

Using Visual Ethnography to Frame Student Perceptions of Agricultural Leadership, Communication, and Education during a Study-Away Experience

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Understanding Leadership, Communication, and Education Through Experiential Travel



01. Introduction

- Domestic study-away = underexplored but accessible form of experiential learning (Northfell & Edgar, 2014).
- Helps students connect leadership, communication, and education concepts to real contexts.
- Visual ethnography offers a lens for reflection and meaning-making.

02. Theoretical Framework

- Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984).
- Visual Ethnography (Pink, 2008): photos + narratives as "visual texts."
- SWOT Analysis (Gurel & Tat, 2017) to interpret themes.



03. Methodology

- **Participants:** 12 senior-level ag education students.
- **Context:** 5-day travel course in Texas (ag organizations, stock show, extension office).
- **Data:** 100+ student photographs + reflection essays.
- **Analysis:** Photo coding + thematic analysis of reflections (Creswell, 2014)..

04. Results/Findings

Leadership:

- Observed as relational and community-driven.
- Mentorship and workforce development valued at professional organizations.
- Youth leadership at stock shows highlighted identity and agency building.

Communication:

- Direct: Policy messaging, organizational outreach.
- Contextual: Nonverbal cues, signage, tone, hospitality shaped impressions.

Education:

- Delivery occurred across formal, non-formal, and informal settings.
- Urban agricultural magnet schools and Extension programming broadened students' views of agricultural education.
- Overall: Students critically compared experiences in Texas with their home contexts, identifying transferable lessons.

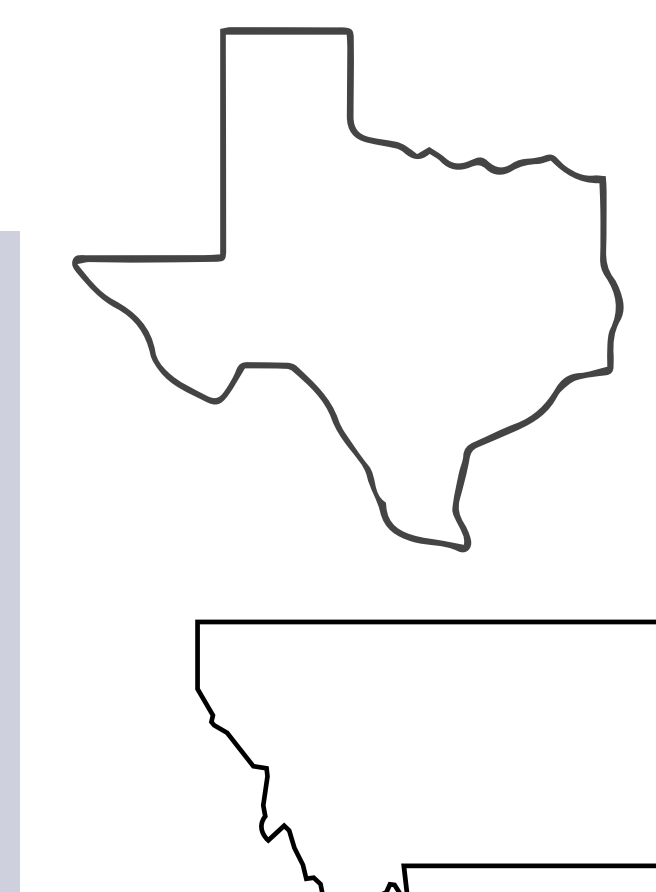


05. Conclusions

- Domestic study-away programs provide powerful, accessible alternatives to international experiences.
- Visual ethnography paired with structured reflection fosters critical thinking, cultural awareness, and professional growth.
- Students gained transferable insights in leadership, communication, and education that prepare them for adaptive, place-based leadership roles in agricultural education.

06. Implications/Recommendations for the Future

- Pair travel with structured reflection (photos, coding, narratives).
- Visual ethnography supports assessment + learner empowerment.
- Extend research: pre/post measures, domestic vs. international comparison.



References

Creswell, 2014 • Gurel & Tat, 2017 • Kolb, 1984 • Northfell & Edgar, 2014 • Pink, 2008