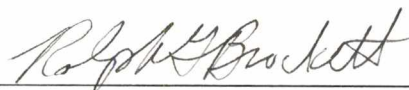


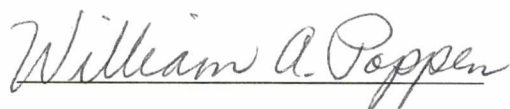
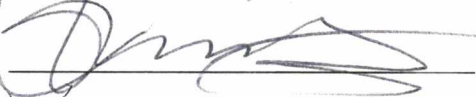
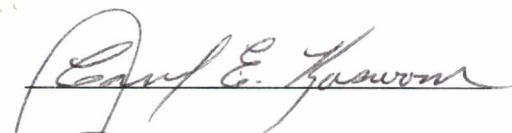
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Loida C. Velázquez entitled *Migrant Adults' Perceptions of Schooling, Learning, and Education*. I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Technological and Adult Education.



Dr. Ralph G. Brockett, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

**MIGRANT ADULTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
SCHOOLING, LEARNING, AND EDUCATION**

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Loida C. Velázquez

December 1993

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband
Luis E. Velázquez
who with love and understanding encouraged me to study
and to excel.

Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to the completion of my research and to the writing of this dissertation. I would like first to thank the migrant community of a rural area in Western North Carolina who welcomed me. I will treasure forever the friendships that developed with many of the community members and study participants.

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The love, support, and assistance of my family were the sustaining factor through the research and writing process. Heartfelt thanks go to my husband Luis, who came home to an empty house for many days while I was at the research site. To my sons Luis Jr. and Loren, who provided the jokes when I needed to relax and laugh the most. To my daughter Laura, who many times provided the right word or the right spelling. And to my daughter Liana, who is the artist behind the figures and tables of this manuscript.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe the context, activities, and beliefs of migrant adults. I studied a Hispanic migrant community in a rural area of a Southern state in order to discover how the migrancy experience frames adults' perceptions concerning schooling, learning, and education and how these perceptions, in turn, shape participation in education programs. The intent was to collect rich and descriptive data about the beliefs, practices, artifacts, and behaviors of this group of people and from this description generate the complex interactions of factors that shape migrant adults' participation in adult basic education programs.

In the study, I described the migrant community at the site using the voices of the migrant adults and community members interviewed. I used ethnographic methods of qualitative data collection because they are the most suitable to analytic description of intact cultural scenes and groups. The data collected provided a profile of Hispanic migrant workers and a description of the migrant community at the research site. The responses of the migrant adults interviewed about past schooling experiences described a lack of congruency between the home and school cultures. School was seen as a meaningless and painful place, incongruent with home lifestyle and values. Since migrant children adopt adult roles at an early age, as soon as schooling seemed no longer valid for achieving a better future, they dropped out of school. However, learning was valued and an attempt was made to return as adults to education as a means of improving employability. These first attempts

to participate in adult basic education programs were not successful. The programs were not sensitive to migrant adults' educational needs and revived strong and negative recollection of schooling. An attempt to return to education was successful only when the experience became untangled from past schooling perceptions. Finding a program specially designed to meet the needs of migrant adults assisted in gaining a more positive view of schooling, learning, and education.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are made for holistic and transformative research and programmatic activities with migrant adults and other adult basic education populations. The type of research recommended focuses on past schooling experiences, cultural and historical background, and values and beliefs of the targeted population as a means for planning adult basic education programs that facilitate empowerment and social change.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Statement of Need

Migrant farmworkers have been labeled the most disadvantaged of all minority groups. An invisible group to most of society, they are, by definition, families on the move with little time to establish community ties (Ford, 1988). They live in isolation even when in high- density areas. When they stop to work on local farms, they are hardly noticed by most community members (Prewitt-Diaz, Trotter, & Rivera, 1990). For the most part, their needs, problems, dreams, and aspirations are kept hidden and go unmet and unfulfilled.

Migrants are the most undereducated major sub-group in the United States. Their high school dropout rate is larger than any other group: 43 percent according to the National Council of La Raza (1990). Mobility, language, and cultural differences experienced as they move from one community to another combined with health and nutritional problems to have a negative effect on school achievement. The constant interruption of the educational process, as well as the inability of schools to understand their culture and meet their needs, lead to confusion, frustration, and a feeling of alienation among migrants. This feeling of alienation in turn becomes a major factor in the incidence of migrant students dropping out of school, according to some researchers (Brewer & Richards, 1988). Hodgkinson (1985) reports that over 70 percent of all migrants have not completed high school and 75 percent are functionally illiterate.

For the purpose of this study, migrant workers are defined as those persons who are agricultural laborers and who travel within the geographical boundaries of the continental

United States and Canada in pursuit of employment. These migrant workers move along three identifiable streams: the Eastern stream, the Mid-Continent stream, and the West Coast stream (King-Stoops, 1980). The Eastern stream is made up of Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Anglos, Canadian Indians, and Blacks, and flows mostly up and down the region east of the Appalachian mountains. The Mid-Continent stream, composed of Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Blacks, and most recently Vietnamese and Cambodians, traces the Mississippi river basin. These migrants move in all directions to and from different regions in Texas. The West Coast stream is the largest movement, extending from California and Arizona to Oregon and Washington. This stream is comprised primarily of documented and undocumented Mexicans, Central Americans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and other Western Pacific immigrants. Figure 1 shows the traditional pattern of migration of farmworkers through the nation.

For decades the economic health of this nation has depended on steady streams of migrant workers moving through our farmland, yet we know very little about who they are, what their lives are like, or what their needs are. The migrant population has remained virtually untouched and is seldom the topic of articles or the subject of research. A search of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) literature reveals very little about the migrant adult. Educators interested in planning programs to reach this particular segment of the population find scarce information giving insight into the educational needs of migrant adults. Most of what we have learned about the educational needs of migrant adults comes from research and

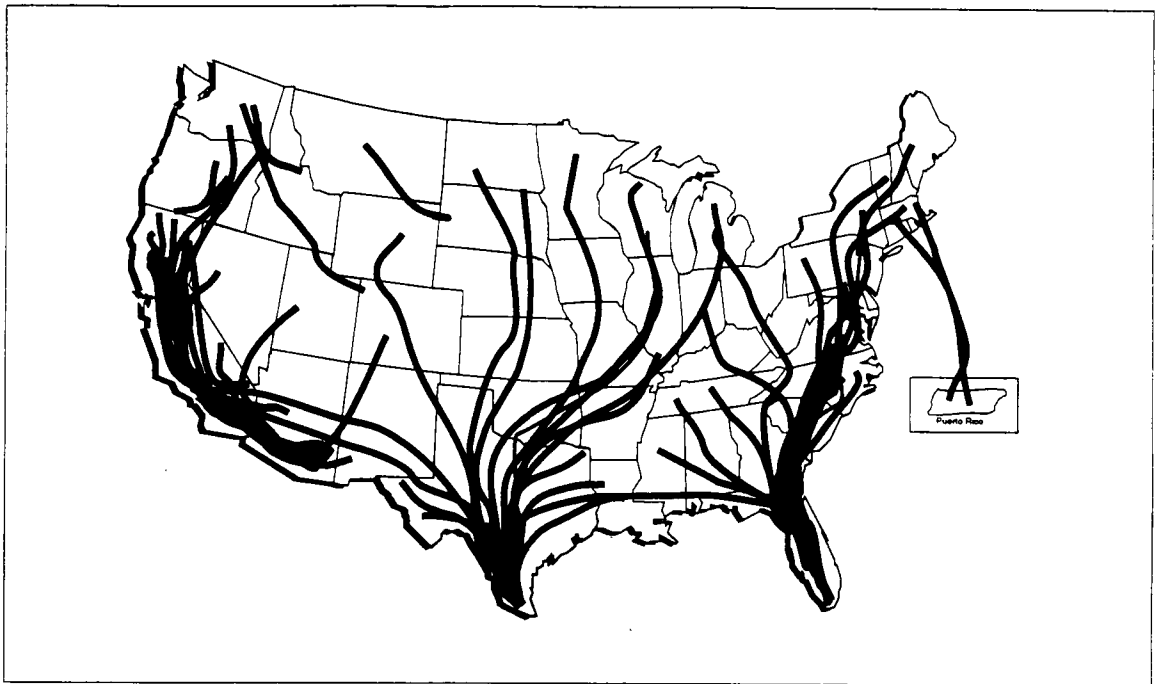


Figure 1: Traditional Pattern of Migration

Source: Pruett-Diaz, J. O. Trotter, R. T. & Rivera, V. A. (1990). *The effects of migration on children: An ethnographic study*. State College, PA: Centro de Estudios Sobre la Migración. p. 8.

articles on the educational needs of migrant youth. Research articles on migrant student dropout rates and dropout prevention provide information on potential ABE program participants (Cranston-Gingas & Anderson, 1986; Apicella, 1985; Nelken and Gallo, 1978; Riley, 1985; Springstead, 1981). An ethnographic study by Prewitt-Diaz, et al. (1990), although intended to provide the necessary information to improve the identification and recruitment of migrant children for state school systems, also gives us some insight into the educational needs of migrant adults. Yet there is still a vacuum in the adult education literature on how to best meet the educational needs of this sector of the population. Such a concern guides this research and the research question.

The ethnographic study conducted by Prewitt-Diaz, et al. (1990) suggested the existence of what they called "the culture of migrancy." As the ethnographers analyzed the data collected, a picture began to emerge of a culture that had often not been written about or studied. According to the authors, migrants come from different countries, cultures, and geographical areas but have developed common beliefs, values, norms, customs, and knowledge symbols. These behavior patterns recurred throughout the three streams and were reported independently by the ethnographers as occurring among the people interviewed. The existence of a culture of migrancy gives boundary to the proposed research study and will be discussed more fully in another section of this dissertation.

The problem my research study intended to address was the lack of information about migrant farmworkers as learners—a cultural group with the highest school dropout rate plus a very low rate of participation in Adult Basic Education programs. To address the problem, I explored their early schooling, education, and family support for learning. The study provided insight into the culture of migrancy and its impact on migrant adults' participation in ABE programs. The knowledge gained can assist in planning ABE programs that are sensitive to the cultural distinctness of this group and will respond to their particular needs. In addition, the documentation the study provides on a migrant community perceptions will serve as a data base for further research and future theory development

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the context, activities, and beliefs of migrant adults. The intent was to collect rich and descriptive data about the beliefs, practices, artifacts, and behaviors of this group of people and from this description generate the complex interaction of factors that shape migrant adults' participation in adult basic education. I expected that the data collected would provide enough documentation to answer the following research questions:

- 1. How does the migrancy experience frame adults' perceptions concerning schooling, learning, and education?*
- 2. What common beliefs, values, norms and experiences are shared by the migrant community residing at the study site?*
- 3. What common elements are found in the educational life histories of the main participants?*
- 4. What are the migrant adults' perceptions on participation in adult basic education programs?*
- 5. How does the study of a migrant community contribute to the knowledge base on the educational needs of minority groups and possibly open new doors to future research?*

Significance of the Study

Cassara (1990) recently asked adult educators to take a new look at what she called "an old issue": the educational needs of minority ethnic groups. The growing number of immigrants joining United States society demands the provision of programs that meet those

needs. Becoming knowledgeable about the educational needs of ethnic minorities can assist adult educators in providing for those needs through effective programming and can also influence national policy affecting the social, economic, and political future of minority groups.

Most of the emerging adult education literature supporting a new focus on minority groups has abandoned the "melting pot" concept and supports cultural pluralism. The melting pot is an assimilationist perspective based on the belief that immigrant groups lose the value orientations of their native culture and integrate or assimilate into those of the host society by the second or third generation (Sojostrom, 1988). A different position is that of a pluralistic model, whereby systems in general and cultures in particular are constantly undergoing change, thus having a constant impact on each other. Cultural pluralism is based on the belief in equality of opportunity for all people, respect for human dignity, and the conviction that no single pattern of living is good for everyone (Pai, 1990). According to Pai, the demand for cultural pluralism stems from the belief that it is intrinsic to democracy. The emphasis is on seeing cultural differences as differences, not deficits. If democracy is founded on the belief in the intrinsic worth of individuals as intelligent human beings, then a democratic society is necessarily pluralistic-culturally, politically, intellectually, and socially.

The recognition of North America as a culturally pluralistic society has resulted in the demand by some groups for education that is multicultural in nature. Others vehemently oppose multicultural education. Multicultural education is defined as the process by which

individuals can learn to live in a progressively effective way by acquiring cognitive understandings and significant experiences of a wide range of cultural patterns (Pai, 1990). "Helping adults construe experience in a way in which they may more clearly understand the reasons for their problems and understand the options open to them [through critical understanding of their own culture and the cultures of others], so that they may assume responsibility for decision making, is the essence of {multicultural} education" (Mezirow, as rephrased by Pai, 1990, p.26).

As adult education turns to cultural pluralism and multicultural education in order to respond to the needs of ethnic minority groups, it is imperative that those needs become part of the agenda of adult education research. Ross-Gordon (1989) recommended taking a concentrated look at a single racial or ethnic group. Migrant adults, as a separate culture and as members of ethnic groups, need to become part of that research agenda if adult education is in any way going to serve their needs.

This ethnographic study explored the educational needs of migrant adults by focusing on the way they perceive learning, schooling, and education. Prewitt-Diaz, et al. (1990) have suggested the existence of a culture of migrancy; that is, that migrants have a unique way of composing, understanding, and living their lives. My research study examined the uniqueness of migrant perceptions. It is my expectation that as a result of this study we will have a better understanding of the culture of migrancy and of migrants' particular educational needs. As a Hispanic who migrated from my native Puerto Rico in search for

better opportunities in the mainland, and as an adult educator who daily searches for better ways to serve the migrant population, I am deeply interested in awakening interest and making this group part of the field's research agenda. It is my hope that this study will be significant to the field of adult basic education by providing a better understanding of the culture of migrancy and the shared beliefs, values, norms, and experiences that frame their perceptions; by clarifying the learning patterns and educational needs of this particular social group; by giving a new perspective to the issue of participation in Adult Basic Education programs; and by adding to the understanding of socially marginalized groups.

Assumptions

This study was based on four assumptions:

1. Migrant workers share common beliefs, values, norms, customs, and knowledge symbols that can be identified and form the culture of migrancy.
2. Migrant adults' perceptions of schooling, learning, and education are unique and shaped by their experiences as migrants.
3. Migrant adults' perceptions of schooling, learning, and education influence their participation/non-participation of Adult Basic Education programs.
4. Qualitative research methods are the most appropriate in the study of migrant adults' perceptions of schooling, learning, and education because they best provide a holistic view of the phenomena. Qualitative research is more suitable to analytic description of intact

cultural scenes and groups. It allows the researcher to generate from these descriptions the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behavior toward the beliefs or the phenomena (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The scarcity of information on the culture of migrancy makes it difficult to use valiative or comparative research methods.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the perspectives gained by using ethnographic research methods at a single migrant adult community in North Carolina. I collected data from migrant adults until a data saturation point was reached; that is, until continuous data analysis revealed a regularity of themes emerging. A site was selected and the main informants were interviewed and observed for a six-month period.

The original intent was to study migrants as a culture formed by different ethnic groups. Once the research study began, I discovered the migrant community at the site was formed mostly by Hispanic migrants. Due to the large number of Hispanic migrants in the area, most of the study participants were of Hispanic origin.

Definitions

The following definitions indicate the usage that specific terms have for the purpose of this study.

Culture

The term culture encompasses all the learned customs, beliefs, values, knowledge, artifacts, and symbols that are constantly communicated among a set of people who share a common way of life (Light, Keller, and Calhoun, 1989).

Migrant Farmworkers

Agricultural laborers who travel within the geographical boundaries of the continental United States and Canada in search of employment.

Schooling

The social process by which members of a society, particularly youth, acquire norms, values, and specific skills by participating in formal educational institutions (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990).

Learning

Knowledge and skills acquired by intuition, study, or experience.

Education

The specific, structured form of socialization in which cultural knowledge, skills, and values are formally transmitted from one generation to another.

Adult Basic Education

Programs created as a response to the Adult Education Act of 1966 to provide training in reading, language, math, and writing for adults who are 16 years or older and who have officially dropped out of school. State education departments distribute the funds to local school districts and community agencies to provide Basic Skills, General Educational Development (GED) test preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Culture of Migrancy

The beliefs, values, norms, customs, and knowledge symbols common to agricultural workers who travel within the geographical boundaries of the continental United States and Canada (Prewitt-Diaz, et al. 1990).

Outline of the Dissertation

Part I of this dissertation served as an introduction to the study. In Part II, I will discuss the research methods used. In Part III, I will describe the social context for the study, the research setting, and the local migrant community. In Part IV, I will present the ethnographic profiles of nine study participants. Part V will consist of a model to better understand migrant adults' perceptions concerning schooling, learning, and education. In Part VI, I will discuss the findings and make recommendations to the field of adult education. Part VII will contain my personal reflections on the ethnographic research process. The literature research will be interwoven with the discussion on Parts III through VI.

PART II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Freire (1973) stated that the lack of education, particularly literacy education, is a form of oppression. For him, the role of the educator is to understand and become part of the learner's culture, to stimulate learning in order to "free" or empower the individual. To reach the adult migrant population and to provide programs that would empower them, it is imperative that adult educators learn more about the migrant culture. Qualitative research methods are the most appropriate to the study of the culture of migrancy because they best provide a holistic view of a culture. Ethnographic methods—the type of qualitative research methods used for this study—assist in the analytic description or reconstruction of intact cultural scenes and groups (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). Ethnographic reports recreate the shared beliefs, practices, artifacts, folk knowledge, and behaviors of a group of people (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In Part II, I will describe the research methods and the procedures for data collection used in the present study.

Wener and Schoepfle (1987) indicated that ethnography is the full or partial description of the activities of a group. For the last five years, I have been involved in designing and directing programs for migrant adults. This involvement has awakened in me a deep interest for this particular population group: I spent six months in direct naturalistic observation of migrant adults who reside at the research site; I also spent time interviewing people in the community who have come in contact with the group of participants and are knowledgeable about their customs, habits, and work. I lived with a migrant family for two

weeks, and during that time I assisted the family by helping at a small migrant store they had recently opened. During my visits to migrant homes and programs serving this population, artifacts such as photographs, school records, and participant schoolwork were also collected.

Methods of Data Collection

Three traditional ethnographic methods of data collecting were used: naturalistic participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and focused educational life histories.

Participant Observation

The participant observation phase of the study included my involvement with migrant adults in the performance of normal, daily activities. I worked alongside a migrant store owner while we talked about her experiences as a migrant worker, attended community activities with a migrant family (harvest fair, church, migrant clinic, migrant day care), and observed migrants working in a tomato field. I lived with a migrant family for two weeks and spent six months in intensive contact with the migrant community of Valley View. Most of that time was spent visiting migrant families, "hanging out" at a migrant store, attending church with a migrant family, visiting a migrant clinic, frequenting a greenhouse that employs migrants, visiting ABE and ESL classes for migrant workers, interviewing young migrants who had dropped out of school, and talking to community members and social

service agencies staff. The information collected during this phase of the research served as basis for the description of the migrant community found in Part III of this dissertation. It also provided the context for making decisions on what other members of the Valley View community would be interviewed.

Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews of the main informants were guided by a series of pre-written questions (See Appendix I), but these questions were open-ended to allow the participants to freely express their perceptions. Each interview lasted an average of two hours. In some cases where I felt the need to further address certain topics, I met twice with the same participant. The second interview was usually shorter and more focused than the first. The interviews were audiotaped after receiving participants' approval. The answers received from the initial questions assisted in the development of more focused questions. I found that it was easy for me as a Hispanic to establish rapport with the participants and I felt free to explore interesting and promising topics brought by the dialogue. I interviewed as many migrant adults as was necessary to reach a sense of integration of the data and until the emergence of regularity of categories was noticed. A total of 27 migrant adults were interviewed. Nine of the migrant adults interviewed were selected for the focused life histories that form the profiles in Part IV of this dissertation.

Focused Educational Life Histories

A focused life history is a record in each participant's own words. The focus of the life histories elicited from the site residents was their educational experiences. Study participants provided the opportunity to ask questions that covered broad topics and also were open-ended. In the first part of the interviews, I asked the participants to provide their earliest recollections about learning and schooling activities, both in formal and informal settings. Data collected through semi-structured interviews, life history interviews, and informal conversation with the main informants were supplemented by the collection of written schoolwork, school records, and interviews with the staff from the following social and educational programs: the migrant health clinic, the Farmworkers Organization (a non-profit organization assisting migrants), migrant Head Start, the Department of Labor, the local Housing Authority and the High School Equivalency Program (HEP).

Focused life history accounts were very valuable because they revealed the events each informant considered crucial to his or her educational development. They also provided a context that helped in the interpretation of beliefs, attitudes, and current behaviors (Prewitt-Diaz et al., 1990). My observations, active participation in activities with participants, and the audiotaped interviews elicited enough information to enable me to prepare a profile of nine of the participants that focused on his or her educational life history. The nine students profiled in Part IV of this study were selected because they were migrant adults who had made Valley View their place of residency (at least for the moment) and because they were also

eager to talk about their educational background. Since the research participants were very mobile migrant adults, at times I found that a person I had selected for further interviewing had left town with no plans to return in the immediate future.

Validity and Reliability

Research validity refers to how one's findings match reality. According to Merriam (1988), the validity of an ethnographic study must be assessed in terms of interpreting the researcher's experience rather than in terms of reality itself. To ensure that my research was a valid representation of the experience of migrant adults, I took my data interpretation back to the participants and asked them if my results were plausible.

Reliability refers to the extent to which one's findings can be replicated. Merriam (1988) stated that the term reliability in the traditional sense is a misnomer when applied to qualitative research. Instead, she recommends terms such as "dependability" or "consistency" of the results obtained from the data. Bogdan and Biklen (1982), stated that qualitative researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their data and tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study rather than the literal consistency across different observations. According to them, two studies of the same setting may have different types of data and produce different findings and be reliable. Only if they yield contradictory or incompatible results will the reliability be questioned.

To enhance the validity and the reliability of my study, I have provided a detailed description of my role and status within the group studied, a careful description of the participants, a clear description of the context within which the data was collected, a clear definition of concepts used, and a detailed description of data collection and analysis.

Triangulation, the use of multiple methods to collect data, has also enhanced the validity and reliability of my research (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). The combined effect of observations at the research site, open-ended interviews of informants and community members, and the collection of physical evidence have all provided a reliable picture of the culture of migrancy at the studied site. This was verified by presenting the findings back to the participants.

An added way of enhancing validity and reliability accessible to qualitative researchers is to allow other researchers to listen to the data and to ask for feedback. During the last year I have been part of a group of faculty and students who meet to share research concerns and experiences and to provide each other with ideas such as how to improve individual research activities and present an objective view of the data analysis. I have continued to meet with this qualitative research support group and have taken advantage of the feedback offered by its members.

Setting and Initial Entry

The site was a migrant residence area housing farmworkers in a small town in North Carolina. Valley View, along with most of Western North Carolina, was originally the land of the Cherokee. The town traces its beginnings to 1787 when the first white settlers arrived in the area. The land is fertile and the town is surrounded by apple groves and produce farms. Nestled against the Smoky Mountains and surrounded by numerous lakes, Valley View's town government is very interested in attracting tourists, but farming is still the main source of income for its residents. A recent survey by the Department of Labor reported 350 apple- and 250 vegetable- growers in the four counties surrounding the town. These growers depend on the availability of farmhands to harvest their produce.

Main Street is Valley View's business and commercial area. The street was recently renovated by adding a brick sidewalk and planting trees along both sides of the street. Antique and curio stores attract vacationers visiting the Smoky Mountains and give life to the town. North of Main Street is the town residential area. Most of the houses are surrounded by tall trees and well-tended gardens. South of Main Street are two large car dealerships. To the south of the car dealerships are several trailer parks. Some of the farmers provide housing to the migrant workers within the farms, but most migrants coming to Valley View live in the trailer areas. These trailer parks became the site for my study.

The family with whom I lived for two weeks and who became my main informants for the next six months lives in this area. Their house faces the street and three rows of trailers

in the back of the house face a ravine. The owner of the house is a migrant crew leader and the people renting the trailers are part of his crew. He is a certified crew leader registered with the Department of Labor and travels to Mexico and Texas at least once a year to secure his crew. Most of his crew comes from Mexico, but some are Mexican-Americans born in Texas.

Entrance to the site was facilitated by my work responsibility as director of a program for migrant adults. I regularly visited the town selected as research site; I shopped at the local migrant store and ate at the Mexican restaurants frequented by migrants. In addition, I had already established contacts within the migrant community living at the research site. The network of contacts I had already established was used to facilitate entry into the community and to secure interview participants. Although I had a supervisory role, only the staff members at the HEP project and the social agencies I interface with were aware of my position. As a very outgoing person, my previous contacts with the local Hispanic migrant community were mostly social in character and as a fellow Hispanic community member.

As a Hispanic and a person who migrated from Puerto Rico in search for better education and employment opportunities, I am identified in some migrant circles as one of the group. My ability to speak the two languages most often used by the migrants living in Valley View—English and Spanish—had facilitated my past contact with this population. Previous research experiences with the culture of migrancy had already given me the opportunity to establish rapport with the community and with potential key informants. Still, I had never lived within the area and was hesitant about asking to be allowed to spend time

living with a migrant family.

During the winter of 1992, I conducted a pilot study for this research project under the supervision of Dr. Kathleen deMarrais. The main participant in the pilot study was a young mother who had graduated from the program I administer for the University of Tennessee. She is a former migrant worker who dropped out of school in the tenth grade. The pilot study tells her story as a third-generation Mexican-American whose grandparents and parents worked as migrants through the Central migrant stream. After dropping out of school, she married a migrant worker and followed the migrant life pattern with him down the Eastern migrant stream. Six years ago, this couple decided to establish residence in Valley View, attracted by the availability of work for farmworkers. Her husband is now a crew leader for a local farm owner and their life has become more stable. They are a very enterprising couple and recently opened the only store catering exclusively to the migrant community. When I mentioned my interest in living with a family in the community, the wife immediately invited me to stay with them and became my main informant.

Before entry, I contacted the North Carolina's state coordinator for the program for migrant adults I supervise for the University of Tennessee. The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) is a federally funded grant earmarked to serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers who have dropped out of school before completing mandatory education. The University of Tennessee HEP serves migrants in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Besides writing the grant proposal, my responsibility is to supervise the daily

operation of the programs through the four states. In order to perform my duties, I regularly visit the programs and spend time in the communities. I selected the North Carolina town as the site for my study because I was intrigued by the high visibility of the migrants in the area. My literature review had indicated that most migrant workers try to keep a low profile while in the communities because of the prejudice and rejection they normally experience from the non-migrant community. Nevertheless, during my visits to the area, I had observed an increased awareness by social agencies of the presence of the migrants and a higher visibility than in any other of the states where we had programs. My observations convinced me that the study was feasible and that finding participants was not going to be difficult because of this heightened visibility.

The Participants

The focus of the study was a migrant community in an agricultural town of North Carolina. The community was studied using the case study strategy of research design and ethnographic methods of data collection. Case studies is the preferred strategy when “how” and “why” questions are being posed, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary phenomena within a real-life context (Yin, 1989). The form of case studies used, the community study, focuses on a neighborhood or community to gain a complete picture of a social group. Migrants as a social group have become a noticeable force in this community during the last ten years, attracting the attention of the

local media and of businesses. Their visibility in the community facilitated the study. Community members were aware of the migrants presence and were able to give me an opinion when asked.

Since the migrant community in the area is mostly of Hispanic background, when I started to look for possible participants I was almost always referred to Hispanic community members. This kind of referral came from both the migrant and the non-migrant community.

The Hispanic migrant community I found at the site was formed by two groups. The largest of these two groups has a home base outside of North Carolina and migrates to the area to work during the apple and vegetables harvests. They come in early April and leave by late October. The second group resides in the area and, although smaller in size, is a fast-growing group. The two groups are formed mostly by Mexican or Mexican-American migrant workers. Most are legal residents who have turned to migrant farmwork because they have been unable to find a more stable type of work.

The information used in the study came from two types of participants: the migrant farmworkers and local community members who are, by virtue of their work, in constant contact with the migrant community. During my stay at the site, I came in contact with 27 migrant farmworkers. These contacts were of different duration and at different settings. Some were informal conversations and others were semi-structured interviews. From the migrants that I met during informal conversations, ten agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews, and I asked them to be the main participants of the study. However,

Constanza, one of the ten who agreed to participate of the semi-structured interviews, moved out of the area shortly after we talked for the first time. The nine main participants included seven Mexican or Mexican-American: four females and three males; one black male; and one Anglo female. The nine participants are profiled in Part IV of the study. The first names used for the profiles and through the ethnographic report are pseudonyms and not the actual names of the participants.

The second group of participants was formed by Valley View community members employed by programs and services that come in contact with the migrant population. Their participation took the form of formal interviews that were audiotaped, transcribed, and used to describe the site and the migrant community at the site. A total of 15 community members were interviewed. Three of the community people interviewed were employees at the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Security office; two worked at the migrant clinic; three were ABE instructors and counselors; and two other were staff members at the migrant Head Start program. The DOL staff interviews assisted in the verification and clarification of the migrant typology found on Part III. I also interviewed the director of the Housing Authority office, a Baptist pastor, two farm owners, and a social worker for the Human Services office. I often visited the local Farmworkers Organization office for clarification on some of the demographic data collected and interviewed two of their staff members. The data collected from these interviews served as basis for the description of the setting and the Valley View community's interaction with the migrant community that is found in Part III.

When I requested the program coordinator to help me find a participant for the pilot project, he suggested a recent graduate from the program who was becoming a recognized leader of the local migrant community. He reminded me that I had briefly interviewed this young woman while doing field work on the housing needs of migrants the previous summer. I immediately phoned her and made plans to visit the area for a few days and spend time talking to her. The results of the pilot study were presented as a project for an ethnographic research course taught by Dr. Kathleen deMarrais. Based on this pilot project, I decided to expand the focus and proceed with the current investigation.

Once the dissertation proposal was approved, I contacted this participant, asked her to be my main informant, and to introduce me to the migrant community. Since I had been involved with a migrant program during the previous four years, I was not totally unknown to the community. Yet, migrants are, by definition, a very mobile group of people and the migrant community is constantly changing. I needed her assistance with those who did not know me. She agreed and we made plans for future visits.

The Data Collection and Analysis Process

During the six months of data collection, I made 24 visits to the site. During one of those visits I stayed at the main informant's home for two weeks. That visit proved to be very valuable for data collection. Every morning I accompanied Luz, my main informant, to the migrant Head Start program where her two children received day care. This gave me the

opportunity to meet other young mothers and to schedule future interviews. During the day I helped Luz at her store where I met other members of the Hispanic migrant community. Her place of business is a Mexican general store that caters to the Hispanic migrant community. She taught me to use the cash register and gave me the task of reshelving the Spanish videotapes she rents as they were returned. Between clients, we talked about her life as a migrant and about the problems encountered by other members of the migrant community. Since she was the chairperson for the Hispanic participation at the apple festival, I was able to observe the interaction of those who came to talk about the plans for the occasion. In the evenings I helped in the food preparation, read to the children, and talked to her husband who is a migrant crew leader. He provided most of the information about the migrant typology found in this study. His crew, formed in part by relatives he brought from Mexico, is housed in trailers located in the back of the house. Eventually I had the opportunity to meet some of them, and one of these migrants accompanied me to visit a tomato field.

The data collected from the migrant adults came from two types of data collection activities: informal conversations and semi-structured interviews. Most of the my contacts with members of the migrant community were informal conversations held at the store or at the home of the main informant. I had constructed an interview schedule that I used to guide the inquiry in the semi-structured interviews. However, for this type of contact I felt free to follow the flow of the conversations, using my questions only when I felt that the conversation was dying or the topic was ambiguous. I always had my tape recorder at hand,

and some of these informal conversations were audiotaped. At the end of the day, I would listen to the tapes and take notes of important data on my research journal. The semi-structured interviews were conducted at either the home of the participant or at a side room at the migrant adult basic education program. These interviews were audiotaped and focused on the educational life history of nine migrant adults. They formed the body of the main participant profiles found in Part IV of this report. I also spent a day with a local farm owner and observed the workers at this and other farms. I visited the church most frequented by the migrant community and talked informally to the church pastor and some of the migrant parishioners.

I spent six months in close contact with the research participants. I lived with a migrant family, visited other participants' homes, and observed them during routine daily activities to learn about their behaviors and cultural patterns. During my time with migrant families, a dialogue was established that elicited the necessary information on their experiences as migrants, their educational life history, their earliest recollection about schooling, how they felt about education, and the type of learning experienced after leaving formal education.

The information was collected in a non-threatening way. I made efforts to clarify my intentions to the participants and to provide an atmosphere that minimized the perception of risk. I discussed with the participants the potential for benefit, stemming from the act of reflecting and responding to my inquiries and for gaining a better understanding of their own decision-making process. Anonymity was guaranteed; fictitious names were used for the profiles and interview notes. Audiotapes and all documentation were safely stored in a

locked file at the Bureau of Education Research Annex Building. The University of Tennessee guidelines governing the use of human subjects were strictly followed.

Field Notes

During the pilot study that gave birth to this research, I discovered that this particular population does not respond well when notes are taken during the course of a conversation. It was during that stage that I started to find ways to record observations and ideas between my contacts with migrants. I kept three types of field notes while at the site. The most simple type consisted of abbreviated entries made when alone and between contacts with the population. These notes consisted of observations, names, and reminders that I later used to reconstruct the day and make appointments. These notes were kept in a small notebook that I carried inside my purse.

The second kind of field notes were expanded daily entries in my research journal. At the end of the day, I would reconstruct the day's events, describe the people I had met, expand on my observations recorded in the small notebook, and make notes while listening to the taped interviews. My observations during the pilot phase had warned me against any device that would intrude into the normal flow of conversation during the participant observation phase of the study. I carried my tape recorder at all times, but only used it when I felt it was appropriate. The journal information was recorded on a thick notebook designed for this type of entry.

The third type of field notes was kept on a large sketch pad. I bought the pad with the intention to use it exclusively for drawings. I brought along a camera to take pictures, but I was afraid to use it since I did not include it in the consent form signed by the participants. I intended to make a sketch whenever I felt the camera would be considered too intrusive. While doing a sketch of the area known in the community as a place where migrants wait for jobs, I began to also organize my observations on the sketch pad. The size of the pad gave me room to draw arrows and connect large pieces of information. From then on, I kept the pad at hand to devise data organization patterns. I found it very useful to design tables and figures that became my first steps of data analysis.

Data Analysis

At the end of each contact with the site community, I searched the data to develop a coding system. This first contact with the information collected assisted me in devising a tentative coding schema that divided the data in two types: data that documented the existence of a migrant community at the site and data that provided information on the educational experiences of migrant adults. This early contact with the data not only assisted in its organization and storage but also served to improve the interview schedule and to find areas that needed further probing.

The data analysis process began the first day of data collection. Very early in the process, I discovered two types of data that necessitated different treatment and organiza-

tional schemes. The data documenting the existence of a migrant community in Valley View came from both migrant and non-migrant sources and had historical and demographic quality. This ethnographic data served as the basis for Part III and described how migrants reach the site, how are they organized, and how they have an impact in the community.

The data collected from the main participants, adult migrants who were willing to participate of semi-structured interviews, were organized in the form of profiles. These profiles are focused educational life histories consisting of information and events the participants believed to be crucial to their educational development. The profiles provided the context that helped in the interpretation of beliefs, attitudes, and current behaviors as they relate to migrant adults' educational decisions. I collected enough information on the educational life histories of the participants to be able to provide some insight into why migrants join the migrant culture and the events that structure their educational decisions. The data collected were analyzed as it related to key events, themes, and processes in the migrants' lives. At the end of each data collection activity, I went through my extended notes and the taped interviews in search for themes, event, and processes. I then constructed two types of matrices. One type was a summary matrix that organized the data by source and two cells: information about the migrant community and information about participants' educational experiences. The second was a focused matrix that organized the data by source and three cells: information related to schooling experiences, learning outside school, and the use of the term "education."

Early on during the data analysis process, I discovered that in Spanish there is not an equivalent term for the word schooling. In the interviews conducted in Spanish I used the term *educación* that literally translates to education. I stopped using the term when one of the older research participants corrected me by saying, *But education is what is received at home*. Realizing that the term had a different connotation for older and less-schooled participants, I began to use the term they used, "*la escuela*", that translated into "the school" in English but describes more than the physical facility and is the closest to the term 'schooling'.

After sufficient information was collected and the same topics began to appear with regularity giving a sense of integration of data, I searched these matrices further for themes, commonly held beliefs, similarities of behavior, and common ways of expressing ideas among the migrants in the community. Once these themes and patterns were identified, I prepared a description of the migrant community. I tried to use actual quotes from migrants and community members to describe the local culture of migrancy. My intention was to paint a picture that was faithful to the description given by participants with very little interpretation or outside influence. In order to verify my findings, I presented this description back to the study participants for confirmation. From the information on the schooling, learning, and education matrix, I searched for themes describing migrants perceptions related to those topics. I also presented this information back to four of the study participants and to the staff of the High School Equivalency Program at Valley View. When I felt confident that these themes and patterns found were a true representation of the migrant community at the site,

I turned to the related literature for interpretation and analysis.

Bias Statement

As the administrator of an adult basic education program for migrant adults, I have a personal and professional interest in learning more about this segment of the population. As a Hispanic, I am also interested in promoting the fair and just treatment of Hispanics as members of a minority group. As a Hispanic woman, I feel the moral responsibility for contributing to the improvement in the quality of life of my Hispanic sisters. As a researcher using ethnographic methods, I was an instrument of data collection and analysis. To help me in this process of recognizing and understanding my own biases related to this project, I had a colleague assist me by doing a bracketing interview. Bracketing is a concept associated with qualitative research. The object is to create awareness of any personal or ideological position held by the researcher that could interfere with the research process. I also continually presented data to my key participant and other colleagues and attended a qualitative research support group at the University of Tennessee. I will further discuss my personal experiences on this topic in part VII of the ethnographic report.

In this section, I have described the research design, the research strategy, and the methods of data collection and data analysis. Validity and reliability were discussed as they apply to qualitative research. In the following section, I will describe the social context and setting for the study. It contains a description of Valley View's migrant community and its impact on the larger community.

PART III

MIGRANTS IN VALLEY VIEW: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Social Context for the Study

In the preceding section, I described the research methodology used in this investigation. In the next three parts, I will provide a description of the study setting, a profile of the main participants, and a discussion of the major research findings. The setting and the migrant community will be described using the words of those who talked with me during the study. The intention is to paint a picture, to allow the words to tell the story, with very little interpretation or analysis added at this point. For the participant profiles in Part IV, I have used the same style. Fictitious names are used to protect confidentiality. The findings will be discussed in Part V. They will be presented as the participants stated or implied perceptions of schooling, learning, and education. After extracting what I considered were the participants' perception I will turn to the adult education literature for analysis and understanding.

Migrants are, by definition, people, usually on the move with little time to establish community contacts and, thus, are hardly noticed by most community members. The need to harvest a crop creates the demand for farmworkers. When that crop is harvested, the typical migrant worker packs up his or her family and possessions and moves on to find new work. Lacking adequate education, and without advocates to protect their rights, migrant workers accept jobs that offer no benefits other than hourly wage or by-bushel pay. Migrants are paid an average of \$4.80 an hour or 40 cents for each bushel harvested (Kissam & Griffith, 1990). They do not receive retirement pension or have a hospitalization plan. They are seasonal agricultural workers who follow the crops and harvests across the United States and Canada

with scarce legal protection or advocacy.

According to King-Stoops (1980), the first real migrant movement began after the Civil War when freed slaves fled north and were hired to do agricultural work. As the season changed, they would move with the crops, taking with them family and relatives. Migrancy became a way of life for them. All family members, children included, participated in the harvest. Children followed the migrant footsteps of their fathers, generation after generation.

During the decade of the 1920s, thousands of acres had to be cleared from ragweed and cockleburs in the Southwestern states. The cotton was moving west across Texas, through New Mexico and Arizona to the coast, and had to be hand-shoed and harvested. Since very few people knew how to clear these brush areas, Mexican workers were recruited. The term in Spanish used by these workers to refer to the brush country —*brasada*— eventually was used to describe those who cleared the brush: *braceros* according to Alford (1972). Because of the closeness of the term to the Spanish word for arms, *brazos*, many have traced the origin of the noun to the word *brazos*. The origin of the word notwithstanding, the term *braceros* is often used in the literature previous to the 1960s to describe migrant workers recruited from Mexico and the Caribbean islands.

The main reason this group of agricultural workers move from farm to farm is to find work and improve their economic situation. They may have a home base to return to after the harvest or they may not. Prewitt Diaz, et al. (1990) found that, contrary to the media stereotype, most migrant workers are U.S. citizens. Undocumented workers represent only 15 percent of all migrants (National Agricultural Worker Survey, 1989). ' Green card

workers' is a term used to identify those who migrate annually from Mexico to the United States to participate in the citrus and grape harvest. The Department of Labor program is also identified by the term 'H2.A' workers. The number of green card holders varies from year to year and is controlled by the Department of Labor.

Sub-categories of Migrant Populations

Prewitt-Diaz, et al. (1990), have divided the migrant population into several subcategories by ethnic background. The early migrant farm workers on the West Coast were Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Mexicans. A second group was composed of blacks on the East Coast. The third group were Spanish-speaking migrants from Puerto Rico and Texas. This latter group moved into the midsection of the country. By 1966, there were migrants moving through the Eastern migrant stream from each of the ethno-linguistic groups discussed below.

Blacks

In the first decade of this century, blacks, primarily from Florida, moved to the Northeast. The predominant place of their resettlement was New York State. Later blacks from other Southern states moved to industrial centers in the North. During the 1930s, the cultivation of winter vegetables attracted black workers from other Southern states to Florida (Young, 1968). Migrant blacks became a significant part of the farm labor force in the South.

Years later, this work force moved to the Northern states. The pattern continues today, although a marked decrease of black migrant workers has been noted.

Mexican-Americans

Mexican-American migrants are predominantly from Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California. The Mexican-Americans comprise the largest group of Hispanics in the United States. There are approximately 13 million Mexican-Americans. No reasonable estimate exists of the percentage of Mexican-Americans who are migrants. However, the Department of Education reports that about 60 percent of all migrant children accounted for by the educational system are Mexican-American.

Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans comprise the second largest Hispanic group in the United States. Their migration to the mainland began after World War II and constitutes the first airborne migration to the United States. They settled primarily in the Northeastern states, as well as in Illinois and Michigan.

Anglos

About 20 percent of migrant farmworkers are Anglo of European extraction. They are located predominantly in Northern states (e.g., Washington, Idaho, Montana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Maine). This population works primarily on dairy farms or crop

production farms.

The Prewitt-Diaz et al. research study (1990) does not mention Appalachian white migrants. However, the site of my research study is within the Eastern stream, which includes the Appalachian mountain area. Many natives of the Appalachian mountain area migrate through the states comprising Appalachia. The ABE program serving the migrant workers in the North Carolina community studied listed this group as targeted for services. Although Asian and Asian-American migrants are very common in the Western migrant stream, they are not common in the studied area of the Eastern migrant stream.

Social and Educational Background of Migrants

Although migrant workers share a lifestyle and behavioral patterns, migrant groups differ in social and educational backgrounds. While many Asian and Hispanic-American migrants have some knowledge of English, some recently arrived immigrants are not literate even in their own language. For some, illiteracy is a result of their social and economic status; for others, illiteracy stems from the disruption in education caused by recent moves or political turmoil (Prewitt-Diaz, et al, 1990). Some migrants come from areas with no written language or where there is a strong oral tradition of language learning (Khmer, Hmong, and Haitians, among other groups).

Migrancy as a Culture

A culture is broadly defined as the set of distinctive modes or ways of behaving that are shared by a group. Migrant lifestyles revolve around working, moving on to find other work, and working again. The activities involved in this process have created behavioral patterns that Prewitt-Diaz, et al. (1990) have called "the culture of migrancy." These behavioral patterns were observed throughout the three streams and reported independently by the ethnographers as occurring among people from different ethno-cultural backgrounds (1990 p. 117). Hintz (1981) studied a community of migrant workers in Ohio and described the migrant culture as follows:

Migrant workers have a strong sense of family loyalty; respect for elderly persons; politeness; the children do not tease or 'kid' an adult. They have pride for what they are and their heritage; maintain faith with the family and their religion. Migrant workers do not strive to obtain higher salaries and do not want more than they need. They consider their employers, and anglos generally, as 'greedy', not satisfied, always wanting more. The migrant family stands firm in its values. They feel that diplomacy and tactfulness are very important in communicating with others.

They are not demanding or aggressive towards agencies or employers. They are not likely to exert violent actions politically (p. 13).

The ethnographic study by Prewitt-Diaz, et al. focused on migrant children, but in the process opened a window into migrant families and their shared behavior patterns. Some of the patterns mentioned in the Prewitt-Diaz study are described in the following paragraphs.

Gender Roles

Although differences were found along ethnic lines, in most cases, women are expected to work in the fields and do household chores. Men and children are usually exempt from household responsibilities.

Marriage at a young age is common for migrants and is even more prevalent among female migrants. For most migrants, especially females, marriage signals the end of schooling. A few young men stay in school; women commonly do not. With marriage comes the assumption of adult roles for both sexes. In most migrant families, enormous pressure exists for the males to support the family and for females to have children. These complementary roles help young migrant couples to survive but severely limit the chances for educational success and advancement.

Adult/Child Roles

Although all cultures differentiate between adult roles and children's behavior, the age at which children begin to adopt adult roles is different for different cultures. In many migrant families, boys begin to be treated as adults when, at age fifteen or sixteen, they can earn as much in the fields as their fathers. Girls start being treated as adults when they are capable of having children and managing a household. The difference between the role expectations of migrant families and those of the dominant society has serious consequences for educational programs. Most migrant children drop out of school when they are able to work in the fields and earn money. Migrant parents allow their children to make the decision

between dropping out of or staying in school.

Dealing with Social Institutions

Educational, health care, and social service agencies are created to facilitate living in a complex society. One of the functions of culture is to teach how to best use the system of agencies. Migrants, especially those who come from a different linguistic and cultural background, are at a serious disadvantage because they do not understand the system. Some migrants strive to be independent and take pride in meeting their family needs; others suffer in silence because they do not know who could help them in times of trouble.

Powerlessness and the Migrant Cycle

The cycle of migrancy is very hard to break, and many migrants feel trapped with little hope for a better future for their children. This feeling of powerlessness is sometimes misinterpreted as apathy by educational agencies. Although migrant parents express support for education for their children, they also feel that migrancy is the fate for them regardless of anything they say or do.

Attitude Toward Authority

Migrants have a generally positive attitude toward authority, especially toward the schools. However, this attitude is occasionally expressed in a way that is culturally confusing to school personnel. Migrants trust the schools to know what is right for their children and feel that their questions about the appropriateness of their children's educational program

will be construed as a challenge to the teacher's authority and prestige. The institution with which migrants most often interact is the school; paradoxically, the migrant lifestyle is the greatest impediment to their children's educational success.

One of the recommendations made by Prewitt-Diaz, et al. (1990) to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Migrant Education as a result of their research was for a study to further define and explore the characteristics and consequences of the "culture of migrancy." The present study, as originally proposed, intended to focus on the migrant population residing in a small, rural community of North Carolina. The intention of the study was to explore and further define the characteristics of this culture of migrancy as they apply to migrant adults' perceptions of schooling, learning, and education. Once the site was selected, I discovered that the migrant population of the town was largely Hispanic. Consequently, the migrant community studied was mostly Hispanic in origin.

The Setting: Valley View

Valley View is a town of about 70,000 inhabitants. Surrounded by majestic mountains and located on a scenic plateau 2200 feet above sea level, the town lies cradled between the Smoky and Blue Ridge Mountains. Its economic base consists of a mix of industry, agriculture, tourism, and retirement. As the winter chill leaves the area, a blanket of wildflowers and orchards full of apple blossoms welcome spring. Spring also brings a large number of migrant workers who picked oranges in Florida during the winter. From

mid-April through November, the farmers of the area depend almost exclusively on migrants for the cultivation, maintenance, and harvest of their crops.

Migrants in Valley View

A Department of Labor (DOL) staff member describes the community reliance on migrant workers and their makeup this way:

The number of migrants needed and used in Valley View probably hasn't changed in the last 24 years. The activities that they are doing have changed; the ethnic background has changed. Years ago this was a large vegetable growing county: they grew beans and potatoes, just a lot of ground crops. At that time the ethnic make-up of migrant crews were predominantly black, probably 75 percent were black and I would say the other 25 percent were White or Hispanic, and I doubt if 10 percent were Hispanic. Also the group make-up at that time was different; they were predominantly single males traveling in old school buses, traveling in crews... 25 to 50 years old or more in crews using farm labor contractor -type deals.

As an administrator of an ABE program serving migrant adults, I was attracted to this community by the growing influx of migrant adults. As a researcher, I became intrigued by the visibility of the Hispanic migrant population throughout the community. Most of the literature describes migrants as an invisible population, but the migrants in this community were becoming very visible. When I inquired about the changes observed by the DOL staff member on the ethnic make-up of the migrant population, he further explained:

It's kind of a slow evolution. I guess. I would say for the last eight to ten years we've almost done a complete flip-flop in ethnic make up of migrants, where now we are running around 75 percent Hispanic and possibly 80

percent, with the remainder being equally balanced between blacks and whites. Probably what is most noticeable is that we no longer have our migrants traveling in all-male crew situations. Hispanics are coming in with their families, which increases the number of a migrant population in a community, but it doesn't necessary change the workers that we need. Their presence is more noticeable, so you do have a number of non-working people in a group or crew, which would naturally impact on a community.

.A typical family would consist primarily of eight to ten people with two or three workers. Quite often you would have at least one or two elderly persons (a mother or grandmother) and four to six children, but in a typical family of 10 you are looking at maybe two kids that may be old enough to work.

The Migrant Community

When the University of Tennessee came to this community to assess the need for a High School Equivalency Program for migrant workers, a social worker for one of the local social agencies said: "To find the migrants in this community, you need to go to D Avenue."

D Avenue is a street intersecting one of the town's main entrances. The D Avenue area is illustrated by the map in Figure 2. Located less than a mile from a major highway, railroad tracks separate D Avenue from the heart of the Valley View township. Old buildings, dilapidated houses, a public housing project, and an abandoned gas station are to the south of railroad tracks. Some of the old buildings are now used to house programs for the homeless and the unemployed. During harvest time, farmers who need workers will drive their trucks down D street between 5:00 and 6:00 a. m. Those workers without a work contract will gather early in the morning at the gas station to be picked up and transported to the fields. For the rest of the day, D street is populated mostly by drug addicts and alcoholics, according to a migrant worker interviewed for this research study:

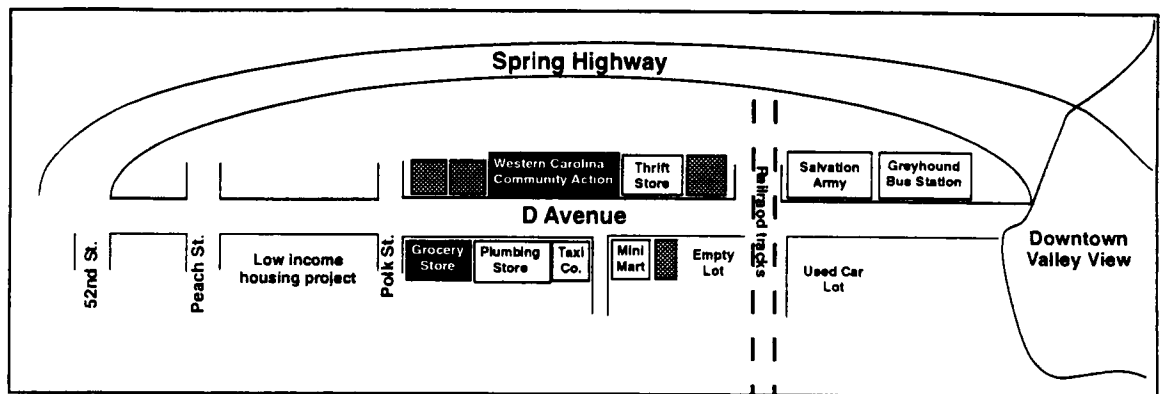


Figure 2: D Avenue Map

These individuals hanging around D avenue give a bad reputation to the migrant worker but very few are really migrants. The town people will never see the migrant that comes to D avenue because they are not up and around that early in the morning.

Reasons for Hispanic Migrant Workers Settling in Valley View

Many Hispanic families who traveled to Valley View as migrant workers are now staying after the growing season is over and making a home in the area. The 1990 census showed a 26 percent increase from the 1980 figure of Hispanics in the state. Yet the consensus is that Hispanics were drastically undercounted because of their mobility, language barriers, and legal status. Experts suggest that the increase in Hispanic population is due to changing immigration laws, the desire to be around other family members, and the hopes for a better life (Wagoner, *Citizen Times*, August 2, 1992). A Valley View resident working with the local Farmworkers Organization views it differently, believing that migrants stay in the area because they are treated better than in other places:

Let me give you another angle to think about. This is just my own idea and it will take you back, all the way back to the slavery days. Along the coast you had plantations. The owner of the plantation did not associate with the workers. He was always having an overseer to go out and tell them what to do. It's having a relationship; there really wasn't a relationship between the workers and the plantation owner. Up here in the mountains, though, we were just little farmers and I work my farm and you helped me and I helped you. To this day you will find people here who wouldn't say people are working for them,;they say they are helping me. Their attitudes are different and they come from their ancestors. Say you are working for me. I would, in my mind, consider you a helper, not an employee. That's one of the reasons I think you have a totally different attitude here toward migrants than you have on the coast. I don't think you will find anyone in the mountains put in a converted hog lot, as you will along the coast. I mean they'll throw a piece of tin over a wooden fence and say that's where you're going to sleep. I don't think you'll find that up here in the mountains.

A farmowner explains the reliance on Hispanic workers this way:

Those workers are vital to the apple and summer produce business. If Mexicans had not filled the niche formerly worked by blacks and students, you would not eat.

Another farm owner expressed her appreciation in this way:

Migrant labor is extremely important to our business, and we are grateful to the workers who harvest our crops.

But former migrants who have settled in Valley View do not support the romantic notion of acceptance or the satisfaction that comes with feeling needed. A young mother told me:

All this moving is tiresome. All I want is to save enough money to buy me a home and I know there is steady work here.

Another former migrant explains it this way:

When we came to Valley View, the trees were turning. It was so beautiful. But I had to fight the butterflies in my stomach. I had to fight the prejudice...The "bolillos" (white anglos) would stare at me when I spoke Spanish. We were looking for a more stable situation. When we came here the year before, we found plenty of work opportunities. My husband was asked to help find workers; I was pregnant and tired of moving around and we talked about coming back for good, but I knew it was not going to be easy. I knew we were going to be looked at as outsiders.

Another migrant is more specific when asked about what attract Hispanics to the area:

Work. In Texas I was working at a restaurant, and I had been there for three years at \$3.35/hr. I came to North Carolina and my first job was \$5.00/hr. That was a big difference for me.

I have a brother who came first. He kept calling me and calling me. Telling me to come and how beautiful it was over here. How easy it was to find work and that there were a lot of Chicanos here. My mom came first, and she called and said she was not coming back. She only returned to get my oldest sister who has five children. Two months later I came, and after two more months we went and got one of my younger sisters.

When directly questioned about the friendliness of the community toward the Hispanic population, a young woman responded:

Some are and some aren't; it depends. I think a lot of them (like the older folks) see you're Spanish and think you don't speak English and they freak out and won't talk to you. Then when you end up speaking it, they like freak out. They go lik.e...oh you speak good English. It is always that line.

Migrants come to Valley View because the area is a rich agricultural farming area. They come looking for work. The availability of work has created the necessary conditions to offer these migrants the opportunity for stable work. For this reason, many migrants have decided to establish residency here or to make this stop in the Eastern migrant stream their regular stop during the harvest months. The local farmers now rely on this regular source of farmhands. The community at large, aware of this reliance, is making the necessary adjustment in attitude and opinion to accommodate the growing migrant community.

Sources of controversy

The Valley View community seems to be opening up to the Hispanic population in their midst. Still, it is not without a measure of controversy (see the section on housing discussed later on for what I called "the migrant housing fiasco"). A social worker responded to an article recently published by the local paper (Wooldrige, *News-Times*, February 28, 1993) about the noted increase in the number of Hispanic migrants:

Black migrants don't come to Valley View's counties as much as they did in the past because they were discriminated against by residents and apple growers. Migrant workers of Mexican origin are treated much better than were black people. There are still a few migrants here from Jamaica and Haiti, but most blacks won't touch the apple crop. They were mistreated by people who control housing here and by the growers themselves.

The director of the Valley View Employment Security Office objects to the notion that the increase in the Hispanic population is related to the mistreatment of Black migrants

and explains it as a normal process of life improvement:

Migrants move out of their status when they get better jobs. Those who have been trying longer are probably the ones who moved out first. This may explain the decline in whites and blacks.

The pastor for the First Hispanic Baptist Church believes that the number of Hispanics leaving the migrant stream and settling down in Valley View has increased because of their commitment to their children:

Hispanics believe life here is better and that it will get better still. In their hearts and minds, they've committed themselves to make another life. They are looking for better opportunities for their children.

A health educator in the migrant health clinic echoes this belief:

They personify the American work ethic. They do not expect handouts. They are trying to make life better for themselves and their children.

The major reason for the increase in the Hispanic population in the area given by the Division of Statistics of the Department of Labor is the changes in the Immigration Act of 1986. The act provided for amnesty and the opportunity to become citizens for Hispanics who were illegal aliens and regular members of migrant crews moving through the Eastern stream. Many former migrants felt free to leave the migrant stream once they became citizens. Valley View offered them the opportunity for jobs in the field they knew best: agriculture. Many are still working the fields while looking for better employment

opportunities; other are abandoning farm worker altogether. Others have learned the business side of farming and are becoming involved with farming in other ways that will be explained later.

Housing in Valley View

Housing is the greatest problem facing migrant workers coming to this area. The regulations applied to housing inside the camps do not protect the migrants living outside the farms. Many crew leaders try to save money by housing several families together. Increasingly, migrants coming to Valley View are opting for finding their own housing, but the community has very little to offer that the migrant can afford.

The person who drove me to my first visit to a migrant housing area has been a long-time resident of Valley View and commented:

Trailer parks like these are all over town. They appear overnight and become a sore.

The migrants are attracted to the trailer parks because the rent is low and, in some instances, a signed lease is not required. Two or more families might rent a unit by pooling together their resources. Since Hispanic migrants typically travel as extended families, two or more generations of the same family might live together in one unit. The trailers are cramped close to each other to accommodate more units and to better utilize the land. They are located close to the farms and away from the residential and business areas.

The Migrant Housing Project

On Thanksgiving Day of 1961, Edward R. Murrow presented a television documentary entitled "Harvest of Shame." The documentary exposed the viewers to the poor and unsanitary conditions under which migrants were living across the nation's farmland. This documentary made a great impact, ruining the Thanksgiving celebration for some and awakening the desire to do something to correct the situation in others. The most significant impact of the documentary resulted in several pieces of legislation directed toward improving the plight of migrants. These policies have given birth to programs such as migrant health clinics, migrant Head Start, Farmworkers' Opportunities organizations -a division of Migrant Education within the US. Department of Education-and the Farmers Home Administration, among others.

One of the services offered by the Farmers Home Administration is in the form of grants to communities interested in building better housing in farming areas. In 1988, the United Way office of Valley View conducted a needs assessment study and discovered that the residents of the area identified housing as the second-highest priority of needs in the county (treatment of drug abuse was number one). As a result of the needs assessment, local agencies and churches banded together to find a possible solution to the housing problem. The group became incorporated into an organization known as the Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC). As a non-profit organization, HAC was allowed to apply for funds to

build a housing project (Velázquez, 1990).

During 1989 the corporation polled the directors of social service agencies for recommendations to correct the housing problem in the community. The two areas of major concern centered on the agricultural workers and the owners of old homes. The next task for HAC was to find a source of funding for a housing project. Encouraged by farmowners who recently had been forced to improve or close the facilities used to house the fruit and vegetable pickers, HAC turned to the Farmers Home Administration. The federal housing program had funds earmarked to assist in farmworker housing projects. The grant amounted to \$3,095,000 but only 40 percent of the 90 proposed units were required to be assigned for "transient farmworkers" (the term used by the agency to refer to migrant workers); the rest was to be for local residents involved in farming. When the news of the project reached the community, the Apple Hill Project (the name given by HAC to the project), became the "migrant housing project." The local paper was inundated with letters against the migrant housing project. The following paragraph came from a letter to the editor of a local paper:

Wake up and listen to your local people who have the voting power. I would venture to say that there are not more than 50 Hispanics in the county with voting power, but there are over 2,000 residents who have signed petitions in opposition to this complex who have the voting power to make themselves felt in the polls. Candidates, have you forgotten your constituents in Valley View?

I investigated the migrant housing project as a field research assignment. In an interview with the HAC director, she noted:

I never imagined this was going to divide the community. People call me and ask why I am doing this to them. I have done nothing to them. All I want is

to help the community to provide better housing to everybody.

Although a housing project for farmworkers was seen by the organizers as benefiting the community, Valley View community did not see the project that way. Their reaction was indicative of the community feelings toward its migrant population. The project was never built. A landowner who was willing to sell his land for the project changed his mind when it became the "migrant housing project." HAC had to return the grant to the funding agency and in the process lost the money invested in the architectural design needed to apply for funding. Although the corporation tried to take the landowner to court, it eventually had to drop the suit and try to rescue its reputation within the community.

The Apple Hill Project was supposed to alleviate the housing problem in a community with over 600 growers; yet there was little input from farmers and none from migrant workers in the planning of the project. A former migrant worker, now a resident of Valley View said:

Don't take me wrong. Their hearts were in the right place. They had a beautiful plan, but it backfired because we were left out. Not only that, we looked like fools because when the public hearings were held we were not prepared to defend ourselves, to express our opinion on the matter

The director of a program that assists migrant workers coming to the area said:

I cannot tell you how it all started because I was not invited to participate in the planning. I found out about it from the newspaper, like everybody else.

Most growers welcomed the idea since earlier in the year they had gone to the state capital to protest the Health Department's new migrant housing regulations; but when the town meeting was held only a handful of supporters attended. The memories of this meeting

are still very painful for a migrant clinic staff member who attended with several migrant families:

They asked me to bring them to the meeting (referring to the migrant families). When we arrived, the area was divided by two signs on the wall assigning sitting facilities to "in favor" and "against" (the project). It was very embarrassing because there were only a handful of people on the "in favor" side and the other side was full of people. People stared at us and a few said nasty things to the migrants. I felt sorry for the migrants that went with me.

Signs of Accommodation

In spite of the problems such as those mentioned above, migrants continue to come to Valley View, and the community is showing signs of trying to accommodate their presence. One of the larger supermarkets in the Southeastern region is catering to the migrants by stocking Mexican products and placing Spanish signs inside the store. Other signs of accommodation have become more visible after the housing fiasco. For example, one of the main informants for this research study sent a letter to the local newspaper presenting the migrant perspective. She is a high school dropout who completed the High School Equivalency Program and has since opened a Mexican products store. Her letter attracted the news media, and she was quickly made the spokesperson for the migrant community. Now she sits on several community advisory committees and for two years in a row has organized the migrant participation in the local harvest parade.

The most recent example of the way local residents and Hispanic migrants have begun to live in apparent harmony occurred during the 1993 Cultural International Awareness Week. As part of the celebration, the Hispanic migrant community together with a group of

local people interested in learning more about this group planned and hosted the *Gracias Amigos Fiesta* (the Thank You Friend Party). It was intended to be a gesture of appreciation from both groups: to the migrants for their contribution in the harvest and to the local community for the job opportunities provided to the migrants. Both groups worked side by side in the planning and execution of the activity that consisted of the sharing of food, music, and speeches. A Mexican-American migrant worker described the fiesta in this way:

Because of the people who organized the fiesta, we were able to (have) fellowship, laugh, and have a great time, and also to show those who attended that we are not people to be feared and that our language is unique. But perhaps most important of all, that our laughter, along with our children's is universal. Never mind that some of us do not understand you. All you have to do to show your friendship is to smile.

Working in Valley View

The Crew Leader System

Most migrant workers coming to Valley View do not frequent D Avenue. They reach the area as part of a crew recruited by a crew leader. The crew leader is most likely a former migrant worker who has established a good reputation with the local farm owners and who has been certified by the Department of Labor. Certification starts with an application submitted to the appropriate DOL office. The application is reviewed and accepted or rejected by a panel of DOL staff at its Tallahassee office. There is no charge for certification, but the applicants must produce verification of transportation insurance. The most difficult

and costly requirement for the crew leader is the insurance necessary to transport the migrant workers.

Since most of the migrant workers coming to Valley View are Hispanics, the majority of the crew leaders are Hispanic also. I was given the names of two black crew leaders and one of my informants mentioned the name of a female crew leader. When I mentioned the name of this female crew leader in a conversation with a male crew leader, he promptly corrected me:

She is not a crew leader, her husband is. He has been very sick for some time and she has had to help him out.

Crew leaders contract with several farm owners to provide farmhands during the harvest. The crew is recruited, transportation is provided, and housing is secured by the recruiter. The farmer pays the crew leader and by using this system avoids dealing directly with the workers. This type of agreement saves the farmer from having to meet the housing and health regulations recently established by federal and state agencies controlling the housing of migrant workers inside migrant camps.

A Typology of Valley View's Migrant Workers

The stereotyped image of the migrant is that of a poor person who cannot find a more stable job. However, this myth was dispelled for me by one of my main informants. An interview with a migrant crew leader suggested a typology of migrant groups working the

fields in this community. Later interviews with other migrant workers and with the DOL staff provided verification and clarification for the typology. José, the crew leader who became one of my main informants, described six types of migrant groups: *pinteros*, *tomateros*, *contratistas*, *con contrato*, *mojaditos*, and D Avenue migrants. According to him, these groups described the type of migrant who will be found in any agricultural community that depends on a work force other than local farmhands. Table 1 represents a typology of migrant groups coming to Valley View.

The idea of representing the groups of migrant workers as a typology was born from an interview with José, the crew leader and businessperson in whose house I was staying. We were at his store talking between customers' visits. The tape recorder was on and I was also using my sketch pad to take notes. I asked him to tell me how the workers get to Valley View. He answered by explaining the different types of worker coming to the area. As he talked, I started to organize the groups in a pyramid form. He looked at the sketch and said:

You cannot say that the different groups are at different levels. Someone that this year may be part of one group, might belong to another next year. Things change from year to year... This a very unstable business. Your truck might break, you might lose all your money, or you could lose your crew... You could be a crew leader today and a crew member next year.

The typology that developed from the interview represents a fluid and functional organization of migrant groups. The names given to each type came from the migrant workers, but I was able to verify their appropriateness when the DOL staff was able to identify each category.

Table 1: Typology of migrant work at the research site.							
	Description	Ethnic Background	Crop	% at site	Tool of value	Employer	Migrant activity
Pintero	Two or more families buy plants from farmer vegetables and fruits	Hispanic	Mostly tomatoes but increasingly other	30%	Truck	self	cultivate, pick, grade, pack, sell
Tomatero	One family buys tomatoes from farmer	Mostly Hispanic	Tomatoes	15%	Pick-up truck	self	pick, grade, pack, sell
Contratista	Former migrant worker contracts to provide workers	Black/Hispanic Anglo	All	5%	DOL Certification Reputation with farmers	farmer	recruit, oversee, supervise
Con Contratato	A family or single person member of a crew	Hispanic/Black	All	35%	self/family	crew leader	cultivate, pick grade, pack
Mojadito	A single male without work contract	Hispanic	All	10%	self	crew leader/farmer	cultivate, pick grade, pack
D Avenue	A single male occasionally does agricultural work	Black/Hispanic Anglo	All	5%	self	crew leader/farmer	cultivate, pick grade, pack

The Pinteros

José described the migrants coming to Valley View in this way:

We are speaking about two classes of people. One class is what you would call...how do you say it? The collar worker (white collar worker). That is the class of commercial worker. These are businessmen who earn a lot of money. We call them "pinteros" The other is the regular worker who comes and works, nothing more, and does not have money to invest.

Having not heard of the term *pintero* as a description of a migrant worker, I asked a DOL staff about its origins:

We call them pen hookers. It goes back to the cattle auctions. This guy brings his cattle in. He's got them in a pen waiting to be auctioned.... Someone comes by and offers him a deal . Instead of auctioning them, he accepts the deal. He sells them, takes them out of the pen, and puts them in the other guy's truck. What he's done is cut the man in the auction out of his fees. He is hooking them out of the pen. That is where the name pen hookers comes from.

Pintero is not a literal translation to Spanish of the term 'pen hooker' but is how the Hispanic migrants use the term. José further explained the role of the *pintero*:

The pinteros are families who pool their money together and buy a truck. They may be three or four families who travel together and who might have a home base in Florida or Texas. The ones who come here are mostly from Florida. Once they have a truck, they again put their money together and buy let's say 20,000 tomato plants from a farmer at \$1.25 the plant. The farmer owns the land and they used to get the workers and invest all the money for the production. But now he sells the plants to the pintero, puts the money in his pocket, and he is done. The pinteros are the ones taking a risk now. They have to pay for spraying and everything the plant needs. When the tomato is ready, they pick, grade, buy the box, and take it to the market. The farmer

does not have to invest any money. The pintero comes, takes it to the market, and takes the risk. The farmer has wised-up and doesn't risk anything. They plant and sell. From 20,000 plants the farmer sold to the pintero, he has ready made over \$20,000. The pintero comes when it is already planted, buys it, and takes care of production. If the weather is bad or an insect comes and eats it, the pintero will take the loss. The farmer doesn't have to be concerned anymore. But if the tomato grows well and is big, the pintero will do very well. The earnings will depend on the price on the market, but he stands to make good money.

According to my sources, an average of 20 percent of the migrant workers coming to Valley View are *pinteros*. They arrive in late April and leave by November. They come in groups formed by three or four families. Each family will have three or four workers. The working members of a typical family will be a father, a mother, one or two older children, plus one or two uncles and their wives. If there are not enough workers in the group of families, they will hire several migrant workers who arrive without a crew to help in the picking, grading, and boxing of the crop. Tomato is the preferred crop of *pinteros* in this area. In contrast, most of the apple farmers use the crew leader system to harvest their crop.

The Tomatero

The *tomatero* (the tomato man) is also a businessman within the culture of migrancy in Valley View. Unlike the *pintero*, the *tomatero* works by himself with only the assistance of his immediate family. He is normally a Hispanic migrant who has saved enough money working as a farmhand to buy a pickup truck. Instead of working the land, he buys the tomato crop after it has been picked. He deals directly with the farmer to buy the tomatoes. He also

buys from the packing house the boxes in which the fruit is packed. With the help of his wife, children, and sometimes other members of his extended family, he packs the tomatoes and takes the boxes to the market or sells the already filled boxes to the packing house. If he takes the boxes to the market his earnings will be higher than if he sells to the packing house. However, he will run the risk of not selling all of the boxes, or at least not immediately, and the produce might spoil. If he sells to the packing house, his earnings will be less but they will be secured. Approximately 10 percent of the migrants coming to Valley View fit this category.

The Contratista

The *contratista* (crew leader) forms the third layer of businessperson within the culture of migrancy in Valley View. Crew leaders are experienced migrant workers who, after years of traveling the migrant stream, have become familiar with the area. They have earned a good reputation with the farm owners as responsible and trustworthy workers and may have been given the task of overseeing the daily farmwork. However, the stories about abusive and untrustworthy crew leaders abound within the Eastern migrant stream. Several recent television (e.g., CBS "60 Minutes" and PBS) and newspaper exposés of poor living conditions in migrant camps in South Carolina and Florida have focused on the role of the crew leader and portray them as exploiting the trust placed in them by the farmowners, and abusing the migrant worker.

The State, a Columbia, SC, newspaper reported in an August 4, 1991, article:

Jack Simmons spent six years in a federal prison for enslaving migrant farmworkers while he was a crew leader. He's been charged by the federal government for ignoring a judge's order to pay more than \$5,000 to workers who after hours of picking in the hot sun hadn't been paid minimum wage.

He's wanted in South Carolina on a charge that he pistol-whipped a migrant. Other workers accused him of stuffing 14 people into a station wagon and driving them to a farm. He also is accused of operating migrant housing with no heat, refrigerator, stove, or bathroom.

Valley View's *contratistas* are mostly Hispanic since the majority of the workers are Mexican-American, Mexican, and Guatemalan. Since the farms in the area are not as large as in other states, these crew leaders contract with several farm owners to provide them with workers. The *contratista* is responsible for finding the crew of workers, securing housing for them, transporting them to the area and to the fields, and supervising their daily work. The farmer pays the crew leader a lump sum and the crew leader pays the workers. Since some migrant workers are not familiar with the banking system of the area, the crew leader also helps with financial transactions (e.g. money orders, utility payments). The process of becoming an official crew leader starts with an application to the Employment Security Office. The application asks for personal information, size of the crew, housing arrangements, transportation vehicle to be used, names of people contracting for services, and references. There is no charge for the application, but the person has to buy transportation insurance. Insurance for public transportation is very costly and few migrants can afford it.

Con Contrato

The next level of migrant workers in Valley View is formed by the workers that come with a contract. This group is recruited by a crew leader, stays for the duration of the harvest season, and usually has a home base in Florida, Texas, Haiti, or Mexico. Guatemalans with a home base in Florida have lately joined the Eastern migrant stream and come to Valley View for the apple harvest. Workers with a contract travel as single individuals, but many bring their families also. Children are pulled out of school at the home base schools and enrolled in the Valley View system. Since the farming season in the area starts at the end of April and ends in November, the children attend two and sometimes three different school systems in a year.

North Carolina is fourth in the nation in the employment of migrant agricultural workers, after California, Texas, and Florida. In 1992, 90 percent of the state's 33,900 migrant workers were Spanish speakers (Kleist, *Times-News*, February 21, 1993). Another 2,000 were legal immigrants, mostly from Mexico, registered through the Federal Justice Department's H2-A labor program. The H2-A program provides a temporary visa to foreigners to come as crews to provide the labor needed. The number of H2-A workers allowed entrance is calculated by considering the work required and the number of domestic workers available in the region. Guidelines have been established to make sure American citizens are not hurt by the H2-A program. Crew leaders are able to bring workers from Mexico by applying for H2-A labor program status. The wages paid to an H2 worker are also

protected, according to the Valley View Employment Security staff interviewed for this study:

We determine whether a particular farmer can bring in workers based on the prevailing wage for that job in this area. We wouldn't let him bring in H2 workers if he were going to pay less than that.

Mojaditos

Mojaditos is the migrant's Spanish word for what Anglos call 'wetbacks'. Wetback is a pejorative term used by Anglos to describe the Mexican who crosses the border through the Rio Grande River. The form of the word wet (*mojado* in Spanish) used by my informant is in the diminutive, that in Spanish is used to show endearment. In this case, the term is used to refer to a newly arrived migrant who is not part of a crew, a rookie. The number of workers who arrive without a contract has diminished, but is still considerable. They are mostly single males who receive information about the possibility of work in an area from friends and relatives with contracts. The ones coming to Valley View are mostly Hispanics who are legal residents and come from Florida or Texas, but this group also includes many who entered the United States illegally from Mexico or Central America. Many are relatives of people who have settled in the area. Since they do not have a contract, they are the ones found early in the morning at D Avenue waiting for the farm owner who needs extra farmhands to pick the crop. They might work a full day and make up to \$50.00 or \$60.00, but they have to provide their own transportation to town and find their own housing. They do not have a secured job and move from farm to farm. If they cannot find work regularly, they move on to the next town or farming area.

D Avenue Migrants

At times, farm owners have to rely on people who "hang around" D Avenue. Some of these people, according to my informants, might be alcoholics or drug addicts. Others, are recently arrived unemployed males who come to D Avenue looking for employment. D Avenue people become day workers who are hired to finish a specific task that needs urgent attention (e.g., protecting the crops from freezing or picking a crop that is ripening ahead of time). A farmer in need of day workers can come to D Avenue at any time of the day and find someone to hire.

In a male-dominated culture, like the Hispanic culture, it is not surprising to find that *pinteros*, *tomateros* and *contratistas* are mostly male. My male informant quickly dismissed the notion that there was a female crew leader in Valley View when I mentioned a name given to me by a female research participant. Most female migrant workers travel as part of a family unit headed by a male who is either a blood relative (father or brother), husband, or boyfriend.

Farmwork Activity In Valley View

The calendar of migrant activity in North Carolina starts late in March. Table 2 describes the farmwork activity of Valley View' migrants through the year. At the end of the harvest, most migrants go to Florida to pick oranges. Others go to Mexico or Texas to visit relatives and friends. Families with school-age children take them out of school shortly after the start of the school year. The children will be re-enrolled in school once the family

Table 2: Calendar of Migrant Activity in the Valley View Area	
January February March	<i>Migrants go to Florida to pick oranges and return to Valley View area in late March</i>
April	<i>Clean the ground Seeding Set stakes to hold seedlings</i>
May June	<i>Shoot-pruning of vegetables and fruits</i>
July, August September October	<i>Pick vegetables and fruits</i>
November	<i>Picking fruits in NC, seeding vegetables in Florida</i>
December	<i>Some migrants go to home base states for the holidays, others return to Florida for planting of vegetables</i>

has found housing and settled in the new community. The lack of continuity and the constant readjustment to a new school environment is stressful to migrant children and becomes a painful memory for migrant adults.

A Visit to the Fields

Apple orchards abound in Valley View but my visit was early in the summer and the tree pruning was already done. Since there was no farming activity needing migrants in the apple orchards, I visited a tomato field instead. The first thing I noticed were the stained hands. Here the tomato juice is green, not red, and stains the hands of the worker. With each twist and pop of the vine the stain becomes darker. The sap thickens and covers the back of

the hand, along the fingers, and under the fingernails.

The sun is high in the sky and the day is hot and humid. There is order and music in the field. The tomato plants form straight rows, and the workers move quickly in a motion that looks orchestrated to my eyes. The green tomatoes make a sound when they hit the bucket, and the noise gives rhythm to the activity. The pace is fast but melodic.

The women work faster than the men, but a young boy who looks not older than thirteen is the fastest. He quickly fills his bucket, carries it on his shoulder to a truck parked in the middle of the field, throws it down the dumper, and makes a mark on a notebook hanging from the side of the truck. Then he goes back to the next row and starts again to fill his bucket. My informant tells me the boy just made about 40 cents.

A young woman is working on her knees, holding the plastic bucket between them so that she can pull the tomatoes straight into the bucket. The bucket has holes around the bottom to drain the juice coming from the tomatoes. She works one side of the row and another woman who looks older, works the other side. They must not be able to see each other since the vines are thick and around three feet high, but they occasionally talk to each other. Once I heard them laugh.

I look at them and my back aches in sympathetic pain. I can imagine the bucket getting heavier each time they return to the rows. I can see the pace going down a notch with each trip to the truck. This is a group of *pinteros* formed by three families. They work past sundown, painfully aware that their earnings this season depend on how quickly the tomatoes

are taken to the market. Later, one of the workers describes her feelings during the picking:

You think about your fingers, how much they hurt, about how much your back aches. You know that the hands will stay looking almost purple even after washing them several times. After a while you just quit thinking about those things and try to concentrate in filling as many buckets as you can because I know we won't be going home until all the vines are empty.

My informant tells me that if this field were to be picked by a crew instead of a family of *pinteros*, the crew leader would withhold social security and income tax before paying each worker at the week's end. After that would come other subtractions, depending on the arrangement made with the worker: housing, meals, beer, and cigarettes. For this family of *pinteros* there are still several chores before they can count their earnings. The tomatoes need to be graded and packed, then taken to the market to be sold. Since rain is expected tomorrow, they need to finish the field today or they will have to work in the rain.

PART IV

VALLEY VIEW MIGRANTS: ETHNOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Introduction

By using the words of community and migrant study participants, I have tried to describe the setting that serves as the place of residence to the migrant community studied. I will now present the profiles of the nine migrant adults who participated in the focused life history interviews. As with the community description, my main interest is to use the participants' own words to describe how the migrancy experience has shaped their perceptions related to schooling, learning, and education.

During my six months of intensive contact with the migrant population working the fields in the Valley View community, I came in contact with many migrant adults in different settings and under a variety of circumstances. The people whose life histories I have compiled are migrants with whom I had the most contact and who agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews. I asked ten migrant adults for a more in-depth interview, and all but one will be profiled here. One person left town after the first interview and I lost contact with her. Five of the migrants profiled are female and four are male. All are school dropouts. Eight were, at some point, students at a Adult Basic Education program. Six took the General Educational Development (GED) test and passed it while ABE students. Of the other two, one failed the GED but is still planning to retake it; the other was a low reader enrolled in a literacy program but never completed it. The one who never attended adult education only went as far as elementary school in Mexico. Ironically, he is the most successfully employed. He is a migrant crew leader and, with his wife, owns a small store.

A life history is a record, in the informant's own words, of important events in his or her life. Recording a complete life history is very rare because it would be too time consuming for both the participant and the ethnographer to assure that all key events in the informant's life have been recorded. Most ethnographers collect focused life histories: narrations of special events or narrowly defined areas of the informant's life. The focus of the life histories collected for this study was centered around the migrant lifestyle and education opportunities. The participants profiled were selected because, through our informal conversations, they had shown interest in education topics. As migrants, and as people interested in education, I felt that they would be able to assist me in answering the main research question: How does the migrancy experience shape migrant adults' perceptions related to schooling, learning, and education?

Luz

Luz is a second-generation Mexican-American and a third-generation migrant worker. Her grandparents and parents picked cotton along the Central migrant stream. She was born in Austin, Texas, and speaks English and Spanish fluently. She fits the stereotype of a Hispanic woman: long black hair, brown skin, and dark eyes. When I first met her three years ago, she was 27 years old and was expecting her third child. During the past three years, I have seen her make a transformation from a high school dropout, who was very insecure and troubled, into a businesswoman and a migrant spokesperson.

Luz dropped out of school when she was fifteen years old to have a baby. When I asked about her earliest memory of schooling she answered with one word: "pain." She recalls being physically and psychologically abused by her mother, who was an alcoholic. To this day she resents her teachers for not coming to her rescue. She tells me about coming to school black and blue from beatings, with ragged clothes and unkempt hair, and nobody noticed her suffering and poor physical condition. She attended an all-English class, learned to read with ease, and found solace in the fantasy world of short stories. She taught herself to read in Spanish in order to read Spanish children's story books from the school library.

The first time that Luz was brave enough to escape the suffering at home, she ran away to the house of an old lady who was a friend of her deceased grandmother. The Human Services Department returned her home. She left home again and returned to the woman's home. When she was found by the social worker, the woman asked to be made her foster mother. The authorities refused because of her poverty and old age and sent Luz to an orphanage. It was there that Luz went through what she calls "my transformation." Up to that moment she had seen herself as a weak, ugly child, teased by schoolmates, abused by her mother, and ignored by the school system. One day at the orphanage, she was attacked by a roommate and for the first time she struck back and won the fight. From that day she decided she did not have to take abuse and had to find her own solution to her life situation. The transformation was so complete that she even changed her name from Jacinta to Luz. About that time she heard of a girl who left the orphanage because she became pregnant. Realizing

that it was the only way that she would be able to leave, she decided to become pregnant too. At fifteen she left the orphanage and school to have a child. She never told the child's father about the pregnancy and went back to the only place where she had received love and acceptance, to the home of her grandmother's friend. A few months after the child was born she met a migrant worker recently arrived from Mexico, married him, and started moving along the Eastern migrant stream working the fields.

At fifteen Luz became a mother, at sixteen, a wife and a migrant worker. There were many things to learn and, lacking good role models, she had to learn them by herself. She did not have access to the books that had been her companion during her childhood, but she continued to look for learning opportunities. Aware that completing high school requirements would be a first step in improving her life situation, she tried to enroll in GED preparation classes at a local community college. However, she felt out of place in the classroom setting, and the painful memories of her schooling years facilitated the decision to drop out again. It was not until she found a program designed to assist migrant and seasonal farmworkers that she felt comfortable enough to complete the GED preparation and pass the test.

Luz dealt with her problematic childhood and painful schooling by isolating herself from her environment and becoming distrustful of others.

I tried to hide by not participating in class. You had to be blind to not to look at me and not notice I was dirty.

I never had what you call friends. Whenever I had someone who wanted to be my friend I wondered what they saw in me....I could not believe someone wanted to be around me. The kids at school could not help but make fun of

me. If you have this nerd going around with a safety pin holding her dress, her legs ashy, without socks, someone who cried easily when they called her names, of course, you know.

When I first interviewed Luz, I was not aware of how prevalent child abuse was among migrant families. Since then, I have found that research in health and elementary education issues among migrant families often mentions the topic (Smith, DeAngelis & Hansen, 1978; de la Torre & Rush, 1989; Stewart, 1992; Implementation of the Helsinki Accord, 1993). A study conducted in New York State found that the risk of child abuse or neglect was six times higher among migrant farmworker families than the national average. Although there was incidence of intentional abuse, most of the 497 allegations listed entailed involuntary neglect, such as allegations of inadequate guardianship; lack of supervision; lack of food, shelter and clothing; educational neglect; lack of medical care; and alcohol or drug use by a child (Implementation of the Helsinki Accord, 1993). My own observations during my interviews with young mothers point toward inconsistencies in parental skills rather than child abuse. I saw children being punished for the same action that another time went unpunished. I saw a young mother slap the face of a child who had run to a busy street. Marginalized and disadvantaged groups for whom survival is a time-consuming activity often show a lack of or inconsistent parental skills. Yet my most relished memory of the stay with a migrant family is of a young girl, no older than eight years old, taking care of her baby brother in a very caring and maternal way.

The indifference and cold treatment Luz experienced at school seemed to be related to her status as a poor, marginal member of the school culture. It was one added pain in a

string of painful experiences. Since schooling seemed to be too foreign to her daily life experience, she continued to find ways to resist becoming part of the school culture by refusing to participate in school activities.

I was never close to any of my teachers. I remember I never liked math and every time I would go to there (to math class) I would go to sleep, put my head down and go to sleep. At first Mr. Sans would wake me up, but then he got tired of waking me and let me sleep. I could hear the other students saying: "But she gets to sleep," but he would reply "Let her, if she wants to fail, that is her business."

I would do what was expected schoolwise, but there was never any participation into school things or never got into the school spirit or pep rallies.

There is no telling what I could have done (if someone would have taken a personal interest in her) because when it comes to books from the library I always took good care of them. When it came to reading and writing, I was fascinated with it. There were other things I was doing-but they were in my little world. I was by myself. And I never talked (to anyone at school) about (my problems at) home.

Actually Luz loved reading and writing and looked for learning experiences even after leaving school.

I always read. I loved to read books by Papillon (a Spanish adventure series). If I were a teacher I would get students to write reports on these books. They inspire loyalty, determination, and are free of violence or sex. I can express myself better on paper. I taught myself to read and write in Spanish.

In terms of education I don't give credit to the teachers.... I learned about life from the old lady who opened her house for me and from my husband and my own curiosity.

Because I was always watching people, I could see how stupid they will get. I did not want to be that stupid.

I never disliked learning and, although schools were not a happy place to be, I never hated learning.

Luz finished the high school equivalency requirements through a program that targets migrant and seasonal farmworkers as students. She is a very intelligent person and, since getting the GED, she and her husband (who is a migrant crew leader) have become the owners of a store that caters to the Hispanic migrant population. She has become very vocal in the community and several times has been interviewed by the media on issues dealing with the migrant population in the area. She has been invited to be a board member for the migrant health clinic and has organized a committee to develop a migrant assistance center.

Her personal success as an adult student and as a community leader have not been enough to stop her daughter from following the migrant pattern and dropping out of school. When her daughter first started to talk about dropping out, Luz tried to stop her; but after critically analyzing the situation, she changed her mind.

I am for education and I don't see my daughter dropping out of school as a problem. I see it as a plus -she will be able to get the GED and start working toward a goal. As it is now, she is behind her age group and the only thing she has in front of her is waiting until she is 20 years old to finally graduate from school. If she drops out, we are not going to allow her to stay at home. We will be behind her pushing her to do something with her life.

Despite Luz's plan for her daughter, not long after the interview quoted above, her daughter dropped out of school. After attending the migrant adult program for a few weeks, she decided to get married. Luz was not very happy with the decision, but to avoid a rift with her daughter helped with the wedding plans. Today her daughter is married to a migrant

worker. And with a newborn baby in tow, she follows him as he migrates throughout the Eastern stream. Like her mother, she left school at seventeen, became a mother, and joined the migrant stream.

The last three years have brought remarkable changes in Luz's life. From a high school dropout migrant worker, she has blossomed into a businesswoman and an assertive community leader. The changes have not been without a price. Her marriage of seventeen years is failing and her desire to see her daughter out of the migrant lifestyle is straining the mother/daughter relationship. The changes in Luz's life and in the lives of two other participants in this research study will be considered further in Part VI "Reflections on the Process."

María

María is 41 years old and a second-generation Mexican-American migrant worker. She was born in a small town in Texas close to the Mexican border. For the last 27 years, she has moved along the Eastern migrant stream looking for a better life for herself and her five children. María is a single parent who also takes care of two grandchildren.

I met María after interviewing her son Tito, who is her fourth child and the first one to finish high school requirements. He dropped out of school and, when she found out he could go to the migrant program and take the GED test, she took him to enroll and insisted he complete the program. After he graduated, María also decided to enroll.

Since she had very low reading and writing skills, María was placed in a literacy class and was attending GED preparation in math. Because I was impressed by her dedication, I requested an interview and set a time to meet her at school. On the day of our interview, she could not attend class because of lack of transportation. When I talked to her on the phone, she invited me to her home.

María lives in one of the trailer parks used by migrants in Valley View. She lives with two sons and her youngest daughter who is the only one still attending public school. The oldest daughter, her husband, and two children live nearby. Her oldest son lives with his father in Texas. María takes care of the two grandchildren when she is in town and the mother is working. Most winters she goes to Florida for the orange harvest. By April she returns to Valley View with her boyfriend, who is a crew leader. Every time she goes to Florida, the younger children are taken out of the North Carolina school system and re-enrolled in Florida.

Tito and Antonio, the two of María's children that I met, looked like the typical Mexican male. They have thick black hair, dark skin, broad shoulders, and a short frame. María's hair has been dyed light brown and her skin is very fair. She is the fifth of nine children born to a first-generation Mexican-American family. She described her father as a hard-working migrant laborer who became a crew leader. He would contract to bring a set number of farmhands from Mexico for farm owners from as far as Michigan and Ohio. As with most migrant families, farmwork was a family affair that involved not only her father but also her mother and all the children who were old enough to work. During the harvest

time, the whole family migrated along the Central and Eastern migrant streams.

María's parents were children of Mexican migrants who dropped out of school to help their parents and became migrants themselves.

My apa (father) went to eight grade and my mother went less.....I think she went to seventh.....They both worked the fields from an early age.

María grew up in a Hispanic neighborhood and her parents spoke Spanish at home. When asked what language she preferred to conduct our interview, she chose Spanish. She attended school on a regular basis until third grade. She went to a school where everything was taught in English. Although she later continued until the sixth grade, she stated that her education stopped at the third-grade level. She never received English as a Second Language (ESL) nor bilingual education.

I went only to sixth grade, but you can say I went only to third because I couldn't attend for several years. When I went back, I was older than the other children and at that time they would promote you because you were too old for the grade, not because you had learned as they do now.

Her memory is vague about the years in which she missed school. She tells about an illness that paralyzed her face temporarily and about going to the fields with her parents.

I only went to school when we were at my hometown.....I missed school too often by then I was too old.... I was around twelve when I dropped out.

From her school years she only remembers the strictness of the environment.

They were very strict, very demanding.... The teacher would raise the voice and you would tremble. They did not have patience with the children. Everybody would behave because we were scared of the teachers.

María herself made the decision to drop out of school.

It was my decision, but my parents did not oppose it because by then my father was very ill and could not work the fields anymore. I was expected to assist my mother and help her with the fruit stand my father had by then.

The reasons María gives for dropping out are consistent with the reasons given by other migrant dropout participants in dropout studies.

I was older than the other children.... I missed school too often and by then I was too old for school.

The records at the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) show María's reading at the third-grade level. They used the English version of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. The Spanish version is not used because, although Spanish is María's preferred oral communication language, she cannot read or write in Spanish.

María chose to conduct all our conversations in Spanish because it is the language she uses in daily communication with her children, Hispanic friends, and fellow migrant workers. She uses a broken Spanish full of anglicisms. For example, she says *apa* for *papa* (father); *writear* for *escribir* (to write); *nohotros* for *nosotros* (us). Her spoken English is good enough

to facilitate communication outside her Hispanic circle of friends and relatives, but she recognizes a deficiency in reading and spelling.

I don't know how to read and that is why I am going to HEP, to learn to read. I like math and I can do it, but I have a problem reading and even in math when it is a word problem.

The lack of vocabulary and comprehension skills affects her daily interactions but does not paralyze her.

I have a problem filling out forms and applications; for example I have to report changes in income within five days (to the Housing Authorities). I don't put the information in the right place because they always have to ask again.....So I ask the person who is helping to do it for me.

María has developed a network of people who assist her to read and understand important documents.

When I get mail I try to read it. If I cannot understand it or if it has too many words I can't understand. I don't leave the letter out of my sight. I take it to people I trust.....They will explain it for me.

Although she has migrated back and forth from Florida to Valley View for the past five years and admits her involvement with the local community is very limited, the network of people who assist her with reading is well developed and stable. They are people familiar with the plight of migrants and who are in one way or another involved with the local migrant community. She is not afraid to ask for assistance. Her low reading skills have forced her to develop other ways to deal with the reading and writing demands of her environment. She

relies heavily on her memory to learn job routines.

I have been assigned to do work-experience at the Employment Office. The way I have done it is by memory. I have a good memory. I had never used a computer but Vicki, the supervisor, is teaching me.

Most of the things I learned are memorized....If things are explained to me clearly, I learn them. I just run them through my mind several times (until I learn them).

María's memory skills and her eagerness to learn seem to have ingratiated her with her employers.

She quickly memorizes the work routines and impresses them with hard work and good attendance.

She has me doing almost everything. She sometimes leaves and I stay by myself. In my last job, I was the best and the fastest worker, and my supervisor said I was the best help they had. He was the one who told me "you have a good head. You are a smart lady. You can do anything you set out to do."

In some ways María is different from the migrant worker for whom field work is the only available job. She has worked at a dry cleaners, done assembly line work, served as a nurse's aide at a nursing home, and assisted a mechanic at a repair shop. When asked how did she learned to do those things, she answered:

People would explain it to me and I would listen carefully.

Only one of María's five children is still in school. Her youngest daughter is in the fourth grade. All of the other four children dropped out of school before completing high school requirements. Two of them since this interview have graduated from the GED

program for migrant adults.

María's greatest concern is helping her only child left in school:

I try to help my daughter with her school assignments. What I hate the most is social studies, but I try to help her by carefully reading a paragraph and trying to find the answer to the questions. We read together and try to find the answers together. I don't know if they are the correct answer but we try.

María's desire for learning and her best intention to help her daughter are very sincere.

Yet she withdrew her daughter from the Valley Views' school system and dropped out from the migrant literacy program as soon as her boyfriend decided it was time to return to Florida to pick oranges. The apple harvest in North Carolina had ended and most of the migrant workers were already moving on. She left the two sons in Valley View and with her daughter at her side followed the path through the Eastern migrant stream as she had done in years past.

Leroy

Leroy is short and muscular and the only migrant worker I talked to who had not dropped out of school. He was expelled. He is also the only black participant. There are not many black migrants working the fields in this area anymore.

Leroy is 34 years old and the seventh of eight brothers. His father was a farmworker and never went to school. His mother cleaned houses and, although he never knew how far she went to school, he remembers that she could read and write. None of his brothers finished school.

Leroy still remembers when he stopped enjoying going to school.

At some point I enjoyed going to school. I remember my first-grade teacher, Mrs. Milton, she inspired me. I enjoyed school that year. Then when I was in the third or fourth grade, we had some rough teacher and I started hating going to school. They were on your case all the time and it felt bad.

I still remember the worst teacher I had, Mr. Scott. He made school like a prison camp or something. He wouldn't listen to what you had to say. It was always his way, acted like he had eyes behind his head. You could tell him something, and even if it was the truth it wasn't true to him. He gave me the feeling of, why try? If I misplaced my homework or really lost it, I couldn't do it again; there was no make up; I would automatically fail. He would never believe me.

Leroy admits that by the time he was in the eighth grade he was hanging with a bad crowd.

I never thought about dropping out.... I was the only one of my brothers who wanted to finish school. I got influenced by other guys. At that time it was small drugs, it was pills. And I have to say it was the influence of others that caused me to get kicked out.

I was in the eighth grade and I was caught with some pills and was kicked out for two years. I tried to go back after that, but I couldn't go back to no school,, I was seventeen years old.

I felt cheated, although I know what I did was wrong and should have been punished for it, but not to the point of being kicked for two years, and having to start over in the same grade.

Leroy's motivation to learn was inspired by a doctor in town for whom he did building maintenance for some time. This doctor gave Leroy books and helped him increase his vocabulary by playing word games with him. He tried two times to enroll in an ABE class and study for the GED test, but by then he had a wife and children and had to work.

He also tried to take classes at a community college, but did not like the way classes were organized and he stopped attending.

It was a two-night- a-week class, but they were not teaching. The instructor will give you assignment without explaining the process. You were supposed to read and find the way to do the work. There was no time to ask questions.

Leroy believed that the school system cheated him of an education.

Everything I knew until I went to HEP I learned in the streets and the various jobs I had. But I know for a fact that you can only go so far without education. Even Burger King and places like that are going to require you've a GED, whereas when I was younger it did not matter much.

Unable to find steady work in his hometown, Leroy became part of a crew of migrant workers. He picked peaches in Georgia, oranges in Florida, and came to Valley View to pick apples. The crew was mostly Hispanic, and there was very little contact between the black workers and the Hispanics because of the language barrier. He had worked in mixed crews before and always noticed that the Hispanics preferred to talk in Spanish with other Hispanics. A few of the Hispanics were able to speak English and he would talk to them. But he said the opportunities to communicate while in the field were few. Once they left the fields, each group went its own way. There is little contact between the two groups after work.

Leroy's girlfriend came to Valley View before he did. She heard about the GED program for migrant workers while looking for work. She enrolled, and when Leroy came

from Georgia, she was already working toward completing high school requirements. He started to look over her books and found that he was able to answer most of the assignments. He joined the program with apprehension since he could still remember that the last time he had tried school it was not a pleasant experience.

I would pick her up from school, and I would look at her books and see what she was studying. This is what you do in school? I asked. She said, "Why don't you call Jean and see if you can enroll? I did not want to at first. I remembered what a waste of time it was when I tried in Fort Valley. But I couldn't find a job. So I did call. I had to wait a couple of weeks before I could start, but I did get in.

Leroy found the adult education program for migrants very different from his schooling experience and an earlier enrollment in a GED program.

When I got to the program, it was totally different. The instructors here took time to work things out with you even on the board. The best thing was the attention, the cooperation that the instructors gave. I had been discouraged from asking questions at Fort Valley. Here I got to participate and contribute from my own experiences.

Leroy did so well that he and his girlfriend graduated at the same time. On the day that I visited their classroom, I had the opportunity of taking their photograph while they received certificates of program completion.

Reyna

Reyna was fifteen years old when she had her first baby. She started working the fields with her grandmother when she was only thirteen. On the day of our first interview, she turned 22 years old but she looked like she was much older. She was short and slim with long black hair that she pulled back in a ponytail.

Reyna was born to a second-generation Mexican-American couple in Texas who separated when she was three years old. Since her mother could not take care of her, Reyna went to live with her grandparents who were migrants moving through the Eastern migrant stream. She spent part of her childhood moving back and forth between Texas and Florida.

We migrated a lot when I was little. We would go from Texas to Florida every year. We stopped going to Texas and started going to Ohio to pick corn. In Texas we would go to school part of the year and finish in Florida. In Ohio we would go to summer school.

I felt bad most of the time because you could never keep friends, and your grades go from higher to lower if you move from place to place.

I never failed a grade, but it was harder at some schools than other, and you never knew how your next year would be.

Reyna knows very little about her parents' educational level. Her grandfather never went to school, and her grandmother only went to the second grade. Spanish was the language used at home, yet she was never in a bilingual class.

I have been reading and speaking Spanish since I was five years old. My grandmomma taught me. She taught me to read the Bible and she taught me to read and write Spanish, but as she got older her vision wasn't as good and I started to read and write for her. Spanish is easier to learn than English.

Once you can identify the letters you know how to read because they have the same sound always.

Since I went to school at a young age while my grandparents were in the fields and went to summer school, I grew up with English and Spanish at the same time. I never got left or anything and that was good because the other children would have picked on me and made me nervous.

As I grew older, it was even worse. The older you get the more friends you have and then you have to leave them. That is the hardest part.

I started working the fields legally when I was thirteen. After school we would go work with my grandma. The fields were close by and we would go and change clothes and then go to the field with her.

Reyna left school after an argument with her grandma over a boyfriend. She left home with him and moved to California.

My plan was to finish school. I was going to be a secretary or something and have my own place, just one kid and that's it. But now I have three kids and didn't finish school.

Reyna enjoyed learning, but her most vivid memories of her schooling years center around her many departures from classrooms and friends. It was very difficult to make friends when she had to move often. While she was a child, she followed her grandparents' advice and was a docile child. When she entered adulthood, she felt entitled to make her own decisions. One of those decisions was to date a young migrant who was not considered an appropriate date by her grandparents. This brought tension to the household, and her work at school started to decline. She had nobody to confide her problems to and felt very lonely.

No, nobody in school knew about the problems I was having at home. I didn't go nowhere and didn't have no friends. I was thirteen years old, and the only person I felt close to was not accepted at home so I left. I went to California with my boyfriend and dropped out of school.

We came back after a while and I tried to go back to school, but I felt out of place. Soon after that I learned I was pregnant and dropped out again. Nobody in school tried to stop me. They didn't even know that I was living with someone. I was fifteen when I had my first child.

After my son was born, things got to difficult and I forgot about school and about my dreams. I had too many responsibilities to take care of.

After returning from California and making peace with her grandmother, Reyna tried to return to school but felt out of place and dropped out again. She then married her boyfriend and moved to Florida to pick tomatoes. During the winter, they became part of a crew that came to North Carolina to pick apples. She was working in a packing house in North Carolina when she finally got tired of their lifestyle and decided to do something to improve her chances for a better job.

I told my husband that I didn't want to work there anymore and that I wanted to go back to school and take the GED. He was not very happy with the decision, mostly because he didn't want to be at home at night, taking care of the kids while I was going to night school.

I went to evening school, but I stopped going because I was still working and would come home very tired to fix supper and give the kids a bath. It was very hard and I figured I was too old and decided it was not for me.

Reyna was recruited to attend the program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (HEP) while looking for another job at the Farmworkers Organization program. She received day care assistance and was placed in a working-experience program in the morning and

GED preparation in the afternoon.

It is easier for me to study because working and coming to school at the same time makes it a whole lot easier. Hopefully I will get my GED next month. I will like to take up accounting or bookkeeping after I finish or something like that.

She is very proud of her accomplishments so far and wants to become a positive role model for her children.

I think with me going to school and having a steady job, it makes your kids feel more proud of you. I expect them to continue their education, so they won't have a hard time like their father and me. I wish school had been like this program (HEP) that you work at your own pace and the instructors are there to help you. School was different, you had to finish the task by yourself or it was homework and at home there was nobody to help.

Ezzy

Ezzy was born in Haskell, Texas, 27 years ago to a first-generation Mexican-American mother and a Mexican father. He was the middle child of five children. His father never went to school, and his mother quit after completing third grade. His family became migrant workers when they joined an uncle who became a crew leader. And with his crew they went to Lake Michigan to work the onion fields. After the Michigan job ended, they followed the Central migrant stream and worked in Illinois, Ohio, and New Mexico, always returning to Texas as a home base.

Ezzy's memories of his schooling years are somewhat hazy, but he still remembers how difficult it was to adjust to the changes in school.

Switching around was hard. You had trouble communicating with different people in different states. You know, in certain states they require a certain level, (to give credit for grade completion). You never know what's going on, it's just hard to get adjusted to it. You never know if you passed or not.

In my situation, the way we used to switch around, by the time I would come back to Texas, Texas schools were a little ahead of the schools upstate, so the teachers would actually work on helping us to catch on, which we never did.

Ezzy dropped out of school when he was sixteen years old. He was in the eighth grade, two years behind his peers. He was already working the fields in order to help his mother. Although she did not want him to stop his education, she was separated from his father and his income was needed.

Well, I used to work in cotton gins just about every season that came around. I used to hang around two friends of mine who dropped out of school and got a job. So I figured it was easy for them. My mother needed the help then, so I was going to bring an income, that way my sisters and little brother would do a little better. My oldest brother had finished high school and entered the Army, but he was already a father and could not help.

Ezzy believed the pressures placed upon a young person during the school years cause a high drop out rate in school. He felt happy and free when he dropped out because it was one less pressure he had in life.

You have school pressures to do well, to meet their requirements. You have also pressures at home: to do something with your life, to help around with the chores, to help meet the bills. You have also pressures about your friends, girlfriend, or boyfriend. And you have to find a solution to all the pressures. People at school do not know about all the home pressures so they make it

worse by increasing the tension, criticizing your behavior, the way you dress, the way you keep your hair. The easiest thing is to leave school and find a solution to all your problems.

But I try to encourage my sisters to finish school because being a migrant worker in the fields you end up nowhere. You can make as much as \$500 or \$600 a week , but the money is gone before you know it and you don't get health benefits or retirement. You need a GED to even work in fast food.

Leaving school forced Ezzy to try many ways to earn a living.

I have done roofing work and I have worked with a master plumber. I learned those jobs by watching the regular workers. I also had a crew and worked as a crew leader. We used to go to California and work in a packing house where we would pack apples. I did pretty good for a while but it's kind of hard to keep a crew and is very frustrating.

Ezzy came to Valley View with his wife and her family to pick apples. They have been migrating from Florida to North Carolina for the last five years. This past year he and his wife decided to stay in Valley View and look for a different way to make a living. They worked in a dry cleaners for a while but started looking for something better and found that every job they applied for required a high school diploma. His wife entered the GED preparation program for migrants but Ezzy felt that was not for him.

I figured you had to be a better student or more committed. The recruiter had to work on me to convince me I could do it.

He took the GED test after attending classes for a few months, but his score came short by a point of a passing score (225). He is now employed doing maintenance work for

the local school system. He makes \$8.00 an hour and is very happy with his job. He is planning to take a day from work and retake the test.

Tito

Tito is seventeen years old and has been enrolled in fifteen schools, failed a grade three times, and dropped out from ninth grade this year. He is a handsome young man, with an easy smile and a good command of the English language. His mother uses Spanish at home, but he was born in Arlington, Texas, and English is his first language.

Tito is the fourth of five children and a third-generation Mexican-American. None of his brothers and sisters have finished school. His younger sister is still enrolled, but their mother moves yearly between Florida and North Carolina and this sister is already one year behind in school.

I live with my mom. She is the one who moved to all the places. My Dad. he is really calm and settled and has always been in one place. He is really the one who encouraged me to go to school. My mom didn't really care too much about it.

I believe that if I had stayed with my Dad in Texas, I would probably finished school.

My Dad finished school and went to the Army and they put him in school for a while. He is smarter than my mom.

Tito's mother dropped out of school after completing third grade but, according to Tito, she is practically illiterate. When I first talked to Tito, he had recently enrolled in the GED program for migrants. Since that interview, Tito has passed the test and is waiting to enter a community college in the fall. His mother also enrolled in a literacy program but dropped out when her crew leader boyfriend decided it was time to go to Florida to pick oranges.

Tito moved quickly through the GED preparation curriculum demonstrating a quick mind for math and sciences. In public school he had never before felt a particular attraction for these subject. But when he was able to attend school on a regular basis he did generally well in all subjects.

What made it hard, I guess, was moving from place to place. The work part wasn't hard, some was a little bit, but most wasn't. I didn't like the teachers. It felt like they were always on my case.

That's probably why I failed. They just tell you not to come back to school until next year. I was always not getting enough credits and having too many absences. Because in Texas, if you missed so many months, you automatically fail the grade.

The constant moving affected not only Tito's performance in school, but also the socialization process needed to adjust to school.

When you go to a new school, people look at you with a certain look, not only students but teachers too. It is like, here comes trouble! And since you don't have friends you do not have people to help you out. If you feel comfortable you learn more. You cannot feel comfortable if everybody is looking at you.

At the program for migrants, Tito became interested in education for the first time.

They teach you but they don't really treat you like a student. You feel more comfortable and less pressured. They treat you more like a person. I like that they make learning fun and at the same time important.

When I last inquired about Tito, I learned he has postponed his plans to go to college, has married, and is expecting to become a father soon.

Carmen

Carmen was originally from Macon, Georgia, but for the last two years she has been following the Eastern migrant stream with her Mexican boyfriend. When I first interviewed her she was a 36 years old, heavy-set white girl with jet-black dyed hair and blue eyes. She was fifteen and pregnant when she dropped out of school. Her then boyfriend and father of her child was a high school dropout and a drug addict who introduced her to drugs. They went to live with his parents but were kicked out of the house after the baby was born. She left the baby with the boyfriend's parents and went to Florida with another friend where they picked oranges for a while, unable to find any other job. She had not seen her baby since she left Georgia. She cried when she told me:

I am trying to straighten my life so that I can go and get my baby back. Nando, my boyfriend, has promised me to help me get my baby back.

Carmen's mother finished high school, and her father dropped out while in ninth grade. They both drank heavily, had a hard time keeping a job, and argued constantly. Her earliest memories of school were of a good place to escape the turmoil at home. She had several friends, and her school work was always average.

The changes that normally accompany adolescence brought even greater turmoil to Carmen's life.

By then I was hanging with a very rough crowd. My friends were into drugs, and soon I was doing the same. We shoplifted and stole everything we found that could be converted into cash. My parents were always on my case, and I ran away several times. I would come home only when I did not have any other place to crash. I would go to school while I was home, but my grades went down and I was not interested in school anymore.

Nobody in school ever took interest in helping me or learning about what had changed me. They only were interested in me going to school in a regular basis. I don't even remember talking to the school counselor. I think they gave up on me, and when I left I never looked back. I never even considered going back to school until I came here and at the Employment Office they told me about the program for farmworkers.

Carmen came to Valley View when her new boyfriend became part of a crew recruited in Florida. She is one of the few anglos living in the trailer park. She is learning Spanish and seems to be fascinated by the Hispanic culture.

The people we hang with are the friendliest people I ever knew. They love music and to dance, and I like that too. Some of the women are not friendly with me, but I can understand that. They don't like to see a Mexican with a white woman. I probably would feel the same in their case.

Carmen heard about the migrant GED preparation program while looking for non-farm work. She enrolled and quickly completed the program requirements and passed the GED test. When I last heard about her, she was dating a different Mexican man and was working in an industrial park.

José

Approximately 20 years ago, José came from Mexico at 20 years of age. He left home because, with five unemployed brothers in the family, there was not enough space and food for all. Most of his friends had already gone north looking for better job opportunities. Some had found work in Mexico City, and some had continued migrating and had reached Texas. The news from Texas was encouraging: *Jobs can be found but it is hard labor, under the sun all day; the food is no good but you make good money.* He decided to go to Texas. He found a job with a soft drink company doing maintenance, but he was told he could do better by working the fields. He had never done farmwork in Mexico but was willing to try anything.

I wanted to be able to send money home because that was the only sign my family would have that I was doing well. That is why I would send most of what I made each week. Because of that, I was not able to do anything else but eat and work. I left the job with (a bottling company) and became part of a crew headed toward Florida. We stopped twice at farms along the way to pick watermelons and peaches.

When we got to Florida, we were housed in a huge building with workers of all colors and race. We worked side by side, but there was little contact outside the Hispanics because we couldn't understand each other.

José kept migrating between Texas and Florida, working the fields along the Eastern migrant stream. Three years after leaving Mexico, he met and married a Mexican-American girl from Austin. She taught him English and helped him better understand the American culture. He started to dream about having his own business.

I started to observe those I was working for, the crew leaders and how they did things, and I decided that I could do the same and treat my crew better. I learned about the good and the bad of the business. I wanted to make it here, but I wanted to be a good crew leader.

I started to talk to my brothers when I went to visit my family and we started to put a crew together. I had come to Valley View to work and made friends with some small farm owners and offered to get them good workers. That is how I became a crew leader.

José has a good reputation among the farm owners and has become an entrepreneur. Besides his farm crew, he has a maintenance crew and has developed a contract with a local industrial plant to do their building maintenance. He is concerned about the stereotyped image the community has of the Hispanic and is looking for ways to change it.

Many of the people here believe these workers do not have any culture or education. Good programs are needed to assist them. Nobody is concerned about helping them. They come here from Mexico because they do not have jobs, because they are born poor, and once you have been born poor, everybody is trying to keep you poor.

Many have a sense of getting better, but the opportunities are not there. Forty cents a pail and \$2.40 a bushel is not attractive and is hard work. The worst of migrant work is that it is not stable. You might make good money for a while but it is seasonal. It will end and you will not work again for some time and the money will be exhausted before the next harvest.

The ones coming without papers are the ones doing the worst. When amnesty was available, these migrants were afraid to come to the employment office and give their information to meet the requirements for citizenship and now they have lost the opportunity to become legal.

Although José has made a future for himself and his relatives in this area, he has not applied for citizenship. He says he wants to remain a Mexican citizen. He seems very proud of the position he has taken toward citizenship and considers it a patriotic gesture. We spoke in Spanish, although his English is good enough to conduct his business transactions with the local business people. He is essentially a Mexican businessman doing business in a United States community.

He is reluctant to talk about his own educational experiences in Mexico. From conversation with his wife, I learned that he did not go beyond elementary school. Yet he is very much concerned about improving the educational opportunities of the migrant community

Many of the people here believe that these workers do not have culture or education. Good programs are needed to help our young people. What happens is that if a young migrant goes to church or the movies they are looked at as strangers, not as decent people trying to make friends. We need a good place for them to meet and establish good friendships and meet good people.. We need what we call in Mexico "Convivencias," or places to meet other people. The environment is very important, young ladies don't have a place to meet good, respectful young men. That is why the majority of them make bad marriages, because they accept the first one that comes along. You can create a place that offer learning opportunities and also social activities, like a place I saw in Austin. It was the place to go after work to take classes, for dancing on weekends or to play games. We need a place like that here.

The place José envisions is a community center where the migrants would come after work to learn cultural traditions, attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, receive literacy education and GED preparation, and learn a skill or a vocation. While explaining to me his dream for this cultural and educational center, he gave me a definition for the term education that is somewhat different from the one used by American educators. I will further discuss this definition in the next section.

Education is not the acquisition of knowledge; that is learning. It is manners and morals, and it is received at home from your parents.

Rosa

Rosa is a beautiful young woman with long black hair, dark eyes, and slim body. She is a fourth-generation Mexican-American born in Pascal, Texas, 24 years ago. It is hard for me to imagine her stooping in the fields doing farmwork.

I've picked apples, worked in packing houses, laundromats and served tables, but I made more money picking apples.

She came from Texas three years ago because her mother and brother had moved to Valley View and told her about the jobs available during the harvest. Since she came, six other family members have joined them: a grandmother, an aunt, two brothers and two sisters. There is only one sister left in Texas and "*she comes and goes.*"

Rosa dropped out of school after completing the eighth grade. She was an average student until she reached high school. By then she had lost interest in schooling.

I really hated school. I did not see school getting me anywhere. I knew I was not college material. The only future I saw for me was in going to beauty school, and I knew of one that didn't require high school. The only thing that kept me in school was being in the basketball team. When I went to the ninth grade, they kicked me off the team because I had ended eighth grade with poor grades, so I got mad and did not go back. For the first time in my life I felt free to get on with my life. I enrolled in beauty school, but I could not buy the supplies so I decided to postpone it and look for a job. I ended up serving tables for a while. I got married and had a kid and that was the end of that.

Rosa found in Valley View a place for herself and is very excited about the growth of the Hispanic population in the area.

I like it here. The agriculture, the mountains, everything about Valley View accounts for something.

I think the Hispanic community is going to be huge one day. And I think that later on this community will fall in place with the Americanos here. It's just going to be an everyday thing. Right now it's just because they are in their corner. They don't socialize much. But it is mainly a lack of communication because they lack English. We, the Hispanic, try to keep like a community of just ourselves. But we already are becoming more active with the anglos. We already started with the Gracias Amigos Day. It was a huge success. It started with the anglos giving a sign of appreciation to the migrants for what they do for them.

Rosa has already completed the GED program for migrants and with their assistance enrolled in the local community college to become a cosmetologist, but she is also interested in becoming a community leader among the Hispanics in the area.

Table 3: Demographic Data of Profiled Study Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Education	# of children
<u>José</u>	M	40	Mexican	Married	Elementary	2
<u>Luz</u>	F	35	Mexican-American	Married	GED	3
<u>Rosa</u>	F	24	Mexican-American	Single	GED	1
<u>Leroy</u>	M	34	Black-American	Married	GED	3
<u>Carmen</u>	F	36	Anglo	Single	GED	1
<u>Reyna</u>	F	22	Mexican-American	Married	GED	3
<u>Maria</u>	F	41	Mexican-American	Divorced	4th grade	5
<u>Tito</u>	M	17	Mexican-American	Single	GED	0
<u>Ezzy</u>	M	27	Mexican-American	Married	1 point short of GED	1

I will give me two-and-half more years. After completing cosmetology, I am going to take a paralegal course and hopefully I will be a Hispanic representative too.

Most of the Hispanic coming for the harvest call Florida home, but many are beginning to settle here. Others are coming from Georgia, Virginia, and even Michigan. During the harvest, the Hispanic population triples because we are not talking just Mexicans, but Guatemalans and Salvadorian. They all get along well and they are becoming part of the Hispanic community. If we are growing as a community we are going to need leaders.

Table 3 represents a summary of the demographic data provided by the profiled study participants.

In this section I presented the profiles of the study's main participants. The profiles were focused life histories concentrating on earlier schooling and learning experiences. The intention was to allow the participants to tell their own stories. In Part V, I will focus on the perceptions of schooling, learning, and education and the related themes extracted from the stories. I will then turn to the pertinent literature review for analysis and understanding.

PART V

**UNDERSTANDING MIGRANTS, SCHOOLING,
LEARNING, AND EDUCATION**

Migrant Adults' Perceptions

Perceptions are mental images we form based on our daily experiences. They are the lenses through which we see the world. These lenses shape how we interpret the world and, once formed in our mind, shape the way we behave. While discussing the data collected for the study with colleagues and my doctoral committee members, a model developed from the data that assisted me in understanding the migrant perceptions emerging from the ethnographic profiles. Figure 3 is a graphic representation of the model.

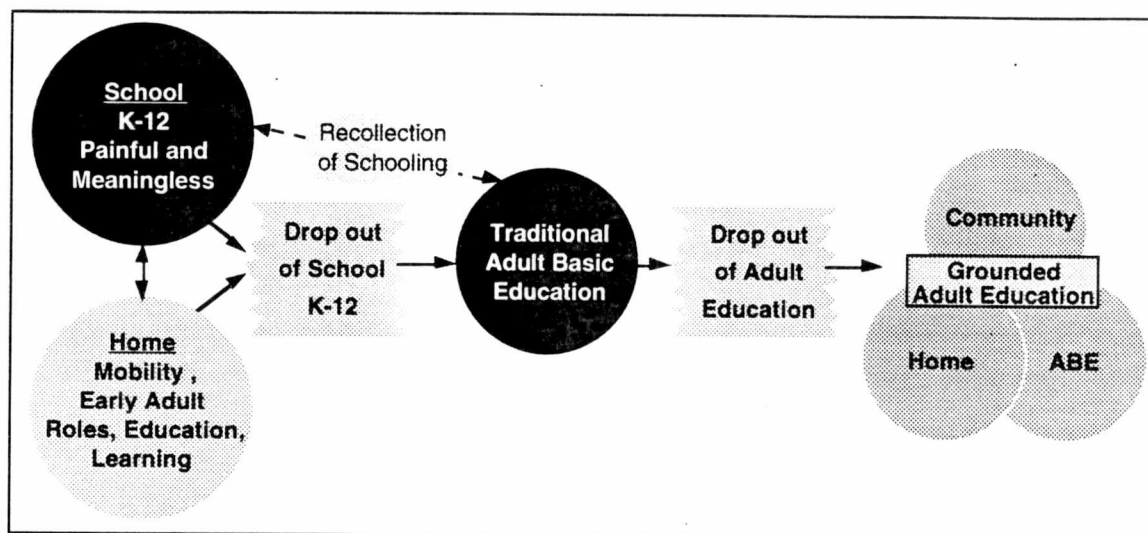


Figure 3: Migrant Adults and Schooling, Learning, and Education: A Model

The first two circles represent the lack of congruency between the home and school cultures. School is seen as a meaningless and painful place, incongruent with home lifestyle and values. The response to the process of internalizing this lack of congruency is dropping out of school. Schooling seems no longer valid for achieving a better future. Since learning is valued, an attempt is made to return as an adult to education. as a means of improving

employability. Attempts to participate in adult basic education programs which are not grounded on the knowledge of the population bring about the same response. An attempt to return to education was only successful when the experience was untangled from past schooling perceptions. This happened when the program attended was specially designed for migrant adults.

Understanding Education for Migrants

The migrant adults interviewed and profiled in Part III responded eagerly to my questions about early schooling, learning, and educational experiences. For some, the experiences were still fresh in their minds; for others it was necessary to probe. Each one of the educational histories was unique in that the individual experiences were the result of unique personal and family circumstances. Placed side by side they form the profile of the migrant adult found at the site.

The migrant adults interviewed at the site presented a common perception of negative schooling experiences. The constant moving from one place to another, the pressures to fit in, to conform, and to meet expectations proved to be a heavy burden. Nowhere in their stories could I find efforts made by the schools to help these young adults to adjust. Many had to repeat grades and were left behind by age peers. Even those who were not turned off by school, like Reyna, did not find the right atmosphere to discuss home problems. Others, like Luz, expressed open resentment for the insensitivity of teachers and administrators. Table 4 highlights the key responses given by the study participants when probed about early schooling and

Table 4: Migrant Adults' Perceptions of Schooling, Learning, and Education

	Schooling/Escuela	Learning	Education
José	A problem because of the moving from one place to another. Better if programs are offered in a "migrant community center" - a combination of school learning, skill/vocational teaching and social activities where young people can get to know each other.	Learning is...what is done in schools.	
Luz	Pain, rejection, and isolation.	Most of the learning I have done has been on my own.	It is learning, schooling, morals and manners. I am not concerned about my daughter leaving school. She can then work for a good, take the GED. She has learned more at the store than what she learned in school. She works the computer and does the inventory.
Rosa	I was never good at it - Did not like it.	I'm looking forward to a career in cosmetology. I want to become a community leader.	
Leroy	I did not leave school. I was kicked out. School was like a prison.	I learned in the streets. Street knowledge.	You can not do anything without an education.
Carmen	I liked school at first because it would take me away from the problems at home. After a while it was not fun anymore, I stopped going.	Now I know that I won't go anywhere unless I put my mind into learning to do something. The problem is finding a decent job.	
Reyna	I liked school. I wanted to be a secretary. Nobody in school knew about the problems I was having at home.	I have tried to finish my education. I went to a community college program but it was too much work. I had to work, take care of the children, and go to school in the evenings.	I want my children to be proud of me, I want them to finish their education. I don't want them to go through what I have gone through.
Maria	Never went far. Went to 5th grade but you can say I went only till 3rd grade. I want my only child left at school to finish and not do like the others that quit.	I learned by watching others. I have a good memory, all you have to do is explain it clearly and I will learn it.	
Tito	I did not do well in school. We moved so many times. It was hard to catch on. Teachers were prejudice.	I started learning here (HEP). I even did better in math, I was never good at math. They were more patient. They treated me like an adult.	I want to go to college. I have already registered at the community college.
Ezzy	I did not like school. I thought it would slow me down if I wasn't going to at least be able to take home a decent income. That is why a lot of people quit. School is full of pressures.	I have done roofing and plumbing. I learned from my brother-in-law. He would give me instruction on how to do something one time and I would be able to do it.	

education experiences.

When talking about school, the migrants adults profiled were able to remember only pain, rejection, and isolation. These feelings facilitated the decision to quit school before completing high school requirements. Although all of the migrants profiled and most of the study participants were school dropouts, they were active learners. When asked about learning experiences since leaving school, all had much to tell. Some talked about street learning; others showed pride in learning skills on their own; while others told about their experiences in adult education programs.

Eight of the nine migrant adults profiled tried to continue their education through adult education programs. It seemed that their initial contact with traditional ABE/GED programs was affected by the negative perceptions of schooling. Luz, Leroy, María, Reyna, and Rosa enrolled in adult education programs and quit after a few weeks. They felt again like children trying to fit into a system. It was only when they were recruited by a program specially designed for migrant adults that they were able to overcome these perceptions and view education as a means to better employment and personal satisfaction. All but one completed high school requirements once they found the appropriate program.

All the migrant adults profiled provided vivid and glowing comments about their belief in the value of education for themselves and their children. Despite the fact that their parents had little schooling and they themselves had not completed high school, most parents wanted their children to finish school. Even Luz, who supported her daughter when she

decided to drop out of school, talked about the importance education had for her and quickly encouraged her daughter to enroll in the GED program.

The term education is used many times to indicate formal learning. When I used a literal translation of the term in Spanish, it had a different connotation for older Hispanic migrants. They defined the Spanish term *educación* as the teaching of manners and morals by parents and relatives. When I talked to them, I had to make a distinction between formal learning and *educación*. Now I wonder how much confusion the different usage of the term must have created for earlier generations of Hispanic migrants dealing with the anglo school system. Once I clarified the term, all the study participants expressed concern about their present employment situation and how they value education as the only means to get out of farmwork and poverty.

A Different Definition of Education

Castañeda (1974), in his study of Mexican-American families, found the use of the term *educación* (education) when describing the children general socialization process. *Bien educado* (well educated socially) is a term often used by the Hispanic families I interviewed to refer to a person viewed as exhibiting positive values and good manners. When I used the term education to refer to formal schooling, the response of several of the participants was as follows:

You are educated at home; in school you learn to acquire and channel knowledge.

Education is not receiving knowledge-that is learning. Education is what you receive at home, from your parents.

Young migrants leave school because it doesn't make sense for them anymore. It is not an attractive alternative to going to work with the family, learning to work the fields, and making some money. The time eventually comes when going to school doesn't make sense and there are more opportunities for them outside, even for getting an education (José).

Mis hijos dejaron la escuela muy pronto pero son bien educados. My children drop out of school but they were educated. (María).

María and José were the oldest of the study participants. Both chose to conduct the interview in Spanish, but most of the time they used a mixture of both languages. Throughout both interviews, the term 'education' was used not to mean the knowledge and development resulting from academic learning, but to mean the learning of social roles, manners, and attitudes taught at home.

According to Castañeda (1974), Hispanic parents place as much emphasis on social roles and behavior as they do on academic education. "They are often confused when school personnel do not seem to understand that a child's duties at home, such as having to stay home to care for younger family members, are just as important as his education at school" (p. 23). This emphasis on the family and the different definition of education was echoed by Constanza. She was a migrant woman who left the site before I was able to interview her for the profiles.

Te voy a decir una cosa (let me tell you something). My family is the most important thing in the world for me. I owe my parents respect, and I will always be there when they need me. I don't want to be like some bolillos (white Anglos) because they don't care about their families; they just care about themselves and making money. They don't like anybody who is different. At

school, the teachers would ignore you if they knew you weren't going to college. Some of the things I learned in school were against what I had learned at home. At home you learned that nothing is above your parents. That the most important thing is to be respectful of the elders and helpful of others. I was never able to compete with others. That was not in me (Constanza).

Migrants' Perceptions of Schooling Experiences

A person is simultaneously engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories. Life is a matter of growth toward and imagined future and therefore involves retelling stories and attempts at reliving stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As I listened to the stories told by the migrant adults interviewed, I was keenly aware of how the exercise of introspection was transforming people in front of my eyes. Many became more assertive and open after the first interview. I saw in others the awakening of leadership skills and ethnic pride. The exercise of introspection brought understanding and insight into forgotten experiences and feelings for some. Trying to capture the essence of what I learned is a difficult task because the story will always be incomplete. The ethnographic profiles presented in the previous section are only snapshots attempting to give a feeling for what the migrant community is all about. The themes presented in this section appeared repeatedly through the conversations with the participants when the focus was on schooling and past educational experiences.

Schooling as a Painful Experience

Pain is a topic not often discussed in educational circles, yet many of the recent ethnographic studies of student dropouts have given voice to stories painfully engraved in the memories of participants. Quigley (1991b) described those students as “wounded by the schooling system” (p. 11). In my research, this theme was sometimes openly described as when Luz talked about her earliest schooling experiences.

My earliest recollection of school? You are going to be surprised! Pain.... I can't help to stay bitter because, those teachers, they should have known better. People could get away with anything. I hate that because if they had paid attention I would not have suffered as much (Luz).

Other times it was the feeling behind the words, as when Leroy compared school with a prison.

This teacher made school like a prison camp or something. He wouldn't listened to what we said....I felt cheated....I did not drop; I was kicked. Of all my brother and sisters, I was the only one who wanted to stay in school (Leroy).

Others only remembered teachers because of the atmosphere of fear they created in the classroom.

They were very strict, very demanding; they would raise their voice and you would tremble. They did not have patience with the children (María).

Yet others openly expressed their rejection of school and only remembered what was taken away.

I hated school. The only thing I liked in school was taken away from me so I quit (Rosa).

Javier, a former migrant worker who now teaches ESL classes described his earliest memories of schooling as follows:

School was someplace where I didn't have to go. It was a memory born in Delicias, Texas, and since we had left El Paso, (it was) an activity that only happened now and then. School was a world of children games, more gringos than I ever seen, and spanking by someone called the principal, who punished children for things that they said.... School was the place where I was ridiculed for my clothes, my way of reasoning, and for my neck, my elbows, my hair, and my hands, which were cleaned by my mother and judged by the school.

School was Mrs. Peters, who enjoyed so much to march the kids from the migrant camp out to the water fountain in the hall. hand us a bar of soap, and then bring out the whole class to watch as she ordered us to wash our necks. "Look, don't you know how to wash your neck? It is filthy," It amazed me that Mrs. Peters could assume that there was plentiful water for bathing; my view of the world was that water for this purpose was limited everywhere, not just as it was at the camp. She led me out to the water fountain and gave me a small piece of soap. As I stood there scrubbing, she went into the classroom and brought out some kids to stare at me. "Her voice echoes in my ears:" His mother must live like a pig...pig...pig...

These were strong memories of pain, rejection, and fear. These students felt powerless, personally isolated, and having no control over the events affecting their school life.

The self-protective response to school as a painful place is alienation. Seeman (1975) defined alienation as a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and personal isolation. For the research study participants, alienation was manifested in two ways: lack of connection

with school processes and isolation.

You never know what is going on (Ezzy).

I was never involved in school spirit or participated in any of the school activities....I was always alone (Luz).

Nobody in school knew anything about what I was going through (Reyna).

Ogbu (1990) blames schools for creating this kind of response in students. According to him, generations of minority students have been discouraged from investing time and efforts in education, dropping out or emotionally tuning out from what is happening in school.

Another aspect of this theme is school as a source of pressure. Many of the participants talked about the many pressures they had to contend with: growing up poor, being in a family that was constantly moving, having to help care for younger siblings, and having to supplement the household income with outside work. School was seen as an extra pressure.

The ethnographic research by Ferrel, Peguero, Lindsey, and White (1988), found pressure and boredom as the most often mentioned negative factors in the lives of students. According to their study, students are pressured by the attitudes of their peers, the demands of their own impulses, family structure, and anxiety about their economic future. Rather than helping the student understand or deal with these pressures, schools add one more pressure.

Gibson (1993) compared the pressures that immigrant students have with other minority students and noted that they also view schooling with suspicion and ambivalence because it pressures them to conform to the dominant culture and to reject the values and beliefs of their culture. The student concludes that the acquisition of skills in the dominant

culture, together with the acceptance of teacher authority and school rules, is something that needs to be resisted. Ezzy, talking about his own reasons to leave school, talked about the experiences of other family members.

I have a cousin, a very good student. She dropped out three months before graduation because of all the pressures. And that happened to two of my cousins. One left her car parked at school and left. Two days later she came back married. That is the reason she quit school: too much pressure at school and at home. She solved the situation by getting married.

School as Meaningless

The view of school as a meaningless place appears often in the dropout research literature (Bishop, 1989; Littwin, 1987; McLeod, 1987; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Some of these studies defined meaninglessness as the connection or lack of connection between schools and orientation toward the future, specifically, a lack of orientation toward finding a job. For migrants and their children, the relationship between schooling and their future is even less clear than for families with a more stable source of income. Many migrants' families feel there is nothing else they can do but farmwork. For the majority of the people I interviewed in Valley View, migrancy had become a family tradition. Some were the fourth generation of a family whose main source of income was migrant farmwork. They felt trapped into doing farmwork because when they tried to do something else they were not paid as well. Rosa told me:

I made more picking apples than at any of my other jobs.

Since the laws controlling child labor allow thirteen-year-olds to do farmwork, a migrant family whose subsistence depends on seasonal work will view it as better for the whole family if the children are able to increase the family income by joining them at the fields. Children can make a significant contribution to the household income, a contribution that can make the difference between survival and despair. Schooling is not viewed as a means to find better employment.

I started working the fields when I was twelve or thirteen (Reyna).

I had to help my mother because my father was not there anymore (Ezzy).

Another aspect of the theme of school as a meaningless place has to do with discontinuities between the culture of the student and the culture of the school. Going to school becomes a constant submission to the assaults by school staff and other students on their ethnic heritage and their place as functioning adults in their own community (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). The migrant adults interviewed describe this in terms of student and teacher prejudice.

They would make fun about my clothes and my hair (Luz).

The teacher was prejudiced (Tito).

They make fun of you, of how you talk, of how you behave (Reyna).

They look at you different; they give you a certain look (Tito).

Ogbu (1990) found that minority students resist the school culture by practicing a system of cultural inversion, that is, by exhibiting behaviors that were contrary to the expectations of school administrators. He stated that minorities in the United States have historically been excluded from the high-quality education received by white students and consistently have been denied access to durable jobs. Williams (1978) compared black dropouts to black graduates and found them to be similar in demographic and personal characteristics, but found the dropout participants to exhibit pervasive feelings of isolation, disconnectedness and rejection. A similar study by Valverde (1987), comparing Hispanic dropouts and graduates, also described findings of alienation, powerlessness, and meaninglessness in reference to school and peer groups among Hispanic dropouts.

Fine (1986) in her study on urban adolescents concluded: "Whether dropping out is a personal act of rejection, assertion, joining one's peers, or giving up, it presumes a structural context that is being rejected, critiqued, and/or experienced as defeating by the actor" (p. 397). The migrant adults interviewed left school for a variety of reasons, some of those reasons were the same found when studying other groups some were unique to the migrant lifestyle.

Mobility as the Main Obstacle to Schooling

Families that migrate in order to find work get caught in a complex lifestyle that affects everyone in the family. The decision to migrate is essentially a financial one, but the consequences affect their social relationships, their health, and their educational opportuni-

ties. School officials concerned about the high rate of dropout behavior among Hispanics consider migrant labor a deterrent to education since it provides access to money at an early age. Children of migrant families are able to choose between schooling and joining the parents at the field. Since schooling is not seen as offering an alternative to farmwork, many drop out of school at an early age. Migrant adults in the study were greatly affected by the lack of educational programs that related to their mobility.

The problem is that you have to start all over again (Reyna).

The way we used to switch around, by the time I came back to Texas, I was already behind....You never knew what was going on (Ezzy).

In Texas, if you miss certain number of days, you are automatically failed. You keep getting behind until doesn't make sense to stay in school because if you do, you will be an old person by the time you graduate (Ezzy).

Frequent school changes brought a constant struggle to gain control over new learning environments. Wehlage and Rutter (1985) found that Hispanic dropouts felt a greater sense of internal control when they altered external conditions in their lives by leaving school. Ezzy and Rosa verified this finding when they both expressed the sense of liberation and exuberance they felt after making the decision to drop out.

Recently a group of educators studied the needs of migrant children for three years, The National Commission on Migrant Education, established by presidential order in 1989, recommended the following at the conclusion of the study:

A more concerted effort should be made to assure that migrant children are identified and served, despite short enrollments, and to ensure better coordination between states and communities to assure appropriate services.

The Department of Education should reinforce the work of the National Secondary Credit Exchange and Accrual project by collaborating with the appropriate groups to foster agreements among states about core courses or waivers, which will lead to the graduation of these students (p. XII).

The National Secondary Credit Exchange and Accrual Project was established by the Education Department in October of 1990 and funded through a three-year cooperative agreement between Texas, Washington, Illinois, and New York. The project was designed to create a national system of credit exchange and accrual to increase the high school graduation rates for all migrants. Students traveling through the four states are able to transfer school credits, to continue in the same courses, and to accrue the same credits necessary for graduation.

These recommendations came too late to help the many migrant adults that were underserved by a school system oblivious to their educational needs. Assisting them will be the responsibility of adult education programs. The challenge this presents to adult education is to develop programs that meet the particular needs of this segment of the population. These programs should be based on the researched knowledge of the population. Ethnographic studies, like the one reported in this dissertation, appear to offer the most hope for unraveling the multiple aspects that impact the participation of minority groups of adult education programs.

Migrants Assume Adult Roles Early in Life

In the United States, the transition from childhood to adulthood is legally recognized as happening between the ages of 18 to 21. In many cultures, young people achieve adult status at a much earlier age. Migrant boys begin to be treated as adults when at 15 or 16 they are capable of earning as much as their father working the fields. Girls start being treated as adults when they are capable of having children and managing a household. Most of the females interviewed left school because they were pregnant or to follow a boyfriend when he moved on in the migrant stream. Most of the male participants left school to work the fields. The parents had very little input in the decision-making process. Smith-Hefner (1990) studied the Khmer culture and found that, although the parents strongly support education, they also leave the decision about education goals and strategy to the children. The study participants verbalized this theme as follows:

They wanted me to go to school and were not very happy when I left school, but I was tall for my age and was sick most of the time. They did not take a strong stand against me leaving school (María).

My mother didn't want me to quit, but I just told her I wasn't going to school, that I was looking for a job (Ezzy).

My grandparents were not happy about the guy I was dating, and I just left with him when he moved on. Later on I found I was already pregnant (Reyna).

Pruett-Diaz, et al. (1990) found a power shift happening when the migrant child started to earn an income and increasingly became financially independent from the father.

They found that many parents expressed impotence when it came to making their children stay in school to finish their education. The impact of gaining adult status at an early age has not been appropriately researched. Cloward (1960), who studied self-esteem, found an increase in the self-esteem of Hispanic males who dropped out of school.

Dropping Out is an Accepted Solution to a Difficult Situation

Dropping out of school is as much a family pattern as migrant work. Most of the study participants had parents and/or siblings who were also migrant workers and who had dropped out of school at an early age. Of the migrant students enrolled in the High School Equivalency Program between 1987 and 1990, 78 percent dropped out of school between the seventh and ninth grades. Cranston, Platt, and Martinez (1993) studied the self-esteem of migrant youth and found that the research participants showed decreased self-esteem as grade level increased, reaching the lowest point at grade eight. Most of the students profiled in this ethnographic study left school before entering high school or around eight grade, verifying these findings.

LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) list poverty as one of the aspects affecting school retention. They see poverty as having a very damaging effect in the self-esteem of young people:

Poverty is more damaging than simply lack of exposure to cultural amenities and educational toys. It means wearing shabby or inappropriate clothing that calls attention to one's status and damages self-esteem (p. 61).

One of the study participants graphically described this feeling when asked about her earlier schooling memories:

Trying to fit in.... Seen other girls with nice clothes and socks with ruffles, and me the only one with ugly clothes, and not having the right clothes (Luz).

Since thirteen-years-olds can legally start working the fields, it should not be surprising that the corresponding school grades have the highest incidence of dropout. In a survey by Apicella (1985), migrant dropout students gave the following reasons for leaving school:

- failing classes
- did not like school
- had very few credits for graduation
- had to work; family needed money
- did not feel a part of school
- had problems with teacher
- felt older than other students
- got suspended and did not go back
- had problems with other students.

Apicella's survey is consistent with my findings. The adults that talked to me were dissatisfied with earlier school experiences. They consistently expressed a belief in the value of education, especially for their children. They valued learning for themselves and expressed pride in learning on their own, during and after leaving schooling. But their own schooling experience resulted in alienation, dissatisfaction, and resentment. These feelings created distrust in schooling as a means for improving employability and quality of life.

Dropping Out is Not Synonymous with Rejection of Learning

Adult education research examining non-participation in adult basic education programs focused either on school dropouts' psycho-social deficiencies or on barriers or deterrents to participation (Boshier, 1973; Miller, 1967; Shipp and Mckenzie, 1981; Martin, 1987; Johnston & Rivera, 1965; Hayes, 1988). However, in recent years resistance theory changed the focus to schooling and its impact on students.

Based on Marx's (1969) statement that "every social process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction" (p. 531), radical educators have looked at school as an institution whose main function is the reproduction of the dominant ideology. Instead of blaming students for academic failure or non-participation, they blame the dominant society. According to Giroux (1963), recent research in schooling has attempted to move beyond reproduction theories. This research emphasizes the importance of human volition, struggle, and resistance to reproduction. Resistance theorists have attempted to demonstrate that the mechanism of social and cultural reproduction are never complete and always meet with partially realized elements of opposition.

Quigley (1990, 1991, 1992) studied undereducated adults from the reproduction and resistance perspective. His studies found that these adults resisted schooling in their earlier years and are now resisting adult basic education programs for the same reasons. He concluded that school resisters were not rejecting learning and objective knowledge but schooling.

Resistance theory suggests that some school dropout students operate from a different set of values than the school system. Some researchers have concluded that these students value "doing" over mental activity and leave school when schooling no longer meet those values. Consequently, they might experience a greater sense of confidence and self-esteem after leaving school (Beder, 1991b; Valverde, 1987; Ziegahn, 1992). For many, "learning can be embraced only after it has been mentally disassociated from formal education memories" (Ziegahn, 1992, p. 34).

I found that, while migrants value education, negative past experiences with schooling often stop migrant adults from searching for educational programs. This finding is consistent with recent research on participation of Adult Basic Education programs by low-literate adults. Ziegahn's research (1992) suggests that "adults with low literacy skills do not necessarily view participation in adult education as a desirable end state, and that participation in adult education is not synonymous with learning" (p. 46).

All of my study participants who were parents of young children placed a high value in learning and expressed the expectation of seeing their children finish school even though they themselves did not.

I encourage my children to stay in school. I don't want to see them going through the hassles I went through (Reyna).

My major concern is that the one left at home doesn't do as the others and stays in school (María).

The coordinator of the program for migrants stated that recruitment is made harder because migrant adults think the program is going to be "like school." Some of the study participants had tried to enroll in other ABE programs but found them too confining and dropped out.

I even enrolled in the GED program at the community college program, but it reminded me too much of school and I quit (Leroy).

I tried to go in the evenings and enrolled but it was too much for me. I had to work during the day and go home too tired to cook supper, give the kids a bath and try to go to school (Reyna).

Many migrant adults do not equate learning with school. Rather they view learning as being able to "do something with their lives."

I am for education and I don't see my daughter dropping out of school as a problem. I see it as a plus. She will be able to get the GED and start working toward a goal (Luz).

Learning was the time spent riding with my father in a tractor as he prepared the soil for planting. Throughout the long day he told me stories, told me of things that I was too young to understand, told me what he did to the earth. He showed me how to grow by allowing me the freedom to taste different things, Learning was guessing the riddles posed by my father as we sat besides a running ditch for irrigation water, or guessing which ingredient my mother was to use next when making the masa for the tortillas, or figuring the cost per basket of strawberries, then multiplying the cost times a certain number of baskets to determine how much money I had earned (Javier).

When asked about future education plans, most of the study participants expressed interest in receiving training or going to educational programs. They wanted to leave

farmwork and place a somewhat unrealistic expectation on training as a way to change their own and their children's economic situation. Ezzy talked about studying nursing; Tito enrolled in the local community college; Reyna wanted to go back to her dream of becoming a secretary and Rosa enrolled in a cosmetology class. But all, with the exception of Rosa, have been forced to postpone these plans. Ezzy is doing maintenance work; Tito is working to support a new family; and Reyna is doing child care. They left farmwork but they are far from leaving poverty. Others, like Maria, probably will never leave farmwork because they feel trapped and are striving for subsistence.

Migrant Adults' Responses to Schooling Perceptions

A recent study estimated that there are 1,661,875 migrant farmworkers in the United States (Migrant Health Program, 1990). The majority are between 25 and 44 years old and have an average of 5.5 years of schooling (Slaughter & Associates, 1991). Mobility affects every aspect of the lives of migrant farmworkers. Many of my study participants had painful memories from their schooling years and were apprehensive about returning to school. Others had enrolled in ABE programs and found themselves out of place because the programs did not meet their needs. Those who had positive experiences of adult education had been served by a program that targeted only migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

I know that without a high school diploma I would had a hard time finding a job. Even McDonald's hires only GED or high school graduates. I went to evening school but I felt out of place (Leroy).

I tried to go to the community college GED class but I quit after a while. I was too tired at the end of the day (Reyna).

I thought it was not for me. I thought you had to be a special kind of person (Ezzy).

The Need for Alternatives to Traditional Adult Basic Education Programs

In her 1981 study Cross concluded, "At the adult level, nothing will happen if we open opportunities and remove barriers for people whose motivational force to participate is low or negative" (p. 146). "For those non-participants that are resisters, Beder said (1991b), school-based approaches to adult literacy are not likely to work and, if we are to reach them, new approaches to adult literacy must be found." Yet most adult education programs continue to use the schooling model of teaching and the ideological goals of remedial education. The adult participants of my study carry baggage filled with painful memories of schooling that have lasted a life time. They are not attracted to adult education programs that reproduce schooling models

Curtis (1990) stated that an empowered citizenry requires a definition of literacy that combines community development, traditional education, and social change. The literacy for social change integrates learning and community change. He proposed this integrated model to address basic skills as well as new attitudes and consciousness. It has the following four interrelated components:

- *Fundamental Skills- the basic skills necessary for dealing with the written word.
- *Critical thinking- the capacity to understand and react to information.

*Cultural expression- the realities of community life, the joys, yearnings, struggles, and achievements, expressed through music, drama, folklore, dance, and literature.

*Individual/community action- the reflection upon personal and community problems and successes and the action taken to address the issues arising through the learning.

Variations of this model have been implemented by programs known as community-based or popular education.

The High School Equivalency Program: An Example

The High School Equivalency Program (HEP), a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, was praised by study participants because of its uniqueness. It was funded to serve only migrant and seasonal farmworkers and was designed to meet their particular needs. Although HEP can not be considered a community-based program, it followed the model of effective adult education programs. The program's schedule is flexible, giving the student the opportunity to attend at their own convenience. It is staffed by bilingual teachers (English and Spanish), experienced in working with the population. It provides transportation and a stipend for incidental expenses. It is not curriculum-driven but student-centered. The goal is to empower the students through education and to assist them to become integrated into the local community.

They treat you as a person, not a student (Tito).

You are able to work at your own pace. They teach in English and Spanish (Ezzy).

They had people working there that I could identify with (Luz).

Seven of the nine migrant adults profiled in Part III of this dissertation completed high school requirements through the High School Equivalency Program. Of the two who did not, one never returned to school after leaving Mexico, and the other started literacy classes but dropped out to go to Florida for the orange harvest and never returned to the program. The HEP project at Valley View has been nationally recognized as a good example of programs for migrant adults. A quick evaluation of the factors contributing to the overall success of this program in reaching migrants reveals characteristics of effective adult education programs (Ross-Gordon, Martin & Briscoe, 1990, p. 1). The following characteristics are the result of six years of research and reflective practice, according to the North Carolina HEP project coordinator.

1. The program is geared to empower students by increasing success experiences, self-confidence, and feelings of self-worth and dignity.
2. Placement plans start at enrollment, and placement activities are geared to end in post-secondary education or competitive employment.
3. Class schedule is flexible with a choice of morning, afternoon, and evening classes. Students unable to attend classes are allowed to take home the instructional material. The instructors and counselors will periodically check with the student either by phone or a home visit.
4. A strong promotion and recruitment program is maintained by visiting migrant gathering places such as laundromats, the migrant clinic, the Mexican store, the Spanish speaking-church, and the migrant housing section of town.
5. Coordinators, recruiters, counselors, and instructors are culturally and ethni-

cally representative of the student body.

6. Bilingual counselors are available and an intensive personal and career program is implemented.

7. An individually tailored plan is developed with the student leading the activity.

8. Staff receive regular training in adult education and cultural sensitive topics.

9. Teacher and program effectiveness are evaluated regularly. The evaluation is staff initiated and has student contribution.

The High School Equivalency Program started as a residential program at the University of Tennessee. Following the format established by other institutions receiving the same federal grant, the University recruited migrant and seasonal farmworkers from the southeastern region to come to the Knoxville campus for a semester of intensive GED preparation, social skills instruction, and counseling. In 1987, the program was significantly changed to better meet the needs of the region. The intention was to reach the migrant communities that were growing and becoming more visible through the states bordering Tennessee. The program in Valley View was the first established and the most successful. When interviewed, the staff of the HEP project gave the following recommendations for a successful migrant program:

1. Take the program to the student. Find where they are and locate the program there.
2. Make the program flexible enough to allow for family needs, work, etc.
3. Involve the other family members. Use family strengths for motivation and support. Keep the family unit intact. Hispanic families are close-knit and very protective, specially of the female members.

4. Be familiar with and use other community resources to supplement services.

The early experiences of migrants related to schooling, learning, and education have made a silent, unconscious impact in their lives. These experiences helped shape their frame of reference and continue to condition their attitudes and behaviors. The migrant community is the context where these experiences were interpreted. Adult education programs trying to reach this segment of the population need to examine the basic perceptions from which these attitudes and behaviors flow and the context that give meaning to these perception. Ethnographic studies seem to be the most appropriate way of unraveling the multiple aspects influencing the adults' educational decisions. Quigley (1992) stated it this way:

The decision to participate in literacy needs to be seen through the kaleidoscope of sociological influences, not the least of which is the impact of past schooling (p. 211).

PART VI

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This research study intended to address five research questions. The five research question were:

1. How does the migrant experience frame migrant adults' perceptions concerning schooling, learning, and education?
2. What common beliefs, values, norms, and experiences are shared by the migrant community residing at the site?
3. What common elements are found in the educational life histories of the main participants?
4. What are the migrant perceptions on participation in adult basic education programs?
5. How does the study of a migrant community contribute to the knowledge base on the educational needs of minority groups and possibly open new doors to future research?

Parts III through V provided the necessary documentation to answer the first four rerearch questions. In these sections, I described the migrant community as a cultural group who shares beliefs, values, norms, and experiences. I also presented profiles of main participants using in-common educational experiences as the focus. Extracting from the focused life histories, I presented Valley View's migrant adults' perceptions related to schooling, learning, education and their impact upon participation in adult basic education programs. In Part VI, I will summarize these findings and provide recommendations to the field of adult education. These recommendation serve as answer to the last research question.

Summary of Findings

How does the migrancy experience frame adults' perceptions concerning schooling, learning, and education?

Earlier schooling experiences made a negative impact on most of the study participants. Schools were remembered as painful places, disliked and oppressive. All of the migrant adults profiled left school before completing high school requirements. The decision to leave was made by the participants when staying in school was no longer meaningful for them.

Mobility is the major obstacle in the education of migrant children. This mobility not only affects the academic progress, but also the adjustments necessary to integrate into a new environment, a new school, new teachers, and peers. Since migrancy is a family pattern, solving school problems created by the migrant lifestyle by dropping out becomes a family pattern also.

Through my conversations with older migrant adults of Hispanic origin, I discovered they give a different connotation to the term education. When these migrant adults use the term, they are referring to the learning of manners and morals at home. My literature review verified this usage of the term. I also found that researchers of Hispanic culture had warned educators about the possible misunderstandings the disparity in usage could create.

Although most of the study participants had dropped out of school, dropping out for them was not synonymous with rejection of learning. They proudly talked about the learning done after leaving school. Education was considered of value for themselves and their children. Most of the participants profiled returned to adult education programs in search of a way to improve employability and break out of the cycle of migrancy. Some had tried to enroll in traditionally designed adult education programs but found them to be too similar to past negative schooling experiences and dropped out. Six of the participants profiled successfully completed high school requirements after enrolling in a program specifically designed for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Assuming adult roles early in life is one of the aspects of the culture of migrancy having great impact in the schooling, learning, and education of migrant adults. The urgency to help with household expenses, early marriage, and parenthood drives young migrants to leave school and postpone, sometimes indefinitely, education plans. Adult education programs successfully serving migrant adults make accommodation for these responsibilities assumed early in life.

What common beliefs, values, norms, and experiences are shared by the migrant community residing at the site?

Alford, in his book *The Proud People* (1972), stated:

The first wheels that rutted the land that would become the United States were Spanish.....The first horses ridden by man across the Great Plains-the first cattle, sheep, goat, pigs, domestic poultry- were Spanish....Also Spanish were the first oranges, lemons, limes, peaches, pears, and apricots grown in the New World. The first European plows and gardening tools in North America were Spanish....In fact, the first European feet to touch the shores of what is now the Southern United States were Spanish..... Evidence of this influence still abounds. And people of Hispanic heritage - Spanish-Americans, Mexican-American, Latin-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and others- are the second largest minority in the United States today.

With the onslaught of Anglo expansion westward from New England in the late 1800s, Spanish-speaking people became strangers in their own land, shouldered aside, but clinging to their culture in proud but impoverished enclaves that survived in the Southwest and then in the early twentieth century were infused with new numbers from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and other Central and South American countries. Often demeaned, discriminated against, they grew steady in number, becoming always more restless. (p. vii)

The original intent of this research project was to study migrants as a multi-ethnic group, but once I entered the field the migrant adults I found at the selected site were mostly Hispanic. Only two of the migrants interviewed were not of Hispanic origin. However, this is consistent with the ethnic composition of the general migrant population. The most comprehensive data on the migrant farmworker population comes from the National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS), an ongoing special-purpose survey by the U. S. Department of Labor initiated in 1988. According to NAWS, 67 percent of the farmworker population consists of foreign-born Hispanics, 22 percent U. S.- born whites, 4 percent U. S -born Hispanics, 4 percent U. S.- born blacks and 3 percent Asians and others (Mines, 1989 unpublished data). The feeling among the DOL staff interviewed is that NAWS somewhat underrepresented migrants and that the actual U. S.-born Hispanic migrant population is

significantly higher. Actually, the migrant population studied was 89 percent U. S. born Hispanic. These demographic factors, the relevant but scarce literature on migrant adults already discussed, and my personal contacts with other migrant communities served to verify that the migrant adult population of Valley View was not unique and that the findings of this research are relevant to migrant adults in general. The data provided by the migrant adults interviewed, by those in the area who work close to the migrant community, and by other Valley View residents seem to suggest a culture of migrancy. Pruett-Diaz (1990) had earlier suggested that migrants form a group who share norms, attitudes, values, and a lifestyle. In the case of the migrant population studied, most of these norms, attitudes, and values are Hispanic in character. The lifestyle is defined by their type of employment, seasonal farmwork, and by the mobility required to earn a living doing that type of work.

Pruett-Diaz used the term "culture of migrancy" (1990, p. 11) in the anthropological sense to describe norms, attitudes, and values that are greatly influenced by the mobility of the migrant lifestyle. The term might bring recollections of the emphasis given by research of the 1960s to the impact of home environment on school performance and the resulting cultural deprivation theory. The poor school performance of minority children became readily explained by the use of term such as "culture of poverty" (Valentine, 1968) and culturally disadvantaged. According to Bennett and LeCompte (1990), the term "culture" was misused to document, "not a culture, but a response to oppressive conditions of racial isolation, powerlessness and poverty" (p. 213)." Migrants, as a socially disadvantaged group, have also been affected by those conditions but, when I visited Valley View I found

a group of people with a rich Hispanic cultural heritage who is getting out of isolation and wanting to share the richness of their culture.

Because the migrants working in Valley View are mostly Hispanics, they share values, attitudes, and norms that are different from the dominant Anglo-American culture. Hispanics emphasize the family above all else. For them the family is a source of comfort, support, security, and identity (Cortés, 1980). The group I found in Valley View was formed by close-knit families. These were extended families, formed by two and sometimes three generations living under the same roof. An intense sense of family obligations, loyalty, and respect cements the individual members of the group. When a member of the family decided to move to Florida or go back to Texas, typically all the others followed. When Rosa's brother decided to make Valley View his home, he sent for his mother, his sister, an aunt, and an uncle.

The Hispanic migrant community of Valley View has a strong commitment to mutual assistance. I was able to observe the results of this commitment while helping at Luz's store. News about an empty trailer was passed on to a recently arrived family. Money was collected to bury a car accident victim. Elderly parents were taken care of with loving concern because the elderly enjoys a special status in Hispanic culture.

Respect is a term often used by Hispanics. A *bien educado* (literally translated as well educated) is a person who treats others with respect and deference. Good manners and respect are valued within the Hispanic migrant community. One-to-one relationships are emphasized. The migrant participants of the research were uncomfortable when in large

groups but very friendly, open, and honest when we talked privately. The older generation is concerned about passing on these values to new generations. This concern was expressed to me as something to be included when planning adult education programs.

Besides sharing values normally identified with the Hispanic culture, the migrants of Valley View share the following problems and situations that also shape their perceptions.

Marginalization and Poverty

Migrant farmworkers throughout the United States and in Valley View are recognized as the most disadvantaged group of this society. They are mostly agricultural workers employed half of the year and they live "below poverty level." Although farmwork for many becomes a family tradition and some feel trapped by the migrant lifestyle, migrant farmwork is not a lifelong career. Availability of farmwork attracts them to a community, but younger migrants are constantly looking for non-migrant employment. As for the general population, education is also sold to migrants by many advocates as the solution for an untrained work force.

Powerlessness

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers' position at the bottom of the economic ladder is related to what social scientists call structural factors. Economic inequalities, racism and class prejudice, and lack of political power create this low socioeconomic position (Hintz, 1987). Some of these workers feel trapped and they pass on this sense of powerlessness to the next generation. The migrants profiled by my study are beginning to deal with this sense

of powerlessness. They are reclaiming a voice in the community and trying very hard to find a place for themselves. Many believe that education offers them a way out of poverty; others are finding a way out by learning the business end of farming. The typology of migrant work I was able to develop from the information provided by the participants reveals that some of the migrant workers in the region are finding a place in the nation's economy. The *Pintero*, *Tomatero*, and *Contratista* are business people who have learned to combine their knowledge about the American economic system with their skills as farmworkers. The typology also described the subtle differences existing among migrant farmworkers.

What common elements are found in the educational life histories of the main participants?

Education, schooling, and learning have become synonymous with power and competency. Literacy programs abound, have become a major emphasis in adult education, and are considered by many as a panacea to society's ills. Adults with low literacy skills are seen as living socially and culturally impoverished lives. Despite research that shows that lacking literacy skills is not synonymous with lacking other skills, adults with low reading and writing skills are seen as unable to cope with the demands of a technological society (Fingeret, 1982; Velázquez, 1991). At the public education level, the emphasis is in reducing the number of people who drop out of school. At the adult education level, it is on increasing access to basic education programs. But from the student perspective, school has simply ceased to be relevant, both to the lives they currently live and to their futures; they continue

to reject formal education.

Although the incidence of dropping out appears to be increasing among white youth, historically the problem has been more prevalent among minority students, particularly black and Hispanic. In 1990, Hispanics had the highest dropout rate of all racial and ethnic groups, and the children of Hispanic migrant families contributed greatly to this statistic. Moreover, the statistics on adult participation of basic education program are dismal for Hispanic adults. Hispanics, along with Native-Americans, are the least likely of all ethnic groups to return to complete high school requirements (U.S. Department of Education Statistics).

Montero-Sieburth (1990) said that the education of Hispanic adults is poorly articulated as a critical national concern and gave the following reasons:

- *Adult education is not a national policy concern;
- *The problem has not been systematically researched;
- *Education for Hispanic adults is often reduced to interpretation at the community level, making it visible only to participants;
- *Specific programs, such as lifelong skills, are underfunded, so that the education programs are primarily considered to be English fluency or English literacy, with no concern for Spanish literacy skills;
- *The particular way in which Hispanics have been categorized and labeled, tends to obscure who are the adults requiring education;
- *The series of assumptions and myths about Hispanics;
- *A limited understanding of the socio-historical influences on American Hispanics;
- *A lack of awareness regarding the contribution of Hispanics to society at large.

The migrant adults of Valley View were not able to verbalize as well as Montero-

Sieburth the problems they had encountered when attempting to use education as a means to improve their employability. Instead, they talked about how their early schooling experiences had influenced the decision to drop out of school and how now, as adults, they feel uncomfortable attending traditionally designed ABE classes. They also expressed a somewhat different definition of education that places emphasis in socialization and the role of the family unit. For them education is what they give their children at home: the cultural and religious values, attitude, and mores that form their particular way of seeing the world and their place in it. Schooling had left painful memories that negatively influenced their views about adult educational programs. The reasons they gave for leaving school, including being too old for the grade, discrimination, meaningless of school when compared to personal and family needs, to take care of family matters, boredom and dislike of school, are all related to the migrant lifestyle. These reasons are also an indictment of schooling. Teachers were described as being insensitive to their needs, and the school system was seen as irrelevant and insulting to their culture. Yet migrant adults see a major value in formal education, especially for their children and future generations. And they value learning for themselves, showing pride in what they have learned after leaving school.

What are the migrant adults' perceptions on participation in adult basic education programs?

For many of the participants, the early schooling experiences became an obstacle to participation in adult basic education programs. They developed a resistance to anything that

was institutionalized and had the semblance of the traditional classroom. Even those who, wanting to improve their employability, forced themselves to return to a classroom were quickly disenchanted by the similarities between the ABE classes and their early schooling experiences. The program that eventually reached them had been purposely designed to serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers and stayed away from the traditional ABE format of program delivery.

This finding is consistent with the findings of recent studies by Cervero & Kirkpatrick (1990) and Quigley (1990, 1991, 1992), among others. An earlier study by Fingeret (1985) had suggested to take a look at schooling as “shaper of individuals” (p .54). Cervero & Kirkpatrick saw schooling as providing a powerful set of social circumstances that shapes the individual and recommended to take a closer look at these in order to understand the low participation rates of ABE programs.

The first study by Quigley (1990) investigated schooling and resistance to literacy as seen through the eyes of fictional literature characters. He concluded that for the characters studied quitting school became a statement of independence and a moral-political victory. In 1989, he studied adult non-participants and found schooling had a long-term psychological impact on the participants that created a resistance to anything resembling schooling. The study participants were influenced—in some case haunted—by the memories of their prior schooling experiences. These associations clearly impeded their stated interest in returning to formal educational programs and provided insight into the effects of schooling both for

school-based and adult education programs” (1991, p .6).

The High School Equivalency Program has assisted the migrant community of Valley View by providing an adult basic education program designed to meet their particular educational needs. It has also assisted by establishing a continuum of services through networking with local agencies also targeting migrant families such as migrant Head Start, Farmworkers Organization, Inc., the migrant health clinic, and the Spanish Baptist Church. By participating in the local association of social services agencies, they have created awareness of migrant’ needs and a system of referrals. Like most federally funded projects, this program is limited by the requirements for accountability placed by the funding agency. Funding is not guaranteed and is predicated upon meeting program completion goals. When interviewed, the staff at Valley View was trying to negotiate other sources of funding that would assist in expanding services and in providing ESL classes.

From the migrant perspective, all these programs have yet to meet one of their concerns. José voiced this concern when he talked about the need for a center that provides for migrant adults’ cultural, educational, and vocational needs.

The migrants in Valley View are organizing around this concern. Luz, who has become not only the migrant spokesperson to the community at large, but also the leader among the migrant community, recently invited a group of community leaders to discuss the need for a Hispanic cultural center. I was invited to attend the meeting, and as I listened to her explaining her ideas and dreams for Centro El Arcoiris (The Rainbow Center) I wondered

if this community was really ready for an assertive and outspoken Hispanic female in a leadership role. The future of the Hispanic migrant community in Valley View depends not only on adult education programs that are empowering within the migrant community but that also bring about social change.

How does the study of a migrant community contribute to the knowledge base on the educational needs of minority groups and possibly open new doors to future research?

My decision to study the culture of migrancy was strongly influenced by recent articles and studies by adult educators who are concerned about serving culturally diverse populations (Ross-Gordon, Martin, & Briscoe, 1990; Quigley 1990, 1991a, 1992). These adult educators have called for the development of alternate programs "grounded in acceptable/relevant values and cultural systems" (Ross-Gordon et al. p. 113). Concerned by the continuing under representation of ethnic and racial minorities in adult education programs, adult educators encourage the study of the forces shaping perceptions and affecting the participation of these groups.

By studying the population that concerns me the most, migrant workers, I hope I have contributed to the base knowledge on the educational needs of minority groups. The study concentrated on how the migrancy experience shaped the perceptions of schooling, learning, and education for migrant adults living at the site. Further research of migrant adults in other communities is needed to see how my findings fit other migrant workers. It is my hope that my

study will serve as the starting point for further research for the benefit of migrants in other areas.

Recommendations

An ethnographic report is always written from the point of view of the ethnographer. But it is also written with an audience in mind. I am an adult basic education practitioner and I am writing with an adult basic education audience in mind. By studying a migrant community as adult educator, I was able to assess some of their perceptions of schooling, learning and education. Using that information, I feel capable to look at adult basic education practices and make recommendations for program improvement in order to better serve migrant adults. I also believe that these recommendations are appropriate for programs serving other similarly marginalized minority groups. Yet, by using ethnographic methods of qualitative data collection a researcher often finds more questions than answers. My review of the pertinent literature made me aware of the need to further study migrant communities. Studies with an anthropology focus are needed to better describe the culture of migrancy. Research on how the typology of migrant work I was able to develop, applies to other migrant communities will further the value of my study. Sociology focused studies on community development, housing, accommodation and integration, ethnicity, race, and gender issues are also needed. The health needs of farm workers are seldom the topic of health related studies. Poverty, labor laws, lack of political power and advocacy are topics in need of study as they relate to the migrant worker.

As an adult basic education practitioner, I hope that my description of a migrant community and of the participants' perceptions of schooling, learning, and education will assist other practitioners in developing understanding and sensitivity for the educational needs of migrant adults. As a researcher interested in finding better ways to serve adult members of minority groups, I urge other adult educators to further study the educational needs of Hispanic adults.

Recommendations to Adult Basic Education

Only "learner-grounded" adult basic education programs can be expected to succeed. In grounding ABE with learners it is also necessary to consider the diversity of socio-economic backgrounds they bring to the programs (Quigley, 1987, p. 70).

Existing communities and social groups are legitimate sources of personal and group identity. Literacy educators must engage in a mutual process of communication and influence with these social groups (Fingeret, 1982, p. 349).

Under the umbrella of adult basic education we find a diversity of programs and a diversity of populations. Adult education programs are only effective if they meet the needs of the target population. The targeted population of adult basic education programs is a complex population. It is formed by groups that have diverse ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds. Many are marginalized groups whose needs go beyond literacy and communication skills. Many have strengths and values that are ignored and mislabeled. Logically, the first step to effectively meeting their needs is to get to know each group in such a way that

will enable adult educators to recognize the needs as well as the strengths. Survey and questionnaires will not be enough. To accomplish that task, adult educators must spend time within the community learning about their culture and social structure.

Based on the findings of this study, I make the following recommendations to adult basic education researchers and practitioners:

1. Implement an adult education research agenda that is holistic in nature.

The recent studies on participation/non-participation that inspired my research had revealed the lasting effects that past educational experiences had for the ABE target population. By focusing on the educational life history of the participants while studying the culture of migrancy, I found that the schooling experiences of migrant adults match very closely the experiences of other group studied. I also discovered that in learning about a culture, we must delve into the interaction between the present and the past. The knowledge thus acquired must then be translated into program planning theory and design.

For me holistic research is the study of the complex interaction of factors that shape individual and groups perceptions. By studying a migrant community, by delving into the educational life histories of the research participants, by focusing on their cultural history I was able to develop a model that graphically describes how the migrant adults studied responded to schooling and adult basic education. The next step will be translate that

knowledge into effective adult basic education programs.

2. Design adult basic education programs that meet the researched needs of the target community

The migrant community in Valley View deals daily with a variety of situations related to their status in the community. Concerns such as where to shop; where to look for housing; how to behave when outside the migrant circle of friends; where to look for jobs; what school to enroll their children; how to behave when dealing with social agencies, local police, and school authorities. Adult education for them cannot be divorced from wider socioeconomic dimensions of unemployment or underemployment, political power, and equal opportunity. Acculturation is the process by which individuals move from one socio-cultural setting to another and acquire the norms of another culture. This process can be dysfunctional for Hispanics if the discontinuity between their culture and the mainstream society are not effectively bridged through functional education (Montero-Sieburth, 1990). To effectively meet the needs of marginalized groups, adult basic education must be holistic and address the totality of needs brought to the learning setting.

Montero-Sieburth (1990), studied four successful Hispanic literacy programs and identified the following characteristics:

- *Espouse a humanistic, interpersonal, and dialogic philosophy;
- *Have an open and supportive environment;
- *Have community visibility;

- *Have a strong network of community resources;
- *Classes are flexible, adults are involved in their own learning;
- *Teachers act as facilitators, counselors, and managers. They are proficient in Spanish and English and knowledgeable of the community and cultural norms;
- *Instructional strategies were based on group dialogue, personal interaction, active participation, appropriate materials, and an integrated curriculum, consisting of basic skills, with personal and community development.

José, one of the migrant adults profiled, advocated a comprehensive learning center where adult basic education would be one of the components. He called that type of program *convivencias*. The term in Spanish literally translated means "living together." It is often used by the Catholic church to describe a type of activity that brings the community together to share experiences, problems, and solutions. As José described the program, he talked about a place that would offer not only literacy and vocational education but also social and community activities. This would be place for young adults to meet and have activities together and a place where traditions and social customs would be transmitted to the younger generations by older members of the Hispanic migrant community.

The HEP program in Valley View helped many of the research participants by establishing a continuum of services to provide assistance beyond GED preparation. Yet the local migrant community still sees the need for services and programs beyond the scope of HEP funding. The "real need", according to the study participants, is for a comprehensive adult education center that meet migrant adults' vocational education, basic skills, and cultural needs.

3. Support research and programmatic activities among marginalized groups that are transformative and empowering.

My experiences as a researcher within the migrant community of Valley View led me to conclude that, no matter the techniques used to conduct research among marginalized people, they should be used for emancipation and empowerment. Beder (1991a) stated that:

Different tools and means of analysis, using either positivist or interpretativist paradigms can serve for transformative research ends.. It is the human factor implemented through ethical choice that counts and that makes research transformative rather than the ideology itselfWe can do research that may strengthen the very structures that keep people oppressed, or we can do research in behalf of and with those who are oppressed. (p. 20)

For me transformative or empowering research is the collective creation of critical awareness of the power relations that keep people marginalized and the participatory search for solutions that empower with knowledge to change them. The programs resulting from this type of research are sensitive to cultural differences; use the participant's strengths as basis for the curriculum; address the real issues of powerlessness, marginalization, and prejudice; and give the target population a voice in the community.

It is my hope that this study will serve as base for further research and programmatic activities to benefit the migrant population and reduce the conditions that keep them marginalized and invisible. Many ABE and GED preparation programs such as HEP are serving migrant adults and other cultural groups, but their scope is limited and retention rates are low. Accountability, as defined by the funding agency, is measured by the number of students passing the GED and not by improvement in the quality of life of its participants.

Many migrant adults enroll in GED preparation programs trying to increase their employability but leave without taking the GED test because of household and family needs. For many others, the pressing need is not taking and passing a test but for becoming empowered to deal with personal and societal problems. The study I conducted among this migrant community leads me to believe that the design and delivery of adult basic education programs that are sensitive to the needs of a culturally diverse population must be based on ethnographic research studies of each of the cultures served, must be driven by transforming and empowering goals, and their success measured by the improvement in the quality of life of its participants.

PART VII

Personal Reflections on the Process: The Role of the Researcher and Transformative Research

My Role as Ethnographer

Life is a continual unfolding where the narrative insights of today are the chronological events of tomorrow. Ethnographic research that uses narratives to present data sometimes freezes the narrative, suggesting to the reader a fixed, print portrait. The participants of my research are living lives that are far from fixed, lives that are evolving and unfinished. For me the hardest part of my research was not gaining entry into the field, nor establishing rapport and getting people to talk with me, it was staying neutral and remaining an observer of these lives.

For a six-month period, I spent as much time as possible within the migrant community of Valley View. That gave me the opportunity to know some of the research participants in a very personal way. The focus of the semi-structured interviews was an educational chronology of time and event in their educational life history, but our interaction during the participant observation phase of the study occurred during daily life activities, giving me the opportunity to experience life as it develops for this group of people. This type of involvement was what attracted me to ethnographic research and I was eager to become a member of the migrant community of Valley View and, in that way, learn more about their lifestyle.

The diversity of views about ethnographic research expressed by my committee during the proposal process had cautioned me against doing openly ideological research. I entered the field with the purpose of describing, to the best of my abilities, the local migrant community. As an adult educator, my research intended to study migrant adults as learners.

Therefore, I intended to learn about the migrant lifestyle to clarify how it framed migrant adults' perceptions of education. I had selected three concepts: schooling, learning, and education, influenced by recent studies by adult educators (Fingeret, 1983, 1984, 1989; Martin 1984; and Quigley, 1987, 1990, 1991). My study was designed to be descriptive, intending to illuminate, clarify, reveal, and find commonalities that would assist in the understanding of migrants adults as learners. This understanding, I felt, was indispensable for the design and implementation of adult education programs that effectively met migrant adults' educational needs. Through the organization and analysis of the data I wanted to paint a picture, to create an image that could represent the essence of the migrant community living at the research site. To do that, I concluded, I would not need a guiding theory or ideology. I would only need to observe carefully and describe faithfully. Objectivity and neutrality will guide me, I thought, and I will be able to produce a value- neutral study.

I entered the field as free of personal bias as I am capable. The first two visits helped me to become familiar with the trailer park where a great number of the migrant community has taken residence. As I drove toward the trailer park area, I passed the residential section of Valley View. The big houses with well-tended yards where flower plants were beginning to blossom were a beautiful sight. In comparison, the trailer park was dreadful-looking and ugly. I asked myself, how can anybody live here? As I begun to know the participants better, I wondered what can be done to improve their living conditions. I asked Rosa, the beautiful young lady who wants to become a community leader like Luz, "What do you think the local migrant community needs the most to be better integrated into the area?" She answered:

Better housing. This trailers are the pits. The rent is too high. They charge \$300.00 for a two-bedroom trailer that is located in the worst part of town. And you take it because the camp's housing conditions is even worse.

I did not go any further on the housing issue and only documented the need for better housing through the story of what I called “the migrant housing fiasco” (Part III). However, I felt a strong urge to promote organizing the migrants around that issue and saw the potential of the issue as unifying factor.

A Transforming Experience

When I felt I needed to spent more time at the site, I was invited by Luz, my main informant, to stay at her house. I happily accepted because I felt that the intimacy of living with a migrant family would give more credibility to the research. But once I moved in, I realized how difficult it would be to remain objective while at the same time a community member. She was going through a difficult and tumultuous time in her life as a woman, wife, and mother. As is common between Hispanic female friends, she confided in me. The very first night I spent at her home we stayed until early in the morning talking about the changes she was experiencing after going from a high school dropout and typical Hispanic migrant woman and wife, quiet and unassertive, to a businesswoman and recognized migrant community leader. I could not play the role of a detached and objective researcher that night. I felt the kinship bonds of Hispanic womanhood that tied us together and shared with her my

own experiences. I did not give advice; I had none to give. We reflected together on shared experiences and “named our worlds.” This experience changed the quality of our relationship. She was not only to remain my main informant only, she was also to become my friend. We were able to talk about any topic after that. She provided very useful research information, but we also spent many hours talking about issues that never made it into my notes. As a result both our worlds changed somewhat, and we will never be the same people we were before.

I found myself listening differently to the stories of the other female research participants, especially Rosa who wants so badly to be another Luz and become a leader in the community. My questions had a different quality. I wanted to know more about their roles as Hispanic women. I discovered that many were very confused about their identities and striving to come out of relationships where they felt trapped and unfulfilled. I also became aware of changes in the way I dealt with the male participants. The roles they played as workers, husbands, and fathers were also changing. The younger ones were breaking with migrancy as a way of life. They were increasingly having to deal with the non-migrant world. They were also confused by the many adjustments these changes are forcing on them. When I asked, many times they were unable to verbalize their plans for the future.

I had to remind myself of the purpose of my research and return to the questions that focused on migrant adults as learners. But undoubtedly, the experience has given me an appreciation for transformative research, for research that does not generate knowledge for the sake of knowledge nor intends to uncover universal laws and scientific principles. Rather

it produces reflective knowledge that helps people to name their world and, in doing so, to change their world (Beder, 1991a).

Since I did not go to Valley View to do transformative research but to conduct descriptive, ethnographic research, this ethnographic report documents the major characteristics of the migrant community in the area and focuses on the migrant adults participants' experiences as learners. By reflecting on the process, I intended to also document the need for research of transformative quality and intent.

The above section consisted of a personal and reflective account of my feelings about my role as a researcher while at the study setting. It also reflects the philosophical and theoretical concerns I experienced. I feel compelled to include them in the body of the dissertation because they reflect the transforming power of this type of research. I believe that the study participants and I entered into a type of relationship that had lasting and transforming effects in both. The study findings and recommendations were undoubtedly influenced by the experiences described in this last section.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Interview Questions

Schooling

Tell me about yourself

- Where were you born?
- How big is your family?
- What type of migrant work have you done?
- Where?

What are your earliest recollections about school

- Elementary?
- Middle/Junior High?
- High School?

Probing Questions

- What happened next?
- Tell me more about it.

What do you remember about

- Teachers?
- School facilities?
- School administrators?
- Peers?

Tell me your happiest recollection about school? Your saddest?

When did you leave school?

- How did it happen? Who made the decision?
- How did it feel to leave school?

Learning

Tell me about any learning you did after leaving school

- When, Where, How?

Tell me about when you first considered returning to school.

- What did prompt it?

Education

Tell me about your future education plans. After you dropped out of school, did you still consider education important for yourself?

- your children

- your relatives

- your friends

Tell me about your aspirations for your children.

Appendix II

Information Sheet

I invite you to participate in a study I am doing about migrant adults' perceptions of schooling, learning, and education. This is an area we know little about and the knowledge gained through this study will assist us to plan better programs for migrant adults.

If you agree to participate I would like to spend sometime with you, at your convenience, to talk about your earliest recollections of school and any learning you have experienced since leaving school. I am hoping that you will benefit from the process of recollecting and responding to my inquiries by gaining a better understanding of the role education plays in your life. The final report for this study will be submitted to a committee formed by the University of Tennessee professors as part of my requirements to complete a doctoral program. The information you provide during the interviews will be held in confidence and code numbers and pseudonyms will be used instead of names on the final report. If you agree, the interviews will be audiotaped and the tapes will be kept in a locked file in my office.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at anytime and/or refuse to answer specific questions without incurring any penalty. If you have any questions about the study and your participation in it, I want you to contact me and I will answer as soon as possible.

Loida C. Velázquez
High School Equivalency Program
Terrace Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37996

Appendix III

Participation Consent Form

I understand that the purpose of this study is to learn about migrant adults perceptions about schooling, learning, and education and that my participation involves talking to the researcher about my early experiences in school, my learning experiences outside school, and my feelings about education.

I understand that the information I provide the researcher will be held in confidence, with pseudonyms used instead of real names in the written report. I understand that my conversations with the researcher will be audiotaped and that by signing this consent form I give my approval to the audiotaping. I have been informed that the audiotapes will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office and that once they are transcribed they will be erased.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from participation at anytime and/or refuse to answer specific questions without incurring any penalty. I know that there are no risks involved in my participation and that I can benefit from the process of reflecting and responding to the researcher's inquiries and from the knowledge gained from the study's findings.

I understand that I may contact the researcher at anytime if I have further questions about the study or about my participation in it.

Signature: _____

Name (please print): _____

Date: _____

Appendix V

Extended Notes

PARTICIPANT #1

2/12/91 9:00 am Luz is a native of Austin Texas, a second generation Mexican-american. She is a typical mexican descendant with dark, long hair, brown skin and dark eyes. She is 31 years old but looks younger. She speaks Spanish as her first language but her English is very good although with an accent. Since she knows I understand Spanish she mixes both languages when we are talking. I have known her for over a year. I first met her when she was a student in the program I supervise but only as I visited the classroom with very little conversation. Her GED instructor was very proud of her accomplishment and kept mentioning her name in our conversations.

Last year, I wanted to research a migrant housing issue that became very critical in that North Carolina town and he recommended I talked to her since she had been interviewed by the local press on the issue. I spent a day with her and was fascinated by her interest in helping her people. I knew immediately I wanted to know more about her life story. She dropped out of school when she was fifteen years old to have a baby. Shortly after

she married Belen, a mexican she had met after her baby was born. Her firstborn is 16 years old now and planning to drop out of eighth grade. She has 2 boys, four years and 18 months. She was expecting her last child when she went to the migrant adult education program and received the GED. Her husband is a crew leader at a migrant camp. His job is to find the migrant workers for the farm and supervise their work. Luz is very energetic and sometimes she seems hyperactive. She is very expressive and friendly and far from shy. When she started in the GED program she was working at a migrant grocery store but now she owns a similar store where she sells mexican food, spices, soda drinks, rents Spanish movies and sells Spanish music tapes.

11:00 am Called Luz. She had forgotten I was coming and had plan to meet with a fellow member of the migrant health clinic board (Lindsay Jones). She suggested to meet for lunch with her and Lindsey.

12:30 pm We had lunch at a Korean restaurant close to Luz's store. The experience was awkward for me. Luz was very attentive to Lindsay and left me in the background. She showed a great respect for Lindsay and throughout the lunch she acted very intent in talking to Lindsay about the last board meeting. She apologize to me and said they had not had time to talk. I had the impression they were to talk before meeting me for lunch and finally understood the situation and took my place in the background. Luz even offered Lindsay to move to a different table to talk but Lindsay seemed to like my presence there. (Later on I found that she had heard about my research on the housing

issue from John Gaventa and wanted to talk to me. We have since talk on the phone and she wrote me a letter). I want to interview Lindsay as Luz's fellow board member. Luz and Lindsay talked about the board meeting. Luz was very concerned about understanding what was going on at the board. Lindsay talked about the hidden agenda of the board and Luz said she had not expressed herself at the meeting because she did not want to sound ignorant and had realized the board had "inside groups". Lindsay (and myself) was surprised by Luz's insight on the board's process. She told her about how the inside group made all the decisions and expected the others (her included) to agree with them. Luz asked Lindsay to explain to her the politics of the group and what their agenda. She asked to explain to her where were the clinic fund's coming from and the secrecy about the executive directors salary. I found the conversation fascinating, specially Luz's questions and insights. I saw Luz trying to gain not only knowledge but a measure of power from Lindsay.

After Lindsay left Luz was very complementary of her and said her vocabulary was so different she had to use the dictionary and look for the words she did not understand after talking to her.

Appendix VI

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT #1

2:30 pm We walked to the store and tried to talk there but Luz suggested we talk outside because her daughter had the radio too loud and the noise bothered her. We sat on the bench outside the store.

Q: Where were you born?

A: Austin, TX

Q: Were your parents migrant workers at the time?

L: "When I was very young they were migrants. I remember my parents putting us under a trailer while they picked cotton. They will fill bags with cotton. We were very happy when we saw those white bags coming back because we knew were going to eat. By the third trip they would stop and give us some tacos. My mother then would turn around and go back to the fields. They worked cutting sugar cane too. We were left under the truck while they were working the field".
I have 3 sisters and 6 brothers. I am the third from the oldest. I went to school when I was six. Went first to Brooks Elementary in Austin. I lived in Austin all

my childhood. Brooks was a big school, bigger than the schools here.

Q: What do you remember about that school?

L: " I remember a lot from first grade. This is going to be touch, I don't know if you want to hear this. Is this confidential?

Me: Very. Only I will listen to the tapes. I will include in the report only what you agree on. Tell me only what you want me to know.

L: "What I remember is hard. I did not have a regular family. The things I remember are not that great. Not even from day one. There has not been any good."

Me: What were the hardest things?

L: "Trying to fit in and not having the right clothes. Seeing other girls with dollies and eating candy, socks with ruffles and me the only one with ugly clothes. Torn clothes. We were poor but that was not it. It was my mother. It was the only thing she knew".

"Right up until the six grade it was all a big hell. Since my step father died. When he died there was nobody for me. I was put in foster homes and even in an orphanage. I was without help from my mother. That was when I started to grow up. That was when the ball started rolling and I had to be who I am. I had to start to defend myself and to grow up. I was never really happy until I was 28. You see when you ask me about school is all tied with my family life".

Q: Did you stay in Brooks all through elementary?

L: "No after third grade I went to Zavalas"

Q: What do you remember about the teachers at Brooks?

L: "They were nice but I can't help but stay bitter because they should have known better. People could get away with anything then and I hate that because I wouldn't have suffered as much if people had paid attention. Even those teachers saw me coming to school with scratches on my face or bruises, if I was always black and blue, my neck was bruised or I had bites on me. I feel those teachers should had wandered (why). I was in the English only program but there was a bilingual teacher who talked to me in Spanish, she helped me more than other."

Appendix VII

MATRIX I

	Migrant Culture	Education
Tito	Traveled back and forth with Maria	Did not like school. Did better in HEP.
Ezzy	Traveled through two streams left school to help at home.	Learned from Brother-in-law.
Maria	Back and forth from Florida - Language problem & Boyfriend relationship?	3rd grade education. Learned by observation and memory.
Carmen	White migrant - Hispanic boyfriend Could not find other type of job.	Did like school at first.
Jose	Type of migrants -----> Crewleader System.	Never continue hired "convivencias" - where young people would learn from old.
Luz	Contact with the Community Gracias Amigo Fiesta	School as pain, isolation, Mother/daughter situation
Reyna	Travel from North Carolina to Florida and Back.	Problems at home ---> dropout ABE - did not work.
Leroy	Black migrant no contact with Hispanics because language barrier. Did some as dad traveled with black crew few Hispanics.	Kicked out of school. Tried ABE did not work.

VITA

I was born on February 21, 1942 in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. I attended elementary and secondary school in Vega Baja, P. R. In 1971 I received the Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus. I taught fourth grade at a private school for a year before migrating with my husband and children to the continental United States. In 1979 I received the Master of Science in Educational Psychology Degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

From 1979 to 1985 I was employed by Minorities in Action (MINACT), a subcontractor for the Department of Labor Job Corp program. During that time I served as counselor, placement specialist, manager of vocations, and director of training for Job Corp centers in Knoxville, Tennessee and Excelsior Spring, Missouri. From 1985 to 1987 I served as East Tennessee coordinator for the Tennessee Protection and Advocacy Agency, a state program responsible for the protection of the civil rights of people with handicaps. I joined the University of Tennessee in the Fall of 1987 as the administrator of a federally funded program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

In December, 1993, I received the Doctor of Education degree from the University of Tennessee, majoring in Technological and Adult Education.