

Teaching and Educational Methods

An Ignatian Pedagogical Approach to Fostering Conversations on BIPOC Farmland Ownership Through Film Screenings

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Abstract

This article applies the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm (IPP) to developing a day-long event focused on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farm ownership in a college of agriculture at a mid-south university. The event utilized IPP's five elements—context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation—to engage students with conversations surrounding the systemic barriers adversely affecting BIPOC producers. The event included a screening of “Gaining Ground,” which provided historical and contemporary insights into the challenges of BIPOC landownership, setting a foundational context and offering a direct experiential learning opportunity. The screening was followed by a panel discussion involving experts in agriculture, social justice, and policy, which deepened the reflective component of the pedagogical framework. The action and evaluation phases were highlighted through networking opportunities with leaders in the field and feedback collection to assess changes in participant perceptions and intentions to act on their knowledge. This case study demonstrates the IPP's effectiveness in delivering educational content and inspiring actionable insights and personal growth for students in agricultural colleges. It underscores the paradigm's value in academic settings for addressing complex social issues and offers a model for educators who seek to enhance student engagement and societal impact through structured pedagogical approaches.

1 Introduction

An increasing emphasis has been placed on integrating socioeconomic perspectives that reflect the diverse and complex realities of farming communities, particularly those historically marginalized (Estepp, Wiersma-Mosley, and Shoulders 2021). To address these challenges, a day-long event was organized at a mid-south land-grant university, focusing on fostering conversations surrounding Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmland ownership. The event featured a documentary screening, expert panel discussions, and networking opportunities, all designed to engage students with the systemic barriers that adversely affect BIPOC producers. This article explores one method to present systemic barriers faced by BIPOC farmers to students, an issue that aligns with the land-grant mission to address societal challenges through educational scholarship (Malone et al. 2022).

Emphasizing these barriers is critical in U.S. colleges of agriculture, given the pivotal role of diversity in enhancing U.S. food systems amid changing demographic and economic landscapes (McCluskey 2019). Despite their significant contributions, BIPOC farmers encounter multifaceted hurdles, from accessing land and capital to navigating institutional biases within agricultural support systems, resulting in a sharp decline of BIPOC-owned Farms (Horst and Marion 2019). These challenges are rooted in historical inequities and require increased intercultural competence and “anti-racism” among burgeoning agriculturalists (Wiersma-Mosley et al. 2023).

By approaching these barriers through the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm (IPP), this study contributes to a broader understanding of how educational interventions can be designed to challenge students to reflect and critically analyze how their own lived experiences might mirror or challenge their

current worldview. The IPP is a well-established educational framework rooted in Jesuit pedagogical theory, emphasizing the integration of five core elements: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in shaping the learning process, promoting a holistic approach that encourages personal growth, critical thinking, and social responsibility. In this context, the IPP provides a structured approach to engage students deeply with the systemic barriers faced by BIPOC farmers, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic perspective. This approach is particularly relevant to developing intercultural competence for undergraduate students in the United States, as it underscores the importance of educational innovations that promote inclusivity and economic resilience in the agri-food sector (Wiersma-Mosley 2019).

Justice work is critical for the field of agricultural and applied economics (Wilson 2023). As such, this paper shows how educators, policymakers, and agricultural professionals might leverage on-campus events to foster conversations about relevance, quality, trust, diversity, equity, and inclusion in agri-food systems (Bohman 2024). These conversations are particularly important, as agri-food policy opinions have changed over time, often leading to demands for added political intervention in the food system (Biedny, Malone, and Lusk 2020). This article seeks to contribute to our understanding of important societal issues and promote innovative pedagogical shifts that might enhance accessibility and inclusion in agricultural education.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. First, we provide a pedagogical background that describes our approach to the development of the event. Rooted in the IPP of integrated action and reflection, we describe the mechanisms with which we introduced the relevant historical and socioeconomic data that describe institutionalized barriers to entry for BIPOC farmers in the United States. We then give a detailed account of the event, including contextual and background information necessary to understand the situation. This section includes details about the event and the entities involved. The fourth section uses reflection data from students in a senior-level undergraduate agricultural economics class of seventy-five students to describe how students processed and reflected on the event. The article then concludes with learned recommendations of best practices for developing similar events in the future.

2 Pedagogical Background

Though events are common on university campuses, this article argues the importance of intentionality in developing an overarching theme and integrating a reflection process into the event. To accomplish this intentionality, we approached our event from the paradigm of the IPP approach, especially as it relates to engaging students in understanding business strategy and ethics (Van Hise and Massey 2010; Gunn et al. 2015; Mauri, Figueiredo, and Rashford 2015). Figure 1 presents our conceptual approach, which is founded on five core elements: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation, each contributing uniquely to the learning environment and outcomes of the event.

2.1 Context

In the IPP, the concept of “Context” plays a foundational role in shaping the educational experience, recognizing that learning does not occur in isolation but is deeply influenced by the environment in which it takes place. Context encompasses how a student’s personal identity is attached to the historical, cultural, socioeconomic, and personal circumstances surrounding the learners and the learning environment (Moreno and Malone 2021). In agriculture, context is also inherently social, as social connectedness has been shown to lead to changes in production choices (DeDecker et al. 2022). It grounds the educational content in the realities of the students’ lived identity, making the learning

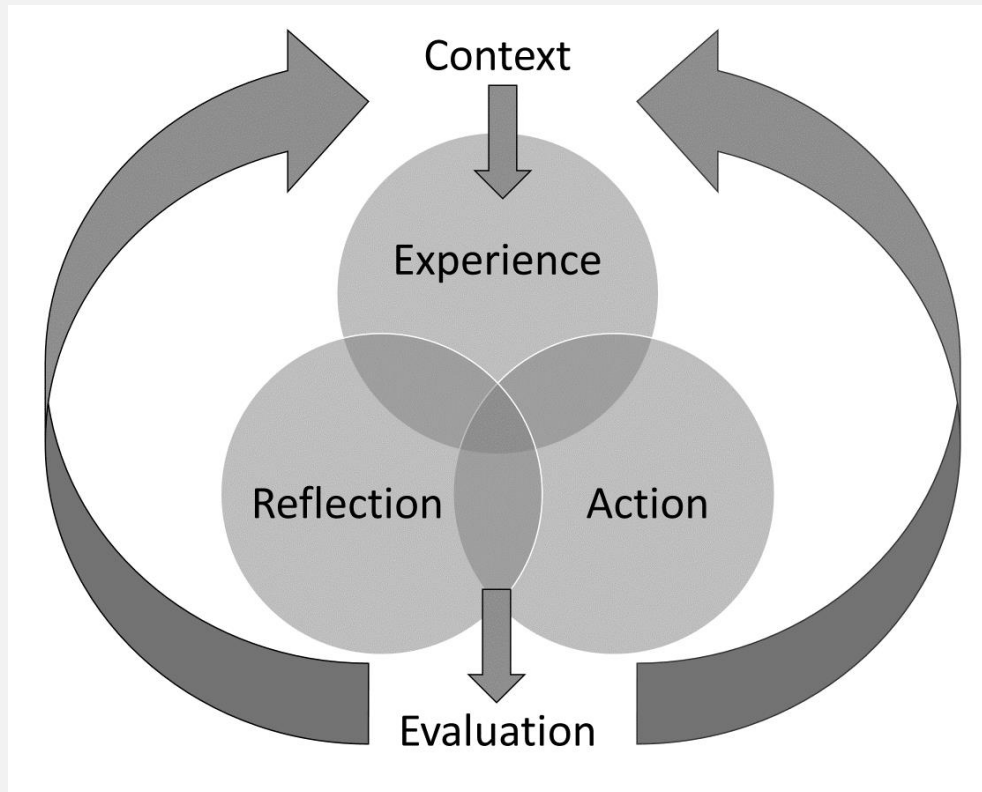


Figure 1: Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm.

Note: Adapted from Mauri et al. (2015)

experience more relevant and impactful. By understanding the specific contexts of the learners, educators can tailor the curriculum to address the unique challenges and advantages these environments present. In strategy classrooms, particularly those dealing with complex issues such as social justice or business ethics, acknowledging context allows a deeper exploration of how broader systems influence individual and collective behaviors and decisions. This approach enhances comprehension and fosters a more empathetic and informed student body equipped to engage with the world around them thoughtfully and effectively.

The event was set against the backdrop of increasing awareness and support for BIPOC communities in agriculture, a sector marked by historical inequities. By hosting the event at a major educational land-grant institution and involving stakeholders from various sectors, including academia, industry, and civil society, the event created a rich context for addressing complex and systemic issues in land ownership and farming among Black communities.

2.2 Experience

Once “Context” is established, a student’s “Experience” forms the primary foundation for deeper learning and personal transformation. This element goes beyond passive absorption of information, allowing learners the ability to engage with and participate actively in the educational content (Lagoudakis et al. 2020). Experience in this framework can range from experiential learning activities, such as simulations and role-playing, to real-world interactions and observations that bring academic theories to life. For instance, in an agribusiness management strategy classroom focusing on agricultural economics, students might conduct field visits to farms or communities, conduct interviews, or participate in service-learning projects that align with the curriculum. These experiences are designed to make the

learning process vivid and tangible, fostering a deeper emotional and intellectual connection to the subject matter. This hands-on approach helps students better understand the complexities of the topics they are studying and empowers them to apply their knowledge in practical and often innovative ways, reinforcing the Ignatian call to service and ethical action.

The documentary screening was a direct experience, providing visceral and intellectual engagement with the subject matter. The panel discussion and the interactive sessions with BIPOC farmers and educators complemented this, further enriching the attendees' understanding by connecting theoretical insights with real-world applications and personal narratives.

2.3 Reflection

“Reflection” is a vital component facilitating a deeper internalization and understanding of the knowledge gained through experience. Without a thorough process of reflection, people can make kneejerk reactions, creating inappropriate policy decisions, thereby misallocating public resources (Malone, Schaefer, and Wu 2021). In this setting, reflection acts as a bridge connecting experience to learning, allowing students to process and analyze their experiences critically. This process encourages students to consider what they have learned and how it applies to their values, future actions, and broader societal impacts. In an educational setting, structured reflection might involve discussions, journaling, or reflective essays that prompt students to think about the ethical dimensions of their studies, challenge their preconceptions, and synthesize disparate pieces of knowledge into a coherent whole. This reflective practice is particularly important in fields engaging in topics like social justice, where understanding the subtleties of cause and effect, ethical implications, and long-term consequences is crucial (Hendricks et al. 2024; Sant’Anna, Kim, and Demko 2024; Yu and Lim 2024). By fostering a habit of reflective thinking, IPP helps students develop a more thoughtful, proactive, and compassionate approach to their personal and professional lives. Reflection was facilitated through guided discussions and Q&A sessions that followed the documentary screening and during the panel discussion. This phase allowed participants to digest and analyze the information presented, consider various perspectives, and engage with complex topics more deeply, fostering a critical examination of the issues at hand.

2.4 Action

The natural progression from “Reflection” is “Action,” embodying the principle that learning should increase knowledge and inspire a commitment to making a positive impact. This component encourages students to apply what they have learned in practical, often transformative ways, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Action in this context can take various forms, from community service projects and advocacy work to implementing new business strategies or policy recommendations. For example, students studying environmental policy might organize a local conservation initiative, or those in business ethics could develop fair trade partnerships. This active engagement ensures that education is about personal enrichment and contributing to the common good. By emphasizing action, IPP fosters a sense of responsibility and agency in students, urging them to become leaders who act conscientiously and ethically in their personal and professional lives, driven by a well-formed conscience to effect change in the world around them.

The actionable component was emphasized through discussions on strategic approaches to address the challenges faced by BIPOC farmers, including legal, economic, and social strategies. Involving students and future policymakers sought to inspire other participants to contribute effectively to these strategies.

2.5 Evaluation

To close the learning loop, participants must have an opportunity for “Evaluation” via a systematic assessment of the educational process and its outcomes. This evaluation extends beyond traditional academic metrics to include reflective self-assessment, peer feedback, and the actions’ real-world impacts. It is designed to gauge what the students have learned, how they have grown personally, and how effectively they have applied their learning in practical contexts. This process encourages continuous improvement and personal development, helping students to recognize their strengths and identify areas where further growth is needed. In practice, evaluation might involve revisiting learning objectives to ensure they align with the outcomes, adjusting teaching methods based on student feedback, or analyzing the community impact of a service project. By incorporating comprehensive evaluation methods, IPP ensures that education is dynamic, responsive, and deeply transformative, encouraging lifelong learning and adaptation.

Although not immediately quantifiable during the event, the evaluation phase involves an ongoing assessment of the knowledge disseminated and its impact on the participants’ understanding and actions post-event. This would ideally be measured through subsequent engagements, applications of learned concepts, and perhaps follow-up sessions or surveys to gauge the long-term impact of the event.

By integrating these elements, the event aimed to inform and engage students in a novel way, equipping students with the knowledge, insights, and motivation to effect change. This approach aligns with the IPP’s goal of forming well-rounded individuals aware of societal issues and prepared to take thoughtful and effective actions to address them.

3 Event Description

In the Spring 2024, an agricultural college at a mid-south, land-grant university hosted a full-day event titled “Transcending Spaces: A Community Conversation of Gaining Ground, The Fight for Black Land.” This event was developed in collaboration with its Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) chapter and supported by a local art museum. This event was developed to address the value of contextualizing and facilitating class conversations about campus diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice (Saucier et al. 2023).

The day began with lectures during courses in the agricultural economics department. In alignment with the IPP’s emphasis on “context,” a Black farmer led an informal discussion with a senior-level Farm Business Management class, sharing insights from his extensive experience as a fifth-generation farmer and agricultural leader. His discussion focused on innovative farming techniques and sustainable practices that have been instrumental in the success of his farms in Virginia and Arkansas. He elaborated on the importance of community building within the agriculture sector, especially among Black farmers, and he also highlighted the National Black Growers Council. His lecture covered strategic decisions in crop selection, land management, and leveraging agricultural technology to enhance productivity and sustainability. By integrating his personal journey and professional challenges, he gave the students a comprehensive view of modern farm management, emphasizing resilience and adaptation in the face of evolving agricultural landscapes. This lecture enriched the students’ academic experience and deepened their understanding of the socioeconomic factors influencing contemporary farming.

In a second course, a Black farmer described the opportunities and challenges in his entrepreneurial role as co-founder of the only minority-owned U.S. farm-to-bottle distillery to a junior-level Food and Agricultural Marketing class. The lecture dovetailed with a larger in-course conversation about the importance of marketing strategy selection for small-scale agricultural producers in the southern United States (Popp et al. 2023). Drawing from his nontraditional experience of transforming a sweet potato farm into premium spirits, he illustrated the role of branding and niche marketing in the success of agricultural enterprises. He emphasized the importance of storytelling in connecting

consumers with the heritage and quality of local produce, which has been pivotal for his family distillery. The lecture covered key strategies such as identifying target markets, leveraging social media for brand visibility, and fostering customer loyalty through community engagement. His insights gave the students practical examples of how innovative marketing strategies can elevate agricultural products from commodity status to premium brand offerings, thereby adding significant value to farm produce. By bringing the speakers to class and meeting the students where they regularly learn, we provide a solid grounding in our students' context, as outlined by the IPP, to set the stage for deeper experiential learning.

Before the documentary screening, we hosted an invite-only BBQ, catered by a BIPOC-owned local food business, where more than eighty Junior MANRRS students (primarily sixth- to twelfth-grade students) and educators from a rural community could informally engage with campus and agricultural leaders in a relaxed atmosphere, fostering conversations before the documentary and panel discussion. This gathering was designed with the IPP's "context" element in mind, creating a setting that acknowledged the backgrounds, identities, and experiences of the participants, particularly those who had never visited a college campus before. Junior MANRRS is a pre-collegiate initiative designed to foster interest and prepare young students for future careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics (STEAM). Aimed at grades 6-12, Junior MANRRS encourages young scholars to pursue higher education and careers in agriculture, natural resources, and environmental sciences. The BBQ and interactions at this event served as an "experience" within the IPP framework, offering students a hands-on, immersive opportunity to connect with mentors and professionals, thus bridging the gap between theoretical interest and real-world application.

Junior MANRRS (1) provides an opportunity to increase historically underrepresented students' direct exposure to a land grant university and mentorship via MANRRS collegiate members; (2) improve diversity in underrepresented areas of agriculture and related sciences by dispelling agriculture "myths"; and (3) expose underrepresented students to important "soft skills", applied research, and opportunities to network with agricultural leaders (Scales et al. 2023). This exposure, coupled with the reflective conversations that occurred during the BBQ, aligns with the IPP's emphasis on "reflection," allowing students to process and internalize their experiences in a supportive environment. The program offers a range of activities, including workshops, competitions, and regional cluster and national meetings, which provide professional development opportunities and expose students to the practical and academic aspects of agricultural sciences. Junior MANRRS equips students with valuable academic and leadership skills. MANRRS introduces young scholars to a network of professionals and like-minded peers, promoting diversity and inclusion within the agricultural sector. Through this initiative, K-12 and collegiate students gained insights into the relevance of agriculture and its impact on their daily lives, encouraging them to explore and contribute to the field proactively. Guided by the IPP framework, students gained insights into the relevance of agriculture and were encouraged to take "action" by actively participating in the field and considering how they might contribute to its future.

The largest component of the event was a free screening for the campus and community of the documentary "Gaining Ground: The Fight for Black Land," which addresses the challenges and systemic injustices Black farmers have faced in the United States over the centuries. Directed by Eternal Polk, produced by Al Roker Entertainment, and supported by John Deere, the film explores the historical context and current realities of Black landownership, emphasizing the significant decline in Black-owned farms and land over the last century. This documentary screening was selected to serve as a way to engage students in "action" within the IPP framework, providing attendees with challenging information about the systemic issues embedded within BIPOC agricultural landownership. Through personal stories and expert interviews, the documentary highlights how discriminatory practices, such as the exploitation of Heirs' Property laws, have systematically disadvantaged Black landowners. It also covers the resilience and efforts of Black farmers to reclaim their land and secure their rights to sustainable farming and generational wealth. The film sheds light on past grievances and focuses on

contemporary movements and legal reforms to rectify these long-standing inequities. “Gaining Ground” advocates for equity and justice within the agricultural sector and underscores the importance of land ownership as a pillar of economic stability and cultural heritage in the Black community.

Following the documentary, the event transitioned to a panel discussion. This part of the evening brought together a diverse group of experts, each offering unique insights into the themes presented in the film. This transition to a panel discussion aligns with the IPP’s emphasis on “experience” and “reflection,” as it provided participants with the opportunity to engage with the material presented in the film through direct interaction with experts. The panel included the Vice President for Agriculture within the state, who brought a deep understanding of agricultural policy. The Assistant Vice President contributed his expertise in economic development and finance as well as growing up in a Black farming family in the state. A Black farmer featured in the documentary and the Chairman of the National Black Growers Council shared personal experiences and broader advocacy efforts. A Black woman who is the Founder and CEO of Black Women in Ag highlighted challenges and opportunities for Black women in agriculture. A MANRRS graduate student at the residing university provided an early career perspective. The Director of Inclusion and Belonging from an art museum moderated the panel, whose expertise ensured a dynamic and comprehensive dialogue. Her facilitation encouraged a deep dive into each panelist’s thoughts and experiences, weaving together the historical contexts with contemporary issues in land ownership and agricultural practices. By anchoring the event in this historical context, we used the IPP framework to ensure that participants can engage with the content on a deeper, more informed level, setting the stage for the subsequent experiential and reflective components of the event.

Following the panel, a Black farmer who owns the only minority-owned distillery in the state hosted a private over-21 tasting. This exclusive session offered a unique opportunity to sample spirits directly from his family-owned distillery, known for its distinctive products derived from locally grown sweet potatoes and other more traditional crops cultivated on their family farm. This tasting session served as an “action” phase within the IPP framework, as it provided participants with a tangible, real-world experience that connected the theoretical and reflective components of the event to practical, lived realities. The tasting also allowed participants to appreciate the distinct flavors of the distillery’s offerings and provided a deeper understanding of the agricultural and entrepreneurial spirit behind their family-owned distillery. He shared insights into the craft of distilling and the importance of agricultural innovation, making the tasting a rich, educational experience that complemented the overarching themes of the event. This session exemplified the integration of agricultural heritage with modern, sustainable practices that define the new generation of Black-owned agribusinesses.

This comprehensive event educated its participants about Black landowners’ past and present struggles and increased awareness for students, educators, and professionals. Through the combined efforts of a documentary screening, expert panel discussion, and community networking, “Transcending Spaces” exemplified the value of enhancing educational and social understanding among its academic community and beyond, setting a standard for how educational institutions can address and illuminate crucial societal issues.

4 Event Reflections

Seventy-five students from a senior-level undergraduate agricultural economics class were required to attend the documentary and panel event and then write a reflection about what they learned. Most students identified as White/Caucasian, and approximately half identified as male. The primary institution of data collection granted Institutional Review Board approval. The student reflections were collected (n = 39) and analyzed using thematic analysis, a method used for identifying and analyzing patterns or themes (Braun and Clarke 2019). Study authors conducted “chunk coding,” in that the authors discussed the student reflections to discover the implicit, initial patterns to form general classifications of the relevant topics to be coded (Ferrari et al. 2009). Then, following the initial coding,

codes were reviewed and discussed to determine dominant themes, and then they were categorized to reflect the perceptions of the students concerning their experiences with the event. Thematically descriptive quotes were used to demonstrate final themes, emphasizing findings across the reflections (Braun and Clark 2006).

The topics emerged from the student reflections under the five core elements: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. Starting with context, the primary theme that emerged was Unawareness (which was noted in twenty-five student reflections) with most students noting that they had no idea, or previous history or knowledge, about many of the issues that were discussed in the film related to Black farmers. Many students wrote about how surprised they were, or what they had previously assumed, but discovered new information. One female student wrote: *"I assumed that Black-owned farmland was diminishing because of lack of interest in the industry. I had no idea that it was actually because of the USDA and policy that African Americans had to leave their land."* A male student wrote: *"It never occurred to me that African Americans wanted to farm as a collective; I just assumed that these people didn't want to farm due to the racism that farming has behind it in the United States."* Finally, many students wrote similar statements of *"I learned many interesting views and opinions I did not grow up having."*

Next, a major theme that students wrote about was regarding their *Own Experience* (six students) within agriculture and how it related to the film. For example, one student wrote: *"I remember growing up and hearing my great-grandfather tell my brother and me [about] this. I never truly understood how important it was to own land until recently."* A male student wrote: *"I have grown up around farming my whole life and never once seen or met a Black farmer. Watching this screening showed me just how disproportionate the land ownership between Black and White people is. Looking back I can understand why this is the case."* Another student wrote: *"I agree with them that we should keep our family farms, me being raised on one, that land means a lot to me, and I could not imagine my grandma ever selling it because she wants my parents to be able to enjoy it."* One male student reported a previous experience with land loss: *"I related to this documentary when it comes to losing land that has been in the family for years. I grew up in a 2,000-acre outdoor oasis until my sophomore year of college because the land was divided between family members. In my eyes, no amount of money could have ever compared to the value of that property. I can't imagine watching a piece of ground that my family had called home for generations being taken from me completely unjustified just because of the color of my skin."* Last, one student reflected: *"My father is a row crop farmer in Arkansas. Growing up and living on my family farm is a part of who I am. I do not think I quite realized the low number of Black farmers with large farms still farming across the whole United States today. It amazed me to see the man [in the film] had no idea there were other thousand-acre farmers in the United States."*

The next theme that derived from the student reflections was in regard to their overall reflections about what they *Learned* (five students), often citing various new facts that they learned from the film. For example, a female student wrote: *"I was surprised to learn that there are more bald eagles in the United States than there are Black-owned farms, which highlights the disparity in land ownership among different ethnicities."* Another student wrote: *"Some facts I learned that I found to be very interesting were that after the Civil War, Whites terrorized the head of households, most likely lynching them, until they fled their land. The KKK would burn landowners' property and houses, and vandalized tractors until Black farmers had nothing left. Loans would be delayed for Blacks until it was too hot/late to get a good crop in, leading to no money being made, and the land going up in foreclosure. And in 1920, 16 million acres of farmland was farmed by Black farmers and now only 2 million acres are still farmed by them."* A female student was surprised to find out that: *"At one point, there were more bald eagles in the lower 48 than there were Black row crop farmers."* Critical thinking emerged for one female student: *"I never asked myself, why is it more common to hear of seventh-generation farmers from the White community but not the Black."*

Next, seven students noted the importance of *Action* and doing something to eradicate these issues; for example, one male student wrote: *“There needs to be something done; better education/information on agriculture and more land ownership opportunity could help this problem.”* Another student indicted: *“I do not understand why this is not a more discussed topic in the agriculture community, and I think that this film will help bring attention to this issue and history.”* A female noted: *“To me this story stuck out to me because you hear so much of these sad stories, but often times they aren’t in an ag [agriculture] environment.”* Finally, a male student wrote: *“Regardless of how you feel about reparations, I feel that the government could have stepped in sooner to provide clarity to this situation. The situation at hand is something that requires a lot of thought and consideration to do right by the American people.”*

Finally, evaluations emerged from the student reflections in two areas: *Resiliency* (three students) and *Empathy* (five students). Resiliency was discussed by some students, for example, a male student wrote: *“Even the resilience and determination of Black communities emerged as a key issue, as they organized unions, formed unions, and fought tirelessly to defend their land rights.”* Another male student wrote: *“Another captivating point in *Gaining Ground* is its focus on community resilience and collaboration. The film showcases how these farmers not only cultivate crops but also cultivate relationships within their local community. Through initiatives like community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs and farmers’ markets, the documentary illustrates the power of community support in sustaining small-scale farming operations. This emphasis on collaboration and mutual support fosters a sense of connection and shared responsibility for food production, fostering a more resilient and interconnected local food ecosystem. Overall, “*Gaining Ground*” serves as an inspiring narrative of hope and resilience, demonstrating the vital role of small-scale farmers in shaping sustainable food systems and fostering community well-being.”* Many students developed *Empathy* as a result of viewing the film, with one student noting: *“I feel like after watching this documentary, not only do I have an understanding of the history of agricultural land in America as a whole but an appreciation for the value of it. This film gave me a better understanding of what all farmers face on a daily basis but an even better grasp on the challenges that Black farmers face. I appreciate the opportunity to grow my knowledge base and further my respect for farmers everywhere.”* A male student wrote: *“The hardships that his [Black farmer in film] ancestors must have undertaken is very remarkable; this shows that they were not willing to give up easily. I enjoyed this film and would like to hear more about [these speakers’] stories sometime, I know they are proud of the progress they have made and it does not look like they plan on slowing down anytime soon.”* Finally, a male student wrote: *“Sitting in that theater and watching that movie from a different perspective was interesting. I hope to continue to learn about this process and the way of life that these families are trying to seek. Lastly, I found out that many of these farmers farm close to where I grew up and farmed around Pine Bluff, AR. I think the documentary was well put together and did a great job in expressing their message.”*

The reflections gathered from students reveal a shift in awareness and understanding of how systemic barriers have been historically confronted by BIPOC farmers. This shift demonstrates how the IPP framework can foster intellectual engagement as well as a meaningful reflection on ethics. By contextualizing this documentary screening through the stages of context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation, the event allowed them to be challenged by complex social issues. For educators, the integration of IPP in analyzing this event highlights the value of applying pedagogical frameworks to educational settings, particularly in enhancing intercultural competence and promoting social justice. In our case, the IPP provided a structured yet flexible approach to deepening student understanding and inspiring a willingness to be challenged by potentially uncomfortable course content.

5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates a unique way to expose students to the systemic barriers faced by BIPOC farmers in the United States, highlighting the historical and ongoing challenges that obstruct their access

to land and capital. By integrating the IPP, we provided an educational framework that illuminated these issues and fostered a dynamic discussion among participants, encouraging a deeper comprehension and engagement with the material.

One reason that the IPP approach may be effective is because it allows students to learn through awareness, interactions with different people, and experiences within a community. The reflections from students attending the event primarily focused on developing new awareness for issues in agriculture, ones that they were not developing through their agricultural curriculum. Increasing awareness regarding BIPOC farmers and producers is essential to agriculture because students are expected to work productively with individuals and families who have been shaped by different values, beliefs, and experiences. Not only does creating greater awareness help students with different backgrounds and needs succeed, but it encourages acceptance and helps prepare students to thrive in a diverse world. It is important to note that no course or discipline can cover all aspects of these conversations and topics. Therefore, it is important that land-grant agriculture colleges systematically review their curriculum, assessment, policies, and environments to engage students to become self-aware, recognize inequities, talk intentionally about them, and act to transform curriculum, instruction, and policy (Wiersma-Mosley et al. 2023).

While our findings contribute valuable insights into the complexities of racial inequities in farming, they come with limitations. First, though this event engaged students with concepts they might not confront in other course curriculum, there would likely be additional value by extending the limited time frame of this day-long event into a more structured “service-learning” experience (Wiersma-Mosley and Garrison 2022). Similarly, this event represents an abbreviated experience for students. The pedagogical approach typically requires a longer-form cyclical relationship between action and reflection that might be included in a longer-form “empathetic course design” structure (Saucier et al. 2022). Additionally, our focus on a specific educational setting may limit the generalizability of the conclusions. For example, the impact of the same event at an 1890s land-grant institution might create a unique value proposition (Wilson et al. 2024).

This study provides a structure for thinking about pedagogy that creates a way for students to consider the unique challenges faced by BIPOC farmers. Policy measures that ensure equitable access to resources, fair legal protections around land ownership, and targeted financial support could substantially mitigate the barriers identified. However, implementing such policies requires awareness that those problems exist. We hope to move the dialogue toward deeper discussion of policy outcomes by engaging with these concerns in a university setting. Further studies could explore the causal relationships of specific policies on BIPOC land ownership and operational success, possibly through longitudinal studies or expanded geographical scopes. That said, this groundwork paves the way for a comprehensive follow-up study, potentially incorporating a broader array of BIPOC voices from different agricultural sectors and regions to enhance the external validity of these conclusions.

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