



Expanded Learning Opportunities: Experiential Learning

EC486

LEADER
GUIDE

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Lesson Goal

Children and youth in out-of-school settings reach their full potential as a result of positive youth/adult interactions, purposeful learning experiences, and safe environments.

Nebraska School-Age and Youth Development Core Competencies

Core Knowledge Area: Growth and Development

- **1.5** Recognizes that youth learn and develop through experience.
- **1.8** Is aware of how youth learn and communicate with peers and adults.

Core Knowledge Area: Learning

- **1.2** Recognizes there is research regarding youth development and learning.
- **1.4** Recognizes the importance of youth input in creating a learning environment.

Learner Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will:

- identify experiential learning techniques.
- provide purposeful and directed teaching.
- have engaged and energetic youth ready to learn.

>>Before the Meeting

Read the leader and participant guides and review the leader resources. Develop the Colorful Questions chart and color code.

>>Supplies

Paper, chart, or whiteboard; markers; colored candy (M&M's®, Skittles® etc.).

>>Introduction

“Learning by doing” is a timeless teaching method. The avenues to use experiential learning can be seen in multiple settings from youth organizations to traditional classrooms. The challenges of experiential learning are designing the environment and having youth who are open and engaged in the learning process. According to the 4-H National Headquarters Fact Sheet, *Experiential Learning*, this type of learning occurs when:

- youth are involved in an activity.
- youth reflect critically.
- youth determine what was useful and important to remember.
- youth use the information gained in a future activity.

As an educator, you can support the learning by:

- providing opportunities in which youth are intellectually stimulated and challenged.

- providing time for youth to reflect and process their learning experience.
- helping youth design real projects, experiences, or learning opportunities that make a difference to others.
- creating experiences with youth that relate to real-life situations (Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development Programs, National 4-H Council).

>>Estimated Lesson Time

60 minutes

>>At the Meeting or Training

1. Introduce yourself and the lesson topic.
 - a. Ask participants, “What is experiential learning?” (Baker, Jensen & Kolb defined experiential learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience.” In other words, learning by doing in which youth are actively engaged in the learning process.) Discuss with participants different experiences or programs they believe were structured for experiential learning. What characteristics or design of the program made them think about experiential learning?
 - b. Have participants discuss in small groups and then share with the large group:
 - i. Experiential learning occurs when youth (fill in the blank). (General concepts include: when youth are involved in an activity, reflect critically, determine what was useful and important to remember, and use the information gained in a future activity.)
 - ii. Ways an educator can support experiential learning. (General ideas to look for: provide opportunities in which youth are intellectually stimulated and challenged, help youth design real-life projects that make a difference to others, creating experiences with youth that relate to real-life situations.)
2. Distribute the Participant Guide. Review the Experiential Learning Model. Divide into groups with each group reviewing one step. Have groups share the significance and purpose of the step assigned.
3. Play the Colorful Conversations Game (Great Group Games: 175 Boredom-Busting, Zero-Prep Team Builders for All Ages, page 52). Depending on the size of the group, it may be best to break into smaller groups of three to eight people. This is a team building activity that can be developed to fit the needs of your group and the learning outcomes. Tell participants to think about experiential learning and how it could be incorporated. Using a whiteboard or chart, list statements for this activity. See 3b. for examples.
 - a. Pour multicolored candy into a bowl. Ask participants to take a small handful of candies in as many different colors as possible. (If concerned about germs, individual packets could be used.) Be sure to tell players not to eat the candy until they hear the instructions. Ask each participant to select one candy and match its color to the conversation topic on the chart. Group members take turns responding to the topics and can eat their candy after each turn. Give participants the opportunity to share at least three times with the group.
 - b. Design questions to fit the group. Examples of colored chart questions include:
 - i. Red Candy: Favorite way to spend your time.
 - ii. Green Candy: Tell something you are proud of.
 - iii. Yellow Candy: Describe someone you respect.
 - iv. Orange Candy: The most meaningful part of this week has been ...
 - v. Brown Candy: Share a goal you have for your future.
 - vi. Blue Candy: Wild card.
4. Activity discussion: Have participants complete the Experiential Learning Model by creating questions and sharing their answers. If participants are struggling, remind them of questions in the Participant Guide. Possible questions to facilitate the discussion are:
 - a. What would you add or do differently to this activity to incorporate experiential learning?
 - b. Which step did we complete already?
 - c. Give some possible examples of questions for each step of the model, depending on the purpose of the activity.

5. Have participants discuss how they will implement or increase experiential learning into their teaching or program. Colorful Conversations is a very simple activity that could assist youth in team building or brainstorming. It also shows how experiential learning can be used in a variety of settings — from typical science to personal growth.

Resources

Baker, A.C., P.J. Jensen, and D.A. Kolb (2002). *Conversational Learning: An Experiential Approach to Knowledge Creation*

Martz, J., C. Mincemoyer, and N. Nestor McNeeley (2009). *Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development Programs*

<http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/professional-development-learning/4-h-youth-development/youth-development/essential-elements/>

Ragsdale, S. and A. Saylor (2007). *Great Group Games: 175 Boredom-Busting, Zero-Prep Team Builders for All Ages*. Search Institute Press.

National 4-H Headquarters (2011). *4-H National Headquarters Fact Sheet, Experiential Learning*

Nebraska Community Learning Center Network (2010). *Nebraska's Core Competencies of School-Age and Youth Development Professionals*

<http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/content/nebrasikas-core-competencies-school-age-and-youth-development-professionals>

Pfeiffer, J.S. and J.E. Jones (1983). *Experiential Learning Model*

Carmichael, C., Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Administration. *Experiential & Inquiry-based Learning with Youth in Non-formal Settings*

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/res/pdfs/experiential_inquiry_based%20learning-1.pdf

Deidrick, J., S. Doering, D. Geiser, H. Kanengieter, B. Piehl, and A. Stevenson (2005). *Questions for Guiding Experiential Learning*. University of Minnesota