

Experiential Learning Fact Sheet

The Experiential Learning Model

The Experiential Learning Model is composed of five steps. The first step is to “experience” or do an activity. Usually this activity is being done for the first time or might be uncomfortable for the participant. After the activity has been done, participants are asked to “share” their experience of what happened. The next step is to “process” by reflecting on what happened. Next the participant will “generalize” the experience and connect it to other real life experiences. The final step is to “apply” the lessons that were learned to situations in real life.

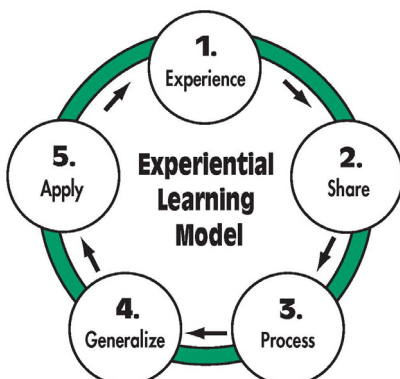
Instead of hearing or reading about an experience, participants get to actually have the experience first-hand. This should help the learner gain more insight and have a better handle on the situation.

Points to Remember

- Encourage open and non-threatening discussions among participants. Although it is important to learn from one’s own experiences, it is also possible to learn from others’ experiences as well. Also, talking about an experience can help a participant understand it and work through his or her thoughts.
- Prepare some open-ended questions to use when leading a discussion about the experience.
- Sometimes the most important lessons are learned when something doesn’t turn out the way you would like it to. Mistakes are fine and quite often more beneficial than doing it right the first time.

Importance for Youth Development

- The Experiential Learning Model helps youth develop several life skills. These include learning, decision making, positive self-concept, communication, relationships with others, and responding to the needs of others.
- 4-H projects are built around the Experiential Learning Model. When youth engage in and learn from activities, they are able to learn lessons that apply directly to them, not from the point of view of the adult.
- Experiential Learning encourages youth to more readily retain information, since they are discovering from experience rather than from the adult perspective.



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E. "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals"
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