

Using Agricultural Stereotypes in the Media to Prepare Students for Careers in Agriculture

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ALEC 380: Experience Agriculture—Study Away

- Critical-thinking, reflection, interaction with peers within context of modern agriculture
- 10-day field trip National FFA Convention
- Individual and group course work



Coursework Focus

- Communicating agricultural messages in unbiased ways
- Combatting agricultural stereotypes



Agricultural Stereotypes

- Perceptions of rural life (Specht, 2013)
 - Pastoral fantasy
 - Decline of agrarian tradition
 - Traditional family farm



The Media

- Entertainment media impacts perceptions of agriculture (Specht & Beam, 2015)
- Social reality influences beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Ruth, Lundy & Park, 2005)

Reality Programs



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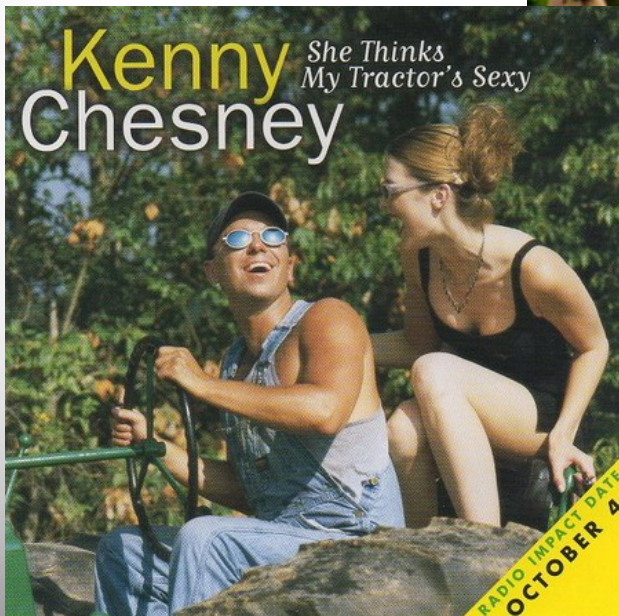
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Cartoons



Reflection

“Society creates many stereotypes, and it is everyone's personal decision as to whether they let those stereotypes rule their life or whether they prove differently.”



Reflection

“Stereotypes are constantly used in agriculture! Everyone thinks it's the farmer with the overalls and red plaid shirt that grows all the food, and takes care of the animals. But in reality it's just the opposite. People who wear tennis shoes, who have loving families, who live in a large city are the ones feeding the world.”



Reflection

“And I honestly was stereotyping people in our classroom the first day I met everyone. I was judging so hard. And man was I wrong about every single one of them.”



Reflection

“Stereotypes exist. And they are more common than I thought! And I honestly had stereotypes myself! But as I went through the trip I realized how ridiculous mine were and changed my mindset.”



Reflection

“I have learned that there will always be stereotypes in agriculture. Whether it [is] in agriculture, society, or even [the} classroom. But, I think it is important to know both sides of the stereotypes. And why there are certain stereotypes and how it can [a]ffect certain people. And why can't we get over stereotypes?”



Reflection

“I have learned[,] not only in our classroom but in general, that stereotypes are not always a bad thing, and can serve a purpose.”



Reflection

“Sadly, stereotypes are most often viewed as a negative thing. However, stereotypes can be positive if a person embraces them and uses them to their advantage.”



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- What were the students' stereotypes of each other?
- Interpersonal connections on the field trip were critical to students' mindsets changing. Curriculum could be implemented without the field trip component to compare learning.
- Stereotypes agriculturalists have of others was not introduced and would be a strong addition to the curriculum.
- Pre- and Post-Reflection Questionnaire



References

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QUESTIONS?

