THE SHARED EXPERIENCES OF PROSPECTIVE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN OKLAHOMA

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"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and future". – Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

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Abstract:

The purpose of the qualitative, phenomenological study was to better understand SAE programs through the lived experiences from self-identified future agricultural education teachers in Oklahoma. Phenomenological methods were used to explore eight Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy from each of the five agricultural education districts in the state. The research questions investigated the learning outcomes and experiences regarding SAE programs. Subjects in this study reported learning skills and external factors that attributed their SAE experiences. Four themes were revealed from the reported data to include: (a) subjects attain skills through SAE programs; (b) teachers have a great influence on subjects' SAE programs; (c) subjects have limited and narrow perceptions of SAE; and (d) subjects believe SAE programs diversify their experiences in agriculture. The essence was revealed that teachers determine learning through SAE programs, which provided the greatest opportunity for the acquirement of employability skills in the SBAE program. Recommendations were developed to address the findings and conclusions for each theme.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research focused on identifying "best practices" for school based agricultural education (SBAE) has concluded Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs are a fundamental component of the agricultural education model and should be implemented in agricultural education programs (Croom, 2008, Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Retallick, 2010). SAE programs provide an opportunity to apply technical skills and information learned in a school-based agricultural education classroom (Ewing, 2010) to occupational, non-occupational, and exploratory experiences outside of the classroom (Cheek & Arrington, 1990). It is "believed to be a foundational piece of a [SBAE] student's experience" (Lewis, Rayfield, & Moore, 2012, p. 78). SAE programs function as an authentic experiential and independent learning opportunity for students (Barrick, Arrington, Heffernan, Hughes, Moody, Ogline, & Whaley, 1992; Ewing, 2010; Hughes & Barrick, 1993; Phipps, Osborne, Ball, & Dyer, 2008; Ramsey & Edwards, 2004; Retallick, 2003; Retallick, 2011) as they plan and implement a SAE program hinged upon their interests in the agricultural industry.

The debate that exists between scholars regarding SAE as the experiential component of the SBAE program is well represented. Kolb (1984) stressed that all

learning is experiential. Additionally, Roberts (2006) reported that experiences occur in unique contextual settings to foster more understanding and vocabulary regarding experiential learning. Further, Roberts (2006) asserted each experience should be defined through four dimensions: level, duration, intended outcome, and setting. Each component of the agricultural education model promotes experiences in different contexts (Roberts, 2006). As such, experiential learning is a central element in all facets of the comprehensive agricultural education program. Baker, Robinson, and Kolb (2012) developed the Comprehensive Model for Secondary Agricultural Education to operationalize experiential learning within agricultural education. The central theme of the model is that the experiential learning cycle is embedded in all three facets of agricultural education, making the total program experiential in nature, thus not emphasizing one component over another with respect to being referred to as the one experiential component. However, other scholars believe that SAE *is* the experiential component of agricultural education (Barrick et al., 1992; Ewing, 2010; Hughes & Barrick, 1993; Phipps et al., 2008; Ramsey & Edwards, 2004; Retallick, 2003; Retallick, 2011). Despite the debate over whether all facets of agricultural education are the experiential component, or just the SAE component, little is known about what specific skills and knowledge are developed as a result of the SAE program.

> "Agricultural education faculty and state directors continue to tout the importance of agriculture teachers maintaining the SAE program for all students" (Ricketts, Duncan, Peake, & Uesseler, 2005, p. 27). Additionally, the profession should advocate this integral component of SBAE as valuable and vital to career preparation (Bird, Martin, & Simonsen, 2013; Boone, 2011; Camp, Clark, & Fallon, 2000; Croom, 2008; Dyer & Williams, 1997; Harris & Newcomb, 1983; Lewis et al., 2012; National FFA

Organization, 2012; Newcomb, McCracken, Warmbrod, &Wittington, 2004). Many teachers consider SAE a viable component of SBAE. To that end, some SBAE programs require every student to have an SAE program (Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Retallick, 2010). So vital is the SAE component in Oklahoma that the state's legislature unanimously passed House Bill 3006 (2014) stating every student enrolled in an agricultural education class must conduct a SAE program.

Although professionals agree SAE is an integral component of the agricultural education model (Croom, 2008; Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Retallick, 2010), there has been a decline in the implementation of SAE programs in SBAE (Barrick, Hughes, & Baker, 1991; Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Phipps et al., 2008; Retallick & Martin, 2008; Steele, 1997; Talbert, Vaughn, Croom, & Lee, 2007; Wilson & Moore, 2007). Researchers suggested the declination of SAE programs could be attributed to factors such as teacher attitudes, student attitudes, and implementation barriers (Clarke & Scanlon, 1996; Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Dyer & Osborne, 1996; Retallick, 2010; Retallick & Martin, 2008; Robinson & Haynes, 2011; Steele, 1997; Warren & Flowers, 1993; Wilson & Moore, 2007). Additionally, incongruence between theory and practice exists regarding SAE programs. Steele (1997) concluded agricultural educators support SAE in theory despite the declination of SAE programs in the state of New York. Further, Baggett-Harlin and Weeks (2000) noted inconsistencies with SAE participation among students in Oklahoma agricultural education programs.

Dyer and Osborne (1996) found no standards to assess the quality of SAE programs. In response, a Delphi study was conducted that identified six quality indicators of SAE including: teacher supervision, current student records, goal-setting, student's

satisfied with SAEs, a variety of SAEs are promoted, and skill development (Jenkins III & Kitchel, 2009). The National Council for Agricultural Education (2009) established National Quality Standards for SAE programs including: maintaining accurate records, management and support strategies, and students with SAEs [should] send to appropriate entities for recognition.

Roberts and Ball (2009) advocated SBAE should exist to prepare students for post-secondary education and industry-related employment. Ramsey (2009) said SAE programs could be employed to prepare students for agriculturally related careers. Ramsey (2009) stated:

> The benefits of SAE can be categorized in a variety of areas…[specifically] the technical competencies that hold potential for being transferred from students' SAEs to the work-site. This transfer of skills acquired by students through experiential learning is an important theme associated with secondary agricultural education, i.e., preparing students for entry-level careers in the agricultural education industry. (p. 6)

SAE proponents have touted its value to provide learning opportunities to students that participate. Those learning opportunities include: (a) acceptance of responsibility, (b) development of self-confidence, (c) independent learning opportunities, (d) development of independence, and (e) learning to work with others (Pals, 1988). Further, competency has been the focal point of several research endeavors, concentrating on the general understanding of SAE or competencies needed in entry-level careers in the agricultural

industry that could be gained as a result of the SAE component (Dyer & Williams, 1997; Lewis et al., 2012; Ramsey & Edwards, 2012; Stewart & Birkenholz, 1991).

A lack of focus and direction in SAE programs has occurred as a result of changes in agricultural education and related industries (Dyer & Osborne, 1996; Theis & Terry, 2006). In the 1980s, The National Research Council's (NRC) Report (1988), "Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education" established the Committee on Agricultural Education in Secondary Schools to assess the contributions of agricultural education to the maintenance and improvement of U.S. agricultural productivity and economic competitiveness (NRC, 1988). This committee concluded high quality Supervised Occupational Experiences (SOE) were to have adequate teacher involvement in all facets of the SOE and all students may not need a SOE all four years of program enrollment (NRC, 1988). Further, the committee determined a broader range of SOEs should be encouraged, emphasis of a SOE should be learning with an appreciation of earning money, and schools should provide on-site laboratory facilities for learning opportunities (NRC, 1988). The committee provided renewal of SOE programs for future practice so the experiential component of agricultural education would maintain its relevance.

Recently, the National Council for Agricultural Education (NCAE) established the SAE Renewal Committee to address the renewal of SAE to meet this constant change. The committee provided clarity and understanding regarding implementation, resources, and philosophy of SAE programs (NCAE, 2014). Additionally, the committee focused on developing guiding principles for SAE execution, receiving teacher feedback on innovative practices to make SAEs relevant in classrooms, and discussing approaches

used in local programs that could serve as a model (NCAE, 2014). Further, upon meeting, the NCAE SAE Renewal Committee drafted the *Philosophy and Guiding Principles for Execution of the Supervised Agricultural Experience Component of the Total School Based Agricultural Education Program* (NCAE, 2014). This draft explained the need, types, and descriptors of high quality SAE programs (NCAE, 2014). The committee provided several belief statements regarding high quality SAE programs. Specifically, "SAE can and should be considered as a source of data for evidence of student growth," and "may be utilized to conduct performance assessment of skills for technical skill attainment for Perkins data reporting" (NCAE, 2014, p. 5).

Statement of the Problem

A primary focus of SBAE programs is to provide opportunities to prepare students for entry-level careers in the agricultural industry (Phipps et al., 2008). SAE programs have been noted to provide skills desirable for the agricultural industry (Ramsey, 2009) and have been the focus of numerous studies (Dyer & Williams, 1997; Lewis et al., 2012; Ramsey & Edwards, 2012; Stewart & Birkenholz, 1991). School based agricultural education has transformed considerably throughout the past three decades to meet the needs of students (Phipps, et al., 2008; Talbert et al., 2007). Students participate in individually supervised experiences to develop knowledge and skills from a SAE program (Croom, 2008; Jenkins III & Kitchel, 2009; Phipps et al., 2008; Ramsey & Edwards, 2012; Roberts & Ball, 2009; Talbert et al., 2007). However, information about specific competencies or skills learned as a result of the SAE experiences is lacking in the literature. Moreover, factors that influence learning as a result of the SAE program have not been studied. Therefore, two issues exist: What are the specific learning outcomes as

a result of a SAE program and what factors contribute to student learning as a result of a SAE program?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe shared experiences of future agricultural education teachers regarding SAE programs. The researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding of future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs, learning outcomes attributed to their SAE programs, and factors that contributed to those learning outcomes.

Exploring and describing learning that takes place as a result of a SAE program aligns with the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) research agenda. Specifically, this research is associated with Research Priority Area 4: Meaningful, Engaged Learning in All Environments where "[l]earners in all agricultural education learning environments will be actively and emotionally engaged in learning, leading to high levels of achievement, life and career readiness, and professional success" (Doerfert, 2011, p. 21).

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study regarding the experiences and factors pertaining to those experiences.

1. What are the learning outcomes attributed to their respective SAE experiences?

2. What are the external factors that the subjects attribute to learning outcomes as a result of their SAE program?
3. What are the subjects' experiences regarding their SAE programs?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

1. Students from Oklahoma were chosen to participate in the Agricultural Education Academy at Oklahoma State University (FAETA). The students were self-identified as future agricultural education teachers who have experienced the phenomenon of SAE programs.
2. Participants ranged from 16 – 18 years of age, represented a variety of backgrounds and geographical locations, and had a variety of SAE programs.
3. As students were chosen from a population self-selected as future agricultural education teachers who participated in learning activities to better understand the three components of the agricultural education model, possible skewed perceptions from the students regarding SAE programs as a result of SAE content reinforced during the Agricultural Education Academy.
4. Qualitative research cannot be generalized; therefore, results from this study can only be transferred to similar populations (Creswell, 2012).
5. As the researcher served as the instrument, the researcher was cognizant to prevent unintentional bias. Extra caution was exercised to report trustworthiness and credibility.

Assumptions

Assumptions were made through the duration of the study. It was assumed that:

1. The subjects of this study had SAE experiences as denoted on their Agricultural Education Academy application.
2. The subjects answered questions truthfully and accurately regarding the student's respective SAE programs.
3. Participants in the FAETA were exemplar.
4. The Agricultural Education Model was implemented comprehensively in the subjects' total program.
5. Students who have SAE programs may or may not apply for the Proficiency award. Further, those students that did apply for the Proficiency award may or may not receive recognition.

Operational Terms and Definitions

Career Development Events (CDE) – Focus on student achievement and the ability to critically think, clearly communicate, and effectively perform in a competitive world. CDEs provide career training through a competitive outlet that helps to further develop skills in the today's agribusiness and agriscience industries (National FFA Organization, 2014).

Employability skills/Workplace skills – Skills such as solving problems, communicating effectively, working on a team, thinking critically, and possessing interpersonal skills that will be useful in the workplace (Billing, 2003; Schmidt, 1999).

Incoming seniors – Students that are transitioning to the 12th grade.

Incoming juniors – Students that are transitioning to the 11th grade.

In-service teachers – Secondary educators that are teaching agricultural education regardless of their certification avenue.

Integration – The process of combining career and technical education and academic curriculum so that learning is more relevant to the students; designed for seamless instruction among career and technical education and academic curriculum (Talbert et al., 2007).

Proficiency award – Provided to students through the National FFA Organization who excel in skill development with their respective SAE (Talbert et al., 2007). "Proficiency awards encourage members to develop specialized skills that will apply toward a future agriculture career. Proficiency awards are presented at the local, state, and national levels" (National FFA Organization, 2014, p. 59).

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) – The application of concepts and principles intended to improve agricultural awareness and/or skills required for a student's potential career; it's the culmination of the concepts and principles learned in SBAE in authentic, planned situations under the supervision of the agricultural education teacher; and one or more SAE projects that has empirical data regarding records, documents, and goals (Talbert et al., 2007).

School-based agricultural education (SBAE) program - Systematic instruction in the fields of agriculture and natural resources at all levels of education for the purpose of 1)

preparing for advancement in the agricultural and related industries, 2) job creation and entrepreneurship, and 3) agricultural literacy. It is taught through Career and Technical Education throughout the United States and five United States Territories to over 7,500 schools. (National FFA Organization, 2014; Phipps et al., 2008).

Traditional agricultural education student – students who have lived or currently live on a farming operation of any kind.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature investigates the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the SAE component of agricultural education, specifically as it is related to learning outcomes and factors. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) Historical Purpose of School-Based Agricultural Education; (b) SAE – The Prototype and Its Evolution; (c) SAE Quality; (d) Work Readiness Legislation (e) Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks; (f); The Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy; and (g) Summary.

Historical Purpose of School-Based Agricultural Education

The following section includes significant information regarding agricultural education in relation to its impact to SAE development. The background and evolution of agricultural education will be addressed.

"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to it[s] liberty and interests by the most lasting bands" (Jefferson, T., Jefferson to J. Jay, August 23, 1785). Thomas Jefferson based his vision of a good society on

agriculture (Bernstein, 2003). Those who are called to cultivate the land must be taught to do so. Therefore, agricultural education has been in existence in the United States since the colonial period (Moore, 1987). Many colonists acquired farming practices and techniques from the Native Americans from the 1500s (Moore, 1987; Talbert et al., 2007). As time evolved, so did crops, farming techniques, and technology. With this evolution, agriculture became a commercial trade industry rather than just a means for survival. The Industrial Revolution generated developments in processing, production, and distribution of products; thus the agricultural industry was seen as a sustainable industry for the economy (Wirth, 1972).

In the late 1800s, the nation was expanding westward and large amounts of land were provided to those individuals who were interested in utilizing it for farming and ranching purposes and was known as the Homestead Act (P. L. 37 – 64; Talbert et al., 2007). As the scope of the agricultural industry grew, the government recognized the need to protect the interests of agriculturalists. The establishment of the United States Department of Agriculture, passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 and the second Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890, produced a national system of agricultural, mechanical, and military education (Herren & Edwards, 2002; Talbert et al., 2007). Additionally, with the establishment of land-grant institutions, agricultural education became a fundamental component in post-secondary education (Herren & Hillison, 1996). Although the land-grant institutions provided education in production agriculture, instruction was still needed for high school students to not only gain knowledge in production agriculture, but also obtain skills needed in the workforce (Roberts & Ball, 2009).

To meet the demands of skilled laborers, the Vocational Education Act of 1917 was passed (P. L. 64 – 347). This legislation is commonly known as the Smith-Hughes Act and provided funding for training teachers in home economics, industrial arts, and agricultural education (Federal Board for Vocational Education, 1917). Agriculture was taught to students at the secondary level, focusing on teaching boys farming techniques that could be implemented on their respective farms (Phipps et al., 2008). Therefore, the curriculum focused on the skills needed on the farm. This curriculum was administered through two key avenues: classroom instruction and hands-on learning.

Before its formal existence, SAE was a key component of the early agricultural education program, teaching skills through apprenticeships (True, 1929). The Smith Agricultural School principal, Rufus Stimson, introduced the hands-on approach into the agricultural education curriculum. The project method was a supervised experience that allowed students to gain skills transferable to their farms and the workforce (Stimson, 1919).

As vocational agriculture gained momentum, students began to meet outside of the classroom, eventually evolving into a leadership-based agricultural youth organization. Although boys' and girls' agricultural clubs have been in existence before the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (Graham, 1941), the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act provided an appropriate avenue for an organization focused on developing agricultural skills and social development to succeed (Croom, 2008). Formally, the National FFA Organization, previously known as the Future Farmers of America, was established in 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri (National FFA Organization, 2014).

As society and its needs have changed over the years, so did vocational agriculture. Employment opportunities took young men off of the farm and jobs were available for those graduating from post-secondary institutions or for those individuals pursuing employment in the industry. Those production agriculture skills that were taught in the early 20th century were no longer relevant (Norris & Briers, 1989). Agriculture has been evolving since the inception of formal instruction, developing into a technologically refined industry (Dailey, Conroy, & Shelley-Tolbert, 2001). However, despite its progress, "[t]he exodus of Americans from farming is one of the most dramatic changes in the U.S. economy and society in the past century (Lobao & Meyer, 2001, p. 103). In the early 1900s, nearly one of three Americans lived on farms, however, at the end of the century, those individual make up less than 2% of the population (Lobao & Meyer, 2001). The USDA (2015, February) reported that nearly 17 million jobs are provided through the agricultural industry. The viability of the agriculture industry is evident. As such, there has been a change regarding the educational needs of its workers (Dailey et al., 2001).

Additionally, in the 1980s, a paradigm shift in educational requirements was brought to the forefront in a report issued by the National Commission on Excellence called, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform,* that report highlighted the need for educational reform (Pringle & Martin, 2005). As a result, the National Research Council established the Committee on Agricultural Education in Secondary Schools to assess the contributions of instruction in agriculture to the continuance and improvement of the industry productivity and economic competiveness (*NAR;* National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; NRC, 1988). Within the report,

agricultural literacy and the total agricultural education program were addressed. The report recommended the focus of agricultural education must change; all students should receive some type of formal instruction about agriculture; major revisions are needed within vocational agriculture; the quality of programs must be enhanced; Future Farmers of America revise its name, organization emblems, contests, awards, and requirements for membership; and students enrolled in vocational agriculture should participate in worthwhile SOE programs (*NAR;* National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).NRC, 1988). These reports propelled legislation to support education reform. *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was enacted to push for increased math, science, and reading in our schools (Pringle & Martin, 2005). The call for increased academic rigor and accountability was the power behind educational reform. As a result, agricultural education teachers had the opportunity to contextualize teaching and learning curriculum (Parr, Edwards, & Leising, 2006).

As a comprehensive school reform (CSR) initiative, NCLB aimed to increase school accountability through standardized testing, demand highly qualified teachers, and promote school progress literacy (NCLB, 2001). NCLB was initiated to close the gap between academic performance and socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Fletcher (2006) reported four basic effects of NCLB on CTE:

- CTE teachers must be highly qualified;
- CTE students are required to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards;
- CTE reform initiatives;
- CTE legislation, including the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006, must be consistent with NCLB legislation.

Since NCLB has passed, a high-stakes environment has been created to ensure students meet baseline assessment scores to graduate. As a result, it has been reported there is a decrease in the amount of time spent on instruction in fine arts, vocational education, field trips, enrichment assemblies, and class activities (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003).

Furthermore, Martin, Fritzsche, and Ball (2006) conducted a Delphi study that identified the perceptions of secondary agriculture teachers and education professionals of Illinois regarding the potential impacts of the NCLB legislation on secondary programs. The researchers concluded those professionals believed the NCLB legislation would negatively impact secondary agricultural education programs (Martin et al., 2006). Subjects noted the requirement to have highly qualified teachers; agricultural education's lack of core academic accreditation, and budget constraints as potential negative impacts resulting from the legislation (Martin et al., 2006).

Agricultural education has been forced to evolve from its original form because of the overarching need for change in the curriculum and the push to be more academically rigorous. In 1989, the National Summit on Agricultural Education was held and stressed the importance of maintaining relevance and the implementation of topics regarding public policy, agribusiness, marketing, and environmental concerns. Agricultural education has transformed to encompass many of the topics to meet the broad scope of agricultural education (Barrick, 1992). With the call to advance the total agricultural education program, other components of agricultural education have changed as well.

The report, *Understanding New Directions in Agricultural Education* (1988), called for the FFA to change and reflect the evolution of education and the agricultural industry. The FFA changed its name to reflect those changes to the National FFA Organization (National FFA Organization, 2014). As the name changed, members began to understand the organization was not only for those who wanted to have a career in production agriculture, but also an organization that could benefit all students (Barrick, 1992). Career Development Events (CDEs), leadership conferences, award programs, and service learning opportunities provide opportunities for students to accomplish the FFA Motto: Learning to do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve (National FFA Organization, 2014).

The final component of the agricultural education program has also changed to meet the needs of society. SAE programs provide the opportunity to apply technical skills and information learned in the classroom to occupational, non-occupational, and exploratory experiences outside of the classroom (Cheek & Arrington, 1990; Ewing, 2010). Since the curriculum has changed from production-focused to a more comprehensive curriculum, SAE programs have undergone a transformation. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 changed the emphasis of supervised experiences regarding farming projects and production agriculture to go beyond the field, stressing broader areas of agriculture (Talbert et al., 2007). As SAE has changed over time, it still functions as an authentic experiential and independent learning opportunity for students as they plan and implement SAE programs hinged upon their interests in the agricultural industry (Barrick et al., 1992; Ewing, 2010; Hughes & Barrick, 1993; Phipps et al., 2008; Ramsey & Edwards, 2004; Retallick, 2003; Retallick, 2011).

SAE – The Prototype and Its Evolution

SAE has undergone transformations in its definition, delivery, and categories. In the sections below, the SAE prototype and its evolution is discussed to include the well-documented debate between Dewey and Snedden. Additionally, the evolution of the definition of SAE programs and categories is discussed.

The vocational focus on skill acquisition, as laid out in the Smith-Hughes Act, prompted debate among thought leaders and educational philosophers. Rufus Stimson, John Dewey, David Snedden, and Charles Prosser were among those noted as impacting vocational education and shared opposing views regarding the legislations' specified intention (Roberts & Ball, 2009). The well-documented argument between Dewey and Snedden vocalized opposing views regarding the purpose of vocational education (Dewey, 1977; Drost, 1977; Snedden, 1977).

Snedden buttressed content-centered curricula, focusing on specific skill acquisition, determined by industry standards, and delivered independently from general academic content (Drost, 1977; Snedden, 1977). Snedden was a proponent of social efficiency philosophy with roots in an apprenticeship model used in Germany (Drost, 1977). Dewey juxtaposed Snedden's viewpoint, advocating for an integrated approach that was blended and delivered in a context-rich environment for the purpose of developing life skills that could be employed in a multitude of careers (Roberts & Ball, 2009). Snedden's view resonated with politicians; therefore, he and his apprentice, Charles Prosser, were significant in developing the Smith-Hughes Act that laid the groundwork for career and technical education (CTE) (Roberts & Ball, 2009).

In the early twentieth century, Dewey formulated a new and innovative way to educate children. “He proposed that by basing education on the personal experiences of a learner, both the quality and quantity of learning would increase” (Dyer & Osborne, 1995, p. 6). This approach called for teachers to provide this *learning by experience*. As such, “John Dewey’s assertions of developing habits of mind have served as a foundation of agricultural education” (Roberts & Ball, 2009, p. 84).

By 1908, Massachusetts-native Rufus Stimson, revolutionized the agricultural education profession (Moore, 1988). Stimson was an agricultural college professor, teaching English, Ethics, and Public Speaking (Moore, 1988). He later became the Massachusetts state supervisor of agricultural education (Moore, 1988). He encouraged students to utilize experiences gained from their home projects “as a basis for study in school, originating the concept of the ‘home project,’ or supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs, as we envision that concept today” (Dyer & Osborne, 1995, p. 6).

As a result of the Smith-Hughes Act, students were required to engage in supervised programs for a minimum of six months each year, either on a farm provided by a school or on some other farm (Stimson, 1919). Stimson implemented this concept before it was mandated in legislation (Moore, 1988). Upon accepting a position as the director of the Smith Agricultural School, he prepared literature regarding a new plan for teaching agriculture expecting students to apply what they learned in class at their farms through home projects (Moore, 1988). Stimson employed the philosophies of Pestalozzi, Rousseau, Froebel, and Herbart while conceptualizing and developing the home project

method (Moore, 1988). Stimson (1919) wrote, “neither skill nor business ability can be learned from books alone, nor merely from observation of the work and management of others, both require active participation, during the learning period, in productive farming operations of real economic or commercial importance” (p. 32). He employed the method at the Smith school requiring students to have a project on their farm to implement farming techniques and practices and generate income. Stimson believed in an ownership project where students could benefit financially (Stimson, 1919).

Stimson appreciated and followed the holistic view of education espoused by Dewey (Moore, 1988). Dewey expressed the project method as being a unique teaching method and found Stimson’s approach to teaching agricultural practices and techniques harmonious with his educational beliefs and ideals (Moore, 1988). Additionally, Stimson advocated that education should prescribe to the holistic view and prepare students for life. While addressing the Harvard Teachers’ Association, Stimson (1915) stated, “[w]e ought to have a different type of education of secondary grade for those who desired direct preparation for life” (p. 474).

“There is no doubt that Stimson was the father of the project method of teaching” (Moore, 1988, p. 53). The project method he developed was based on solid philosophical underpinnings (Moore, 1988) and is still relevant today. Stimson’s project method of teaching served as a prototype for the modern day SBAE SAE program.

Although differences are evident, primarily there are minor differences between how the project is being implemented in SBAE and how Stimson conceptualized it originally (Moore, 1988). Students are still learning through experiential methodology and the essence of the project method has remained the same. However, the terminology has undergone a transformation, reflecting changes in educational reform and industry needs, going through a complete metamorphosis (Phipps et al., 2008). From its genesis, variations include *Home-School Cooperation Plan* (1908), *Farming Project* (1919), *Productive Farm Enterprises* (1926), *Supervised Farm Practice Program* (1938), *Supervised Farming Program* (1943), *Supervised Occupational Experience Program* (1972), and *Supervised Agricultural Experience Program* (1992) (Phipps et al., 2008).

Most educators agree SAE should be a required component of all SBAE students (Croom, 2008). Nonetheless, agricultural educators and thought leaders diverge on the very basic definition, meaning, and implementation of SAE. Dyer and Osborne (1996) have determined there is not a clear, definitive definition of SAE. In fact, state departments of education, FFA associations, university teacher preparation programs, and agricultural educators differ on how they operationalize SAE programs.

Researchers have defined Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs in a variety of facets. Camp et al. (2000) concluded SAE can be defined in broad, general terms and should be defined as "the planned, supervised application of agricultural principles and concepts. SAE opportunities should serve to improve agricultural literacy and skills and abilities required for careers in agriculture" (p. 20).

Phipps and Osborne (1988) defined SAE in agricultural education as "… all the practical activities of educational value conducted by students outside of class and laboratory instruction or on school-released time for which systematic instruction and supervision are provided by their teachers, parents, employers, or others" (p. 313).

Barrick et al. (1992) described SAE as the

> Actual planned application of concepts and principles learned in agricultural education. Students are supervised by agricultural teachers in cooperation with parents/guardians, employers, and other adults who assist them in the development and achievement of their educational goals. The purpose is to help students develop skills and abilities leading toward a career (p. 1).

Croom (2008) expressed SAE "is an independent learning program for students enrolled in agricultural education courses. It is designed to provide learning experiences for students in the agricultural career pathway of their choice" (p. 110). With the elaborate variation on the definition of SAEs, these constants remain: it is a student project that works in cooperation with their support system to gain employability and technical skills for a career and is an important part of agricultural education.

Regardless of the interpretation of the very definition of SAE programs, the agricultural education profession is in accord that SAE programs are a vital component of agricultural education and student engagement. There are several benefits that exist with SAE implementation. Pals (1988) revealed that students noted the following items as benefits of SAE participation: "(a) promote acceptance of responsibility, (b) develop

interest in agriculture, (c) learn to keep records, (d) make vo-ag class practical, and (e) develop a good relationship with instructor" (p. 39) Later, Knobloch (1999, p. 16) stated

> Supervised agricultural experiences implemented in agricultural education programs by its true definition of students experiencing agriculture with adult supervision have proven to help students apply knowledge, clarify career choices, solve problems through decision making, develop responsibility, and learn agricultural skills through practical experiences.

Additionally, other benefits include maturation, developing employability skills, obtaining personal finance skills and money, and recognition for SAE achievement (Stewart & Birkenholz, 1991).

More recently, the NCAE SAE Renewal Committee drafted *Philosophy and Guiding Principles for Execution of the Supervised Agricultural Experience Component of the Total School Based Agricultural Education Program* (NCAE, 2014). The committee determined that SAE is a required component of the program and is intended for every student (NCAE, 2014). As a result of the SAE, students should be able to consider a multitude of careers and occupations, learn proper behavior in the workplace, develop skills needed in a specific facet of the industry, and exhibit those skills in the industry or a simulated environment (NCAE, 2014). Additionally, teachers, parents, and other necessary supporters should provide guidance and supervision of the program and actively participate in the planning and goal-setting process (NCAE, 2014). Further, the SAE must be agricultural in nature and does not necessarily have to take place on a farm, ranch, or other private agricultural enterprises (NCAE, 2014). The SAE must correlate

with classroom instruction and the student's career interest, while following a recognized Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) career pathway (NCAE, 2014).

For this study, an SAE is defined as the application of concepts and principles intended to improve agricultural awareness and/or skills required for a student's potential career; it's the culmination of the concepts and principles learned in SBAE in authentic, planned situations under the supervision of the agricultural education teacher (Talbert et al., 2007). SAE programs are the *learning by doing* component of agricultural education.

Since it's beginning, the home project was supplemented with in-class instruction and out-of-class activities (Colvin & Stevenson, 1922; Stimson, 1919). As project classifications evolved, approaches to learning have as well. Kilpatrick (1918; 1925) classified projects based on purpose and outcomes. However, other scholars classified projects on the actions of learners (Davis, 1927; Stimson, 1919). More recently, a combination of project purpose and learner actions has been employed to classify projects (Camp et al., 2000; Newcomb et al., 2004; Talbert, Vaughn, & Croom, 2005).

Kilpatrick (1918; 1925) described where a project should be classified regarding where the outcomes may align. He classified projects into four types, *Type 1* or *Producer's* projects where a project produces a tangible product. *Type 2* or *Consumer's* projects where a project yields an affective outcome. *Type 3* or *Problem* projects revolves around solving a problem and *Type 4* or *Specific Learning* project is to obtain a specific skill or competency.

Stimson (1914; 1919) had a different perspective. He classified projects regarding the actions of the learners to include *Improvement* projects, *Experimental*

(1914) or *Trial* (1919) projects, or *Productive* projects. Improvement projects were employed for improvement around the farm, experimental or trial projects were used to test hypotheses, and a productive project was to yield an agricultural commodity.

Additionally, Davis (1927) classified projects based on their intentions. Davis (1927) employed the same terminology as Stimson (1919), but with different meanings. *Productive* projects were employed to produce an agricultural commodity for profit. *Trial* projects were used to test a new or innovative method. *Improvement* projects were employed to enhance one's surroundings. Davis (1927) added a new classification to include *Management* projects, where the student developed managerial skills.

The evolution continued when Camp et al. (2000) proposed eight types of projects. These projects include (a) Agribusiness Entrepreneurship, (b) Agricultural Placement, (c) Agricultural Production, (d) Agricultural Research, (e) Directed School Laboratory, (f) Agricultural Communications, (g) Agricultural Exploration, and (h) Improvement Projects. Talbert el al. (2005) proposed similar classifications of SAE programs that paralleled Camp et al (2000). Talbert et al. (2005) identified seven types of projects in SBAE: (a) Exploratory; (b) Paid Placement; (c) Unpaid Placement; (d) Entrepreneurship/Ownership; (e) Directed Laboratory; (f) Research and Experimentation; and (g) Improvement. These types of projects are similar to those of Camp et al (2000). As these proposed classification systems are closely related, the classification areas will be discussed congruently. *Exploratory* was intended for younger students and to aid in an appreciation and understanding of the agricultural field (Camp et al., 2000; Talbert et al., 2005). The Placement classification is divided further into two sub-categories: *Paid* and *Unpaid Placement*. Both promoting the development of skills to enter the agricultural

workforce, but ultimately the difference is whether the learner is paid or not paid (Talbert et al., 2005). *Entrepreneurship/Ownership* project entails the learner owning and developing an agricultural enterprise and gaining business skills (Talbert et al., 2005). *Directed Laboratory* classification is often used when no other classification area can be employed (Camp et al., 2000; Talbert et al., 2005). It can vary and is dependent upon the learners' interests and are frequently conducted at school facilities. *Research* or *Experimentation* project is when the learner employs scientific approaches to solve problems (Talbert et al., 2005). *Improvement* classification is utilized to make an improvement, either at home or in the community (Talbert et al., 2005).

Newcomb et al. (2004) followed previous thought leaders (Davis, 1927; Kilpatrick 1918; 1925; Stimson 1914; 1919) and recommended three general classifications of SAE projects: *Ownership, Placement* or *Cooperative,* and *Improvement* or *Skill Development*. Ownership can be further employed as *Production* projects, *Group Enterprise* projects, *or Entrepreneurship* projects. Production projects include the production of an agricultural commodity. Group Enterprise projects promote the learner to work with others to produce a product. Entrepreneurship projects require the learner to create an agriculturally related business. The Placement or Cooperative project is the knowledge and skills that are needed in agricultural industries. Students are placed within an agricultural business and gain employment to learn the industry and related skills. Improvement or Skill Development projects are to improve the learners' surroundings or learn and practice specific agricultural skills.

Finally, the NCAE SAE Renewal Committee (NCAE, 2014) determined six types of SAE classifications. The six classifications include (a) Exploratory, (b)

Placement/Internship, (c) Ownership/Entrepreneurship, (d) Research, (e) School-Based Enterprise, and (f) Service Learning. The *Exploratory* classification focused on the development of an SAE plan and is embedded as an individual student activity in the classroom. *Placement/Internship* places the learner at an agricultural enterprise and is the *learning by doing* environment. The *Ownership/Entrepreneurship* classification is where the learner "plans, implements, operates, and assumes financial risks in a productive or service activity or agriculture, food, or natural resource-related business" (NCAE, 2014, p. 2). The *Research* classification is divided into sub-categories to include *Experimental, Analytical,* and *Invention*. The *Experimental Research* SAE program is an "extensive activity where the [learner] plans and conducts a major agricultural experiment use the scientific process" (NCAE, 2014, p. 3). An *Analytical Research* SAE program is where the learner will choose a real-world problem in the agricultural sector that is not conducive to experimentation and develops a plan to investigate and analyze the problem. Data should be gathered and evaluated from a variety of sources and a product should then be produced that can be used to educate the intended audience. The *Invention Research* SAE program is where a learner "identifies a need in an agriculture, food, or natural resource-related industry and performs research and analysis in order to solve a problem or increase efficiency by developing/adapting a new product or service to the industry" (NCAE, 2014, p. 3). *School-Based Enterprise* is a learner-managed entrepreneurial operation that provides goods and services in a school setting to meet the needs of an identified audience. The *Service Learning* classification is a learner-managed activity where the learners "are involved in the development of a needs assessment, planning the goals, objectives and budget, implementation of the activity, promotion, and

evaluation/reflection of a chosen project" (NCAE, 2014, p. 3). A project must be a stand-alone project and not in conjunction with an on-going chapter activity. The project must require a challenge that requires the implementation of leadership skills, but also allow unskilled helpers to assist within a reasonable amount of time.

Currently, the National FFA Organization (2014) recognizes the following categories for SAE programs: *Entrepreneurship; Placement; Agriscience Research and Experimentation;* and *Exploratory.* The National FFA Organization (2014) defined Entrepreneurship, Placement, and Agriscience Research and Experimentation similar to the same aforementioned areas stated from previous researchers (Camp et al., 2000, NCAE, 2014; Talbert et al., 2005). However, The National FFA Organization (2014) divides Exploratory classification into *Improvement Projects* and *Supplemental Skill Development.* Improvement projects follow that of previous researchers (Camp et al., 2000, NCAE, 2014; Talbert et al., 2005). It is employed to improve one's home or workplace, or improve the efficiency of a business of living conditions of a family (National FFA Organization, 2014). Supplemental Skill Development SAE programs generally take less than a day to complete and are not related to a learners' major SAE. It includes experiential learning and enhances agricultural skills and knowledge (National FFA Organization, 2014).

A quality SAE program has been previously undefined in the literature base (Dyer & Osborne, 1995). However, Jenkins III and Kitchel (2009) conducted a modified Delphi study to observe quality indicators of student SAE programs. The researchers used 36 professionals from various levels of agricultural education to establish an expert panel

(Jenkins III & Kitchel, 2009). The expert panel determined four quality indicators for SAE programs (Jenkins III & Kitchel, 2009). The four indicators include:

- Teacher has supervision time for SAE
- Student has up-to-date records on SAE
- SAE involves goal-setting
- A diversity/variety of SAE types are promoted (Jenkins III & Kitchel, 2009, p. 36).

Additionally, the researchers reported other indicators to include approval of program by the advisory council and administration, demonstration of growth, skill development, opportunity for SAE recognition, parents/teachers/students involved in the SAE program, continuous instruction and supervision, and SAE programs be a mandatory component of agricultural education (Jenkins III & Kitchel, 2009).

Further, the National Council for Agricultural Education developed 16 assumptions regarding SAE programs from the current literature. Though these assumptions have not been officially determined as quality factors, they do provide confirmation towards the status of SAE programs (Barrick et al,. 2011). The assumptions include:

- Viewed as a program, not as a project;
- Planned, with learning objectives and agreements among parties involved;
- Record/portfolio of experiences are kept by student and teacher and are part of instruction and evaluation;
- Shows evidence of growth in scope and sequence;

- Related to state-approved agricultural content standards;
- A part of the curriculum, extended beyond classroom and laboratory instruction;
- Required of all students;
- Programs differ between students studying in agriculture and those studying about agriculture;
- Instructor prepared for and supportive of experience programs;
- Approved by the school administration;
- Supported by the program advisory committee;
- Program is supervised year-round;
- Parents are informed and supportive of student involvement;
- Students invest time, energy and/or money; and
- Student programs are recognized (Barrick et al., 2011, p. 7-8).

Work Readiness and Federal Legislation

In April, 1992, the second and final Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report, *Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance* was published. The report presented the data taken by field research that confirmed the findings of the first report *What Work Requires of School* (1991)(SCANS, 1992). The second report focused on how schools prepared students for the workforce (SCANS, 1992). Both reports named three foundation areas and five competency areas that serve as guiding principles for career-focused curricula. The three foundations areas included: (a) basic skills, (b) thinking skills, and (c) personal qualities (SCANS, 1991; 1992). The five competencies included: (a) resources, (b) interpersonal, (c) information, (d) systems, and

(e) technology (SCANS, 1991; 1992). The expectation is that students learn these skills and competencies to master the abilities to analyze, solve problems, and utilize knowledge into some sort of operation (SCANS, 1992).

As education and the industry were evolving, legislation was passed to replace the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 with the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (P.L. 98 – 524). The Perkins Act redefined vocational education as vocational-technical education and emphasized the acquisition of job skills (P.L. 98 – 542). The reauthorized act in 1990 (P.L. 101 – 392) established the Tech-Prep program to "encourage greater coordination of secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs and activities through a coherent sequence of courses" (P.L. 108 – 334, p. 4).

In 1990, public law 101 – 392 was reauthorized that provided appropriations for the Head Start Act, The Follow Through Act, the Community Service Block Grant, and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act. Additionally, in 1991, public law 102 – 103 was passed to amend the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Act of 1998. Both public laws amended the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (P.L. 101 – 392; P.L. 102 – 103). In 1994, the United States Congress reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Act and included the School-To-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA). This public law established a national agenda for linking academic education and vocational education (P.L 103 – 239).

With the passage of the aforementioned public laws, the federal guidelines became stricter, requiring the education programs to provide academic and occupational skill education necessary in the competitive workforce (P.L. 101 – 392). Carl D. Perkins

Act was amended again in 1998 to provide funds to the state and local agencies, to aid in the development of systems that would ensure the integration of academic, career, and technological education to achieve desired results (P.L. 105 – 332). The allocated funds would provide state and local education entities to purchase the latest technological advancements, utilize them in the classroom, and provide support to career and technical student organizations (P.L. 105 – 332).

"Legislation guided the American education institutions to developing curricula blended from vocational and academic programs meant to enhance the information processing skills" (Kennedy, 2006, p. 39). The vision for CTE has become more career-focused with the intent to combine academics and employability skills with career knowledge (Ramsey, 2009). However, researchers reported that 30% of high school graduates pursuing job opportunities were not provided the necessary skills (College Enrollment and Work, 2008). As SBAE should prepare students for post-secondary education and industry-related employment (Roberts & Ball, 2009), perhaps SAE could aid in providing the skills that employers are expecting. However, there has been a national decline in the participation of SAE programs (Barrick et al., 1991; Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Phipps et al., 2008; Retallick & Martin, 2008; Steele, 1997; Talbert et al., 2007, Wilson & Moore, 2007). The decline of SAE programs has implications of agricultural education's role in providing students for entry-level positions for the agricultural industry (Ramsey & Edwards, 2012).

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Frameworks for this study are categorized into conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Conceptual frameworks include constructivism, socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1962), zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). The theoretical underpinnings of this study emerged from the data to include social judgement theory (Hammond, Hamm, Grassia, & Pearson, 1987), social learning theory and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977).

The conceptual underpinnings of this study lay within the constructivism epistemology. "Constructivism does not propound that learning principles exist and are to be discovered and tested, but rather the learners create their own learning (Schunk, 2012, p. 230). Theorists believe constructivism houses many varieties and not one person's version should be viewed as more correct than another (Derry, 1996; Simpson, 2002). Several key assumptions of constructivism include people are active learners (Geary, 1995) and teachers should not deliver instruction traditionally, but rather so learners become actively involved (Schunk, 2012). Schunk (2012) posited constructivist classrooms should pose problems of relevance to students, learning should be structured around primary concepts, students' points of views should be sought after, adaptation of curriculum for student suppositions, and student learning should be assessed in the context of teaching. Just as generations have been previously named, *Millennials* are dubbed as the young adults and teaching that came to age in the year 2000 (Donnison, 2007). Millennials prefer teaching and learning styles that coincide with the constructivist epistemology in which students play an active role in in developing their knowledge by

linking new information with past experiences (Wisniewski's, 2010). SAEs are discovered and observed in non-traditional classroom settings.

Within the constructivism epistemology, lie the works of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and Piaget's theory of cognitive development. For the purpose of this study, the researchers chose to focus on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory as the theoretical basis. Within this theory, Vygotsky places a greater emphasis on the social setting as a catalyst for learning and development (Schunk, 2012). Though the theory was developed to apply to Marxists views of social change to language and development (Schunk, 2012), this theory fits well with the findings of the study.

Vygotsky was a believer that both consciousness and environment played an important role in development (Schunk, 2012; Vygotsky, 1962). The theory "stresses the interaction of interpersonal, cultural – historical, and individual factors as key to human development" (Schunk, 2012, p. 242). The interactions with one's environment can act as catalyst for developmental processes and cognitive growth; this is where one can transform experiences based on knowledge and reorganize one's mental structure. "The cultural – historical aspects of Vygotsky's theory illuminate the point that learning and development cannot be disassociated from their context. The way that learners interact with their worlds – with the persons, objects, and institutions in it – transforms their thinking" (Schunk, 2012, p. 242). Additionally, prior conceptions and new concepts are interwoven to form new knowledge. These serve as the basis of SAEs, utilizing the relationship and environments around the project and individual to create a learning atmosphere.

Schunk (2012) further explained the social atmosphere affects cognition through *tools* including cultural objects and its social institutions. In this case, the cultural objects include the physical SAE (i.e., Livestock project, agriscience project, etc.) and the social institutions include the agricultural education classroom, school farm, livestock show, greenhouse, etc. Students socially engage with their teachers, parents, peers, and other program partners during the SAE development and execution process (Phipps et al., 2008). Vygotsky (1962) claimed all higher mental functions originate in social settings. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) further explains the relationship of SAEs and the sociocultural theory.

ZPD is defined as, "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This represents the amount of learning that is possible by a student with the proper guidance and instructional conditions (Puntambekar & Hubscher, 2005). Further, Schunk (2012) summarized other researchers having stated that, "[c]ognitive change occurs in the ZPD as teacher and learner share cultural tools, and this culturally mediated interaction produces cognitive change when it is internalized in the learner" (p. 244). Learners bring in previous knowledge to social interactions and develop implications by assimilating those understandings with their own experiences in the necessary context (Schunk, 2012). In this context, the SAE is the environment and the peers, agricultural teachers, parents, and employers serve as the guidance for the student. For the purpose of this study, the focus on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and ZPD was

employed to explain the essence of self-identified future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs.

Experiential learning has long been the backbone of agricultural education since the commencement of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 (Graham & Birkenholz, 1999). The theoretical underpinnings of SAE are grounded in experiential learning. With that, a thought leader in experiential is John Dewey. Dewey (1938), a pragmatist, believed that there was an "organic connection between education and personal experience" (p. 25). Additionally, Dewey (1938) thought that the educational impact is contingent upon the quality of the experiences and its ability to influence later experiences. He also prescribed to the principal of continuity of experience where "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (Dewey, 1938, p. 35). Dewey (1938) further purported a need to ensure teacher awareness of their surroundings for learning. "A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth" (Dewey, 1938, p. 40).

Dewey (1938) also proclaimed that learning occurs through experiences and is a cyclical process that builds on past experiences. That cyclical process is as follows:

> (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past, a knowledge obtained partly by recollection and partly from the information, advice, and warning of those who have a wider

> experience; and (3) judgment which puts together what is observed and what is recalled to see what they signify (p. 69).

Experiential learning has been a vital element in agriculture education since its inception (Cheek, Arrington, Carter, & Randall, 1994; Knobloch, 2003; Stewart & Birkenholtz, 1991). Cheek et al. (1994, p. 1) conjectured,

> The value of experiential learning in agricultural education has long been recognized as an important part of the educational process. Through practice and experience students apply what they have learned in real situation, thus the material become understandable and usable. Moreover, in the process of gaining experience, new problems and situations arise causing learners to seek additional information and new ways of applying what they have learned.

This learning takes place in the formalized student SAE programs in which, theoretically, the teacher serves as the supervisor to ensure learning is taking place.

Thought leaders have built on Dewey's foundational work, thus propounding the value of experiential learning in education. David Kolb created a model that illustrated the "process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Kolb also denoted experiential learning as a cyclical process, employing four modes of learning: (1) concrete experience (CE), (2) reflective observation (RO), (3) abstract conceptualization (AC) regarding the experience, and (4) active experimentation (AE) regarding the understanding of the experience (Figure 1). Kolb determined that learning can occur at any stage and is continual.

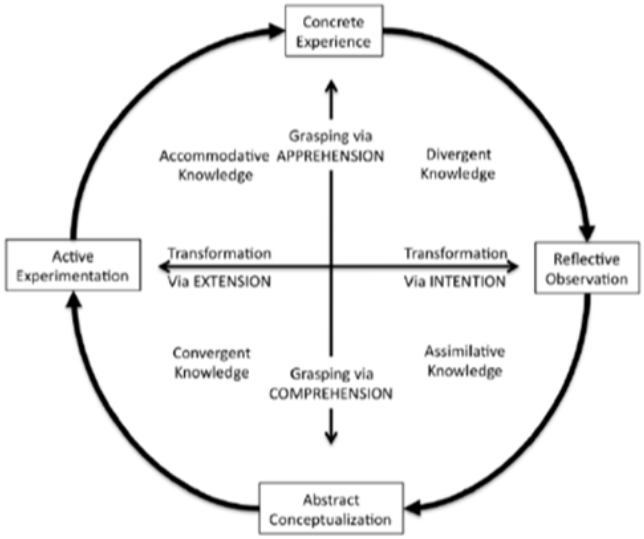

Figure 1. Model of Experiential Learning Process. Adapted from *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (p. 42), by D. A. Kolb, 1984, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

As described in Figure 1, the experiential learning model (Kolb, 1984) is applicable in agricultural education. It is exhibited though experiences which students have inside and outside of the traditional classroom setting. With regards to SAE programs, students have a hands-on CE in the agricultural education program, cultivating an interest in the subject area. Students, then transfer to the next stage of the process, RO, where the student can think deeply, internalizing the experience. Following the RO stage, students will begin to formulate their own postulations and conceptions regarding their experience, modifying their original interpretations. This is the AC stage where students can increase their comprehension of the experience. Finally, the students accomplish the cycle (Kolb, 1984) by entering the AE stage. In this stage, students can test their postulations grounded in their initial experience. In order for students to have a complete learning experience regarding their SAE program, confirmation of the model should be evident.

Additionally, history would indicate that the FAETA participants may have had several experiences together before attending the academy. It is common for the participants to attend the National FFA Washington Leadership Conference and other FFA or SAE functions together. It is not uncommon for the participants of the FAETA to seek a state FFA office.

To ensure the relevance of the experiential learning, over the past decade, several researchers have sought to determine the theoretical underpinning for the agricultural education profession. Knobloch (2003) recognized four principles of experiential learning: (1) learning through real-life context, (2) learning by doing, (3) learning through projects, and (4) learning through problem solving. More recently, Baker, Robinson, & Kolb (2012) developed the Enriched Agricultural Education Model that operationalized the function of experiential learning with regards to agricultural education (Figure 2). The central idea is that the experiential learning cycle occurs in each of the circles in the three-component model of agricultural education, as well as encompassing the entire model, ensuring the experiential learning cycle is used by all three components simultaneously.

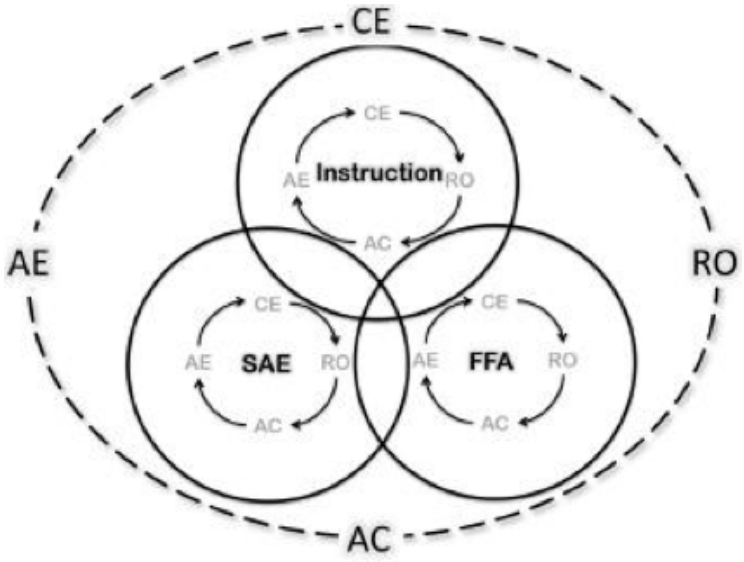

Figure 2. Enriched Agricultural Education Model. Reprinted from "Aligning Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory with a Comprehensive Agricultural Education Model". M. A. Baker, J. S. Robinson, & D. A. Kolb, 2012, *Journal of Agricultural Education, 53*(4), p. 1 – 16. Reprinted with permission.

Baker et al. (2012) helped to elucidate the association of experiential learning theory in the agricultural education profession. The researchers deduced that experiential learning should (a) encompass each of the three components of the integrated agricultural education model, (b) require purposeful and planned supervision from the agricultural education teacher, (c) lead to the development of important meta-cognitive skills, and (d) include curriculum planning and assessment (Baker et al., 2012).

As the end result of all experiences in agricultural education and congruent with the FFA Mission, students should be obtaining skills and knowledge that will help them become contributing members to society. Knoblock (2003) declared,

> Agricultural educators who engage students to learn by experience through authentic pedagogy will most likely see the fruits of higher intellectual

achievements, not only in classrooms and schools, but more importantly, in their roles as adults as contributing members of society (p. 32).

While analyzing data, a theory emerged that helped bring forth the essence of self-identified future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs. The theory that emerged is social judgment theory (SJT) (Hammond et al., 1987; Hammond & Stewart, 2001) from the framework of the Lens Model theory (Brunswik, 1956). "Judgments of historical […] material will seldom be justified with *correspondence* with empirical fact […] but more often by *coherence* with the supporting, current ideology, which will be expanded to […] a central vision of life" (Hammond, 2010, p. 327). Additionally, judgment cannot be justified, not by any cognitive activity (Hammond, 2010). The intuition, or hunch, is the polar opposite of analysis and doesn't require any cognitive ability. Students revealed they all espoused successful SAE programs. However, through SJT, and employing quality assessors, students were unaware of specifically, what was meant by those aforementioned trademarks. Students look through a variety of lens to determine if their SAE was high quality and successful, including FFA Proficiency applications, FFA degree applications, achievement in other award areas, or simply by their own reported intuition. However, most of the students revealed that they did not determine the quality of their SAE based on its original intended purpose, which most of them were to contribute to production agriculture.

Hammond (2010) postulated that one should replace intuition with quasi-rationality. Quasi-rationality is "*resembling* rationality rather than being identical with it" and its intent to be adaptable, and thus a defendable form of cognition (Hammond, 2010, p. 330). Today, SJT has evolved from probabilistic functionalism had has had an effect

on research areas including conflict reduction, insight, dynamic decision making, and the investigation of learning and inference (Hammond, 2010). SJT works well with determining learning outcomes and influencers that affect learning outcomes with regards to student SAE programs because SJT requires an ecological view, meaning that the environment must be taken into consideration when determining its achievement (Hammond, 2010). For this study, achievement would be cognitive gain. Social Judgment theorists employ a standard for achievement and correspond with the environmental events. The central idea behind SJT rests in the Lens Model.

The Lens Model is analyzing behavior, achievements, or work, across multiple cases or times (Doherty & Kurz, 2010). From those behaviors, a sample is pooled and data analysis begins (Doherty & Kurz, 2010). Figure 3 represents the Lens Model and labeled to that initial judgments (Y_s) made, analyzed through a variety of lens (X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5), then presenting data in its true state (Y_e). R_a serves as the statistical achievement, but in this study, I simply used the cues, environment, and subject to assess students SAE programs.

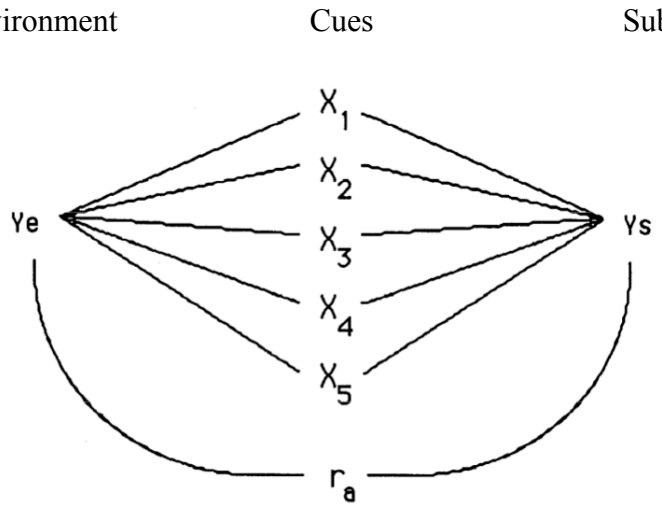

Figure 3. The Lens Model. Adapted from "Social Judgment Theory" by M. E., Doherty & E. M. Kurz, 2010, *Thinking and Reasoning, 2*(2 – 3), p. 190 – 140.

Though these theories are typically used for empirical studies, I have employed them to explain the students' perceived quality and success of their respective SAE programs.

Social learning theory extended the foundation that Vygotsky began with regards to environmental impacts on learning. Much like Vygotsky (1962), Bandura (1977) proposed that the learning environment is categorized by exchanges between the student, the student's behavior, and the environment surrounding the student. Moreover, the subjects reported efficacy in their respective SAE areas, often times helping peers through a variety of avenues.

Self-efficacy has been associated with academic achievement, specifically regarding career preparation (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Bandura (1977) stated, "[p]received self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to given attainments" (p. 3).

Self-efficacy is a component of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1999), that proposed that human behavior consists of interacting personal, cognitive, and environmental events.

> The substantial body of research on the diverse effects of perceived personal efficacy can be summarized as follows: People who have a low sense of efficacy in given domains shy away from difficult tasks, which they view as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, the obstacles they will encounter, and all kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties. They are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks. Because they view insufficient performance as deficient aptitude, it does not require much failure for them to lose faith in their capabilities. They fall easy victim to stress and depression. (Bandura, 1999, p. 11)

Bandura (1977) denoted that self-efficacy is guided by four main influences: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social and verbal persuasion, and physiological states.

Mastery experiences are viewed as the most crucial factor of the four aforementioned influences (Bandura, 1994). Mastery refers to the repetitive attempts at a task that have yielded positive results through adversity and obstacles (Bandura, 1994). If

mastery is achieved easily, then the individual will have high self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). However, a failure could reduce the sense of overall mastery.

Vicarious experiences can also promote self-efficacy. Modeling behaviors to those who are attempting to accomplish a given task is key to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). However, the model fails to complete the task, regardless of the effort, the belief is that the given task may be weakened (Bandura, 1994). "For most activities, there are no absolute measures of adequacy. Therefore, people must appraise their capabilities in relation to the attainment of others" (Bandura, 1999, p. 86).

Social and verbal persuasion is an acknowledgment from others that one has the capability to complete a given task (Bandura, 1994).

> It is more difficult to instill high beliefs of personal efficacy by social persuasion alone than to undermine it. Unrealistic boosts in efficacy are quickly disconfirmed by disappointing results of one's efforts. But people who have been persuaded that they lack capabilities tend to avoid challenging activities that cultivate potentialities and give up quickly in the face of difficulties. (Bandura, 1994, p. 73)

Finally, the psychological state of an individual can influence self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). People have the ability to *read* themselves, acknowledge an overall sense of *being*, which is determined by their current state of mind (Bandura, 1994). Perceived self-efficacy can have an effect on choice of activities and settings (Bandura, 1977). It can also have an influence on one's coping skills as a result of the expectations of eventual successes (Bandura, 1977). "Efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194).

Within the social cognitive camp, people are not driven by inner forces and are not shaped and controlled by external stimuli (Bandura, 1986). Instead, human functioning is described where behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental events operate as relating elements (Bandura, 1986). The Model of Triadic Reciprocality (figure 4) illustrates the reciprocal relationship of the aforementioned factors. Bandura (1997) explained that reciprocity does not mean that all three factors have equal strength and they do not influence and affect each other simultaneously. Instead, the factors influences will vary depending on situations and activities (Bandura, 1997).

The three factors are *personal factors and cognition* (P), *behaviors* (B), and *environmental factors* (E). Additionally, the lines with arrows indicate the reciprocal interactions among the factors.

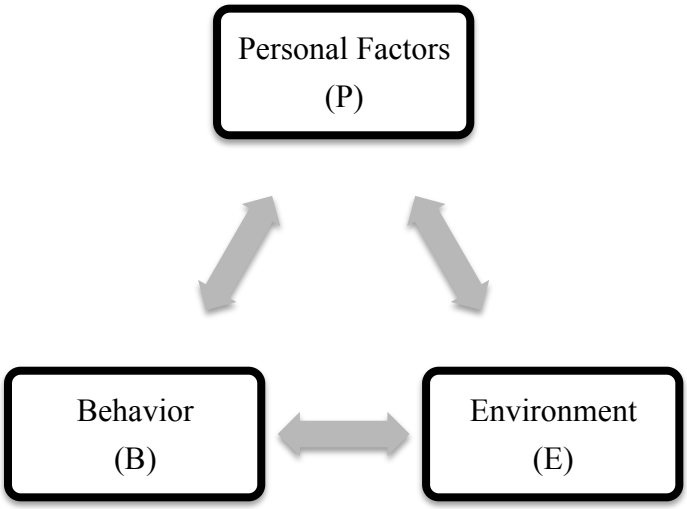

Figure 4. Model of triadic reciprocality. Adapted from *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control* by A. Bandura, 1997, New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

The Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy

The Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy (FAETA) was established in 2007 to "encourage and promote the teaching of high school agricultural education as a positive and promising college major and career choice. The academy is aimed at recruiting top-notch students who have a strong desire to pursue a career in Agricultural Education. The weeklong program is housed on the OSU campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma and focuses on life at OSU and provides a look into the life and career of a school-based agricultural education teacher" (Ramsey, 2014, p. 1). The goals of the FAETA include promoting awareness of the AGED profession and promote AGED as a promising career choice, having the participants to declare AGED as their future major, and to eventually enter the AGED teaching profession (Ramsey, 2014).

The students that are selected to attend present an outstanding record of FFA membership, are recommended by their agricultural education teacher, and have participated in leadership endeavors (Ramsey, 2014). Students must submit an application to attend the FAETA. Review and selection of the applicants to attend the FAETA is done through external sources. To date, 100 students have attended the FAETA from across Oklahoma. Of those 100 individuals, 9 individuals have gone into the agricultural education profession as teachers (Ramsey, 2014). Each year, activities and curriculum evolve and commitment numbers have increased as a result. More students, who participated in FAETA, are entering Oklahoma State University as an AGED major than ever before. The 2009 FAETA yielded six students who graduated with AGED as their primary major and gained SBAE employment.

The FAETA is made possible my sponsors. Those sponsors include the Department of Career and Technology Education, Farm Credit Associations of Oklahoma, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources – OSU, State Program Administrator Agricultural Education, Oklahoma FFA Alumni Association, and Chesapeake Energy.

Summary

"The exodus of farming is one of the most dramatic changes in the U.S. economy and society in the past century" (Lobao & Meyer, 2001, p. 103). It has been evolving since the inception of formal instruction, developing into a refined industry (Dailey et al., 2001). As the agricultural industry has changed, agricultural education has evolved from producing food to be self-sufficient to a commercial industry (Talbert et al., 2007). Thus, the production skills that were taught in the early 20th century are no longer relevant (Norris & Briers, 1989).

With the paradigm shift in the 1980's educational requirements were brought to the forefront, focusing on economic competitiveness and skill acquisition (NRC, 1988). Components of the comprehensive agricultural education program were evolving to reflect the changes in education and the industry. Additionally, SAE programs became clearer in the definition, purpose, and categories, while being firmly grounded in experiential learning.

SAE programs are rooted in constructivism, where students cultivate their own learning (Schunk, 2012). The conceptual framework lies within socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1962), zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), and experiential

learning (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). Students should use experiences with their SAE programs, reflecting on those experiences, making adjustments when necessary, and trying the reflected and adjusted experience again, often times using their peers for guidance. As such, when the culmination of these items, ideally, learning should occur.

Theories emerged from data analysis that revealed that students are using a variety of lenses to determine success and quality with the subjects' SAE programs. Known as social judgment theory (Hammond et al., 1987; Hammond & Stewart, 2001), the subjects used FFA Proficiency applications, FFA degree applications, achievement in other award areas, and their own intuition to determine the success and quality of their respective SAE programs. Additionally, the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura 1994) emerged, revealing that students are more efficacious when they have mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social and verbal persuasion, while having a specific mind set (Bandura, 1994). Further, the reciprocity of ones' personal factors, behaviors, and environment can have an effect on the self-efficacy. The students reported their efficacy in areas of their SAEs and other facets of agricultural education, often helping other students with a complex task.

The NCAE SAE Renewal Committee is currently discussing SAE categories, definition, and implications of SAE programs. SAE programs are evolving to encompass the changing demands of agricultural education and its students. With the future of the profession as the subjects of this study, the data reported could serve as a useful tool to inform the committee, making SAE programs more relevant, with a clear and distinct path for pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and teacher educators.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLGY

Introduction

This study sought to understand learning as a result of Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs from students who identified themselves as future agricultural education teachers. I employed qualitative methodology to answer research questions regarding the student's individual SAE experiences. This chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) Phenomenology; (b) Reflexivity; (c); Researcher Struggles; (d) The Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy; (e) Participant Descriptions; (f) Description of Interview Location; (g) Data Analysis; and (g) Building Quality into the Study.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research typically begins with assumptions and data collection occurs through the natural settings of the people being studied (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, data analysis is inductive and themes are established (Creswell, 2012). As such, this report was written from an emic perspective (Creswell, 2012). This design was the best approach for this study as little research has focused on the individual experiences of

students with respect to their SAE programs. I investigated the meaning of learning students experienced from their involvement with their SAE programs and the situations and individuals that influenced meaningfulness from their experiences through their SAE programs. Because subjects had individual and unique experiences, the phenomenology approached was used.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that seeks to discover meaning from an individual's lived experiences pivoted on a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine the essence of SAE programs among self-identified future agricultural education teachers utilizing the constructivism epistemology. Moustakas (1994) explained transcendental phenomenology as, "What appears in consciousness is an absolute reality while what appears in the world is a product of learning" (p. 27). I sought to understand the experiences of the subjects. Specifically, three questions guided the research:

1. What are the learning outcomes attributed to their respective SAE experiences?
2. What are the external factors that the subjects attribute to learning outcomes as a result of their SAE program?
3. What are the subjects' experiences regarding their SAE programs?

When determining research lens in which to pursue the research questions, phenomenology provided a unique opportunity to captivate the essence of SAE programs among self-identified future agricultural education teachers. Creswell (2012) noted "phenomenology is [used] to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a

description of the universal essence" (p. 76) and it captured the "meaning for several individuals for their lived experiences" (p. 76). In this study, the phenomenon was the essence of SAE programs among self-identified future agricultural education teachers.

According to Creswell (2012), two types of phenomenology exist, hermeneutical and transcendental. Transcendental phenomenology was utilized for this study because the researchers were interested in determining the essence of SAE programs among self-identified future agricultural education teachers. Merleau-Ponty (1962) determined transcendental phenomenology requires the researcher to disregard previous knowledge and experiences in order to better understand the phenomenon more completely through a step-by-step process.

Transcendental refers to the viewpoint that for the duration of the study "everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). His design is utilized in a variety of content areas including psychology and education (Creswell, 2012). As hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on interpretation, and is used heavily in the medical field (Creswell, 2012), transcendental phenomenology of focusing on the individual's experiences was employed for this study. Further, the step-by-step process and use in educational literature brought this approach to the forefront when designing a quality study. Moustakas (1994) described the transcendental phenomenology step-by-step process as a reduction process, reducing data to one central essence. Two general research questions are addressed throughout data collection:

1. What have the subjects experienced regarding the phenomenon?
2. What has influenced or impacted the subjects' experiences?

To answer these questions, in-depth interviews are typically the primary method to be employed, however data collection can also include documents, photographs, and field observations (Creswell, 2012). Using these other forms of data collection help with triangulation during the research process. Triangulation is achieved when two or more sources of data coincide, resulting in increased reliability (Denzin, 1978).

For the purpose of this phenomenological study, some typical research designs were used including, literature review, theoretical framework, selection of subjects, and data collection. However, the deviation from typical quantitative methodology came with data analysis and findings. Data analysis for transcendental phenomenology encompasses bracketing, horizonalization, clustering meanings into themes, developing textural and structural descriptions, and synthesizing those descriptions into the essence (Moustakas, 1994).

Epoche "is a process of setting aside predilections, prejudices, predispositions, and allowing things, events, and people to enter anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Bracketing is the first step in the process to achieve Epoche (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing allows the researcher to set all biases and experiences aside so that the research process is entirely rooted on the specified topic and situation (Moustakas, 1994). It was utilized to neglect previous knowledge and experiences (Creswell, 2012) and helped to reduce predisposition by bracketing out ideas and emotions towards the subject related to the phenomenon so that the researcher is better able to describe the participant's experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Throughout the research process, it was extremely important for me to bracket my experiences as an agricultural educator and FFA advisor, as I had previous experiences advising and developing SAEs with students and their support systems. This study was done from an emic perspective, telling the story from the participant's perspective in order to attain Epoche. As qualitative research requires that the researchers serve as the instrument, validity and reliability are achieved through credible and trustworthy methods.

Horizonalization is the second step in the data analysis process. Upon completing the transcription of the subjects' interviews, horizons, or significant statements were selected. This process is know as coding and is imperative in the deduction process. I employed theme coding (Saldana, 2009). The significant statements are considered equal among the horizons. When significant statements have been selected, they are complied into meaningful clusters known as themes. These verbatim statements can be utilized in the findings to narrate and expand the meaning of the themes. Each theme is organized into coherent textural and structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994).

Textural descriptions begins with the Epoche and maneuvering through the process of returning back to the phenomenon itself, with clear and open-mindedness that can encourage deeper thinking regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). While developing these descriptions, an interweaving of the participant, experience, and phenomenon occur and is granted equal value (Moustakas, 1994). Nonrepetitive experiences are thematically linked and a full description and narration is complied (Moustakas, 1994).

Structural descriptions describe how the subjects experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). These descriptions and narratives are employed to develop the essence of the phenomenon. The essence is the deduced experience of the subjects and is reported to the audience for the purpose of better understanding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the essence was targeted toward better understanding the meaning of learning regarding self-identified future agricultural education teachers.

Qualitative research cannot be generalized, but the essence experienced by the subjects might be transferrable among similar populations and situations (Creswell, 2012). Moustakas (1994) suggested employing traditional reporting for a study beyond the methodology and findings. As such, the research design for Chapters 1, 2, and 5 are similar to other accepted research designs.

Data analysis process of phenomenology is represented through a visual depiction and is a template for coding in a typical phenomenological study (Figure 4) (Creswell, 2012).

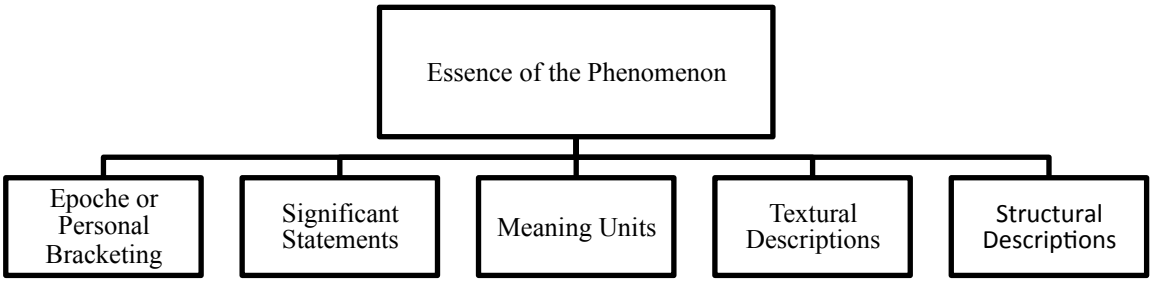

Figure 5. Template for Coding a Phenomenological Study. Adapted from *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches by* J. W. Creswell, 2012, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reflexivity

Self-reflexivity is one of the most celebrated practices of qualitative research and it "encourages writers to be frank about their strengths and shortcomings" (Tracey, 2010, p. 7). Reflexivity was used to bracket out my own personal ideals and focus on the participant's experiences. It requires a sense of "honesty and authenticity with one's self, one's research, and one's audience" (Tracy, 2010, p. 7).

To achieve reflexivity, researchers are encouraged to keep a reflexivity journal while in the field to bracket out information before any observations or interactions. I used a reflexivity journal through the duration of the research process before any interviews were conducted and data was analyzed to determine my biases, opinions, and prejudices to better understand the subjects' experiences through transcendence. As this is good practice, I was able to present the findings from an emic perspective, rather than my own perspectives. Additionally, to be transparent to my audience, my own agricultural education background, experiences, and epistemological stance should be noted so the reader can make his or her own judgments regarding my biases.

I grew up in a suburban community in mid-Georgia with a successful multi-teacher school-based agricultural education program. Teachers in the program were skilled and interested in student achievement in Career Development Events (CDE) and SAE programs. Each teacher specialized in specific facets of the school-based agricultural education program. One teacher was a horticulture specialist and also managed the large market hog program. Another teacher managed the dairy heifer program and specialized in leadership and forestry. The third teacher specialized in

animal science and agricultural mechanics and managed the beef program. All three teachers in our program focused on specific livestock interests, but two of them also focused on agriscience research projects.

My teachers guided and supported me to a national-winning CDE team, chapter, area, and state FFA officer positions, as well as the State and American FFA degrees. It was because my agricultural education teachers that I pursued the career of teaching agricultural education upon graduating from the University of Georgia. I taught high school agricultural education for four years and now pursue a career in higher education. I am currently a doctoral candidate in Agricultural Education at Oklahoma State University, while concurrently teaching school-based agricultural education in a rural community in mid-Georgia. The community has a predominately African American and Hispanic population. My experiences as a student and a teacher will help me disclose my strengths and shortcomings. It is for these reasons I worked diligently to bracket out my experiences for the purpose of this study.

My epistemological standpoint is that of a constructivist. I am specifically a social constructivist (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) where, "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work…relying as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation" (Creswell, 2012, p. 24). Because of this stance, I am able to make sense of a phenomenon without preconceived ideas to the best of my ability. Additionally, my epistemological stance permits me to interpret findings without prior assumptions.

I chose this population and topic as I am interested in SAE program knowledge from current SBAE students. My thesis work involved leadership and life skill development as a result of a SAE program. I wanted to investigate what skills were learned from those students who were self-identified future agricultural education teachers. As indicated on their FAETA applications, these subjects were assumed to be high achievers in the total agricultural education program. Additionally, as self-reported high achievers (supported by their agricultural education teacher) and self-identified future agricultural education teachers, I assumed that these subjects would present a wealth of knowledge regarding their SAE program and general knowledge about SAEs.

Researcher Struggles

Through the duration of this study, I internalized information I received from the subjects and reflected on my own viewpoints. I struggled with students' complete view of a total SAE program. I felt the students' knowledge regarding SAE programs should have been more comprehensive and found difficult not to question their ability with their own program. However, after consulting my committee concerning the data and my struggles, it was determined that I bracket out my perceptions and experiences in my reflexivity journal and continue to interview students with the transcendental approach (Moustakas, 1994).

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Polkinghorne (1989) recommended researchers interview 5 to 25 subjects who have experienced the phenomenon, while Creswell (2012) recommended interviewing subjects until data saturation was reached. Ten self-identified future agricultural

education teachers from the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Agricultural Education Academy were utilized for this study. These students were self-identified as future school-based agricultural education teachers and were selected to participate in the Agricultural Education Academy at OSU.

Census sampling methods were employed for this study, but out of the 14 students chosen to participate in the OSU Agricultural Academy, 10 assented to participate in the study. All participants were a Caucasian and mixture of males and females. They were from across Oklahoma and had experienced a SAE program while enrolled in school-based agricultural education. All participants were either incoming juniors or incoming seniors in high school. The ten subjects represented each of the five Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE) districts. As a number of students apply to the OSU Agricultural Education Academy each year and have identified themselves as future school-based agricultural education teachers, if data saturation would not have been reached, more subjects would have selected from this population until saturation was reached. However, no additional subjects were needed because data saturation was achieved with the selected subjects.

Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the subjects and the subject's parents were contacted via postal mail regarding their participation in this study. Of the 14 potential subjects requested, 10 opted to participate, including six females and four males, which is not only a representation of student leadership in agricultural education in Oklahoma, but also a representative population nationwide.

The Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy

The Oklahoma State University Future Agricultural Education Teachers Academy (FAETA) was established in 2007 to "encourage and promote the teaching of high school agricultural education as a positive and promising college major and career choice. The academy is aimed at recruiting excellent students who have a strong desire to pursue a career in Agricultural Education. The weeklong program is housed on the OSU campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma. It focuses on life at OSU and provides a look into the life and career of a school-based agricultural education teacher" (Ramsey, 2014, p. 1). The goals of the FAETA include promoting awareness of the AGED profession and AGED as a promising career choice. Program organizers also aspire to having participants declare AGED as their future major and to eventually enter the AGED teaching profession (Ramey, 2014).

Students selected to attend FAETA are not average FFA members. They are chosen to attend because of their outstanding record of FFA membership. They are recommended by their agricultural education teacher and must have participated in leadership endeavors (Ramsey, 2014). Students submit an application to attend the FAETA which is reviewed by an external panel. To date, 100 students have attended FAETA. Of those 100 individuals, 9 have become agricultural education teachers (Ramsey, 2014). Each year, activities and curriculum evolve and commitment numbers have increased as a result (Ramsey, 2014). More FAETA participants are entering Oklahoma State University as AGED majors than ever before (Ramsey, 2014). The 2009 FAETA yielded six students who graduated with AGED as their primary major and gained employment as a SBAE teacher.

The FAETA is funded by a group of sponsors including the Department of Career and Technology Education, Farm Credit Associations of Oklahoma, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources – OSU, State Program Administrator Agricultural Education, Oklahoma FFA Alumni Association, and Chesapeake Energy, donating nearly $30,000 for the program.

Participant Descriptions

Thick descriptions of the participants are provided for the reader to better understand the subjects. Additionally, the information provides the subjects' location, SAE programs, and perception of their total program.

Sandra

Sandra is a 17-year-old, incoming senior at a very small school in Western Oklahoma. She was born and raised on a crop production farm where her family produces corn, wheat, and milo. Sandra is a small-town girl who appreciates knowing individuals when she stops in a local store in her hometown. She has been in agricultural education for nearly six years. Her parents and grandfathers were involved in agricultural education. She speculates her great grandfather might have been involved as well.

Sandra is part of a growing program, which she attributes to a fairly new agricultural education teacher. She feels students are able to experience more of what the program has to offer and is attracting more quality FFA members because there is a good mix of SAE, classroom, and career development events (CDE) in the program. However, she noted that only 4 – 5 FFA members are typically active in all aspects. She is

extremely involved, participating on several CDE teams in state leadership development opportunities, and working with chapter members to develop showmanship skills.

Her SAE programs are two-fold as she has a feed business and a swine production operation. She facilitates livestock showmanship clinics, obtaining experts to teach participants correct showmanship skills. Her future plans include attending Oklahoma State University and majoring in Agricultural Education.

John

John has been nomadic in his agricultural education experience due to his father's career as a school administrator. He started in Southwestern Oklahoma and has moved to several schools across the state. He is currently residing in the Northeast district and attends a small, rural school. He is an incoming senior and wants to follow in his parents' footsteps to become a teacher, despite their encouragement to consider a different career. His mother is an elementary school teacher, his father is a former agricultural education teacher, and his older brothers are also agricultural education teachers. His original career plans focused on criminal justice, but through his involvement with the agricultural education program, John feels he is being led to serve students and a community in that way.

John participates in many agricultural education activities including judging events, greenhouse work, and agricultural mechanics. His SAE programs included sheep, swine, and cattle production.

Abby

Abby is a 17-year-old female from a small agricultural town in the Central district. Her parents were FFA members in her hometown. They raised and exhibited pigs. Abby's older sister unsuccessfully ran for a state FFA officer position. Her sister majored in agricultural education and is currently a school counselor. Abby's sister and agricultural education teacher have motivated her to be involved with the agricultural education program and pursue a career as an agriculture teacher.

As an incoming senior in the agricultural education program, she feels that the agricultural education program rests in her hands and is extremely involved. Despite the revolving door of Agricultural Education teachers she as had while in high school, Abby participates in leadership conferences, CDEs, community service, livestock exhibition, and primarily focuses on the recruitment of the seventh and eighth grade students. Her SAE program includes beef production, however, as this is her last year in the agricultural education program, Abby would like to venture out and include swine production within her SAE program.

Charlotte

Charlotte is an incoming senior in a small agricultural and athletic-driven community. She classifies her family as a non-traditional agriculture family, they raise a small herd of registered beef animals and she is involved with all aspects of equine science. Charlotte deemed their beef herd and equine interests as *hobby farming*. Her mother is an elementary school teacher and a local petroleum company employs her father.

An outgoing individual, Charlotte began her leadership journey heavily involved with 4-H and began exhibiting heifers at age 11. She commonly referred to herself as a non-traditional agricultural education student because she did not exhibit livestock as a young child. Additionally, Charlotte referred to her *weird side* as raising and showing horses since she was eight years old. She was not afraid to step out of her comfort zone, trying new CDEs and leadership conferences, meeting people from across the state. Charlotte found herself excelling in judging CDEs and public speaking opportunities whether through 4-H or FFA since the age of 9. Additionally, Charlotte currently holds a state rodeo title. Originally, Charlotte aspired to be an equine vet, but because of the influence of her agricultural education teachers, passion for leadership opportunities and working with and recruiting students, Charlotte has decided to pursue teaching in the agricultural education profession upon graduating from college.

Charlie

Charlie is an incoming senior from a large rural community in the Northeast district. His community is very supportive of the program, the FFA chapter is included as part of the local sports booster club. Charlie's FFA chapter is extremely involved in community service and participates in several CDEs, however he feels the lack of commitment from some FFA members prevents the chapter from being seen at local CDEs before the state contests.

Charlie participates in a multitude of CDEs including public speaking, livestock judging, and is a member of the skeet shooting team. His SAE programs include goats, cattle, and hogs, with past experiences in sheep production. As Charlie's father passed

away, his agricultural education teacher has become like a father figure to him. His brother also is an agricultural education teacher and helps Charlie with his program, along with his mother, who is a large supporter of the program and his success.

Charlie believed the strength of his agricultural education program is the diversity among the students, expressing that regardless of backgrounds and interests, students have a passion for the agricultural education program and FFA. He feels his chapter size prevents the chapter from experiencing as much success as other smaller, rural chapters.

Terry

Terry is an incoming senior in a small high school in the Northeast district. She is a naturalized citizen from Europe that has been in the agricultural education program for three years. Her mother owns and manages an orphanage in Europe where she was adopted. Terry has a brother that was also adopted by their mother. Her mother returned to the states and Terry was required to strengthen English, as it was her second language.

Upon entering her first American school, she noticed that Agricultural Education was a course on her schedule and she did not understand what was in store for her. After attending class, she realized just how much she enjoyed the course. She enjoyed learning about livestock and leadership, and found that agricultural education and the FFA provided her the opportunity to gain friendships and skills that will help her in her future profession. Her SAE program encompasses avian selective breeding, mainly dealing with nearly extinct breeds of chickens. Terry produces the rare birds and exhibits them at shows. Additionally, she is involved with rabbit production and exhibition.

Because Terry has the ability to work with students and gains knowledge and skills from the agricultural education program, she has chosen to pursue agricultural education as her profession. She expressed intentions of attending a local junior college, then after graduating with an associates degree, Terry would like to attend Oklahoma State University where she plans to major in agricultural education.

Maddy

Maddy is the youngest subject; she is an incoming junior in high school. She grew up in a modest-sized town in the Northeast district where her father is the agricultural education teacher. Maddy was immersed in all things agricultural education and livestock. Maddy is well spoken and motivated to follow in her father's footsteps.

Already training freshman teams, Maddy is full of energy and drive to ensure her FFA chapter is successful. Having understood her program, school, community, and program goals, Maddy is extremely competent regarding all things FFA. Her ability to communicate her ideas and knowledge regarding to program interworking led me to believe that she is motivated, focused, and driven. She expressed that she is interested in doing anything and everything the agricultural education program has to offer, as those are opportunities to experience personal growth.

Maddy seems to be much wiser than her age, offering guidance regarding emotional preparation, adversity, and networking opportunities with individuals across the state. Throughout her interview, Maddy was discussing her chapter and used other individuals within her chapter's accomplishments to highlight and showcase her chapter's

activities. She revealed through her interview that she is completely engaged in all things regarding the chapter and truly cared about the students and their accomplishments.

Luke

Luke is an incoming senior from a very small, rural program in Southeastern Oklahoma that focuses on beef operation and prepared public speaking. His family operates a small cow-calf operation, his father owns his own unrelated business and his mother holds a job for another company. Luke is satisfied with his accomplishments, though he verbalized that his success is not seen on the state level. He takes pride in the small accomplishments, i.e. improving his speaking skills, and improving genetics. Luke conveyed that the process was more important than the product regarding his participation in the agricultural education program.

Luke is self-motivated, often times relying on his own ability to seek out resources to learn a skill or CDE. He is proud to have learned a skills or concepts on his own and is more than willing to share them with other people in the chapter to better them in agricultural education, which he feels will ultimately help him in his future profession as an agricultural education teacher. Luke has demonstrated that he understands the overall goal of agricultural education: to provide students with leadership and life skills.

Summary of Subjects

Table 1
Summary of Subjects

Participant's Pseudonym	FFA District	Years Completed in Program	SAE Program Proficiency Area(s)	Traditional Agriculture Student
Sandra	Northwest	5	Agricultural Sales – Entrepreneurship; Agricultural Education – Placement; Swine Production – Entrepreneurship	Yes
John	Northeast	4	Sheep, Cattle, and Swine Production – Entrepreneurship	Yes
Abby	Central	4	Beef Cattle – Entrepreneurship	No
Charlotte	Northeast	4	Equine Production – Placement	No
Charlie	Northeast	5	Goat, Cattle, and Swine Production – Entrepreneurship	Yes
Terry	Northeast	3	Poultry Production – Entrepreneurship; Rabbit Production – Entrepreneurship	No
Maddy	Northeast	2	Sheep Production – Entrepreneurship	No
Luke	Southeast	4	Beef Production – Entrepreneurship	Yes

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Because the researchers employed the phenomenological approach, "the process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews", coupled with document analysis was employed for this study (Creswell, 2007, p. 131). A list of interview questions was developed for the subjects to use during the semi-structured interview session (see Appendix E). A pilot study was conducted using the same population to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions (Creswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). After the pilot study, I met with my committee to assess the alignment of the questions and data received to the initial research questions to further aid in trustworthiness and credibility. A revised interview protocol was developed to more concisely answer the research questions (see Appendix F). The aforementioned methods of data collection were employed to triangulate data, thus improving the overall credibility of the study.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board, I conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with each participant. The study was guided by the following research questions developed by Moustakas (1994):

1. What are the learning outcomes attributed to their respective SAE experiences?
2. What are the external factors that the subjects attribute to learning outcomes as a result of their SAE program?
3. What are the subjects' experiences regarding their SAE programs?

Additional sub questions were asked to help guide subjects in a semi-structured manner for the purpose of data collection. Semi-structured interviews, lasting

approximately 30 minutes were recorded on a digital recording application on an iPhone. Data were then transcribed verbatim using *Microsoft Word* and proceeded until data saturation was reached. I used a research assistant that aided in transcribing the interviews. When the research assistant completed their assigned interviews to transcribe, I compared the transcribe document with the interview recording to ensure transcription accuracy. Upon complete transcription of interviews, subjects were sent a copy to approve and member check, or reflect on their interview (Tracy, 2010). Minor revisions were made to the verbatim transcripts and did not substantially affect the data. Following approval of the verbatim transcripts, I continued with data analysis.

Further, triangulation was utilized as I scribed field notes and observed documents that would help describe the present phenomenon. Tracy (2010) determined that triangulation is a form of validity or credibility that is used in qualitative research that combines multiple sources of data that yield the same results. Interviews were transcribed verbatim using a digital recording application on an iPhone so they could be further analyzed.

Description of Interview Location

Subjects were interviewed through the duration of the camp in the evening time after the scheduled events concluded. Students were housed in the dorms at Oklahoma State University. The dorms contained multiple common areas where students could eat, fellowship, and study. The common area that was used for data collection was a glass study room that contained a table and chairs. The transparent room provided an optimal environment data collection. Additionally, the room provided enough isolation from other

members of the Agricultural Education Academy to collect data, but also was located on the same floor as the subjects' dorms, therefore the students could feel more comfortable during their interview.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2012) reported that phenomenological data analysis is completed through the methodology of reduction; thus, analysis of the data was guided using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method modified by Moustakas (1994). Transcriptions were downloaded and coded for the purpose of horizonalization using the computer software *Nvivo*. Horizonalization can be described as "the process of laying out all the data for examination and treating the data as having equal weight; that is, all pieces of data have equal value at the initial data analysis stage" (Merriam, 2009, p. 26). This would employ for the researchers to look at each statement, or horizon, of the transcription equally and then identify significant statements. Bounded horizons were then clustered under codes.

Once the horizons were coded, "…nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping constituents were clustered into themes" (Moustakas, 1994, p.180). As a result, the data from eight subjects yielded 364 significant statements under 21 codes and four themes emerged. Themes were then used to develop textural descriptions, describing *what* was experienced and structural descriptions describing *how* it was experienced. The textural and structural descriptions were then synthesized into the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The essence, which focuses on the common experiences of the subjects (Creswell, 2012), for this study focused on the experiences of the self-identified future agricultural education teachers regarding their respective SAE programs.

Building Quality into the Study

Lincoln and Guba (1985) determined that good qualitative research is trustworthy. Tracy (2010) determined eight criteria based on the profession's thought leaders with several procedures to achieve credibility, trustworthiness and quality within a study. The eight criteria include: (a) choosing a worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) credibility, (e) ethics, (f) significant contribution, (g) meaningful coherence, and (h) resonance (Tracy, 2010).

Rich rigor revolves around the work of the researcher. Time spent in the field is classified as an important component of rich rigor. The researcher must spend time in the field and report rich, thick descriptions regarding the subject to better illustrate the amount of time and understanding brought to the literature base through the research. Rigor ensures that the reported data is accurate and truthful. To achieve rigor, I spent an exorbitant amount of time with the Agricultural Education Academy, teaching lessons, and spending time with them during free periods. Additionally, I used multiple forms of data and engaged in follow-up practices through member reflection.

In qualitative research, credibility and trustworthiness are a means to exhibit reliability (Tracy, 2010). Credibility "refers to trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility of the research findings"; therefore credibility became a top priority during the research process (Tracy, 2010, p. 842). Multivocality, triangulations, and member reflections promote credibility (Creswell, 2012; Tracy, 2010). As multivocality encourages the researcher to collaborate, I employed my dissertation committee during data collection to provide another perspective to reduce biases. Additionally, I debriefed with my dissertation adviser and committee members to ensure accurate interpretations of

the reported data. The committee members were familiar with qualitative research methods and provided feedback regarding the trustworthiness of the study. This additional perspective allowed for guidance and recommendations to strengthen the study.

Member reflections, or member checking, command the researcher to convey the data back to the subjects to ensure truthfulness (Tracy, 2010). Member reflections were accomplished by subjects approving verbatim transcripts to be used in the coding process. During this process, subjects are encouraged to reflect upon the transcripts to allow for new data to surface after seeing the first data set (Tracy, 2010).

Each participant was sent a verbatim transcript to ensure data accuracy. Upon the completion of the study, the final draft was sent to the subjects to ensure the true essence was achieved and all information was factual. Triangulation is attained with multiple forms of data deliver the same result. Students' applications regarding their personal information, SAE information, and teacher recommendations were employed to triangulate the data in this study.

During the research process, I was cognizant of the ethics that is required by qualitative research. Tracy (2010) breaks down ethics into four categories: (a) procedural, (b) situational, (c) relational, and (d) exiting ethics. These four categories were engaged to ensure that, I as a human instrument would be a responsible and cautious researcher.

Procedural ethics refers to "ethical actions dictated as universally necessary by larger organizations, institutions or governing bodies" (Tracy, 2010, p. 847). I achieved

this by keeping all documents confidential, ensuring privacy among subjects. For the purpose of this study, all subjects were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Situational ethics is described as "ethical practices that emerge from a reasoned consideration of a context's specific circumstances" (Tracy, 2010, p. 847). Further, Tracy (2010) posited the question, "Do the means justify a means to an end" (p.847); is the data worth exposing? The findings were carefully analyzed and statements were considered before being subjected in the final draft.

Tracy (2010) denoted that "relational ethic investigators engage in reciprocity with participants and do not *co-opt* just to get a great story" (p. 847); meaning that both the participant and research develop a mutual respect and that the researcher is mindful their character, actions, and consequences on others. Reciprocity was achieved because both parties benefited from the study; the subjects agreed to tell their story and I agreed to accurately report the findings to the agricultural education profession for the mutual benefit of better understanding the essence of SAE programs of self-identified future agricultural education teachers.

Exiting ethics involves the consideration of how to best present the data in order to avoid unjust or unintended consequences (Tracy, 2010). To prevent unjust interpretation of the data, I provided direct quotes within thick descriptions (Tracy, 2010). Quotations were used to further the reader's understanding of each participant and the essence. An extensive audit trail was retained throughout the study that reflected thoughts, viewpoints, and past experiences grasped in data collection, coding, and the reporting phases of the study. This enabled me to present thick descriptions and provide

concrete details (Tracy, 2010). These ethical considerations were taken sincerely to protect the subjects and to provide an accurate description of the essence of their experiences.

Meaningful coherence is determined by studies (a) achieving their stated purpose, (b) accomplishing what the study advocated to be about, (c) use methods and practices that work well with theories, and (d) use literature to connect the research foci, methods, and findings. To achieve meaningful coherence, I provided a conceptual and theoretical framework, previous literature, and methodology paired with rich, thick descriptions for the reader to better grasp and understand the reported findings, possibly providing an opportunity for transferability to occur. Employing the aforementioned criteria into a study all contributed to meaningful coherence of a credible report regarding student's learning experiences with their SAE programs.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This study focused on the SAE programs of eight subjects who were participants in the Future Agricultural Education Academy conducted by OSU in 2014. Subjects represented a variety of backgrounds, SAE program, and school based agricultural education programs. A more detailed description of each participant can be found in chapter 3.

Upon receiving IRB approval, I sought parental consent and student assent to gain access for students to openly share their thoughts and feelings regarding the respective SAE and agricultural education programs. Additionally, the participants revealed the external factors regarding learning in their SAE programs (Creswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). As I am the research instrument, I provided thick, rich descriptions of the participants (Tracy, 2010).

Additionally, I used direct quotes as data and introduced other data (i.e., documents) to confirm credibility and trustworthiness in the findings. The information provided by the subjects offered insight and information regarding SAE programs among self-identified future school-based agricultural education teachers in Oklahoma. All subjects were included in each theme if applicable, as each participant's data was weighted the same. Moreover, the order of the contributions of the subjects was entered in the same order to promote consistency. Quotes from the subjects were entered into a table at the end of each theme to provide the reader with additional data that helped to lead to the genesis of the theme but was not provided in the participant narrative.

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, each quote was accompanied with the subjects' pseudonym and the line number given by *Nvivo* enclosed in brackets. Subjects agreed data were accurate and no reported information would lead to their identification. Reflecting with the subjects ensured I promoted ethical behavior.

Four themes emerged from the data, which including 364 significant statements and 21 codes. I used significant statements from the subjects to identify codes. A code is typically a word or phrase that is evocative, summative, or essence-capturing (Saldana, 2009). Theme coding was employed that used phrases or sentences to categorize data (Saldana, 2009). The codes include:

- Community Embarked on New Content
- Helps with SAE
- Holistic View
- Individual SAE Programs

- Influencers
- International Student Perspective
- Inverted Program
- Knowledge of SAEs
- Learned Content
- Misreported SAE Skill
- Positives of Agricultural Education Program
- Responsibilities of Student
- SAE Breakdown
- SAE/Award Misunderstanding
- Self-Perception
- Soft Skills
- Student Initiative
- Student Teaching Opportunity
- Technical Skills Where SAEs are Learned

The themes of student learning as a result of their respective SAE programs and the influencers that attributed to their learning emerged from analyzing the data. The themes were:

- Subjects attain skills through their SAE programs
- Teachers have a great influence on subjects' SAE programs
- Subjects have limited and narrow perceptions of SAE
- Subjects believe SAE programs diversify their experiences in agriculture

Themes are reported with the corresponding research question. Themes are not weighted and are not presented in any specific order.

Research Question 1: What are the Learning Outcomes Attributed to their Respective SAE Experiences?

The following theme answers the aforementioned research question to better understanding the subjects' learning.

Theme 1: Subjects Attain Skills Through their SAE Programs

Subjects overwhelmingly reported learning employability skills as a result of their SAE program. Participants revealed a wide array of skills and competencies. As I met with each participant, their enthusiasm to demonstrate their overall knowledge about their SAE programs was evident. Luke provided an overarching statement that sums up the subjects' points of view when he said, "SAEs are a better place [than compared to athletics] to learn some real skills that you can use when you graduate, either college or a technical school" [Luke: 249].

Charlie revealed his perspective regarding the dedication of students with SAE programs. He stated:

> FFA members have a work ethic that's like no other. Our work ethic compared to a football player is incredibly bipolar, you've got the football player that may workout three or four days a week during the summer, but you've got us and we are working with our animals for hours, morning and night, during the summer.

> We are working for those shows, working for our livelihood, and our FFA chapter. [Charlie: 460]

Several students reported having learned skills regarding their total program involvement. Students testified that perseverance was learned. Maddy shared,

> It has taught me how to deal with disappointment and overcome those things that are going to go wrong. There are two options to everything, and if the first option doesn't go right, you got to open that second door and go for it. [Maddy: 112]

Similarly, Terry reported, "Don't give up on something if it doesn't work out the first time and to allow others to help you" [Terry: 105]. Luke stated, "I have learned to be more open minded and diversified. I mean, it is crazy how much you can just stay in your mindset" [Luke: 129]. John further illustrated, "I am able to step out of my comfort zone and have learned to be a leader. I now know when to be forceful, know when not too" [John: 208].

Students reported employability skills ranging from livestock production to finance and recording keeping. Charlie reported learning specific skills from his agricultural education teacher and implementing those skills into his SAE program.

> [I learned] how to clip a lamb, band a goat, trim hooves, worm an animal, ear notch an animal, interpret ear notches, ear tag, and administer shots. Everything I have learned on my farm has been from my agricultural education instructor. [Charlie: 338]

Charlotte's SAE program is a placement program for an equine business. As she works for another person, she felt her experience was providing her necessary tools preparing her for her own enterprise. She revealed,

> I have learned how to bale hay, moving things with the tractor, and basic tractor operations. It's like I almost have my own little farm because I work for an older couple so I'm kind of their only labor. I mean, yes I do get paid for it, but I'm also learning for myself if I had this many horses to care for. [Charlotte: 361]

John reported having learned a variety of employability skills regarding his sheep SAE program and his feed supply business. He testified he learned how to administer medications and develop feed rations. Moreover, regarding his enterprise, he has learned, "A lot of business skills. Learning to do taxes at a young age. Being able to be an expert" [John: 393].

Sandra began her initial SAE in animal production, but has grown into a feed and seed operation, taking on more responsibility and learning about agribusiness. "I've learned how to grow and expand my business. I started off with 15 customers and now I sell in four different states and have over 70 customers. I have expanded so much, I have taken over my father's barn" [Sandra: 463]. Moreover, she revealed she has learned record keeping skills and increased her math skills, including prices and percentages, as a result of her business. Sandra also noted she has acquired a fair amount of knowledge regarding banking. "I learned a lot about the money aspect, being financially able to balance everything and make sure my business isn't in the red" [Sandra: 442].

Further, Terry and Maddy disclosed learning patience during their SAE programs. Responsibility and time management were noted from Abby, Charlie, Charlotte, Luke, and Sandra. Regarding time management, Sandra also has learned to prioritize her activities. She elaborated,

> Sometimes I just have to pick and choose what activity I want to participate in. Being from a small school [the school] wants you to play sports and be in every organization. I've had to put my foot down and say I cannot be on the softball team and do all my agricultural education stuff because it is what I love and softball is what I do on my down time. [Sandra: 240]

With regards to feed management, Charlie conveyed his increase in his critical thinking skills. He stated,

> I have had to critically think about different feed needs for different goats. Comparing the feed performance of each goat and deciding on a plan of action. I have to think about what kind of feed I want to switch to or how I want to feed it to get it ready for county fair. [Charlie: 523]

Competencies that were learned as a result of the subjects' SAE programs included livestock production knowledge and agribusiness knowledge. Terry's SAE program was unique among the subjects. Her poultry production SAE focused on breeding and genetic improvement among chickens and geese. She gained a certification as a result of her SAE. "I became a certified National Poultry Improvement Plan tester, where I can test for diseases and keep the stock clean throughout travels" [Terry: 204].

Sandra reported gaining a better understanding for production shipments and how it affects her customers. She stated,

> I have learned a lot about freighting my product. I sell two different kinds of feed, a basic everything feed and a show feed. One feed is delivered from Oklahoma City where a truck comes to a town that is two hours away and I have to meet it to pick up my product. The other feed from a city Kansas. There are times where I have to drive eight hours to get it and there are other times where a truck comes to my hometown and delivers it. I have definitely learned the logistics of coordinating my feed deliveries. And I cannot let down the 70 people I have riding on me. [Sandra: 494]

Table 2 exhibits the theme *subjects gained employability and life skills as a result of their respective SAE program*. These significant statements were relevant to the theme and were disclosed to make the reader aware of additional data for the purpose of credibility and trustworthiness.

Table 2

Statements from Theme 1: Subjects attain skills through their SAE programs

Participant	Significant statements related to the theme
Luke	"SAEs are a better place [than compared to athletics] to learn some real skills that you can use when you graduate, either college or a technical school" [249].
Charlie	"FFA members have a work ethic that's like no other. Our work ethic compared to a football player is incredibly bipolar, you've got the football player that may workout three or four days a week during the summer, but you've got us and we are working with our animals for hours, morning and night, during the summer. We are working for those shows, working for our livelihood, and our FFA chapter" [460].
Charlotte	"I have learned how to bale hay, moving things with the tractor, and basic tractor operations. It's like I almost have my own little farm because I work for an older couple so I'm kind of their only labor. I mean, yes I do get paid for it, but I'm also learning for myself if I had this many horses to care for" [361].
Terry	"I became a certified National Poultry Improvement Plan tester, where I can test for diseases and keep the stock clean throughout travels" [204].

Research Question 2: What are the External Factors that the Subjects Attribute to Learning Outcomes as a Result of their SAE Program?

The following themes answer the aforementioned research question to better understanding the subjects' learning.

Theme 2: Teachers Have a Great Influence on Subjects' SAE Programs

Individuals who supported student SAE programs initiated learning opportunities and cultivated meaningful relationships with the subjects. All but one participant reported their agricultural education teachers were the main source of support regarding their agricultural education program. Abby regarded her family providing the major support for her SAE program. "The livestock [SAE] would be more like the family thing" [Abby:" 129]. Charlie, Charlotte, Luke, Terry, and Sandra revealed they saw their agricultural education teachers as the main support for their SAE programs. Charlotte stated her "agricultural education teacher helps her out a lot" [Charlotte: 139]. Moreover, Luke described that his agricultural education teacher's passion is to work with the livestock industry in exhibition.

> He loves it, he lives and breathes it, if he could do that everyday that's what he would do. And he has helped me with my livestock SAE. When I was in 8th grade, I could have cared less to show, but he urged me to do it. He was understood that I already raised cattle and he felt that I already knew a great deal of information about cattle production. He has really helped me out and checks up on my program. He does everything he is supposed to and so that he helps me out mostly regarding my SAE program. [Luke: 79]

Several subjects had denoted their parents have served as or were formally an agricultural education teacher. With regards to Maddy's SAE program, she regarded her father, whom was also her agricultural education teacher, as her main support for her SAE program. She felt he was first, her agricultural education teacher, and second her father. When asked who helped her with her program, she enthusiastically answered,

> Oh my gosh! That would definitely be my dad. He's my Ag teacher first, I mean that's kind of backwards but he's always been my Ag teacher first, and he's kind of my dad second. Except when we go in the show ring, that's the only place that he's my dad first. [Maddy: 97]

Additionally, John comes from a family of agricultural education teachers. His father and two brothers were in the profession. Concerning support, John feels he has a multitude of individuals that are willing to help him. He stated,

> If I have a question, of course, I call the agricultural education teachers. I am fortunate because my dad was an agricultural education teacher, I talk to him, ask him questions, and if none of the three of them know, I call my brothers and see if they have an answer to my question. [John: 181]

Subjects revealed the influencers of learning regarding SAE programs. Several students noted their agricultural education teachers were the major individuals that contributed to learning with their SAE programs. Sandra reported, "my agricultural education teacher is the most influential person when it comes to learning through my SAE program. My parents are always there in the background if I need help or support" [Sandra: 192]. Charlie has a father-son relationship with both of his agricultural

education teachers. He reported his instructor not only taught him skills but, strengthened the bond between him and his peers as he can rely on them as a source of help. Charlie revealed,

> 341 And because of our backgrounds with our SAE programs, I have a few of my peers that can come help me when I need to do certain things around the farm. We had an agricultural education instructor that taught us all how to do the skills I need for my SAE program. He also instilled in us that we need to be willing to help each other out. And it helps us form those life long bonds with each other. [Charlie: 341]

A trend was revealed in the data analysis that highlighted the agricultural education teacher is the main influencer of learning regarding the subjects' SAE programs. Because of this relationship, the aforementioned passages (concerning employability skill development) denoted students have become more proficient and aware in their SAE programs. This has triggered students to become self-motivated within their total agricultural education programs, thus increasing the students' efficacy to provide teaching opportunities to other students within their local agricultural education programs. Subjects that have provided opportunities to teach other students have reported a holistic understanding of agricultural education.

Luke reported being self-motivated and was evident in the other subjects as well through their efforts in working with other individuals. Abby noted her, "main priority was to recruit seventh and eighth graders. I will call them to the agricultural education room. We will just go do something fun and so I kind of recruit them" [Abby: 100].

Other subjects revealed working with students with their respective SAE programs, Career Development Event (CDE) teams, and other various chapter activities.

Sandra noted she held a showmanship clinic for showmen in the chapter. Instead of only holding the showmanship clinic for species she was knowledgeable about, Sandra took it upon herself to recruit experienced individuals in her program regarding specific species to participate as a volunteer at the showmanship clinic she hosted.

> I knew about or found someone in my chapter and had them help me with the clinic. So say someone showed cattle, I had the cattle person teach the cattle portion of the clinic and I'm at the clinic helping to facilitate. I feel that I shouldn't teach the subjects about a species if I'm really not knowledgeable. [Sandra: 170]

Maddy coached a junior dairy judging team to help recruit for her agricultural education program. "My freshman went out and competed in dairy judging and they earned third place overall team and were excited. I think dairy judging is really going to blossom and bloom in our chapter" [Maddy: 64]. Terry taught poultry judging to students in her agricultural education program and has taken it upon herself to be a welcoming committee for new students.

> I help with new students and make them feel comfortable. I offer advice, inform them of our program activities, and get them to feel comfortable. I like to let them know that they don't always have to show livestock and that they could get in a lot of different categories. [Terry: 73]

Charlie's SAE expertise lies within goat production. He reported helping a non-experienced student with her SAE program. This opportunity to work with her has promoted Charlie to envision his future career as an agricultural education teacher. He stated,

> I am able to help her and guide her with what she needs to do with her goat SAE program. Also, I can inform her of how she can care of them and what she needs to do with them to get them show ready. Helping and teaching her makes me feel good about myself. And it makes me feel like I truly can be an agricultural education teacher because I am doing it right now. [Charlie: 479]

Several students reported understanding a comprehensive view of agricultural education and the goal of the program. When referring to an opportunity to serve as a page for the state legislation, Luke initially contacted his state legislators to network for the opportunity to serve as a page the first time he did it. The second opportunity, the individual who was initially chosen was unable to attend. Because of Luke's networking skills that he acquired as a result of his SAE program, he was able to fill in for the student. Luke felt that is was an easy transition as he stated, "it's great how much agriculture can spread into other things" [Luke: 139].

Charlie discussed what he has learned while being part of the total agricultural education program. Amongst learning skills involved with public speaking and judging his livestock for his SAE program, Charlie felt that the skills were more than just surface level. He revealed,

> Being able to give reasons to somebody would make you be able to communicate, like I am now. And that kind of thing, you don't just pull it out for FFA, or for your agricultural education program, you pull it out and use it everyday situations in life. [Charlie: 255]

Charlie also reported the overarching mission of agricultural education laid out by E.M. Tiffany in the FFA Creed. He passionately proclaimed,

> I have truly learned what it means to live and work on a good farm like it says in the FFA Creed. I've learned what it truly means to say "I believe in the future of agriculture" because we, students, are the future of agriculture. We, in fact, dictate what happens next. Some people may not see it but we (students in agricultural education) do see that we dictate what happens next and that means a lot to me. [Charlie: 452]

Students reported their agricultural education teachers as the main influencers for learning through their respective SAE programs. Additionally, students revealed a chain reaction began due to the relationship with their agricultural education teacher, having the student become self-motivated within their respective total agricultural education program. This has indicated an increase in the students' efficacy to provide teaching opportunities to other students. Most of the subjects have embarked on eliciting student teaching opportunities and have reported having a holistic understanding of agricultural education. Table 2 provides significant statements related to the theme *Teachers have a great influence in subjects' SAE programs.*

Table 3

Statements from Theme 2: Teachers have a great influence on subjects' SAE programs

Participant	Significant statements related to the theme
Luke	"He loves it, he lives and breathes it, if he could do that everyday that's what he would do. And he has helped me with my livestock SAE. When I was in 8th grade, I could have cared less to show, but he urged me to do it. He was understood that I already raised cattle and he felt that I already knew a great deal of information about cattle production. He has really helped me out and checks up on my program. He does everything he is supposed to and so that he helps me out mostly regarding my SAE program" [79].
John	"If I have a question, of course, I call the agricultural education teachers. I am fortunate because my dad was an agricultural education teacher, I talk to him, ask him questions, and if none of the three of them know, I call my brothers and see if they have an answer to my question" [181].
Sandra	"My agricultural education teacher is the most influential person when it comes to learning through my SAE program. My parents are always there in the background if I need help or support" [192].
Charlie	"Everything that I have learned on my farm, since my father passed away, has been from my agricultural education instructor. There are things that I do now, that I never would have done without the guidance of my agricultural education teacher. And because of our backgrounds with our SAE programs, I have a few of my peers that can come help me when I need to do certain things around the farm. We had an agricultural education instructor that taught us all how to do the skills I need for my SAE program. He also instilled in us that we need to be willing to help each other out. And it helps us form those life long bonds with each other" [341].

Theme 3: Subjects Have Limited and Narrow Perceptions of SAE

Subjects reported learning about SAE programs in a variety of avenues. Luke revealed he learned what SAE programs were from his agricultural education teacher. He further purported,

> [I also learned about SAE programs] by seeing people have livestock when I was younger. I just wanted to show something and that was, kind of, how I learned about it. But, I didn't really learn what it was till 8th grade, I got in the classroom and was explained what it was. [Luke: 205]

John reported he learned what SAE programs were during his eighth grade year. "I learned about SAE programs in the classroom during my eighth grade year. I started showing with 4-H years before then, but it was when I got to my agricultural education class in eighth grade that I understood what SAE meant" [John: 258]. Additionally, Terry also revealed that she learned about SAE programs from her agricultural education as well as in the classroom environment. Terry stated,

> I just started with poultry judging and my agricultural education teacher informed me that my SAE could be poultry production, like selling the birds, collecting eggs and selling them, or sell the chicks that you could produce. She said that I could start raising them and selling them, making it a business. I learned a little about SAE programs in class, but didn't fully understand it all the way until I had my poultry operation. [Terry: 139].

Interestingly, Charlotte reported learning about SAE programs during her ninth grade year in her agricultural education program, but was confused about the nature of the SAE program.

> We learned the basic definition of SAE in my classroom as a freshman. I have also watched older kids with their projects. I guess we never really used the term *SAE*, we always knew it as *proficiency*. So I see that the term SAE and proficiency are interchangeable. For example, a girl I went to high school with just graduated, she had her own swine production. That's how I took an SAE. It is something that she's working on year-round and working towards a proficiency. So that's how I see it. [Charlotte: 137]

While some subjects reported learning about SAE programs from their teachers, others recounted understanding the concept of SAE before entering the SBAE program. Those that knew about it before entering a formalized agricultural education program included Abby, Sandra, Maddy, and Charlie.

Abby reported understanding what an SAE was before entering the agricultural education program, but her knowledge regarding SAE categories were expanded. She stated,

> I learned about it in the classroom from my agricultural education. However, I already understood what it meant. Back when I started with my one heifer [that I saved up for when I was nine], I used to think that was all that could be done as a SAE program. Learning about it in the classroom really opened my eyes. I realized that you don't have to show an animal to have an SAE program. You can

do plants or whatever you want. It just kind of opened my eyes of what opportunities there are out there for people. [Abby: 193]

Further, Sandra revealed she, too, had prior knowledge of the concept of SAE before entering the SBAE program through showing and raising hogs.

I've shown pigs since I was 9 years only in 4-H, so that was just something that I did kind of through high school. I had no idea that it was called a SAE though. I formally learned about it in the *Introduction into Agriculture* class. We learned what the three circle [model is] and in the book we used, there was a list of everything that goes into an SAE. I realized then that I already had an SAE and had one for a long time. [Sandra: 281].

Having grown up with her father as her agricultural education teacher, Maddy was already fluent with the concept of SAE, understanding the total SAE program. She conveyed,

My dad says that I first learned about SAE's when I was about 3. However, I say five, because that's when I started messing with animals and got my first sheep. I joined 4-H when I was seven years old and was involved with 4-H until I was 11 years old. I showed animals during that time. When I finally reached the age where I could be in agricultural education, I always knew that I wanted to show, but I didn't know what it was called. It was just showing to me. However, when got into class and started talking about SAE programs, I realized that I grew up having an SAE and I just didn't know the name for it. [Maddy: 194]

Charlie, like Maddy, grew up having understood the concept of SAE at an early age. He exhibited pigs at a very early age, but it was about the time he was eight years old, he gained an understanding of SAE programs because his brother was in the agricultural education teacher preparation program in college. Charlie reported,

> Because of my brother and showing at a young age, I knew what SAE was before I even got to high school. It was a big deal to me because I was a step ahead of everybody else. I already was keeping my records because from the time my mom bought me that first show pig at three-years-old we kept records every year. I have records from when I bread that first show pig, when it had babies, and when I sold the babies. I had that pig for five years and then I kept a couple more that she had. I actually got rid of them and started over, doing it again. I am able to say that I've known the term SAE for that long is actually a big deal because most people don't hear it until they are in eighth grade. [Charlie: 389]

Subjects were asked to provide an explanation of SAE programs. One participant was exactly on target regarding understanding and explaining SAE programs. When explaining the concept of SAE to someone, Charlie touted the expansiveness of an SAE program, regarding,

> I would tell someone that an SAE program is raising and caring for an animal. Well—not necessary raising and caring for an animal, it can be metal fabrication, working on tractors, starting or working for a lawn care business… anything like that, anything that you have to spend money on and maybe not make a profit every year, maybe lose a little here and there. Or maybe break even. An SAE to

> me is something that you do to try to make a career out of whether it be raising the livestock, being an student Ag-Ed instructor in high school, something like that. It also needs to be supervised, whether it is their parents, their Ag teachers, or their extension agents. If you're spending the money, taking the time, supervision is provided, and has the passion to do something that is agriculturally related, it is an SAE in my books. [Charlie: 360]

Several subjects deduced SAE into its simplest terms. John regarded SAE programs as "an agricultural experience that is supervised by your agricultural education teacher" [John: 243]. Sandra noted, "it's taking everything you've learned in two circles [of the agricultural education model], which is FFA and classroom, and putting them together, actually applying them hands-on" [Sandra: 252]. Terry provided an explanation, regarding, "its something that you work with and start building it up to generate an income. The goal is to try and gain more income than what you are spending and keep accurate records on everything" [Terry: 131]. These simple explanations provided me with the insight that these specific subjects had an understanding regarding the very basics of a SAE program.

However, several subjects were unclear with the definition of an SAE program. When asked to describe a SAE program, Abby explained it as, "something, that gives you something to do and helps you out, but I guess technically it would be doing something on your own. It also benefits you and your chapter" [Abby: 152]. When asked to describe an example of an SAE program she had seen, she further elaborated, "I don't really know if it's an SAE or not but he welds in our shop and then he will go and sell it in our community. He once made a smoker" [Abby: 222]. Charlotte described SAE programs as

being an exchangeable term with proficiencies. “I see SAE and proficiency as being interchangeable” [Charlotte: 241]. When recounting other student projects, Charlotte described shop construction projects as part of student SAE projects. She stated, “A lot of the shop guys sell their projects. They don’t necessarily keep records, but they do have a side business. They may not put it all on paper, but they are using it as their SAE program” [Charlotte: 268].

When the subjects were asked to describe their SAE program, some described it using correct terminology. For example, Charlotte described her SAE as equine production placement and Charlie described is as swine production. Sandra described both her feed business and her swine production operations. However, there are a few subjects that had a different way to operationalize their SAE programs. When asked to describe his SAE program, Luke stated, “I show Chi heifers and have been showing since I was in eighth grade” [Luke: 58]. He later describes that he owned a cow/calf operation, but initially revered his SAE program as showing Chi heifers. Moreover, Abby also described her SAE as showing steers and heifers and, too, later mentioned her cow/calf operation. John reported that his SAE programs were to show pigs, sheep, and cattle. Additionally, Maddy determined that SAE programs are showing livestock as well.

> I got into agricultural education and I always knew I wanted to show, but I didn’t know what it was called. It was just showing to me, and we got in there and started talking about SAE’S and I figured out what it was and I was like, “Oh that’s what I do!”, so it just grew from there. I always knew what it was, I just didn’t know that name for it. [Maddy: 197]

However, when discussing what was involved with a SAE, John replied, “Sometimes it is your proficiency. For me, I sell livestock show supplies” [John: 246]. As previously mentioned, Charlotte sees that the term SAE and proficiency are interchangeable. Some subjects presented SAE programs in terms of methodical, well-articulated descriptions, while the majority responded with surface answers where livestock exhibition was the heart of their SAE program. These specific subjects presented minimal knowledge concerning SAE programs.

Further, subjects were asked if they regarded their projects as a SAE program, extension of the classroom, or a FFA activity to help assess their knowledge regarding their total program knowledge. The following table illustrates each subjects’ viewpoint.

Table 4

Subjects' viewpoints regarding classification of SAE and the relationship to the Ag-Ed Model

Participant's Pseudonym	SAE Program(s)	Classification of the Respective Project
Sandra	Feed Business and Swine Production	SAE
John	Sheep, Cattle, and Hog Production	All Three Components of Agricultural Education Model
Abby	Beef Cattle Production	All Three Components of Agricultural Education Model
Charlotte	Equine Production	All Three Components of Agricultural Education Model
Charlie	Goat, Cattle, and Hog Production	SAE
Terry	Poultry and Rabbit Production	Some Classroom and More SAE
Maddy	Sheep Production	SAE
Luke	Beef Production	SAE

Additionally, subjects denoted success within their SAE programs on their Agricultural Education Academy application. These successes indicated that a phenomenon occurring within this group of subjects was that all students were perceived to have successful and quality SAE programs. However, not all subjects reported the evidences regarding their SAE programs to indicate quality within their respective SAE programs in the interviews.

When asked about their respective SAE programs, most subjects replied with the livestock species that they exhibit at livestock shows. Some aforementioned subjects could not fully operationalize what the terms SAE meant. For example, Abby explained that she exhibited steers and heifers as her SAE program. She later revealed that she had a cow-calf operation, but her initial statement did not involve production, but instead pivoted on the exhibition of her livestock. Luke followed in stride with Abby, reporting his SAE program involved showing Chi heifers, but was later revealed that, he too, had a small cow-calf operation. Both operations were reported as evidence of minimal quality indicators. For example, Abby recalled learning employability and life skills as a result of her SAE program, however, she had trouble totally rationalizing what skills were learned as a result of her SAE program and not as part of her involvement with her SBAE program. Additionally, Luke also touted the employability and life skills learned as a result of his program. He also mentioned the need to make a profit with his SAE project and not to buy excessive costing livestock.

Charlotte reported that the terms proficiency and SAE were interchangeable, having revealed her confusion among the topics. Additionally, she described her equine

production placement SAE had several quality indicators. However, her perception regarding her SAE program was skewed and inverted. She revealed,

> I'm not the traditional agricultural education student. I did not start showing immediately. I started my agricultural education career like every other normal in in the eighth grade and I did a lot of showing. I am really big into equine. That's the weird part of me. I call that non-traditional because when you see agricultural stuff, you automatically think of cows, lambs, hogs, and stuff like that. [Charlotte: 50]

Similarly, John had issues operationalizing the terms SAE and proficiency. Although John gave a simplistic definition of a SAE program, "an agricultural experience that is supervised by your agricultural education teacher" [John: 243], he lacked an understanding of the difference between the terms SAE and proficiency, having stated, "that SAE is sometimes your proficiency" [John: 246]. When asked about his SAE program, John simply replied, "I show pigs, sheep, and cattle" [John: 175]. He only referred to the employability skills initially when relating to an award that could be received as a result of the SAE program. "I learned how to work on a computer, because before you get your proficiency award, you have to be able to put your information in the electronic recordbook" [John: 333].

Maddy also reported having exhibited livestock before she actually knew that it was her SAE program. She recounted,

> I joined 4-H when I was seven years old and was involved with 4-H until I was 11 years old. I showed animals during that time. When I finally reached the age

> where I could be in agricultural education, I always knew that I wanted to show, but I didn't know what it was called. It was just showing to me. However, when got into class and started talking about SAE programs, I realized that I grew up having an SAE and I just didn't know the name for it. [Maddy: 194]

Maddy touted the other SAE programs within her SBAE program, however, she only spoke about those who exhibited livestock or rode in horse shows. When discussing her own learning outcomes as a result of her SAE program, Maddy spoke more of life lessons and employability skills, none of which were considered program quality indicators.

Even those subjects that revealed having a comprehensive SAE program still had inverted beliefs regarding their SAE programs. When initially asked to describe what she participated in her SBAE program, Sandra spoke of hogs that she exhibited. However, when asked about the employability skills she has learned, Sandra revealed a plethora of information regarding her swine production SAE program. I learned about animal systems and animal anatomy in a hands-on way" [Sandra: 216]. I was when we dove into discussing her specific SAE programs that she divulged she had a feed business. She was unable to classify her feed business in one of the SAE categories. After digging a little deeper, Sandra revealed her elaborate and extensive recordkeeping system and skills needed to adequately run her business, elucidating quality was present within her entrepreneurial SAE program.

Charlie revealed the extent of his swine program to include recordkeeping and producing a product for profit. He reported,

> I already was keeping my records because from the time my mom bought me that first show pig at three-years-old we kept records every year. I have records from when I bread that first show pig, when it had babies, and when I sold the babies. I had that pig for five years and then I kept a couple more that she had. I actually got rid of them and started over, doing it again. I am able to say that I've known the term SAE for that long is actually a big deal because most people don't hear it until they are in eighth grade. [Charlie: 389]

Terry also revealed that she was implementing quality indicators within her SAE program. Those quality indicators included detailed records of breeding stock, having developed a system for identification of her birds, and obtained certification with the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

Table 5 provides significant statements regarding *Theme 3: Subjects have limited and narrow perceptions of SAE.*

Table 5

Statement from Theme 3: Subjects' perceptions of SAE

Participant	Significant statements related to the theme
Abby	"An SAE is something, that gives you something to do and helps you out, but I guess technically it would be doing something on your own. It also benefits you and your chapter" [152].
Charlotte	"I see SAE and proficiency as being interchangeable" [241].
Charlotte	"I'm not the traditional agricultural education student. I did not start showing immediately. I started my agricultural education career like every other normal in in the eighth grade and I did a lot of showing. I am really big into equine. That's the weird part of me. I call that non-traditional because when you see agricultural stuff, you automatically think of cows, lambs, hogs, and stuff like that" [50].
John	"I learned how to work on a computer, because before you get your proficiency award, you have to be able to put your information in the electronic recordbook" [333].
Maddy	I joined 4-H when I was seven years old and was involved with 4-H until I was 11 years old. I showed animals during that time. When I finally reached the age where I could be in agricultural education, I always knew

that I wanted to show, but I didn't know what it was called. It was just showing to me. However, when got into class and started talking about SAE programs, I realized that I grew up having an SAE and I just didn't know the name for it. [194]

Research Question 3: What are the Subjects' Experiences Regarding their SAE Programs?

The following theme answers the aforementioned research question to better understanding the subjects' experience.

Theme 4: Subjects Believe SAE Programs Diversify their Experiences in Agriculture

Most subjects reported an appreciation for learning new content and trying different curriculum and activities. In fact, subjects reported an affinity towards diversifying their respective agricultural education programs with both content and individuals. John reported that his SBAE program is "beginning to grow, getting more people involved, and trying to diversify" [John: 108]. When referring to her SBAE program's course offerings and program expansion, Charlotte felt that her teachers were making strides to aid in diversifying the program. She recounted,

> My agricultural education teacher incorporated an agricultural leadership program, which is now is an art credit. So a lot of kids now want to take that because not only is it going to help them towards school, but also another different way that we are offering involvement. I understand we have a lot of kids that are quiet, that don't necessarily want to go out and do a contest, but they much rather prefer sitting behind a computer and typing an article about news stories. [Charlotte: 165]

Sandra felt much like Charlotte, as her SBAE program was trying a new subject as well. In western Oklahoma, she stated that horticulture is not a common course or

contest that is competed in among the various schools. However, her program was trying it out for the first time. Sandra revealed, "I like things to be a little bit different. Normally, our agricultural education program is traditional. It just opened out eyes to things we are not used to, because where I live, horticulture is not a big thing" [Sandra: 88].

Charlie continued the trend regarding trying new content. He referred to his agricultural education teachers and peers as motivators to become more active. Charlie stated, "instead of just doing livestock, we started doing cattle grading, the electricity contest, and we now have a shop team. Next year, we are supposed to try the Agricultural Education CDE" [Charlie: 55].

Several students noted that they feel an obligation to recruit for their SBAE programs. Abby previously mentioned that she enjoyed recruiting seventh and eighth graders into her program. Terry also recounted, in a previous passage, that she feels like part of a welcoming committee for new members and help them explore the program's offerings. Charlotte further revealed, as an FFA officer, "I can connect with kids a lot more because I am not focused on just one CDE. I feel like it's my part to try and figure out the kids' different niches when they come in to our agricultural education program" [Charlotte: 123].

On the contrary to other subjects, Luke feels that his SBAE program is stagnate in its growth, even though he has an affinity for trying new contests and learning new content. He hails from a small community and a rural school, so there is not much opportunity for program growth. Luke has encouraged students to participate in public

speaking events, but without a push from his agricultural education teacher, there has been very little response. He reported,

> [Public speaking] is not my agricultural education teacher's focus, but he is supportive. He takes me [to the contests] and we go, but it's just the two of us almost every time. I would like to see the program, grow in public speaking competitors, but we just don't have anyone that wants to do it. I've done my best to try and get people to compete. This past year we had an eighth grade girl who was interested and she competed and made it to the district contest, so I have made some progress. [Luke: 50]

As a result of the diversification of the students' SBAE programs, the students revealed an increase in program size and participation. Sandra stated that her chapter has doubled in size since her first year in the SBAE program and accredits the new teacher in the program.

> My first year there maybe was 20 kids and now there are almost 50. It has grown each year and I feel like we are exponentially more active than we used to be. We got a new agricultural education teacher and she brought new aspects to the table and that has helped out a lot. We have won competitions on the state and national levels, which is kind of cool. [Sandra: 67]

Charlie has a similar view regarding his teachers. He recounted the agricultural education teachers' past behaviors with focusing on one type of student and the new transformation of diversifying the SBAE program. Charlie stated,

> They actually have broadened our spectrum. The teachers used to focus on the kids that have the agriculture background. Now our school is becoming more diverse and they are starting to broaden the spectrum. My teachers are getting those kids that don't have an agricultural background to come in and give speeches. [Charlie: 59]

Further, Charlie admits that, at first, he and his peers were not a proponent of expanding his SBAE program to include new students. He reported,

> At first, we were all kind of against it, because we didn't thing that we liked the new people. However now that we do have them in our program, we realized that those new people are not bad. Going on speech contest trips with them is fun. We all just goof around on the way there and on the way back. [Charlie: 69]

Charlie goes on to tell that he believed the strength of his SBAE program is the ability to be diverse with a different group of students. "Regardless of our diversity, you have the same love for the FFA. Whether students are from a big city or from the rural area, you have a common bond" [Charlie: 172].

Maddy felt that her SBAE program was diverse in its activities, but she felt that it could also be a hindrance, causing students and teachers to feel stressed and drained.

> I have such a diverse change. Everyone is doing something and you get to experience so many different things that would not be possible if you were in a one-sided program. But there are times when it gets really draining because there are people that want to participate in all facets that agricultural education has to

> offer, and we try to do everything that people want to do. It doesn't always fit together, but we are extremely supportive of others' interests. [Maddy: 145]

Maddy also reported that although her SBAE program is running at full speed, she would like to add more to her program and expand. "I think we could broaden our audience and possibly do agronomy. That would be cool" [Maddy: 181].

Overall, the subjects revealed that they appreciated new content and individuals infiltrating their respective SBAE programs. Table 6 provides significant statements regarding *Theme 4: Subjects believe SAE programs diversify their experiences in agriculture.*

Table 6

Statements from Theme 4: Subjects believe SAE programs diversify their experiences in agriculture

Participant	Significant statements related to the theme
Charlotte	"My agricultural education teacher incorporated an agricultural leadership program, which is now is an art credit. So a lot of kids now want to take that because not only is it going to help them towards school, but also another different way that we are offering involvement. I understand we have a lot of kids that are quiet, that don't necessarily want to go out and do a contest, but they much rather prefer sitting behind a computer and typing an article about news stories" [165].
Sandra:	"I like things to be a little bit different. Normally, our agricultural education program is traditional. It just opened out eyes to things we are not used to, because where I live, horticulture is not a big thing" [88].
Luke	"[Public speaking] is not my agricultural education teacher's focus, but he is supportive. He takes me [to the contests] and we go, but it's just the two of us almost every time. I would like to see the program, grow in public speaking competitors, but we just don't have anyone that wants to do it. I've done my best to try and get people to compete.

	This past year we had an eighth grade girl who was interested and she competed and made it to the district contest, so I have made some progress" [50].
Charlie	"They actually have broadened our spectrum. The teachers used to focus on the kids that have the agriculture background. Now our school is becoming more diverse and they are starting to broaden the spectrum. My teachers are getting those kids that don't have an agricultural background to come in and give speeches" [59].

Summary

Subjects reported increased knowledge from their SAE programs. They revealed employability skills were gained as a result of their respective SAE programs. Teachers of the subjects interviewed were noted as the main influencers of learning through the students' SAE programs. However, most subjects reported only surface level understanding regarding SAE program knowledge. When new content was presented in the total SBAE program, the subjects expressed an overall appreciation to incorporate diversity. Finally, when asked to describe SAE programs, most subjects revealed a skewed and inverted perception of their own SAE program and its overall meaning.

Composite Textural and Structural Descriptions

The integration of *what* the subjects felt and *how* they felt are known as textural and structural descriptions. These descriptions were interwoven in to the themes, however in phenomenological research, composite textural and structural descriptions follow the themes have been developed, and finally the essence is brought forth from the deductive process (Creswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

Composite Textural Description

The subjects in this study experienced learning as a result of their SAE programs. Additionally, teachers were revealed as the main influencers of learning regarding SAE programs. Learning occurred when subjects had experiential instances with their respective SAE programs. Additionally, the group also expressed an affinity for trying new content and diversifying the SBAE programs to encompass less of the normal, everyday information and incorporate new and different content and curriculum. Finally,

most of the group experienced a skewed and inverted perception of their SAE program, only having a shallow understanding and placed an emphasis on exhibition of livestock, rather than the intended production aspect.

Composite Structural Descriptions

Several contexts or settings had an affect on the learning that occurred through the subjects' respective SAE programs. Although the students had varied examples of their experiences, the aforementioned themes were developed as a result of a commonality among the subjects and their experiences regarding learning in those areas.

Subjects learned in a variety of contexts through their SAE program. For example, Terry reported obtaining a NPIP certification as a result of her poultry production SAE; Charlie revealed the process of owning his first hog and using it to start a small swine operation; Sandra spoke of her feed business and the logistical skills she as obtained as a result of the SAE; Maddy illustrated the employability skills learned from her SAE; and Luke referred to the networking skills he gained from exhibiting his livestock. Each participant revealed some type of learning as a result of their respective SAE programs to encompass technical knowledge, soft skill development, and increased awareness of competencies.

Agricultural education teachers were reported as the main influencers concerning learning through their SAE programs. Teachers provided guidance, direction, and support for the subjects regarding their SAE programs. Most of the students recounted instances where their agricultural education teachers were more than just a teacher to promote learning through an experiential project, but were viewed as a family member, or in some

cases, were the family member. Subjects reported an admiration for their teachers. Charlie felt that his agricultural education teachers were father figures and Terry revealed, “My agricultural education teacher is awesome” [Terry: 250]. Luke reported that his relationship with his agricultural education teacher was positively influenced because of his teacher’s affinity for livestock production.

Finally, subjects have reporting gaining knowledge as a result of their respective SAE programs, however their knowledge regarding general SAE knowledge, including knowledge about their specific SAE, was lacking. Learning is taking place, but the very basics regarding their respective SAE programs and general SAE knowledge was minimal.

The settings and contexts for learning directly tied to the subjects’ experiential involvement with their respective SAE programs. As the agricultural education teachers were reported as the main influencers in knowledge acquisition, subjects were affected by their relationship with their advisor regarding their SAE program. Learning through SAE programs occurred in a variety of settings and contexts among the subjects.

Essence

The condensed experience that is produced from the textural and structural descriptions of the subjects is known as the essence (Moustakas, 1994). The essence from this study was revealed that teachers determine learning through SAE programs, which provided the greatest opportunity for the acquirement of employability skills in the SBAE program.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the shared experiences of future agricultural education teachers regarding SAE programs. I specifically sought to gain a deeper understanding of (a) future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs, (b) the learning outcomes attributed to the SAE program, and (c) the influencers that contributed to the specified learning outcomes as a result of the SAE program. This study is an attempt to expand knowledge in the Agricultural Education profession by providing information regarding SAE implementation and highlighting learning outcomes associated with SAE programs.

Research Questions

Moustakas' (1994) research questions regarding transcendental phenomenology were used to direct this study and address student learning through SAE programs and the influences affecting learning of self-identified future agricultural education teachers. The research questions were:

1. What are the learning outcomes attributed to their respective SAE experiences?
2. What are the external factors that the subjects attribute to learning outcomes as a result of their SAE program?
3. What are the subjects' experiences regarding their SAE programs?

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations from Findings

The interview protocol questions were developed from the research questions and were answered by subjects. Answers to the research questions were explained in the themes that were deduced from the collect data. Subjects discussed their respective SAE programs and those who influenced their learning from their SAE program. The themes were reported with the research questions and connected back to current and relevant literature. Additionally, the themes were not weighted and not reported in any order. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations for practice and future research are reported by each theme to condense and organize the information. Finally, a discussion of the essence and summary followed.

Research Question 1: What are the Learning Outcomes Attributed to their Respective SAE program?

The following section will provide the conclusions and implications for the theme as related to the research question.

Conclusions and Implications Theme 1: Students Attain Skills Through their SAE Programs

Agricultural education students who participate in SAE programs attained employability and life skills. Subjects of this study shared a wide array of skills and competencies they credited with their SAE experiences. Skills identified include herd health management, illness identification, interpreting swine ear notches, developing feed rations, operating heavy machinery, implementing financial record systems, and business management. The identified skills could be useful when seeking entry-level jobs. These findings are consistent with other studies that determined SAE programs have provided the skill acquisition desirable for the agriculture industry (Dyer & Williams, 1997; Lewis et al., 2012; Ramsey, 2009; Ramsey & Edwards, 2012; Stewart & Birkenholz, 1991). Additionally, specific skills mentioned by subjects helps to close the literature gap about specific skills learned through SAE programs.

The acquisition of employability skills with application to a variety of careers was a basic tenant of Dewey's philosophy, basing education on personal experiences (Dewey. 1938). The development of these skills was obtained through the content of a SAE program and reflected the four principles of experiential learning: (a) learning through real-life context; (b) learning by doing; (c) learning through projects; and (d) learning through problem solving (Knobloch, 2003; Kolb, 1984). These experiential learning principles were evident in this theme as students discussed their SAE programs.

Millennials prefer teaching and learning styles that coincide with the constructivist epistemology and take an active role in developing their knowledge by linking new information with past experiences (Wisniewski's, 2010). As SAE programs

provide students opportunities to build on prior knowledge and link new information to those past experiences, students' acquisition of employability skills vary based on the level their SAE. Supervised Agricultural Experience levels are determined by sequence, scope, and difficulty and should increase year to year (Stimson, 1919). Subjects not far in their SAE journey exhibited knowledge of basic skills, while others gained intermediate to advanced employability skills as a result of their SAE program. This gain in skill could be a result experiential learning, particularly where they had the opportunity to have multiple concrete experiences, reflected on their experience, used abstract conceptualization, and actively experimented with their SAE program (Kolb, 1984). Could it be the skills noted by subjects in this study were due to the cyclical nature and employing trial and error techniques? Perhaps the subjects are purposefully engaged in the experiential learning process to gain skills.

In an article in the *Agricultural Education* Magazine, Baker & Robinson (2011) discussed David A. Kolb's suggestions for implementing experiential learning in agricultural education. Kolb outlined four suggestions for implementation: (a) teachers must be present and involved in the experience; (b) learning must begin with the students' interests; (c) teachers should move into different roles as the student progresses through the cycle; and (d) teachers should teach content and teach students *how* to learn (Baker & Robinson, 2011). Regarding this study, could it be teachers were employing the experiential learning cycle each time a student had an experience concerning their SAE program to cultivate learning? Perhaps teachers are asserting themselves into different roles as the student progresses through the experiential learning cycle, thus promoting maximum learning. Subjects reported helping other students with their SAE programs,

implementing modeling techniques. Perhaps teachers intently employing modeling behaviors (Schunk, 2012) to encourage skill acquisition.

Perhaps a study should be conducted to determine what skills are learned from SAE programs. Results from such a study could aid in-service teachers' efforts to promote and implement SAEs in their agricultural education programs. With the national movement to standardize curriculum, perhaps providing standards, or baseline skills, for SAE programs could influence positively the diffusion of SAE in SBAE programs that lack SAE participation.

Recommendations Theme 1: Students Attain Skills Through their SAE Programs

The following section will provide the recommendations for the theme as related to the research question.

As teachers may be employing modeling (Schunk, 2012), it is recommended that further research be conducted to evaluate teachers' implementation of peer modeling regarding SAE programs. Additionally, it is recommended that further research is needed to assess teachers' implementation of the experiential learning cycle regarding SAE programs. As qualitative inquiry promotes transferability rather than generalizability (Creswell, 2012), it is recommended a similar study be conducted to further understand what skills are learned from specific SAE programs.

If specific skills were determined, perhaps this could positively influence SAE diffusion. Therefore, it is recommended policy makers for SBAE determine if SAE program standards would be beneficial to SAE diffusion. Additionally, these studies

could lead to a baseline of knowledge secondary students should have with respect to type of SAE program and time with the SAE program.

Teachers should continue to instruct students regarding employability skill acquisition and provide opportunities for students to apply those skills through SAE programs. Additionally, it is recommended SBAE teachers identify a baseline of desired skills upon completing an introductory SAE as a measure of quality. It is recommended that research be conducted to determine baseline skillsets needed for different types of SAE programs. Teacher educators should continue to tout the importance of SAE programs to their pre-service teachers, focusing on employability skill acquisition.

Research Question 2: What are the External Factors That Contributed to the Specified Learning Outcomes as a Result of the SAE Program?

The following section will provide the conclusions and implications for the theme as related to the research question.

Conclusions and Implications Theme 2: Teachers Have a Great Influence on Subjects' SAE Programs

The SBAE teacher had the greatest influence on students' SAE. Subjects in this study said their teachers supported SAE programs, initiated learning opportunities, and cultivated meaningful relationships with them. The majority of subjects reported their agricultural education teachers were the main source of support regarding their agricultural education program. Some research has reported teachers are a barrier to SAE implementation (Clarke & Scanlon, 1996; Dyer & Osborne, 1995; Dyer & Osborne, 1996; Retallick, 2010; Retallick & Martin, 2008; Robinson & Haynes, 2011; Steele,

1997; Warren & Flowers, 1993; Wilson & Moore, 2007). The subjects in this study, however, noted the opposite effect. They reported their teachers were a source of motivation and knowledge concerning their SAE programs. Subjects revealed their SBAE teacher was the main influencer regarding knowledge, support, and motivation for their SAE programs.

As teachers are charged with providing meaningful experiences to students (Roberts, 2011), several subjects reported their agricultural education teacher helped them develop an SAE that was interesting and meaningful to them. These meaningful experiences led by the agricultural education teacher promoted participation and achievement. This finding is consistent with the recommendation of Bird et al. (2013) that teachers should focus "on students' personal interests related to SAE areas, designing SAEs that would be personally meaningful to the student, or providing rationale to student as to how and why SAEs are important to their educational and/or personal development" (p. 42).

As mentioned in the previous theme, teachers employed constructivism epistemology to cultivate learning, specifically employing the socio-cultural theory by Vygotsky (1962). An individual's collaboration with others increased the learner's potential to develop more knowledge at a deeper level (Vygotsky, 1962). Supporting this idea, Schunk (2012) stated, "[t]he cultural – historical aspects of Vygotsky's theory illuminate the point that learning and development cannot be disassociated from their context. The way learners interact with their worlds – with the persons, objects, and institutions in it – transforms their thinking" (p. 242). This concept served as the basis of

SAEs, utilizing the relationships and environments around the project and individual to create a learning atmosphere.

The student employed cultural tools, including the physical SAE, social institutions, and social engagement with teachers, parents, and peers. The zone of proximal development is described as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Subjects reported learning skills from their SBAE teacher and using their peers to implement these skills in different settings. This finding is consistent with the *Abstract Conceptualization* component of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). For the purpose of this study, the SBAE teacher served as the expert for the duration of the SAE program.

The subjects revealed SBAE teachers were the main influencers for gaining knowledge and skills through their SAE programs. Perhaps it possible teachers are educating their students about subjects regarding SAE programs by spending substantial time with the students outside of classroom time. As the student becomes more proficient with the SAE, it was noted the subjects then took the initiative and sought out teaching opportunities to help their peers. Perhaps those individuals that provided learning opportunities for their peers understand the holistic view of the agricultural education profession. Could it be that the time spent with the teachers and their understanding of the holistic view of the profession could promote recruitment for the profession? Moreover, as students increase their aptitude with their SAE programs and take the initiative to provide learning opportunities for their peers, perhaps the informal implementation of the

experiential learning cycle may provide increased comprehension of their own SAE programs.

Recommendations Theme 2: Teachers Have a Great Influence on Subjects' SAE Programs

With the time that is spent with students possibly impacting their view on the total agricultural education program, it is recommended that in-service teachers continue to invest in students and their SAE programs to encourage profession recruitment. Additionally, it is recommended that pre-service teacher educators tout the importance of employing sound SAE practices as a method to promote the agricultural education profession.

It is recommended to further examine the phenomenon of students providing learning opportunities to their peers and determine the implementation of experiential learning during those opportunities.

Conclusions and Implications Theme 3: Subjects Have Limited and Narrow Perceptions of SAE

Students' knowledge about and understanding of SAE programs is minimal and narrow. Students reported learning about SAE programs through a variety of methods including having prior knowledge of SAE concepts before entering the SBAE program and as a result of entering the SBAE program. When students were asked to explain SAE programs, one student provided an accurate, detailed account regarding SAE programs. Perhaps this student was influenced by his agricultural education teachers to grasp a

detailed understanding of SAE programs so that he might be utilized to cultivate knowledge at a deeper level with other students (Vygotsky, 1962).

However, several students reported a surface level or unclear understanding of a SAE program, often employing incorrect terminology. As these students were chosen for their involvement with the total agricultural education program and their expressed interest to teach agricultural education, I expected a higher level of knowledge regarding SAE knowledge. Additionally, I bracketed out biases and experiences to maintain ethical research procedures (Tracy, 2010) to analyze the data through transcendental means (Moustakas, 1994). However, as it is recommended to seek input in qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2012), I consulted with my committee and determined that several students lacked comprehensive SAE knowledge and is consistent with previous research (Lewis et al., 2012).

Further, half of the subjects reported that their SAE programs were classified as either *All Three Components of Agricultural Education Model* or *Some Classroom and More*. The students could not separate the individual components of the Agricultural Education Model in Figure 4 (National FFA Organization, 2014) when describing the classification of their SAE program. Could it be that in-service teachers in Oklahoma are teaching the Agricultural Education Model comprehensively, where the students do not process three separate components, but instead three parts to a holistic model? Perhaps in-service teachers are implementing the Agricultural Education Model in such a method that students cannot distinguish the individual components? With the national call to increase SAE participation (NCAE, 2014), could this be a positive side effect of in-service teachers increasing the implementation of SAEs in their comprehensive

agricultural education programs? Additionally, are students inadvertently employing the Enriched Agricultural Education Model (Baker et al., 2012) and are unable to separate their experiences from other agricultural education components?

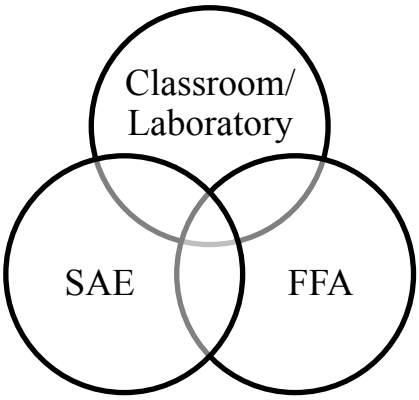

Figure 6. The Agricultural Education Model. Adapted from the National FFA Organization, 2014, *FFA Manual*, Indianapolis: IN. Students reported success within their SAE program on their OSU FAETA application.

These successes indicated that a phenomenon occurring within this group of subjects was that all students were perceived to have successful and quality SAE programs. However, not all subjects reported the evidences regarding their SAE programs to indicate quality within their respective SAE programs in the interviews. The reported data aligns with social judgment theory (SJT) (Hammond et al., 1987; Hammond & Stewart, 2001).

Several subjects reported having, what they viewed to be quality SAE programs. However, when asked to describe the details of the program regarding terminology, descriptions, and program type, subjects could not articulate information to supporting their claims. Social judgment theory is used as a perspective for understanding human judgment within a specific context (Cooksey, 1996). For the purpose of this study, the context is the SAE program.

Subjects reported having quality SAE programs and the majority of them exhibited livestock. Perhaps the subjects experienced success with their livestock SAE program through a variety of avenues, i.e. livestock shows, proficiency awards, FFA degrees, creating an opportunity for judgments to be made. These avenues are lenses (Brunswik, 1956) that the subjects could employ to measure their perceived SAE quality. Moreover, as the subjects evaluate their progress or quality of their SAE program through these lenses, judgments are made, promoting behaviors and practices surrounding SAE programs.

Additionally, as subjects reported having quality SAE programs, could it be assumed that their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) was increased as a result of those SAEs? Several subjects reported assisting peers with their SAE programs. Perhaps the subjects' self-efficacy played a role in how they thought, formed attitudes, and motivated themselves (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, the Model of Triadic Reciprocality (Bandura, 1997) further supports the claim that the lenses (Brunswik, 1956) which the subjects could have employed could have aided in their efficacy to continue the behavior.

Furthermore, several subjects reported their SAE program as *exhibiting livestock* and a *proficiency*. This revealed that the students have an inverted perception regarding SAE programs, often referring to the program as the award portion instead of the experiential components. As students should seek out awards for their SAE programs (NCAE, 2014; Stewart & Birkenholz, 1991), could it be that too much emphasis is placed on the recognition of the SAE (Bird et al., 2013; Wilson & Moore, 2007; Retallick, 2010)? Perhaps this could be considered as putting the proverbial cart before the horse?

Recommendations Theme 3: Subjects Have Limited and Narrow Perceptions of SAE

Several students reported confusion regarding SAE terminology and definition, often referring to SAE as the *proficiency*. It is recommended for in-service teachers to stress the differences in terminology during classroom instruction, preventing terminology confusion. Additionally, it is recommended that in-service teachers should provide more instruction regarding the definition of SAE. Perhaps teacher educators should focus teacher instruction on how to educate secondary students on all facets of SAE programs that are effective in classroom settings.

Perhaps the subjects are unable to separate their experiences from the Agricultural Education model. Therefore, further studies should be conducted to assess students' knowledge regarding SAE's relationship with the other components of the Agricultural Education Model.

Could it be that these self-identified future agricultural education teachers have been looking through the wrong lenses to determine SAE quality? It is recommended that future research be conducted to identify how students internalize SAE quality and their implications.

Are teachers emphasizing the award structure to promote SAE involvement? It is recommended for teacher educators to stress the importance the SAE process over the product of recognition for the program. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers emphasize that students maintain foundationally strong SAE programs. Additionally, it is recommended that in-service teachers communicate the purpose of SAE programs to all

students, especially those who are future agricultural education teachers. Further research is warranted to address potential inversion of SAE programs.

Research Question 3: What are the Subjects' Experiences Regarding their SAE Programs?

The following section will provide the conclusions and implications for the theme as related to the research question.

Conclusions and Implications Theme 4: Subjects Believe SAE Programs Diversify their Experiences in Agriculture

Students appreciate learning a wide range of content and experiencing a variety of activities associated with agriculture. Additionally, the subjects revealed that new content provided recruitment opportunities for the agricultural education program. Subjects defined *content* as new curriculum and new CDEs to their respective programs. These diverse opportunities were reported by the subjects as a method to gain more skills needed for their potential future careers. Perhaps with the expansion of content taught and activities in which the subjects participated, the in-service teachers provided a greater opportunity for them to gain more employability skills. Could it be that with the subjects' respective agricultural education programs diversifying across the aforementioned areas, not only is program recruitment taking place, but teacher recruitment is as well?

Subjects reported developing relationships with students new to the program and providing encouragement for participation. Much of the literature focuses on barriers for recruitment (Breja, Ball, & Dyer, 2000; Croom & Flowers, 2001; Hoover & Scanlon, 1991; Marshall, Herring, & Briers, 1992). The findings of this study are consistent with

Marshall et al. (1992) that addressed factors that have a positive influence on a student's decision to enroll or not enroll in SBAE courses. Some factors for enrollment include the characteristics of the course and encouragement from significant others (Marshall et al., 1992).

Further, the majority of subjects reported an increase in recruitment and participation of FFA members as a result of diversifying content and activities. This finding is consistent with previous researchers that identified strategies for program recruitment that encompass curriculum expansion, CDEs, and recreational or social activities (Myers, Dyer, & Breja, 2003).

Recommendations Theme 4: Subjects Believe SAE Programs their Experiences in Agriculture

It is recommended that in-service teachers employ various diverse activities, curriculum, and CDEs within their respective programs to continue with recruitment efforts. Additionally, the subjects reported feeling a sense of obligation to aid in recruitment. Therefore, it is recommended that in-service teachers identify those students with strong SAE programs and a desire to teach agricultural education to provide assistance with recruitment activities. Further, it is recommended that teacher educators provide learning opportunities for pre-service teachers in a variety of curricula, CDEs, and unique educational opportunities to implement in their respective SAE programs. Additionally, it is recommended that teacher educators provide professional development opportunities for in-service teachers to enhance their recruitment efforts while simultaneously providing opportunities for students to gain employability skills.

Essence

The condensed experience that is produced from the textural and structural descriptions of the subjects is known as the essence (Moustakas, 1994). The essence from this study was revealed that teachers determine learning through SAE programs, which provided the greatest opportunity for the acquirement of employability skills.

Summary

The subjects revealed they gained employability skills as a result of their SAE programs and their teachers were the main determinant in learning in the SAE programs. As a result of the agricultural education teachers spending an ample amount of time with the students during their SAE programs, it could be assumed the relationships and bonds formed with the subjects promoted two outcomes: learning and teacher recruitment.

Additionally, the subjects also revealed several areas that teacher educators, pre-service, and in-service teachers could improve. Expanding the SAE knowledge base could decrease confusion in terminology, promoting more student success and learning with their respective programs. Incorporating new curricula, CDEs, and activities into the agricultural education program could serve as a recruitment tool and increase SAE participation. Finally, the profession should promote sound SAE programs that could achieve recognition in the future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Wednesday, June 04, 2014
IRB Application No	AG1428
Proposal Title:	The Shared Experiences of Future Agricultural Education Teachers Regarding Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs
Reviewed and Processed as:	Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 6/3/2015

Principal Investigator(s):

Ashley S. Whiddon
920 S Murphy St Apt 24105
Stillwater, OK 74825

Jon Ramsey
455 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1.Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2.Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3.Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4.Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia K

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO PARENTS OF SUBJECTS

SCRIPT

Ashley S. Whiddon
Graduate Teaching & Research Associate
Oklahoma State University
459 Agricultural Hall
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

June 3, 2014

Dear Agricultural Education Academy Participant Parent/Guardian,

Congratulations on your child being selected to participate in the Agricultural Education Academy. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission to allow your child to participate in an interview I am conducting to better understand your Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program, specifically to seek a deeper understanding of their SAE program, the learning outcomes attributed to their SAE program, and the influencers that contributed to their learning outcomes as a result of the SAE program. Your child's participation in this study will contribute to the Agricultural Education profession by providing information with regards to SAE implementation and highlighting learning outcomes associated with SAE programs.

The data collection process will consist of one, 45 – minute interview during your child's time at the Agricultural Education Academy at Oklahoma State University, June 16-20, 2014. Your child's participation in this study is strictly voluntary, but would be greatly appreciated.

In no way will your child's answers influence your personal life or future employment as there will be no identifiers attached to your responses and pseudo names will be used.

Would you be willing to allow your child to give me 45 minutes of their time to interview during their time at Oklahoma State University? If you choose to allow your child to participate, you **must** complete the study consent form (attached) and bring it with you along with your child's Agricultural Education Academy medical release and consent forms upon attending the academy. If you choose to allow your child to participate, they have the right to decline participation with no penalty.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Ashley S. Whiddon
Graduate Teaching and Research Associate
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Jon W. Ramsey
Assistant Professor
Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX C: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: The Shared Experiences of Future Agricultural Education Teachers Regarding Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Programs

Investigators:

Ashley S. Whiddon – Graduate Teaching and Research Associate – Agricultural Education, Oklahoma State University

Jon W. Ramsey, PhD – Assistant Professor – Agricultural Education, Oklahoma State University

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to describe the shared experiences of future agricultural education teachers regarding SAE programs. The researcher will specifically seek to gain a deeper understanding of (1) future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs, (2) the learning outcomes attributed to the SAE program, and (3) the influencers that contributed to the specified learning outcomes as a result of the SAE program. This study will contribute to the Agricultural Education profession by providing information with regards to SAE implementation and highlighting learning outcomes associated with SAE programs.

Procedures:

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in this study. A one, 45 – minute interview addressing questions regarding their SAE program and learning outcomes attributed to your SAE program.

The researchers will identify critical themes and ask questions regarding those themes. The interview will be conducted and recorded. The researchers will provide a draft of each interview for review within one week of the interview to ensure accuracy. All identifiers will be removed for the purpose of confidentiality. The researchers will be asking probing questions about the events to further clarify responses.

Risks of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits:

Your child's participation could contribute to the Agricultural Education profession by providing information with regards to SAE implementation and highlighting learning outcomes associated with SAE programs. Addressing questions regarding the scope of future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs, learning outcomes attributed to those SAE programs, and the influencers that contributed to the learning outcomes from the student's perspective will inform the profession of SAE implementation, learning outcomes, and actors that contributed to that learning.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of the subject who participates in research.

All recordings will be destroyed after the researchers have transcribed responses. Data will be stored for the duration of the study and will then be deleted upon submission of the manuscripts to journals and conferences. All identifiers will be removed and the student will be choose a pseudonym for the purpose of confidentiality.

Contacts:

If you have questions regarding this research, you may contact, via e-mail, Ashley S. Whiddon at ashley.whiddon@okstate.edu or Dr. Jon Ramsey at jon.ramsey@okstate.edu.

If you have questions about your child's rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights:

Your child's participation is completely voluntary. Even if you have consented to your child participating in this study, they still have the right to decline participation. There is no penalty if your child chooses to participate and then wish to withdraw from the study.

Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the parental consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent Date

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

APPENDIX D: STUDENT ASSENT FORM

STUDENT ASSENT

Project Title: The Shared Experiences of Future Agricultural Education Teachers Regarding Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Programs

Investigators:

Ashley S. Whiddon – Graduate Teaching and Research Associate – Agricultural Education

Oklahoma State University

Jon W. Ramsey, PhD – Assistant Professor – Agricultural Education,

Oklahoma State University

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to describe the shared experiences of future agricultural education teachers regarding SAE programs. The researcher will specifically seek to gain a deeper understanding of (1) future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs, (2) the learning outcomes attributed to the SAE program, and (3) the influencers that contributed to the specified learning outcomes as a result of the SAE program. This study will contribute to the Agricultural Education profession by providing information with regards to SAE implementation and highlighting learning outcomes associated with SAE programs.

Procedures:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. A one, 45 – minute interview addressing questions regarding your SAE program and learning outcomes attributed to your SAE program.

The researchers will provide a draft of each interview for review within one week of the interview to ensure accuracy. All identifying information will be removed for the purpose of confidentiality.

Risks of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits:

Your participation could contribute to the Agricultural Education profession by providing information with regards to SAE implementation and highlighting learning outcomes associated with SAE programs. Addressing questions regarding the scope of future agricultural education teachers' SAE programs, learning outcomes attributed to those SAE programs, and the influencers that contributed to the learning outcomes from the student's perspective will inform the profession of SAE

implementation, learning outcomes, and actors that contributed to that learning.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of the subject who participates in research.

All recordings will be destroyed after responses have been transcribed. Data will be stored for the duration of the study and will then be deleted upon submission of the manuscripts to journals and conferences. All identifiers will be removed and you will choose a pseudonym for the purpose of confidentiality.

Contacts:

If you have questions regarding this research, you may contact, via e-mail, Ashley S. Whiddon at ashley.whiddon@okstate.edu or Dr. Jon Ramsey at jon.ramsey@okstate.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights:

Your participation is completely voluntary. Even if your parents have consented to you participating in the study, you can refuse to participate. This decision is completely up to you. There is no penalty if you choose to participate and then wish to withdraw at any time.

Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

1. Describe your school and community.
    a. What does the area you went to school look like regarding building, neighborhoods, and demographics?
    b. Describe a typical school day for you.
    c. What activities are you involved in your school and community?
2. How did you get involved in Agricultural Education (AE)?
    a. Who were the individuals that influenced your decision to be active in AE? How?
    b. Why was AE appealing to you?
3. Describe your goals and dreams.
    a. How can adequate or inadequate grades affect your goals and dreams?
4. Describe why you want to be an AE teacher.
    a. What events led you to that decision?
    b. Who were the specific individuals that helped you determine your future career? How?
    c. So far, what is your favorite aspect of AE (SAE, FFA, Classroom)?
    d. What is your overall goal while you are teaching?
5. Describe your Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program.
    a. How did you come up with the SAE?
    b. Who helps you with it? How?
    c. Describe a typical day with your SAE.
    d. Who provides the most guidance? How?
    e. Did you, your advisor, parents, etc. discuss goals for the SAE? Describe that process.
6. Describe your current record keeping system for your SAE program.
    a. Computers? Paper system?
    b. Do you update it frequently?
    c. How do you maintain your records?
    d. Does anyone help you with your record keeping? If so, who and how?
7. Describe the technical and soft skills you have gained as a result of your SAE.
    a. Who has primarily facilitated the acquirement of those skills?
    b. How will these skills help you as an AE teacher?
8. Are you satisfied with your SAE?
    a. Would you change anything about it?
    b. If you could go back to the beginning and do something different with regards to your SAE, what would you do?
    c. What do you think would be the expected outcome if your SAE were conducted differently? How?
    d. Looking back and not changing/tweaking your SAE, what have you learned? How?
    e. What are the most significant learning outcomes you have had as a result of your SAE?
9. Describe the other influencers that have affected your learning with regards to your SAE.
    a. Classroom time?
    b. Outside classroom?
    c. Other students?
    d. State staff?
    e. University personnel?
    f. Career Development Events (CDE)?
10. Describe how you have sought recognition for your work with your SAE.
    a. What does it mean to seek recognition?

b. Is it important? Why or why not?
c. Have you ever sought recognition for your SAE? If so, who encouraged you to seek recognition?
d. What did you learn as a result of the recognition process

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE REVISED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Revised Protocol - 5/17

- Tell me about where you grew up (not using the name).
- How many years in AE?
- Describe your AE program.
- What takes place in the program?
- What do you do in the program?
- Who helps you with that?
- What have you learned?
- Specifically, I am looking at SAEs. Do you know what that is?
- How would you explain what a SAE is?
- How did you learn about SAEs?
- Do other kids have other projects in class?
- How would you describe your project, FFA/SAE/Classroom?
- What have you learned from all of that (SAE)?
- What are the positives of your AE program? What are the negatives of your AE program?
- How can your AE be improved?
- Anything else about your AE program that is important?

APPENDIX G: AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION ACADEMY APPLICATION

Application for the Future Agricultural Education Teacher Academy and Scholarship Program

Due Mar. 1

Up to 15 $1,000 Scholarships Available!
Application Deadline – March 1, 2014

Purpose

To encourage and promote the teaching of high school agricultural education as a positive and promising college major and career choice. The Future Agricultural Education Teacher Academy and Scholarship Program is aimed at FFA members who:

1. Have a sincere desire to pursue a career as a high school Agricultural Education teacher and FFA advisor.
2. Have a sincere desire and the academic credentials to be admitted to Oklahoma State University, and to major in Agricultural Education.
3. Have a sincere desire to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of an agricultural education teacher to meet the needs of a diverse society.

Incentives

1. As many as 15 participants will be selected to attend the 2014 Future Agricultural Education Teacher Academy, June 16-20, at Oklahoma State University.
2. Campus housing, meals, on-site transportation, conference materials, and shirt are provided.
3. Students who attend the Academy, and who receive admission to OSU and enroll in Agricultural Education with an emphasis on teaching, will each receive a $1,000 scholarship. One hour of college credit at OSU may also become available.
4. Academy participants will be recognized on stage at the upcoming state FFA convention.

General Guidelines

1. High school juniors entering their senior year may apply. High school sophomores entering their junior year may apply. A student may participate in the academy only once.
2. Must attend all five days of the Academy scheduled for June 16-20, 2014, on the campus of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.
3. Must meet the application deadline, postmarked by March 1, 2014.
4. Must include with the application an official copy of the applicant's most recent high school transcript and a wallet size or larger photograph of the applicant.
5. To receive a $1,000 scholarship, the applicant must:
   - Attend all five days of the academy.
   - Be admitted to Oklahoma State University within three years after graduation from high school.
   - Select the Agricultural Education teaching option as your OSU college major.
   - Forward a copy of the first semester OSU transcript, showing a 2.5 or higher GPA, to the Executive Director of the Oklahoma FFA Foundation. A $1,000 scholarship check will be mailed directly to the participant.
6. If the one hour of college credit becomes available, participants will work directly with their OSU Agricultural Education advisor during the first semester enrollment process.
7. Must be willing to write thank-you notes to the Academy and Scholarship sponsors. Names and addresses will be provided.

Sponsors

The $1,000 scholarships are sponsored by:
Chesapeake Energy Corporation
Oklahoma FFA Alumni Association
Oklahoma Steel and Wire

Facilitators, counselors, housing, meals, on-site transportation, conference materials, and shirt sponsored by:
Farm Credit Associations of Oklahoma
Oklahoma FFA Association
College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma Department of CareerTech
Agricultural Education Division, Oklahoma Department of CareerTech
Oklahoma FFA Alumni Association

On-site coordination, facilitator training, program content, and delivery sponsored by:
Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership,
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University

Application

Available on line at www.okffa.org. Click on Scholarships.

First Name_____ Last Name _____ MI _____

Home Address_____

City _____ ZIP Code _____

Cell Phone_____ Home Phone _____ Email _____

Parent or Guardian _____

Age _____ Year in School ❑ Sophomore ❑ Junior (Check one)

Home FFA Chapter _____

Home FFA Advisor(s)_____

Hometown Newspaper _____

Provide all that apply: High School GPA and Class Rank_____ / _____

Pre-ACT Score _____ ACT Score _____ SAT Score_____

My preferred polo style shirt size is (please circle):

Male: S — M — L — XL — 2XL Female: S — M — L — XL — 2XL

A. Please check all of the following that you agree to:

- ❑ Yes, I understand by applying for acceptance to the Academy, I am exhibiting a sincere desire and strong intentions of pursuing a career as a high school Agricultural Education teacher and FFA advisor.
- ❑ Yes, I understand if selected for the Academy, I must be willing to attend all five days of the Academy at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater on the date established.
- ❑ Yes, I understand if selected for the Academy, I will be recognized on stage at the upcoming state FFA convention in Oklahoma City.
- ❑ Yes, I understand if selected for the Academy, I will be expected to write thank-you notes to the appropriate sponsors.
- ❑ Yes, I understand if I participate in the Academy, I will be required to meet admission standards for enrollment at Oklahoma State University and that I must enroll at OSU majoring in the Agricultural Education teaching option within three years after graduation from high school to be eligible for the $1,000 Academy Scholarship Program.
- ❑ Yes, I understand if I participate in the Academy, I must submit a copy of my first semester OSU transcript showing a 2.5 or higher GPA to the executive director of the Oklahoma FFA Foundation to receive a $500 scholarship check mailed directly to me. Once I have been admitted to OSU ag ed student teaching, I must submit a signed note from the director of OSU ag ed student teaching to the executive director of the Oklahoma FFA Foundation to receive my final $500 scholarship check mailed directly to me. *(The split scholarship checks begins with the 2014 Academy class.)*

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B. Briefly explain in the space provided why you are strongly considering the Agricultural Education teaching profession as your number one career choice.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. List your top five Non-Competitive FFA Leadership Activities, including but not limited to, MFE, WLC, COLT, Alumni Camp, State Convention, National Convention, Workshops, Committees and Community Involvement. List each activity only once.

1. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
2. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
3. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
4. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
5. _____ Year(s) achieved_____

D. List your top five Competitive FFA Activities, including but not limited to, Fairs and Shows, Career Development Events, Proficiency Awards, Chapter Offices, and Star Awards.

1. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
2. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
3. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
4. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
5. _____ Year(s) achieved_____

B. Briefly explain in the space provided why you are strongly considering the Agricultural Education teaching profession as your number one career choice.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. List your top five Non-Competitive FFA Leadership Activities, including but not limited to, MFE, WLC, COLT, Alumni Camp, State Convention, National Convention, Workshops, Committees and Community Involvement. List each activity only once.

1. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
2. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
3. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
4. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
5. _____ Year(s) achieved_____

D. List your top five Competitive FFA Activities, including but not limited to, Fairs and Shows, Career Development Events, Proficiency Awards, Chapter Offices, and Star Awards.

1. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
2. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
3. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
4. _____ Year(s) achieved_____
5. _____ Year(s) achieved_____

VITA

Ashley Seamon Whiddon

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE SHARED EXPERIENCES OF SELF-IDENTIFIED FUTURE AGRICULUTRAL EDUCATION TEACHERS REGARDING SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2015.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Agricultural Leadership at the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia in 2010.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education at the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia in 2010.

Experience:

Graduate Teaching and Research Associate, Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, & Leadership, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma; Secondary Agricultural Education Instructor, Veterans High School, Kathleen, Georgia; Secondary Agricultural Education Instructor, Houston County High School, Warner Robins, Georgia.

Professional Memberships:

American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE)
National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)
American Evaluators Association (AEA)
Association of Leadership Educators (ALE)
Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association (GVATA)