

Volunteer Training Module VII LEARNING & TEACHING

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After completing this module you will:

- Understand a variety of learning methods, styles and strategies
- Understand and use the Experiential Learning Model
- Be familiar with the Cone of Experience
- Use a variety of appropriate teaching methods
- Be familiar with leadership styles
- Be familiar with the five steps to successful learning

Basic Learning Principles

Some basic principles apply to all learning situations:

- People learn best in an atmosphere of **WARMTH AND ACCEPTANCE**.
- Youth must have clear, **SELF-DETERMINED GOALS**.
- Each youth will have **DIFFERENT ABILITIES**. The same learning method will not be equally successful with all members.
- Adequate learning requires **MOTIVATION**. Self-motivation comes from basic needs, personal preferences, and feelings of self-worth and belonging. External motivation, on the other hand, is usually based on incentives and awards received.
- Youth must **ACTIVELY SELECT AND CARRY OUT** the learning activities.
- **SELF-EVALUATION** is the most meaningful kind of evaluation.

4-H Teaching Philosophy

4-H Youth Development emphasizes “experiential learning,” that is, learning through experiencing, learning by doing. The success of this method depends on your ability as guide and the ability of the learners to apply their knowledge and experiences to other situations.

Experiential Learning

4-H Youth Development promotes youth learning-by-doing and utilizes the methodology called **Experiential Learning**, which engages learners in an activity that:

- Is direct and hands-on
- Uses open-ended questions that invite further discussion and interaction
- Allows participants to discuss the experiences they had doing the activity
- Results in active reflection and discussion of the activity by the participants
- Makes connections between the activity and real-world examples
- Applies the outcomes of the activity to one or more independent situations

4-H Youth Development helps members learn by exploring, by doing, and by receiving feedback. The 4-Her:

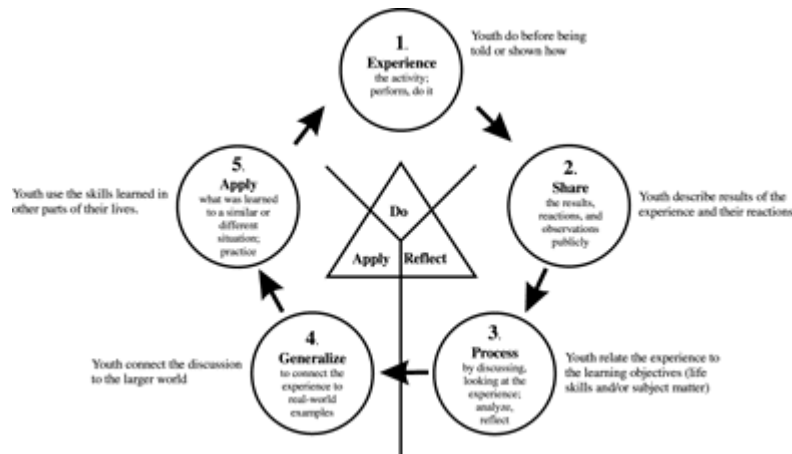
- Learns individually when trying out new knowledge in real-life settings
- Learning cooperatively by having fun while learning
- Learns competitively when work is compared and evaluated by accepted standards

Experiential Learning – Possible Outcomes. In experiential learning, there are three possible outcomes:

1. Specific Skills/Knowledge outcome (i.e., how to ride a bike, how to tie a shoe, how to swim)
2. Social/Emotional outcome (i.e., making decisions, communicating, developing self-confidence, solving problems)
3. Moral/Ethical outcome (i.e., values clarification, citizenship, social responsibility)

You must ask yourself, “What do I want the members to learn?” A specific learning activity may have only one outcome identified, any two, or all three. Identify your desired outcome (s) before you begin planning the actual activity to give your activity a focus.

The success of this method depends on your ability as guide and the ability of learners to apply their knowledge and experiences to other situations. The most widely used model of experiential learning in the 4-H Youth Development Program utilizes the following 5-step cycle.



Experience: Do It! Begin with a concrete experience. This can be an individual activity or a group activity, but it involves doing something with little or no help from the leader. Ask youth to rate an item. For instance, “which product costs more?” Additionally, you can create exhibits, role-play, give a demonstration, problem-solve, or play a game. This is the actual doing part of the activity---throwing a ball, making a puppet, feeding a pet, playing a game. This first step is not the most important in this model. Too often, leaders in a teaching role devote most of their energies to planning a creative learning experience, but fail to devote enough time and energy to the remaining steps. Take time to cover all steps thoroughly when you teach.

Share: What Happened? Get the group or the individual to talk about the experience. Share reactions and observations in the group. Answer the questions: “What did you do?,” “What did you see?,” “Feel?,” “Taste?,” “What was the most difficult part of the experience?,” “The easiest part?” Let the group talk freely.

Process: What’s Important? Discuss, analyze, reflect on, and look at the experience. Ask members questions such as, “Tell me what you did. What happened in your group or to you? What were you thinking and feeling during the activity? What was new or different in this activity? Youth should talk about how themes, problems and issues are brought out by the experience and how they were addressed. Have the members identify a common pattern of behavior; things that they may have noticed or experienced before. For example, you might ask “What happened in this activity that’s like things you’ve noticed at home or school? How was today’s activity like things you’ve done before? or “How was

today's activity different from things you've done before?" Discuss how questions are created by the activity. Ask more questions! Analyze the experience.

Generalize: So What? Support youth in finding trends or common lessons in the experience that can be applied to the real world, not just the specific topic. Identify key terms or real-life principles that capture the meaning.

Apply: Now What? Talk about how the new information can be applied to everyday life now or sometime in the future. Apply what was learned to a similar or different situation. Practice what was learned. Ask the youths how what they did, observed, or learned can be used in other places – at home or school, or with friends and family. Good questions to use here are: "What did you learn today that can help you or that you can use in school, at home, or with your family?" or "What difference can what you learned make at home, school, 4-H, or other places?" The best way to be sure that the members understand and can use what they learned is through planned application. Have the members share how they will use the new information and then record it. You may write it down for everyone to see or the children can draw pictures of what they plan to do. Check a week or day later to see if they accomplished their goals. You can strengthen your members' individual commitments by having them record their plans for how they will use what they learned.

Providing a hands-on learning experience alone does not create "experiential learning." The experience itself comes first. The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created in sharing, processing, generalizing, and applying the experience. Using this model, you can turn any experience, good or bad, into a learning experience. It's a process every leader, parent, teacher, or friend needs to know and use.

Learning Styles

People have different **learning styles**. Some of us are **visual** or **spatial learners**. We think in pictures and learn best from visual displays, such as diagrams, illustrated books, overhead projections, videos and DVDs, handouts, and flip charts. The skills visual learners are best at include puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts, demonstrating a good sense of direction, painting, designing practical objects, and interpreting visual images.

Some of us are **auditory learners**. We learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard or read aloud. The skills auditory learners are best at include listening, speaking, explaining, writing, using humor, remembering information, or telling a story.

Kinesthetic learners learn better through moving, doing, and touching. They take a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. Youth may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need to activity and exploration. The skills these learners may master easily are physical coordination, dancing, sports, hands-on experimentation, crafts, acting, or using their hands to create or build.

Setting the Stage for Learning

The role of the 4-H leader has many facets. You serve as mentors, coaches, teachers, resources, partners, and positive role models for youth. Each role involves skills and knowledge of “best practices” that can help you be successful in working with youth.

As a leader, you have the wonderful opportunity of utilizing a variety of teaching environments, methods, and styles to best meet the needs of the individuals you will be working with.

Get to know the individuals in your group and how they learn. Analyze how they respond to different learning and teaching methods. Ask them what they prefer. Evaluate what they have learned by engaging them in discussion, asking them to demonstrate to or teach another child.

Leaders need to consider the various learning strategies available to best shape the learning experience. By making selections that consider age, developmental stages and the needs of the group, you can ensure a positive and enjoyable learning experience for everyone.

Learning is a natural, lifelong process for all of us. You, as a 4-H leader, can make a difference in what and how youth learn. Hands-on learning is a key part of 4-H. It can occur through three different strategies as follows.

Learning Strategies

Competitive Learning

If I swim, you sink. If you swim, I sink.

Participants work against each other to show who is best. To attain the goal of winning, one must beat all others. Only one can win.

Example: Winning a contest and moving on to the next level.

Implications: Competitive learning encourages high levels of individual achievement, but also creates many more losers than winners. This can be harmful to youth, especially those with undeveloped centers of self-esteem.

Individualistic Learning

If I sink or swim, it has no effect on whether or not you sink or swim.

A participant works alone against established criteria to show what he or she has achieved.

Example: Earning a medal based on number of personal tasks completed.

Implications: Individualistic learning encourages independence but does not provide participants with any information about their peers. It allows leaders to consider the developmental capability of individual members in helping them set personal goals for growth, but requires time for advising each member on their plan of work. It requires the development of standards for youth to work toward.

Cooperative Learning

We sink or swim together.

Cooperative learning encourages the development of social interaction skills but takes a greater commitment of time to promote learning. This type of experience has several necessary components.

Example: A group works on the yearly club budget. It is in the best interests of everyone to help others do their best

Implications:

Positive Interdependence – Each and every member has something vital to contribute to the success of the group. Learning will not occur if group members ignore each other. A leader can promote interaction by giving each member a vital piece of information that the entire group must know before they can succeed.

Face-to-Face Interaction – Group members must be able to interact directly with each other.

Individual Accountability – Every member must be responsible for how he or she does as an individual as well as how the group does.

Teaching Social Skills –Teaching social skills should be a part of the planned activity because they are necessary for the group to succeed. Do not assume the members will absorb these skills just by participating in the group discussion.

Processing – Members must be able to discuss how their group worked and what they learned.

Teaching Techniques

The teaching techniques that follow are only suggestions. Feel free to choose those best suited to your youths.

You may use these techniques with or without a formal project. Most 4-H members will want to choose an organized project, such as gardening, plan it, and carry it out. All 4-H projects are listed in **EM2778, 4-H Projects and Publications** (also available on CD format as **CD2778**). However, some youth, particularly older ones, will prefer self-determined projects. (See **EM2957, Working with 4-H Members in Self-Determined Projects.**)

We retain about 10% of what we hear, 50% of what we see, and 90% of what we do. The following “Cone of Experience” diagram displays teaching methods ranked in relation to which ones offer 4-Hers the opportunity to learn the most – by doing the most.



Actual Experience – 4-H Projects. Learning by doing is important. Members can gain hands-on experience with their projects at meetings, at home, at workshops, and at clinics, shows, and fairs. 4-H members learn the most when they do the work themselves.

Working With Models. Members can learn by doing by using models. These numbers show why it is important to work with real items or with models.

4-H patterns to make stuffed cloth animal models are available through your county extension office for the following animals: lamb, rabbit, horse, dairy goat, chicken, pig, and calf. You may want to ask clothing and textile advisors or members in the 4-H clothing program to make these models.

Food models are available from the Dairy Council. You or your members could also make models for other projects.

Members may enjoy making their own models, such as dioramas. Models work well in science projects.

Judging/Role Playing. You may use judging to help young people see differences and similarities. Judging is decision making. It can be applied to any area, whether the subject is what constitutes a good muffin or a good lamb. (See EM4647, *Learning Through 4-H Judging.*)

Members often enjoy role-playing in order to learn about themselves or others. Encourage the youths to write plays to act out and perform.

Discussion. Youths need to discuss their ideas and feelings with others. They value knowing what their friends and interested adults think about various subjects. 4-H discussion groups allow members test their ideas, answer their questions, and work out solutions to their problems.

Keep discussion groups small. Discussions should expose members to a variety of views and give everyone a chance to participate.

Demonstrations/Public Presentations. Demonstrations and illustrated talks can be used by you and/or by members to show others how to do something. Members who give demonstrations not only teach others, but also learn.

Encourage each youngster to give a presentation. Help 4-Hers select a subject each can handle with ease, such as showing how to thread a needle or set out a plant. These are simple tasks that even the younger members can talk about and do. Later, they can advance to more complex presentations, such as planning the color scheme for a room or how to rehabilitate a stream. (See EM4616, *How To Give a 4-H Demonstration.*)

Field Trips/Tours. Youths like to go places and see things. A visit to a 4-H member's home, for example, can be quite a boost to the member and the family.

Everyone gets the chance to compare methods and gauge progress. The member can discuss experiences, display work, or even give a demonstration.

4-Hers can also tour businesses related to their projects, such as bakeries, stockyards, and electric plants. Or, if they're studying citizenship, much can be gained from a visit to the county courthouse, local newspaper, or fire department. Tours should always include group discussion time.

Exhibits/Displays. The results of 4-H work are often exhibited at 4-H meetings and programs, shows, fairs, and other public places. Good exhibits stimulate a desire to try new things and adopt new practices.

Exhibits are of two types. Either they display items members have made in the 4-H project group, or they present processes or ideas. How can 4-Hers display an idea? If they are studying electricity, for example, they could exhibit how to build a study lamp. (See EM4573, *4-H Educational Display Guidelines*, and EM4841, *4-H Foods and Nutrition Exhibit Guidelines*.)

A variety of shows and fairs are available: the community fair, the county fair, the junior show, and, for those chosen, the state 4-H fair. View the fair as an opportunity to help young people show others what they have learned.

Other Teaching Methods. The last four categories on the Cone of Experience are useful at times, but use the others more often:

- Television, movies, and filmstrips
- Radio, recordings, and still pictures
- Illustrated talks, charts, graphs, posters, and maps
- Talks and printed matter

Record Keeping. 4-H record books help youngsters get their plans on paper and measure their progress toward their goals. Older boys and girls will be able to see the value of record keeping. However, record books are not appropriate for primary members, unless alternative approaches are used, for example, picture drawing or use of stars or stickers.

Encouragement and Reward

Recognition, Awards, and Competition. Recognition, awards and competition influence young people strongly. How they are used determines their value.

Recognizing an individual or group accomplishment is acknowledging it. The recognition may be as public as a name in the newspaper or as private as a pat on the back. Each individual should receive recognition for his or her work. Do not base recognition solely on competition.

Competition is measuring one's accomplishments against private or public standards, or against one's own or others' achievements. Contests are regulated competitions. Recognizing young people's effort calls for flexibility and variety.

Suit the standards for achievement and the form of recognition and competition to the age, abilities, and resources of 4-H members. Young children, for example, prefer to be measured by their own yardstick or their peers', not by adult standards. Also, as children mature they become more capable of facing competition. A sensitive or less able child can be harmed by competition that is too keen. A child fearful of not doing well may withdraw. Avoid too much competitive stress.

Washington State 4-H/Youth Policy states that members must be in the third grade or higher and have reached at least their eighth birthday before January 1 of the current 4-H year to be eligible for competitive situations. (See **EM0758**, *Washington State 4-H/Youth Policy*.) Use recognition only to encourage children to create and produce. Do not attach children's worth as human beings to their success, failure, or competence. Encourage them to seek satisfaction in the work itself. Recognize the group, rather than individuals, whenever you can to foster cooperation.

Achievement Programs. Members can also exhibit, demonstrate their skills, and tell about their 4-H experiences at their own 4-H achievement program. If you and the members decide to hold such a program, the fall is a good time. The program can help form a more complete picture of 4-H for new members and parents, and recognize other members for their efforts.

Some counties have area-wide or county-wide achievement programs. Outstanding 4-Hers may be recognized for their achievements at county, state, and national levels.

4-H Events. Club/group, project, or activity programs often culminate in events. We have already discussed events such as fairs, shows, achievement nights, tours, and demonstrations. The following is a list of other popular events not yet mentioned. Check with your extension agent for availability or current status of events in your area.

- Camps
- Share-the-Fun Nights
- Fashion Revue
- Project Activities Day
- Teen Events – held by most districts in the fall
- Quiz Bowls
- Know Your Government Conference; delegates study themes related to the governmental process
- State forums or conferences for teens and volunteers
- National 4-H Congress or Conference
- National 4-H Week, held in early October – its purpose is to draw public attention to 4-H

Other Club/Group Activities

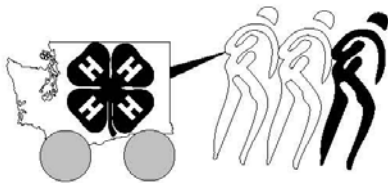
4-H activities can also include citizenship programs, membership drives, parents' nights, and special parties. Two other activities that your group may want to consider are discussed below. The depth of involvement might depend on the age of the members.

Community Service. Many groups undertake activities of value to others. They ask themselves what their community needs, and what they, as a group, might do. They make sure all members share in the planning and decision making as well as the work. The results are often impressive. 4-H members have cleaned trash from roadsides, collected books for underprivileged groups, and canvassed their neighborhoods for such things as the cancer drive. (See **EM4587**, *Community Pride: Chairman's Guide*.)

Cross-cultural Activities. 4-H Youth Development programs are in all 50 states and in over 75 countries around the world. This provides unlimited opportunities for 4-H members to learn about different cultures and to contribute to national and international understanding. 4-Hers can adopt a sister club or pen pal, visit another state, study other countries, send money to youth groups in developing countries, or participate in such programs as the International 4-H Youth Exchange Program (IFYE), 4-H Japan Exchange Program, or 4-H IFYE Ambassador (summer travel).

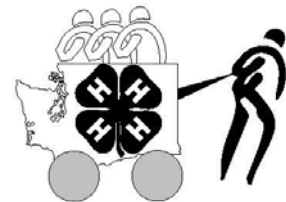
Leadership Styles

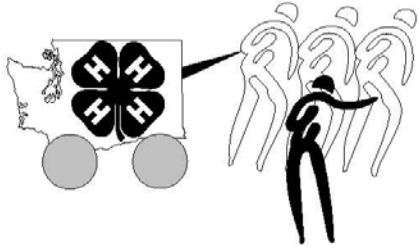
When you encourage youth by providing for "hands-on" learning, you may use a variety of leadership styles. In the following illustrations, the shaded figure represents the leader and light figures represent the members.



Us-And-Our Group. You know the individual members well and are interested in them and what they do. The group belongs to all the youth. You say, "Let's go! Let's find out! How shall we test this?" You take an active part in group affairs, but do not control them.

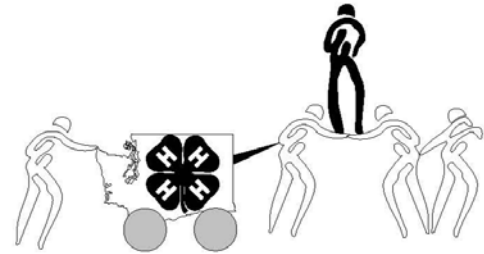
Leader-Out-In-Front Group. You are out in front, pulling the group behind. You speak of "my group," which may make it appear to others that the group belongs to you. Planned programs reflect your wishes.





Leader-Alongside Group. You move along beside the group and with it. You watch the progress, offer suggestions, and actively help do the work. You are genuinely interested and enjoy being a leader, but do not have a feeling of owning the group. You see that the job is done.

Hands-Off Group. You sit back, make no decisions for the group, and force the group and the individuals to chart their own course. You permit good as well as bad decisions, plans and programs to develop. Strong clubs get stronger under this type of leadership. Weak clubs may fall apart.



Which Style of Leadership Is Right? No one right style is the “right” one. The trick is to find the one that works best for you and your group. You’ll probably find yourself most comfortable and the members happiest in one of the four styles of leadership. However, as interests and experiences change, the appropriate leadership style may also change. Be flexible. Choose the right style of leadership for the group and situation.

Steps to Successful Learning

In summary, your major challenge is to help young people and their families achieve the goals they set for themselves; to measure the progress they’ve made; and to celebrate the pride of their accomplishments. Consider these ideas:

1. **Get together to know one another.** Plan some type of group-building or trust-building activity for each meeting.
2. **Decide together what to learn, make, or do.** Have members, parents, and adult volunteers set goals for things they would like to do and accomplish in 4-H.
3. **Work together to learn, make, or do.** 4-H Youth Development offers a wide variety of projects, meetings, and events to help youth and adults accomplish the goals they set for themselves.
4. **Measure together what was learned, made or done.** Evaluation is a positive element in 4-H Youth Development, as long as youth realize it applies to the skills they are learning and not to their worth as people. If

evaluation is done well, it can help young people see what they have accomplished. Evaluation can be done by the youth, by peers, or by an objective evaluator. Young people must be able to measure the progress they have made.

5. **Celebrate together the experiences, successes, and feelings.** Celebrating completes the learning experience. It does not have to be dramatic or time-consuming. It can be done in five minutes before the end of the meeting, just to say in some way, "This is what we did today," or it can be a big party planned to culminate a long-term activity. No matter what form you use, celebrating says, "I feel good about what I have done. My friends are happy. What a great way to spend my time."

Self Assessment

1. The Cone of Experience and 4-H Teaching Methods emphasize learning by doing. Why?
2. Which of these four leadership styles is the right one?
 - a) Us-and-Our Group
 - b) Leader-Out-in-Front Group
 - c) Leader-Alongside Group
 - d) Hands-Off Group
 - e) Either one can be right, depending on the group
3. Which of the following IS NOT a learning strategy?
 - a) Competitive Learning
 - b) Situational Learning
 - c) Individualistic Learning
 - d) Cooperative Learning
4. Which of the following IS NOT one of the three steps of the Experiential Learning Model?
 - a) Do/Explore
 - b) Document/Record results
 - c) Reflect
 - d) Apply
5. What are the three possible outcomes in experiential learning?
6. Why is it important to identify desired outcomes when planning an activity?
7. Which of the following IS NOT one of the five steps to successful learning?

- a) Get together
- b) Decide together
- c) Delegate parts of the project
- d) Work together
- e) Measure together
- f) Celebrate together

Answers to the Self-Assessment Questions

1. We retain 90% of what we do, only 50% of what we see, and just 10% of what we hear.
2. e. Either one can be right, depending on the group
3. b. Situational Learning
4. b. Document/Record results
5. Specific Skills/Knowledge Outcome
Social/Emotional Outcome
Moral/Ethical Outcome
6. This helps you give your activity focus to achieve desired results.
7. c. Delegate parts of the project

TEACHING LIBRARY

Experiential Activities

- [Pledge Puzzle Activity](#) (M1)
- [Realizing Our Perceptions—a Filtering Situation](#) (M3)
- [Realizing Reason for Difference—A Bear of a Puzzle](#) (M3)
- [Teaching Tolerance—A Circle of Shoes](#) (M3)
- [Ways to Teach a Topic](#)

News Release Samples

- [Making 4-H a Positive Experience](#) (M2)
- [Stages of Development for Youth](#) (M2)

Power Point Presentations

- [Developmental Jeopardy Game](#) (Jim Lindstrom)
- [Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development](#)
- [The Art of Delegation](#) (Jana Ferris)

Publications

- [4H0259L Active Teaching—Active Learning](#)

Other

- [Lesson Plan/Activities Template](#)
- [VOLT Lessons](#)--Volunteer On-going Leader Training
(For lessons without links, please contact the State 4-H Office for a hardcopy.)
 1. Lesson Planning: Simple as P-I-E—Jan Hiller, Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist
 2. The Stepping Stone to Community Pride—Ginny Bowen, Former Whatcom County 4-H Leader and VDAT member
 3. What to do Instead of SCREAMING—Mary Katherine Deen, WSU Extension Diversity Director and Youth & Family Specialist
 4. Learn by Doing: How to Make the Most of It!—Mary Katherine Deen, WSU Extension Diversity Director and Youth & Family Specialist
 5. Storyboarding--Ginny Bowen, Former Whatcom County 4-H

Leader and VDAT member

6. Many Faces, One People—Phyllis Scaringe, Community CARES Project
7. Ethics---How Do You Decide?—Lauri Sherfey, Benton/Franklin 4-H Educator and Jan Hiller, Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist
8. Ages and Stages—Jan Hiller, Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist
9. Strengthening Self Esteem—Jan Hiller, Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist