**From Interview Transcript to Draft: Practice**

**Interview questions and answers**: Martin Curiel, former migrant farm worker who earned an MBA from Harvard is a real person, and most of these quotes are taken from a profile published when he won an award. Let’s pretend he is related to a current SJSU student who interviewed him, and that below is the transcript of that interview.

**Your task** is to take one of these quotes and work it into a short paragraph that includes both a paraphrase and a quote, plus your own words to frame it. That means at least 2 sentences.

**Sample**: (this goes paraphrase, quote, paraphrase, quote, quote. Yours doesn’t have to be that long.

When he was only 16, Curiel saw that he needed to get out of the fields and back into school full time. “I saw so many farm workers broken down before they were 40, trapped in this hard life, and I didn’t want that for myself,” he said.

All the interruptions in his education had left him behind in school, and his English skills were basic because he lived and worked in a Spanish-speaking community, but he knew he could succeed in school if he could devote himself to it fully.

Ironically, Curiel said that work in the fields had given him an edge over the other students because, "In the fields, I had developed the skill of doing something that I hated for long periods of time.” He explained, “Even if I didn't like a class, even if it was difficult, even if it required a lot of time, I had the mind frame that I could work longer than most people without much trouble."

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**Transcript with questions and answers:**

1. You’re really successful now, but you started out with a hard childhood. Tell me about what that was like.

"Basically, what my parents did was come into this country somewhere around May of every year, and work the different crops. They picked olives, peaches, cherries, walnuts, almonds, prunes and worked miscellaneous farmworker jobs until the end of November, when they would go back to Mexico. I have an older sister and a younger sister. We worked alongside them through their schedule every year until I was 19 years old. I worked 12 hours a day picking fruit in unbearable heat. As a child, I felt dirty, looked down on and ashamed to be a farmworker. I didn't understand why I couldn’t watch "Scooby-Doo" on Saturday mornings like other children, or why hmy family drove such an ugly car. The worst part was that we attended school only now and then because the family moved around so often.

1. What made you decide to leave the fields and get a serious education?

“At 16, I realized that I needed to get out of the fields and get an education in order to become successful. I saw so many farm workers broken down before they were 40, trapped in this hard life, and I didn’t want that for myself. So although I was behind in school and my English was limited because I socialized mainly with other Spanish-speaking farmworkers, I was determined to finish high school and go to college.”

1. This must have taken a lot of courage. What made you think you would be able to do it? What were your strengths as a student?

"In the fields, I had developed the skill of doing something that I hated for long periods of time. It took a lot of tolerance to do that. Even if I didn't like a class, even if it was difficult, even if it required a lot of time, I had the mind frame that I could work longer than most people without much trouble."

1. How did your family feel about your wanting to leave the fields and go to school? Were they supportive? Or did they make you feel guilty for leaving? Or what?

"They were really supportive, though they didn’t think I would be as successful as I was. Plus, I was still working to help support the family, so that helped them accept what I was doing. Later on, after I graduated second in my class, they were really excited that I was going to college, and a whole gang of us drove down together for orientation. Then there was a car accident and my father was killed. I thought that my father had essentially died for my education, and so my intensity quadrupled, as far as my desire to go to school and continue to be successful. I competed with some of the top engineering students in the state and was able to graduate cum laude with a 3.5 grade-point average.”

1. You studied engineering, at first. How did you decide on your career path?

“For a while I worked as an engineer for what was then called Chevron Texaco in Bakersfield, but I returned to my roots and became involved with the plight of farmworkers in the community. Although I did well as an engineer, I realized that engineering was not my passion. I had the revelation that I had to help the farmworkers because of what happened to my father in 1993 and because of what I've experienced in my life. Business was my vision of channeling resources into this community."

1. Tell me about the project you started to do this and how your career developed.

“At Harvard, I started the Rising Farmworker Dream Fund with a group of like-minded colleagues and peers. From 2004 to 2007, I worked as a management consultant for Deloitte Consulting in San Francisco. The company gave me money to provide scholarships for farmworkers and allowed me to use their facilities for a conference. I currently donate 10 percent of my salary from Denali Advisors to the Rising Farmworker Dream Fund.

1. Of all your successes, what are you proudest of?

“Our Dream Fund has helped seven former farmworkers start their own businesses, and 30 people have received scholarships. He said his focus is on the sons and daughters of farmworkers. What I found is that farmworkers, because they live in rural communities, are relatively invisible and, like my family, move around all the time. I see myself as the bridge between the business community that's very resourceful and powerful and the community of farmworkers. I'm trying to connect two worlds that most likely would never come in contact with each other."

1. What would you say to current college students who aren’t sure what they want to do with their careers, or whether they even want to finish college?

“I’d tell them to just do what they do best: work hard. College might feel weird at first, and you might not feel that welcome, but just remember that your professors want you to do well, and they want to help you reach your potential. You might just have to tell them what you need from them. Ask questions. And don’t just stick to your homies during the down time. Meet new kinds of people. You’d be surprised how interesting that can be.”

1. What would you say to people who work in colleges, whether as counselors or instructors, that would help them understand how they can help students who come from non-traditional backgrounds?

“I would tell them to expect great things, even if the students themselves don’t seem all that confident. I’d tell them to be supportive, friendly, and patient if the students didn’t seem to fit in right away, or if their skills aren’t that great at first. But they should also demand that the students stretch themselves. They don’t need a lower bar just because they might have challenges non-traditional students won’t face. That first year of college is especially hard for these students, because that’s where the adjustment comes in, but if they can just get a sense of welcome, they can do it.”

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**Outline for Interview Essay**:

**From the Migrant Farm Life to an MBA from Harvard, and Beyond: Some Thoughts for Caesar Chavez Day** (tentative title)

**Intro** (rough ideas): Open with a reference to Caesar Chavez Day, suggest that we should think about how that legacy lives on in California, particularly among today’s migrant farm workers and their families, but also for the rest of us, who had immigrants in our background at some point. Kairos: link to the Caesar Chavez holiday we just had, and the arch monument I walk by every day. Link to Martin Curiel’s story, the picture of him with his mom in his cap and gown that I saw in the newspaper one year.

1. Background of Martin Curiel, childhood, epiphany that made him seek another path.
2. How he strived in school
3. How his family background motivated him
4. Harvard success, then something he didn’t expect—a career giving back, inspiring others

**Conclusion**: back to SJSU campus, students here: Whether you are descendants of farmworkers yourselves, or the descendants of Pilgrims, or maybe brand-new immigrants yourselves, you can live up to Curiel’s example if you don’t take your opportunities for granted. Think about this next time you walk past that Caesar Chavez mosaic.