

# **Gender Differences in Addressing Critical Needs of the Texas Agricultural Leadership Curriculum**

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## **Introduction**

Texas employed 1,539 secondary agricultural science teachers as of October 2003 (Texas Education Agency). More than half of those teachers are male. Additionally, about 50 of the 1,539 teachers are females who serve as the sole agricultural science instructor or agriculture department head. Due to this difference in gender, researchers conducted a study to find significant differences in agricultural leadership curriculum of male and female Texas agricultural science teachers. Finding and isolating differences in areas of curriculum encourages action to correct problems and inconsistencies in Texas agricultural leadership curriculum.

## **Methodology**

The target population included all secondary agricultural science teachers in Texas for the 2001-2002 school year. The researcher used systematic random sampling techniques and sent questionnaires to 285 agricultural science teachers. The researcher received responses from 124 educators resulting in a return rate of 43.5%.

The sample population received a questionnaire titled "Leadership Education in Agriculture," created by the researchers. The questionnaire, presented in a booklet form, asked teachers to rate both the importance and depth of coverage of certain aspects of agricultural leadership curriculum. Subjects covered in the questionnaire included areas of personal development, career preparation, and communication skills.

## **Results**

Of the 124 responses received, male teachers accounted for 83.06% (n=103) of the responses, and females made up 13.71% (n=17) responses. Additionally, 4 respondents chose not to report their gender. Males taught high school agriculture an average of 11.6 years. They ranged in age from 23 to 57 years old with an average age of 36.9 years old. Females taught high school agriculture an average of 14.8 years. Their ages ranged from 24 to 55 years old and showed an average age of 39.3.

The instrument revealed significant correlations in the importance and depth of coverage of current high school leadership curriculum based on the gender of the teacher. Female teachers ranked personal and group goal setting, personality profiles, and identification and use of influence tactics significantly higher and more important than males did.

Females and males differed in their views on depth of coverage as females scored the following items higher: appropriate work habits; speech preparation and delivery; creating a personal vision statement; practicing good listening skills; and personality profiles.

### **Conclusions**

When teaching leadership curriculum, females believed personal and group goal setting, personality profiles, and identification and use of influence tactics serve as important subjects, whereas men did not. Females also cover appropriate work habits, speech preparation and delivery, creating a personal vision statement, practicing good listening skills, and personality profiles in greater depth than males.

### **Recommendations**

The results of the study show the differences in importance and depth of coverage of certain curriculum criteria might be better suited to females rather than males. Changing the Texas agricultural leadership curriculum might bring males females to the same levels in the curriculum areas of significant differences found in the results section. Leadership curriculum training for educators serves as another possible solution to correct the differences by increasing the importance and depth of coverage of the areas with significant differences. The Texas FFA Organization's new leadership curriculum might solve these problems as well pending its public release and subsequent review.

### **References**

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