



## FOSTERING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### *Educational Design and Delivery Domain*

The Experiential Learning Model was created to empower learners to trust their own experience and to gain mastery over their own learning<sup>1</sup>. Volunteers who intentionally foster the Experiential Learning Model within 4-H activities help youth to:

- have a positive attitude towards the project,
- gain new knowledge and skills,
- be responsible for their own learning,
- improve youth's decision-making skills, and
- have confidence to share the knowledge they gained<sup>2</sup>.

There are several adaptations of the Experiential Learning Model. Although you may have seen a simplified version<sup>3</sup> as “Do, Reflect, Apply,” for this fact sheet we will use the expanded five-component model<sup>4,5</sup> (Figure 1. Experience, Share, Process, Generalize, Apply).

**Experience (Do):** 4-H is “hands-on” learning, and this practice is one of the foundations of the 4-H Youth Development Program. This practice is also the first component in the Experiential Learning Model. The experience could be baking a cake, raising a chicken, giving a presentation, fundraising, to name a few. These activities can be carried out as individuals or in groups, may or may not be familiar, can be virtual or in-person, can challenge youth, and can include the possibility of failure.

**Share (Reflect):** Participants are encouraged to talk about the experience,

especially with regards to their five senses. Observations are usually based on direct experiences and spontaneous. As relevant to the experience, you may want to ask youth, what did you see, smell, taste, hear, and/or touch. Share observations with the group and let the group acknowledge the ideas generated.

**Process:** Encourage participants to engage in more critical reflection by reframing the previously spontaneous reflection. Critical reflection of the experience can be fostered by an examination of assumptions, reframing issues, and adopting alternative perspectives. Consider how each youth's culture (e.g., beliefs, customs, history) and previous lived experiences might influence their observations. Try to identify what was most important, common themes, and common insights.

Some questions to ask could be:

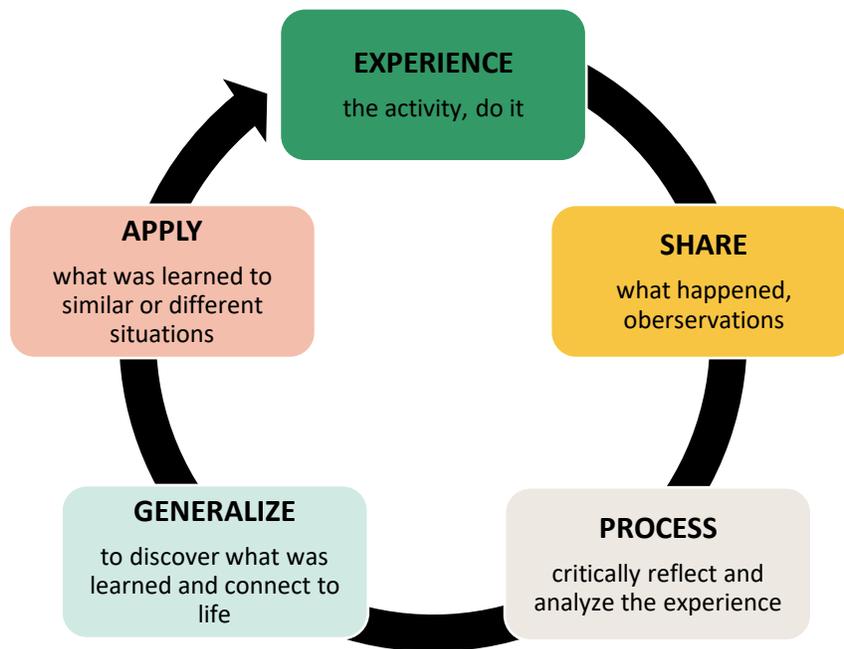
- Did you notice any recurring observation, theme, issues, or problems?
- Was there anything similar or different?
- Are there things from your previous experiences and culture that could play a role in how you interpret the current experience?

**Generalize:** Participants connect the experience with real world examples or to their daily lives. Again, acknowledge that each youth's previous experiences and cultural background could affect how youth respond. You could ask:



- Could you identify a “real-life” principle from the themes?
- What did you learn about yourself through this activity?

**Apply:** Discuss how you can make changes or adopt the identified ideas to future or new activities. Ask participants, based on what we learned, how can we make the activity better? What would you do differently?



**Figure 1.** Five components (Experience, Share, Process, Generalize, Apply) of the Experiential Learning Model<sup>4,5</sup>

## References

- <sup>1</sup>Kolb, D. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Pearson Education LTD.
- <sup>2</sup>Taylor, S., Do, K. A., Qin, S., Xia, Y., & de Guzman, M. R. (2019). Youth’s perspective of experiential learning delivery: Findings from multistate 4-H youth program. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 7(1), 79–91. <https://www.jhseonline.com/article/view/808/701>
- <sup>3</sup>Van Winkle, R., Davis, W., Skubinna, T., & Larwood, L. (2002). *Active Teaching-Active Learning: Teaching techniques and tools (4-H 0259L)*. Oregon State University Extension Service. <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/4-h0259l>



# VOLUNTEER

Research Knowledge Competency

<sup>4</sup>University of California 4-H Experiential Learning. (n.d.). California 4-H. Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/EL/>

<sup>5</sup>Enfield, R. P. (2001). Head, heart, hands and health: "Experience and Education" by Dewey's criteria? Paper presented as the 2001 American Educational Research Association Conference.

The original resource *4-H Educational Design and Delivery: Application of Experiential Learning (VRKC: Volunteer Research, Knowledge, & Competency Taxonomy)* was developed by Sue Pleskac.

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