diverse youth increases, 4-H should learn how to attract more students of color to the traditional club program. To improve the participation of students of color, 4-H must acknowledge the different cultures, appreciate the repertoire of experiences students bring to the table, and engage parents and communities as volunteer leaders. The 4-H organization needs to transfer the benefits of the traditional program in such a way that students of color see it as beneficial for them. However, the findings also demonstrated that some 4-H staff fail to acknowledge racial differences. This may have made it difficult to recognize an unconscious bias that may influence expectations, actions, and the way 4-H staff address students of color. Although the staff all agreed that the club program has been proven most effective in impacting positive youth development and that there are few youth of color in that program, none of them seemed to know what to do about this discrepancy, if anything. If the goal is to provide equal opportunities to all potential participants, then either the other programs need to be studied and improved to be equally impactful in positive ways regarding youth development, or the club program needs to be changed to be more inviting and supportive of non-traditional students.

4-H curriculum. Regarding the quality of the 4-H curriculum, most 4-H staff would readily agree that the experiential based nature of the curriculum was beneficial and age appropriate for all youth. However, the 4-H curriculum showed fewer instances of multicultural content integration than expected. Based on the results, the 4-H

curriculum operated on the additive level approach regarding multicultural content. That is, adding curriculum units related to multiculturalism, without changing the basic structure of the 4-H curriculum. Examples of the approach include adding a module such as the Adventure in Diversity and Cultural Awareness 4-H curriculum. The purpose of the curriculum module is to help youth gain global and cultural competence. The disadvantage of an approach that does not involve a restructuring of the curriculum (Banks, 1997) means that ethnic content is viewed from the perspectives of mainstream historians, writers, artists, and scientists. The 4-H staff appeared to be satisfied with the superficial celebrations of heroes and holidays. These celebrations convey the message that diversity is only important during certain months. The separate, isolated, and once-a-year celebration of events does not support an inclusive program. This is consistent with the literature in that the appreciation of cultural differences should not be considered a separate or isolated aspect of the curriculum; rather, cultural sensitivity needs to be embedded in the curriculum and materials selected (Reyes-Blanes & Daunic, 1996).

Overall, the 4-H curriculum showed far more emphasis on learning subject matter knowledge and material than in integrating the perspectives of students of color. To create a 4-H curriculum that generates connections for diverse youth, the staff needs to have a wide-ranging knowledge of subject matter content in addition to a sensitivity to include multiple representations addressing the prior experiences of students of color (Banks, 2008). The traditional ways of organizing content in 4-H materials obscured or excluded certain ideas and ethnic groups. The curriculum should be revised to include the contributions of a wide variety of ethnic and cultural groups. Although the 4-H

program developed new projects for its members that moved beyond agriculture, projects lacked the cultural relevance needed to retain students of color. A culturally relevant curriculum “engages and affirms students’ and teachers’ identities, worldviews, and cultural and experiential reference points in the process of learning” (Clark, 2013, p. 28).

Multicultural cultural integration has numerous educational aims. At the social action level students explore ways that they can affect social change or contribute to social causes (Banks, 2008). The final step in the experiential learning model directs youth to apply what they learned to real world experiences. After the hands-on experience, the youth are asked a set of questions focusing on applying the new knowledge gained to real world experiences. Questions may include; how could you apply what you have learn; how could you make it better; or what would be the consequences of doing/or not doing that? The advantage with this approach was that youth can discuss the learning process and staff can solicit feedback. The disadvantage with this approach was that after the discussion youth do not have the opportunity to put together an action plan to address an issue or a problem. Incorporating an action plan within the apply phase of the experiential learning model presents a golden opportunity for 4-H to reach more students of color. Ideally with a plan in place, the outcome of the final step in the experiential learning model should be to take social action that contributes to the resolution of a problem or issue. Experiential learning is a critical part of learning within 4-H, and it is integrated into all of the curriculum and project books. Ladson-Billings (1995) acknowledges that students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and

institutions that produce and maintain social inequities. 4-H youth must become aware that identity is influenced by sociopolitical forces; this can help them develop a critical consciousness and build capacity to create change. In closely reviewing the literature and the data, it becomes evident that multicultural integration and experiential learning share in commonalities. Combined, they can result in a superior curriculum model. Staff needs to begin to look at the benefits of finding commonalities to help arrive at superior best practices that serve the needs of all youth. However, addressing the diverse needs of students of color requires a major transformation of the current 4-H educational approaches. Transforming the curriculum would require curriculum planning, adding diverse perspectives from people of color, and provide students of color a sense of being inclusive in programs. According to Ford (2010), this requires substantial curriculum revision, in-service training, and the identification and development of materials written from the perspectives of diverse groups. 4-H must infuse their curriculum with opportunities for students to explore the question of fairness and equity as they relate to subject matter content. Banks (1994) claims that

It brings content about currently marginalized groups to the center of the curriculum. It helps students understand that how people construct knowledge depends on their experiences, values, and perspectives. It helps students learn to construct knowledge themselves. Moreover, it helps students grasp the complex group interactions that have produced the American culture and civilization.

This statement confirms that the 4-H program have been shaped too long by traditional values of the dominate culture. More importantly, administration needs to be supportive

in the process. This requires new knowledge and an understanding of cultural differences and the history of different ethnic groups.

These findings challenge the work of state 4-H staff from across the country, which tended to assume that developing multicultural curriculum modules provided one of the best avenues to recruit and retain students of color. Although I agree with adding multicultural ethnic content to the curriculum, I still maintain that transformative changes in the structure of the curriculum will create more opportunities for involvement as students of color see their cultures and perspectives in the 4-H programs and curriculum.

Research Question 2C

What are their thoughts about why more students of color were not involved?

The 4-H staff discussed their thoughts on why more students of color were not involved in the 4-H program. They suggested barriers such as the lack of resources, as in funding and volunteers, and interpreting language differences. However, the various issues raised uncovered the larger issue of resistance to changing traditional 4-H practices. When 4-H staff perceive that reaching more students of color will require more financial resources, more volunteers, and more time, it can be perceived negatively in that change can threaten to modify existing practices.

Lack of resources. Recruiting volunteers is crucial for the 4-H program because it increases both the program scope and the efficiency of outreach efforts. It requires commitment of time, energy, and persistence. Capturing the volunteer potential of diverse communities can enrich the organization by expanding the number of volunteers, by making services more culturally appropriate, and by bringing diverse viewpoints to

inform practice (Hobbs, 2001). The focus group participants suggested that finding volunteers to work with the 4-H program might be improved with a stipend or some incentive to participate. Although the 4-H program provided volunteer recruiting and training materials, the materials were not as culturally relevant as they could be in terms of recruiting minority adult volunteers.

The success of recruitment and retention strategies are vital to the delivery and execution of the 4-H program. In order to address shortages of 4-H volunteers, the factors that prevent potential minority candidates from volunteering and/or the factors that cause current volunteers to leave the program must be determined. Minority youth and families are potentially a significant source of volunteers for the 4-H program. In order to gain their participation, 4-H must reassess traditional ways of doing business and make much-needed adjustments to their program efforts.

Language. The 4-H staff also identified language as a barrier to participation. Some students of color and their families may feel hindered by their lack of English to participate in 4-H programs. In addition, the 4-H staff and volunteers were limited in their ability to speak with parents who speak languages other than English. This means that 4-H must make multiple language skills and multicultural understandings a top priority for positions that involve outreach efforts (Hobbs, 2001). More important than simple differences in racial or language backgrounds, there are also marked differences in the biographies and experiences of most educators and their students (Banks, 2008). The focus group participants mentioned having some 4-H materials translated into a different language. Because written correspondence is not always sufficient (Waterman & Harry,

2008), 4-H staff should consider other alternatives as a means to communicate with parents as often as resources allow.

The 4-H program should make a conscious effort to break down the barriers that limit access to 4-H programs. These findings were consistent with those from an earlier study (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1999) where a significant challenge has been a decline in the volunteer base. Finding relevant solutions can have important consequences for the 4-H program and the most effective solutions are those that take into account the needs of students of color.

Research Question 2D

What assumptions do 4-H staff bring that might hinder their work with students of color?

There were three assumptions the 4-H staff thought would hinder their work with students of color: overcoming stereotypes about students of color; understanding the misconceptions 4-H staff had concerning working with students of color; and the importance of cultural awareness and diversity. The findings contributed to moving staff outside their comfort zones and to stimulating them to shift their views on how they work with students of color. As a result, the focus group participants agreed that more engagement was needed with students of color in order to overcome these assumptions.

Stereotypes about students of color. Breaking down stereotypes about students of color and creating a more inclusive learning environment can help connections between the 4-H program and youth. The focus group participants expressed a concern about the importance of addressing racial and ethnic stereotypes. Stereotypes can powerfully shape perceptions about students of color. To avoid these issues, the focus

group participants indicated that they needed to know the students they work with as well as their abilities. The evidence showed that participants made a conscious effort to break down stereotypes; however, they may not have the necessary skills to do so. Banks (2008) stated that educators need to be able to understand student cultures and differences without falling victim to cultural stereotypes that might result from a superficial understanding of youth and their experiences. These perceptions can contribute to the failure to see the strengths within certain racial groups. Ogbu (1992) agreed when he wrote that multicultural education fosters pride in minority cultures, helps minority students develop new insights into their culture, reduces prejudice and stereotyping, and promotes intercultural understandings.

In an attempt to reach out to students of color, the majority of the survey participants indicated the 4-H staff's ethnic, racial and cultural background makes a difference in how they connect with students of color. Furthermore, the presence of role models from different ethnic groups posed an additional challenge. This was important because the racial disparity in 4-H staff in comparison to youth will likely affect participation. 4-H staff that is representative of different cultures can be an advantage, but non-minority staff can benefit from culturally relevant practices in utilizing the backgrounds, knowledge and experiences of students of color to inform 4-H program and activities.

Seeing colors the misconceptions. This section addresses the misconceptions of 4-H staff regarding the ideology of colorblindness and race consciousness. According to Williams (2011), "colorblindness is the racial ideology that posits the best way to end

discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture or ethnicity” (p.1). For example, one participant noted that she programmed without seeing color. I interpreted her comments to mean that she treats all youth the same regardless of the ethnic and cultural differences. Her method implied a colorblind approach to developing 4-H programs. The consequences of this approach can lead to youth feeling uncomfortable and not respected, therefore diminishing opportunities for students of color to get involved. An alternative to colorblindness is multiculturalism, an ideology that acknowledges, highlights, and celebrates differences (Williams, 2011). Race does matter because it affects opportunities and perceptions. Colorblindness can become a problem because it denies (a student’s) negative racial experiences, rejects their cultural heritage, and invalidates their unique perspectives (Williams, 2011).

Cultural awareness and understanding diversity. The focus group participants mention the importance of cultural awareness and understanding diversity. Valuing diversity builds understanding that helps people learn to appreciate this new diversity and managing diversity attacks institutional racism, reallocates power, and promotes justice in the workplace while enhancing the work environment (Ewer & Rice, 1994). When 4-H programs addressed diversity initiatives, it was often implemented through grant and short-term funding. Therefore, diversity initiatives typically end when funding ends. Diversity programs must become a permanent fixture within the development of programs and become part of the 4-H program’s core budget.

Multicultural practices can start a dialogue where 4-H staff can be open and honest about race. As long as diversity is viewed as a problem to be solved rather than a

strength and an asset that can help us advance our goals, diversity will continue to be an intractable issue in our communities and workplaces (Cider, 2008, p. 1). 4-H staff must acknowledge how deficit-based notions of students of color continue to permeate traditional program thinking and practices. When the staff overcomes discomforting feelings when talking about race, stereotypes and assumptions are more likely to be eliminated. The concept of working across borders to create a new identity opens new doors and opportunities to create egalitarian environments for students, parents, and teachers. Collaboration and teamwork between staff and community leaders provide an example of border crossing and provide the tools necessary for reform. These conclusions add weight to the argument that multicultural education brings race issues to the forefront, acknowledges the perspectives of students of color, and sees their cultural background as an asset and not a drawback to their participation.

Research Question 3

What does 4-H staff feel they need in order to recruit successfully and work with students of color?

The focus group participants all agreed that they could benefit from new and innovative training opportunities to successfully recruit and work with students of color. The 4-H staff generally agreed that to effectively reach diverse students required new knowledge and pedagogical skills. In addition, they felt they were inadequately prepared to recruit and retain students of color. 4-H staff cannot be held accountable for working well with students of color if they have not been prepared to do so. The survey participants were asked what type of training was most needed to work with a culturally

diverse population. Some were unsure about what they needed, and some mentioned having a better understanding of diverse cultures. 4-H staff members should understand his or her cultural beliefs and values. This is important because the more we understand ourselves and our culture; the more effectively examine our biases and become open to accepting others. None of them discussed the importance of understanding themselves more

The state 4-H office at each land grant university was responsible for the preparation and training of 4-H staff, including any multicultural training for reaching students of color. Survey participants were asked if the state 4-H office provided services to retain students of color once they enroll in 4-H. Most of the participants responded that sometimes services were offered. Participants were asked about the availability of instruments or techniques for working with students of color. Unfortunately, the majority responded to neither agree nor disagree on the availability of instruments or techniques. Many were undecided if they would attend training if the state office provided the opportunity. The survey participants acknowledge some resources available. However, based on their responses, either they are not aware of any resources available or deem the instruments and techniques that are available as inappropriate for their program needs. When asked what training is most needed, one survey participant responded that there is a need to “blend youth of various races and cultures in a non-confrontational way. In rural counties, sometimes our programs are stereotyped as being only for this race or this cultural group when that is not the case at all.” It is obvious from the data that much work needs to be done to recruit and retain students of color. The 4-H staff needs more

training opportunities, an awareness of different cultures, and more support from the state 4-H office. I was concerned about the lack of urgency to reach students of color that I interpreted in analyzing the data. It is crucial for the 4-H staff to realize that the sustainability of the 4-H program will depend on the relevance of their program in meeting the needs of diverse audiences. It is imperative that the 4-H program takes the necessary and transformative steps to planning and implementing a 4-H multicultural program.

Implications of the Results

I believe this research study has implications for both research and practice. Research has shown that multicultural education practices can be an effective tool in working with students of color. 4-H has struggled with problems of membership recruitment and retention, especially with older youth. Some reasons students of color chose to participate or not to participate are beyond our control; however, we can control the quality of the 4-H experience. If the 4-H program wants to be significant in the future of youth development programs, it must meet the needs of students of color. 4-H needs to adapt to new ideas that reach youth from all cultures, races, and ethnic groups. Addressing complex problems requires new approaches for program planning, and the 4-H organization must utilize this knowledge and inspiration to implement new innovative strategies. What does this mean for the 4-H program? It means that if 4-H adopts such pedagogical practices, it can deliver a richer, more effective experience for students of color and their families. Diverse youth can then see their perspectives reflected in the

curriculum, will have an open forum to confront societal issues, and will feel an enhanced desire to participate in the 4-H program.

This work extends those theories of multicultural education practices in the field of 4-H youth development programs. For example, this study illustrates the complexity of the development of these practices within the 4-H program. Current multicultural education research offers detailed descriptions for educators to model these practices. These descriptions are beneficial, but ignore the complexities that 4-H staff encounter when attempting to have more inclusive programs. The research tells us what these practices look like, but does not explain the processes.

Recommendations

This chapter's recommendations are based on how the 4-H program might consider transformative multicultural practices to meet the needs of students of color. The findings demonstrate the need to understand unconscious biases that may be present among the staff in order to improve the racial equality across all segments of the 4-H program. The data provided evidence that the 4-H staff can better meet the needs of students of color by modifying some of their current practices. For example, the 4-H staff must be able to eliminate disparities in traditional educational practices for youth, especially those youth who have been poorly served by the current system. This would require a structural change in which students' cultures are taken into account regarding the learning process. 4-H staff need to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to create culturally relevant and inclusive multicultural youth development programs. 4-H staff need more knowledge and understanding of how to best support students of different

cultures because this would help support their program outreach efforts. Advancing the knowledge and skills of 4-H staff would require developing a new way of thinking about the importance of an inclusive environment. The 4-H organization should require that 4-H staff provide programs to students underserved on the basis of language, culture, race or ethnicity by the existing 4-H program. It is necessary to support professional development processes that build on community stores of knowledge to foster culturally relevant curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promotes successful communication within the 4-H program.

Building relationships with students of color and engagement with the diverse communities can generate an inclusive environment and turn fear into action. The 4-H staff must start by becoming aware of their own culture and by examining any misinformation or stereotypes they might have about youth from other cultures. Then the 4-H staff must make a conscious effort to establish relationships with others by going beyond “all reasonable efforts” and meeting youth and families in their communities. When 4-H staff and students of color and their families can work together to develop creative solutions to meet the diverse needs of students, the 4-H program will be greatly enhanced.

Developing curriculum and educational programs that encompass multicultural practices is crucial. I recommend a call to action aimed at creating a pedagogy of engagement where students of color build a sense of connection to their local 4-H program and staff provide an atmosphere where 4-H youth are challenged to think outside the box and question the status quo. The 4-H curriculum should include a variety

of perspectives and include activities that discuss issues of equity and justice that foster critical thinking and awareness. Based on the findings, I feel that the 4-H staff might be more apt to implement multicultural materials in their county if those materials are provided by the state 4-H office. A more structured and well-developed multicultural and subject-based curriculum from the state office might ensure more widespread implementation. Bringing talented people from across the state together to face common challenges can only move the organization forward. It is important to utilize the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of the staff and students of color to inform the curriculum and program design. Most importantly, it is imperative to design innovative, inclusive programs that bring more students of color into the 4-H programs.

The volunteer recruitment depends on awareness of the cultural differences between the majority traditional practices and diverse youth and adults. Volunteers should be seen as advocates who are committed to mentoring and guiding youth. They should facilitate relationships with 4-H and ensure that youth are well integrated into the 4-H experience. The future success of 4-H depends on the non-traditional style that may be more relevant for diverse audiences. As an organization, 4-H continues to fall into the trap of seeing only the obstacles rather than the windows of opportunity to achieve change. A culturally relevant program uses cultural attributes in curriculum and program planning, organization, leader instructional guides, club organization, and assessment. Culturally relevant work requires 4-H staff to change their frames of reference, adopting an asset-based perspective about the culture of students of color and their families.

The unconscious or implicit bias was revealed from the 4-H staff who genuinely believed in racial equality and justice but unknowingly provided programs that may have favored traditional audiences over underrepresented youth. The common stereotypes and bias that are embedded in dominant U.S. American culture was also reflected in the 4-H culture. Because the 4-H program reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group, their practices are seen as the norm. Some staff discriminate when simply carrying out their job, without being aware that their role is contributing to an inequitable outcome.

This dissertation process has altered my state of perception concerning the 4-H program. It allowed me to question things that I have never questioned before and allowed me to be open to new ideas and multicultural practices. As a researcher, it was important that I stepped out of the role as a 4-H staff member to succumb to the realization of how the current 4-H practices hinder students of color from participation. At one time I was like hundreds of 4-H staff across the state who thought I was making all reasonable efforts to reach students of color. The research and theories of scholars in the field of multicultural education, not only helped to reveal the misconceptions and perspectives through this process, but also confirmed how significant multicultural practices could impact the 4-H program. With comments such as “I programmed without seeing color” and “I don’t see discrimination and don’t know what to look for” I started to connect the dots of what is currently happening and what should be taking place within the 4-H program. I began to connect my first hand experiences years ago with the inequities and resistance staff face today. This led to my ah-ha moment. It became a sudden

understanding of an incomprehensible problem that the 4-H program has faced for many years. In addition, this moment provided an understanding of how 4-H staff roles and responsibilities can impact the participation and non-participation of students of color. I realized that multicultural practices could solve issue of recruitment and retention of students of color and these practices provided a lens through which to understand what was taking place within the 4-H program.

The 4-H program needs more than cultural awareness, but a cultural awakening in order to open the door to transformational multicultural practices. In order to bring about an in depth understanding of multiculturalism I would need to take the 4-H staff through various activities that will enable staff to view the 4-H program through a multicultural lens. An awareness activity adopted from Gorski (2015) will help to reveal the limitations, challenges, and assumptions often made by the 4-H staff members. This activity would help to give the 4-H staff an opportunity to experience their ah-ha moment and gain insight to the issues concerning reaching more students of color.

Gorski (2015) would suggest that the 4-H staff should first understand the concepts of multicultural, prejudice, and discrimination and explore the intricacies and implications of each. For example they would define the word “multicultural”. What does this term mean? And as a group, they would define multicultural in terms of what they believe individually, review a dictionary definition, and conclude with a consensus on one definition for multicultural. I would then ask them to suggest and provide a list of all dimensions of culture they can think of by encouraging them to reflect on their own

experiences. The major point of this first activity is to get staff talking about these terms and realizing that their colleagues may have different interpretations of each word.

The next step would be to divide the list of items into categories under the three levels of culture; concrete (clothes, music, food), behavioral (language, family structure), and symbolic (values, customs, religion). I would review and define each category and give the 4-H staff an opportunity to discuss relatedness and importance and consider how they define themselves within each category. In order to facilitate discussion, I would ask the 4-H staff to consider the items listed under that category to be the most important considerations for how they define their own culture. For example, under the concrete category, I would move down the list and ask 4-H staff members to raise their hands if they consider the items listed under this category to be the most important consideration for how they define their own cultures. Then, count the responses and list them next to the category. I would then proceed in the same manner with the behavioral and symbolic categories. It is important to ask questions such as, when you meet someone, which of those items do you use to understand them culturally? And, what forces in our society might contribute to our simplification of others' cultures? (Gorski, 2015).

After recording how many 4-H staff members define themselves most closely with the three categories, it is time to view these terms from an educational perspective. After recording and defining how the participants define themselves and "why", I would ask, which of these categories do you as a 4-H educator, focus on when you plan your program activities? This question should provide the "aha" or "awakening" moment for the participants. They should answer, how has 4-H tried to be multicultural? And what

are the aspects or dimensions of culture that you focus on in your 4-H program trying to be multicultural? This exercise would be helpful because the 4-H program is stuck in the “additive” or “heroes and holidays” stage of multicultural education. At this time it is important to facilitate discussion on how the 4-H staff can work together to bring about change. It is also important to note that this exercise was not intended to criticize the 4-H program but highlight areas of needed improvement.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study left me with a few unanswered questions that I believe warrant investigation in the future and suggest future inquiries that would expand this field.

1. How can 4-H make connections with the families of students of color and involve the families in the educational process even when language differences and communication barriers exist?
2. What are the factors that prevent potential minority candidates from volunteering and/or the factors that cause current volunteers to leave the program?
3. What alternative research can be done that will include the voices of students of color, their families, and their communities?

Conclusion

As 4-H staff face the challenge of the changing demographics, they must embrace multicultural educational practices. They must develop self-awareness about their attitudes and beliefs; learn more about the cultures of students of color; and develop

knowledge and skills, through information and reflection, which will translate to effective programs. Culturally relevant pedagogy offers an intervention for the recruitment and retention of students of color. Although some work has been done to integrate multicultural dimension into the 4-H curriculum, new transformative pedagogical approaches are needed. Considerable time and efforts are needed to create curricula and programs that are not stand-alone ones, but are integrated experiences throughout the 4-H curriculum. Single stand-alone experiences are not enough to overcome years of prior conditioning (Banks, 2008). In other words, 4-H must not concentrate on the minute details of the problems and lose sight of the overall picture. In order to reach more students of color, 4-H must move beyond a quick fix and dive into the heart of the problem. Curriculum designers must determine the weaknesses of curriculum designs and leader materials and make the changes necessary to improve the overall quality. The 4-H program has focused on subject matter issues without seeing the larger picture of how dominance and oppression hold back the disadvantaged (students discriminated against based on class, race and other differences). In addition to transforming the curriculum into culturally relevant designs and instructional strategies, 4-H staff needs to acquire the knowledge base about ethnic diversity in order to recruit and retain students of color. This is the precise group of young people 4-H are desperately trying to impact with positive learning experiences. Although extension's current program planning model maps out a systematic means of developing programs, success has been limited. It is time to re-examine the previously held assumptions and expectations of the 4-H

program and explore new ways of approaching the complex issues of leadership, democracy, and education.

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APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Introduction Questions:

1. Please tell me a little about yourself such as the county, how long you have been working with 4-H, how long you've been in this county, and what you enjoy most about your role as a 4-H staff member?
2. How would you describe your philosophy about experiential education? What do you believe works?
3. What ideas do you have about curriculum?

History of 4-H

4. What do you know about the history and foundation of the 4-H program? What was the original mission of the land grant institution?
5. What was the 1890 Morrill Act intended to provide? How do you define limited resource? How do you use this term? What do you think about this term? What themes or discourse have dominated the 4-H curriculum.

FIRST FOCUS GROUP SESSION

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Describe the students you work within 4-H?
2. How representative are these students in terms of the demographic in your area related to race?
3. What are your thoughts about why 4-H serves mostly white students?
4. What are your experiences working with students of color?
5. How would you feel about working with more students of color in the 4-H program you lead?
6. What might be some of the challenges of doing so?
7. What might you do differently, if anything to serve their needs?
8. What kinds of things have you done in 4-H that have facilitated the growth and development of students of color?
9. How representative do you feel the 4-H curriculum and materials are in terms of providing a diverse picture of the world?
10. If you could revamp the 4-H program in ways that would assist you in working with students of color, what change would you make?

ADMINISTER THE MULTICULTURAL RATING SECOND FOCUS GROUP SESSION

(These will be impacted by the results of the rating scale. The goal is to gain qualitative feedback on the quantitative results from the rating scale survey.)

1. The results of the multicultural rating scale revealed this _____ in relation to 4-H policies and procedures. What are your thoughts about this?
2. The results of the multicultural rating scale revealed this _____ in relation to 4-H staff development. What are your thoughts about this?
3. The results of the multicultural rating scale revealed this _____ in relation to 4-H curriculum. What are your thoughts about this?
4. The results of the multicultural rating scale revealed this _____ in relation to 4-H community. What are your thoughts about this?
5. The results of the multicultural rating scale revealed this _____ in relation to 4-H evaluation. What are your thoughts about this?

APPENDIX B

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Survey Questions
<p>Demographics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please indicate the number of years you have worked with the 4-H program. (1 to 2, 5 to 10, 10 to 15, 20 and above) 2. Please indicate your ethnicity. (Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Other) 3. What is your gender? (male, female) 4. Approximately, what percent of the youth in your county 4-H program, make up each demographic group. (Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Other) 5. What do you know about the history of 4-H? (<i>open ended</i>) 6. Please speak to how land grant universities and the 4-H program was established if you know about that? (<i>open ended</i>)
<p>Please rate, to the best of your ability, your skills regarding working with students of color.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. How would you rate your ability to effectively assess the needs of youth and their families from a cultural background different from your own? (<i>poor, fair, good, very good, excellent</i>) 8. How would you rate your skill level in terms of being able to provide appropriate educational services to culturally different students and their families? (<i>poor, fair, good, very good, excellent</i>) 9. How would you rate your ability to accurately assess the educational needs of students of color? (<i>poor, fair, good, very good, excellent</i>)

Please rate, the best of your ability, and the success of the 4-H program in its effort to work with students of color.

10. Please respond to the following questions.

- a. 4-H creates positive images of students of color. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
- b. 4-H teaches youth that the cultures of all groups are relevant in our society. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
- c. 4-H teaches about the world in a way that incorporates the perspectives of people of color. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)

Please rate to the best of your ability the following statements that pertain to your personal attitudes and beliefs regarding students of color.

11. There is NO a difference between the way traditional 4-H audiences and students of color are treated in the 4-H program. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
12. The 4-H traditional program audience represents all people of color. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
13. Diversity is important to my 4-H program. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
14. Efforts are being made to increase participation of students of color. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
15. When planning your 4-H program, how important is it to you to include multicultural content? (*not at all important, very unimportant, neither important nor unimportant, very important, extremely important*)
16. County and state activities are multiethnic and multicultural. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)

Please rate to the best of your ability, your awareness of working with students of color.

17. How would you rate your level of awareness regarding different cultures. (poor, fair, good, very good, excellent)

18. How would you rate your program's ability to promote values, attitudes, and behaviors that support ethnic and cultural diversity. (poor, fair, good, very good, excellent)
19. Do you think that 4-H staff's ethnic, racial and/or cultural background makes a difference in how they connect with students of color. (*never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always*)

Please rate to the best of your ability the potential barriers to participation in traditional 4-H programs.

20. 4-H climate is supportive of students of color participation in traditional 4-H programs. (*never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always*)
21. 4-H has adequate presence of role models from different ethnic groups. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
22. Recruitment efforts in my county 4-H program are in place to encourage students of color to enroll in 4-H. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
23. 4-H State staff provides support services to retain students of color once they enroll in 4-H. (*never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always*)
24. 4-H learning materials reflect the cultures and cognitive styles of various ethnic and cultural groups within the program. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
25. 4-H State staff provides a variety of instruments and techniques for working with students of color. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
26. If the State 4-H office offered classes to help train staff in 4-H programs from a multicultural perspective, would you take them (very unlikely, unlikely, undecided, likely, very likely)

Please answer the following questions in regard to your work with students of color.

27. Please respond.

- a. I have similar expectations for all youth regardless of race. (never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always)
- b. I provide equal learning opportunities for all youth in my county. (never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always)
- c. I connect my programs to real world events and experiences related to more than one diverse culture. (never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always)
- d. Do you adapt your materials to meet the needs of students of color. (never, rarely, sometimes, most of the time, always)

28. What would influence you to include more multicultural content in your 4-H program (open response)

Please rate the following questions regarding staff development.

29. Please respond.

- a. 4-H county staff are from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
- b. The 4-H program has a systematic comprehensive, multicultural staff development program? (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
- c. Staff development program provide opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding about racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)
- d. 4-H provides opportunities for learning how to incorporate multicultural content into curriculum materials. (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree*)

30. In your opinion, what training is most needed to equip 4-H staff to work with a culturally diverse population? (*open ended*)

APPENDIX C

CURRICULUM PROFILE

Curriculum:

Topics/Issues

Review the unit. Determine if this element integrates contributions, additive, transformative or social action level. Categorize the unit by one of these four categories.	<i>Contributions</i> Portray people from multicultural, racial, ethnic , religious groups in a variety of roles	<i>Additive</i> Concepts, themes and perspectives form a variety of ethnic and cultural groups are added to curriculum without changing its basic structure and assumptions	<i>Transformational</i> The emphasis is on the complexities of diverse cultures and the role of government and other institutions in achieving specific outcomes.	<i>Social Action</i> Participants infuse their curriculum with opportunities for students to explore questions of fairness and equity as they relate to classroom practices.
Evidence				

Activities

Review the unit. Determine if this element integrates contributions, additive,	<i>Contributions</i> Portray people from multicultural, racial, ethnic , religious groups in a	<i>Additive</i> Concepts, themes and perspectives form a variety of ethnic and cultural groups	<i>Transformational</i> The emphasis is on the complexities of diverse cultures and the role of government and	<i>Social Action</i> Participants infuse their curriculum with opportunities for students to
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transformative or social action level. Categorize the unit by one of these four categories.	variety of roles	are added to curriculum without changing its basic structure and assumptions	other institutions in achieving specific outcomes.	explore questions of fairness and equity as they relate to classroom practices.
Evidence				

People studied

Review the unit. Determine if this element integrates contributions, additive, transformative or social action level. Categorize the unit by one of these four categories.	<i>Contributions</i> Portray people from multicultural, racial, ethnic , religious groups in a variety of roles	<i>Additive</i> Concepts, themes and perspectives form a variety of ethnic and cultural groups are added to curriculum without changing its basic structure and assumptions	<i>Transformational</i> The emphasis is on the complexities of diverse cultures and the role of government and other institutions in achieving specific outcomes.	<i>Social Action</i> Participants infuse their curriculum with opportunities for students to explore questions of fairness and equity as they relate to classroom practices.
Evidence				

APPENDIX D
EMAIL RECRUITMENT LETTER

FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Study Title: TRANSFORMING 4-H PEDAGOGY: EQUITY, ACCESS, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

Dear 4-H Staff,

My name is Travella Free. I am a doctoral candidate in the Education Department at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree and I would like to invite you to participate.

My objectives are to critically examine the thoughts, assumptions, and ideas of 4-H staff regarding recruitment and retention of students of color. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in two Blackboard Collaborate focus group sessions and complete a 30 question survey. In particular, we will discuss the foundation of 4-H, working with students of color, and reviewing the 4-H program and curriculum from a multicultural perspective. Each focus group session will take place at a mutually agreed upon time, and should last about two hours per session. The focus group session will be administered online by way of Blackboard Collaborate. The survey will also be administered online. This survey should take approximately 20–25 minutes to complete. Participants will be emailed the link on which to have access to the Blackboard Collaborate sessions and survey.

The focus group sessions will be audio-recorded so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by the researcher who will transcribe and analyze them.

Because this research will question the existence and nature of 4-H program participants must (a) have at least three years of experience in 4-H, (b) have an understanding of experiential learning, (c) be interested and visionary about the potential personal growth youth may attain through participation, and (d) have some experience in developing materials for youth audiences.

The benefits to this study will help the 4-H staff understand better the assumptions of the 4-H program and how to recruit and retain students of color. The benefits to the focus group participants include the opportunity to author material which will be used in future 4-H program development and the opportunity to serve on a culturally-relevant design team with experts interested in a particular area of youth development.

Participation is confidential. The data will be used solely for research and no other purposes. Audio recordings will be transcribed within 4 weeks of the date of recording. Transcription will not include personally identifiable information. Paper copies will be kept in lockable file cabinet. Data and audio files will be stored on a password protected computer. All three of these will be in the student researcher's lockable office Coltrane Hall on NC A&T Campus. Paper copies will be shredded and data and audio files will be deleted from the computer used to store and analyze data after study is complete. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (tfree@ncat.edu) if you have study related questions or problems.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, I will send you a self-addressed envelope with a Consent Form attached. Please sign the consent form and return it to me at the following address. I may call you within the next week to see whether you are willing to participate.

With kind regards,

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APPENDIX E

MULTICULTURAL RATING SCALE

Rating Scale				
<p>1 = <i>Ineffective</i>: This guideline is either entirely lacking, or it is producing no results.</p> <p>2 = <i>Somewhat effective</i>: The program does address this guideline, but it is not accomplishing fully the desired results.</p> <p>3 = <i>Effective</i>: The program is doing a quite satisfactory job here, but there are ways for doing even better.</p> <p>4 = <i>Very effective</i>: The program is doing an outstanding job in addressing the guideline so rated.</p> <p>This checklist contains guidelines that serve as criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the multicultural education components established by the National Council for the Social Studies.</p>				
<i>Rating</i>				
1	2	3	4	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.0 Does ethnic and cultural diversity permeate the total school environment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.1 Are ethnic content and perspectives incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum, preschool through 12th grade and beyond?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.2 Do instructional materials treat racial and ethnic differences and groups honestly, realistically, and sensitively?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.3 Do school libraries and resource centers offer a variety of materials on the histories, experiences, and cultures of many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.4 Do school assemblies, decorations, speakers, holidays, and heroes reflect racial, ethnic, and cultural group differences?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.5 Are extracurricular activities multiethnic and multicultural?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.0 Do school policies and procedures foster positive interactions among the various racial, ethnic, and cultural group members of the school?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1 Do school policies accommodate the behavioral patterns, learning styles, and orientations of those ethnic and cultural group members actually in the school?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.2 Does the school provide a variety of instruments and techniques for teaching and counseling students of various ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.3 Do school policies recognize the holidays and festivities of various ethnic groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.4 Do school policies avoid instructional and guidance practices based on stereotyped and ethnocentric perceptions?

(continued)

FIGURE 7.2 Checklist for assessing a school's multicultural education program.

FIGURE 7.2 (continued)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.5	Do school policies respect the dignity and worth of students as individuals <i>and</i> members of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups?
1	2	3	4	3.0	Is the school staff (administrators, instructors, counselors, and support staff) multiethnic and multiracial?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.1	Has the school established and enforced policies for recruiting and maintaining a staff made up of individuals from various racial and ethnic groups?
1	2	3	4	4.0	Does the school have systematic, comprehensive, mandatory, and continuing multicultural staff development programs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1	Are teachers, librarians, counselors, administrators, and support staff included in the staff development programs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.2	Do the staff development programs include a variety of experiences (such as lectures, field experiences, and curriculum projects)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.3	Do the staff development programs provide opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding about various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.4	Do the staff development programs provide opportunities for participants to explore their attitudes and feelings about their own ethnicity and others?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.5	Do the staff development programs examine the verbal and nonverbal patterns of interethnic group interactions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.6	Do the staff development programs provide opportunities for learning how to create and select multiethnic instructional materials and how to incorporate multicultural content into curriculum materials?
1	2	3	4	5.0	Does the curriculum reflect the ethnic learning styles of students within the school?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.1	Is the curriculum designed to help students learn how to function effectively in various cultural environments and learn more than one cognitive style?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2	Do the objectives, instructional strategies, and learning materials reflect the cultures and cognitive styles of the various ethnic and cultural groups within the school?
1	2	3	4	6.0	Does the curriculum provide continuous opportunities for students to develop a better sense of self?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6.1	Does the curriculum help students strengthen their self-identities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6.2	Is the curriculum designed to help students develop greater self-understanding?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6.3	Does the curriculum help students improve their self-concept?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6.4	Does the curriculum help students to better understand themselves in light of their ethnic and cultural heritages?

FIGURE 7.2 (continued)

1	2	3	4	11.0	Does the curriculum help students develop decision-making abilities, social participation skills, and a sense of political efficacy necessary for effective citizenship?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.1	Does the curriculum help students develop the ability to distinguish facts from interpretation and opinions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.2	Does the curriculum help students develop skills in finding and processing information?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.3	Does the curriculum help students develop sound knowledge, concepts, generalizations, and theories about issues related to ethnicity and cultural identity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.4	Does the curriculum help students develop sound methods of thinking about issues related to ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.5	Does the curriculum help students develop skills in clarifying and reconsidering their values and relating them to their understanding of ethnicity and cultural identity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.6	Does the curriculum include opportunities to use knowledge, valuing, and thinking in decision making on issues related to race, ethnicity, and culture?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.7	Does the curriculum provide opportunities for students to take action on social problems affecting racial, ethnic, and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.8	Does the curriculum help students develop a sense of efficacy?
1	2	3	4	12.0	Does the curriculum help students develop skills necessary for effective interpersonal and intercultural group interactions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12.1	Does the curriculum help students understand ethnic and cultural reference points that influence communications?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12.2	Does the curriculum help students participate in cross-ethnic and cross-cultural experiences and reflect upon them?
1	2	3	4	13.0	Is the multicultural curriculum comprehensive in scope and sequence, presenting holistic views of ethnic and cultural groups, and an integral part of the total school curriculum?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13.1	Does the curriculum introduce students to the experiences of persons of widely varying backgrounds in the study of each ethnic and cultural group?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13.2	Does the curriculum discuss the successes and contributions of group members within the context of that group's values?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13.3	Does the curriculum include the role of ethnicity and culture in the local community as well as in the nation?

FIGURE 7.2 (continued)

1	2	3	4	14.0	Does the curriculum include the continuous study of the cultures, historical experiences, social realities, and existential conditions of ethnic groups with a variety of racial compositions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.1	Does the curriculum include study of several ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.2	Does the curriculum include studies of both white ethnic groups and ethnic groups of color?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.3	Does the curriculum provide for continuity in the examination of aspects of experience affected by race?
1	2	3	4	15.0	Are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches used in designing and implementing the curriculum?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15.1	Are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives used in the study of ethnic and cultural groups and related issues?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15.2	Are approaches used authentic and comprehensive explanations of ethnic and cultural issues, events, and problems?
1	2	3	4	16.0	Does the curriculum use comparative approaches in the study of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16.1	Does the curriculum focus on the similarities and differences among and between ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16.2	Are matters examined from comparative perspectives with fairness to all?
1	2	3	4	17.0	Does the curriculum help students view and interpret events, situations, and conflict from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives and points of view?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17.1	Are the perspectives of various ethnic and cultural groups represented in the instructional program?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17.2	Are students taught why different ethnic and cultural groups often perceive the same historical event or contemporary situation differently?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17.3	Are the perspectives of each ethnic and cultural group presented as valid ways to perceive the past and the present?
1	2	3	4	18.0	Does the curriculum conceptualize and describe the development of the United States as a multicultural society?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18.1	Does the curriculum view the territorial and cultural growth of the United States as flowing from several directions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18.2	Does the curriculum include a parallel study of the various societies that developed in the geo-cultural United States?

FIGURE 7.2 (continued)

1	2	3	4	19.0	Does the school provide opportunities for students to participate in the aesthetic experiences of various ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.1	Are multiethnic literature and art used to promote empathy and understanding of people from various ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.2	Are multiethnic literature and art used to promote self-examination and self-understanding?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.3	Do students read and hear the poetry, short stories, novels, folklore, plays, essays, and autobiographies of a variety of ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.4	Do students examine the music, art, architecture, and dance of a variety of ethnic and cultural groups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.5	Do students have available the artistic, musical, and literary expression of the local ethnic and cultural communities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.6	Are opportunities provided for students to develop full literacy, and musical expression?
1	2	3	4	20.0	Does the curriculum provide opportunities for students to develop full literacy in at least two languages?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.1	Are students taught to communicate (speaking, reading, and writing) in a second language?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.2	Are the students taught about the culture of people who use the second language?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.3	Are second language speakers provided opportunities to develop full literacy in their native language?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.4	Are students for whom English is a second language taught in their native languages as needed?
1	2	3	4	21.0	Does the curriculum make maximum use of local community resources?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.1	Are students involved in the continuous study of the local community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.2	Are members of the local ethnic and cultural communities continually used as classroom resources?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21.3	Are field trips to the various local ethnic and cultural communities provided for students?
1	2	3	4	22.0	Do the assessment procedures used with students reflect their ethnic and community cultures?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.1	Do teachers use a variety of assessment procedures that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of students?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22.2	Do teachers' day-to-day assessment techniques take into account the ethnic and cultural diversity of their students?

FIGURE 7.2 (continued)

1	2	3	4	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.0 Does the school conduct ongoing, systematic evaluations of the goals, methods, and instructional materials used in teaching about ethnicity and culture?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.1 Do assessment procedures draw on many sources of evidence from many sorts of people?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.2 Does the evaluation program examine school policies and procedures?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.3 Does the evaluation program examine the everyday climate of the school?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.4 Does the evaluation program examine the effectiveness of curricular programs, both academic and nonacademic?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23.5 Are the results of evaluation used to improve the school program?

Follow-up After marking the checklist as objectively as possible, a summary of the results can prove helpful in identifying areas to be developed and in planning modifications to further enhance existing components. The following format can facilitate this process:

- The checklist indicates that our program is very effective in the following areas:
 -
 -
 -
- The checklist indicates that we need to work to become more effective in the following areas:
 -
 -
 -
- The checklist indicates that we lack the following aspects of a completely effective multicultural education program:
 -
 -
 -
- We have the following specific plans for improving the effectiveness of our program:
 -
 -
 -

Sources: From J. A. Banks. (September 1992). Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education. *Social Education*, pp. 274-294. National Council for the Social Studies. Rating scale adapted from Checklist for Assessing a School's Foreign Language Program, *Handbook for Planning an Effective Foreign Language Program*, 1985.