



Intended Audience:

- 4-H youth and adult leaders

Learning Objectives:

4-H youth and adult leaders will:

- Describe the role of non-formal education in the 4-H program
- Define experiential education
- Identify five or more life skills

Target Essential Element:

Focusing on the educational mission of 4-H helps members achieve *mastery*.

Time: 20 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- Handout: “Life Skills Wheel” (1/participant)
- Handout: “Experiential Learning Cycle” (1/participant)
- Soft object to toss
- Pens or pencils
- Evaluations

Do Ahead:

- Copy all necessary handouts.

Source:

- Created by Jessica Jens, 4-H Youth Development Agent, UW-Extension, Sauk County

BACKGROUND

What is the foundation of 4-H? Education, of course! Although many 4-H members don't view their 4-H experiences as “educational,” it is important that adult volunteers have a good understanding of how education is woven into the experiences and activities of the 4-H program.

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Life Skills

So what do 4-H youth learn? Life skills, of course! As defined by Iowa State: “Life skills are abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life.”

(Use a soft object, like a Beanie Bear, for this game.) Think of a life skill that 4-H members learn through their participation in 4-H. (Toss the soft object to one of the participants.) When you catch the object, you need to say one life skill that 4-H members learn and give one example of a situation that would teach that life skill. When you're done, toss the object to another participant. We'll continue until everyone has had a chance to speak.

(Conclude this activity by handing out the “Life Skills Wheel” from Iowa State University. Briefly highlight some of the life skills that were mentioned, and not mentioned, on this wheel.)

Activity: Experiential Education

(Pass out the diagram of the Experiential Learning Cycle, or show a diagram via PowerPoint or a poster to the participants.) 4-H strives to teach youth life skills through experiential education. Has anyone heard of the term “experiential education” before? Do you know what it means? Most people are not familiar with the term. What about “learning by doing”? Most of us should be familiar with this phrase because it's the 4-H slogan! It's also another way of defining experiential education, which is the type of education that is the foundation of the 4-H program.



(Briefly go through the parts of the Experiential Learning Cycle. Explain the cycle in a way that is comfortable to you, but try to refrain from giving any concrete examples.)

Now, let's break into two teams. Each team should think of three or four different 4-H experiences. With each experience, your team should be able to apply the Experiential Learning Cycle to describe how a youth would learn important life skills through the experience. You can try to “stump” the other team with your experiences, so you can try to make them difficult.

We'll take turns as each team tries to stump the other team. Team One will describe a 4-H experience to Team Two. Team Two then has to explain how the 4-H youth in that experience would learn based on the Experiential Learning Cycle. The team needs to take the experience through the entire Experiential Learning Cycle. If you get it right, you get a point.

If you cannot figure it out, Team One gets a chance to relate the experience to the learning cycle. If they get it right, which they should, they get one point. Both teams take turns going back and forth for two or three rounds, depending on how much time we have. At the end, the team with the most points wins.

(One sample 4-H experience you might use: a 4-H member picks out a dress pattern to sew as a first year clothing member; the pattern is very difficult and she gets a white ribbon on her dress at the county fair.)

Closing

Allow a couple of minutes for questions and thoughts at the end of the program. If time permits, a brief round table discussion about how clubs are including education in their clubs can also be facilitated.

EVALUATION

It is important to use an evaluation that is consistent with your teaching objectives. The short evaluation in the handouts can be modified to meet your needs. An alternative to a written evaluation is to record the Reflection discussion under "Talk It Over." Recruit someone ahead of time to take notes while you are leading the discussion. Remember to share the evaluation results with 4-H Youth Development Extension staff in your county.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- What activities in 4-H are educational?
- What are life skills? Name several life skills that youth learn in 4-H.

Apply:

- What can you do to facilitate learning in your 4-H club?
- How do youth learn through the Experiential Learning Cycle at 4-H club meetings?

ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY

Enhance:

Before you get into the activity, it's a good idea to start with a "mixer." Even if group members know each other, these types of activities are good for getting people talking and more receptive to the upcoming discussion. If you decide to add this activity, your lesson will be over 30 minutes long. One idea is called "Fun with Dough!" Give each participant a clump of clay or Play Dough. Direct them to make an object that represents something about them. After the participants complete this task, go around the room and ask each person to describe their object and why it represents them.

ADDITIONAL WEBLINKS

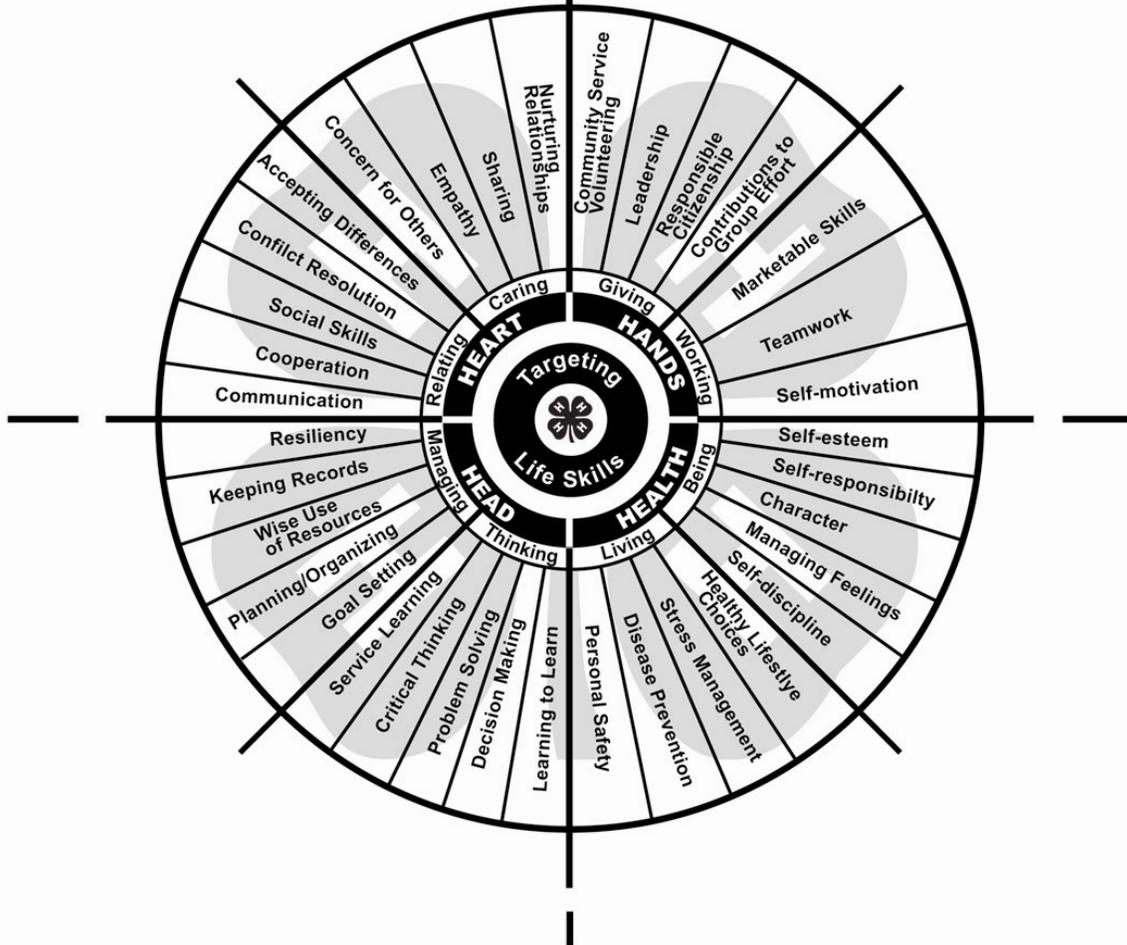
- "Learn by Doing the 4-H Way," New Jersey 4-H Leader Training Series, <http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/pdfs/4h/e148/447-454.pdf>.
- "Power of Experiential Learning," 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System, <http://www.4hccsprojects.com/learn/>.
- "Targeting Life Skills Model," Iowa State University, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/lifeskills/homepage.html>.

Finalized by Strengthening 4-H Club Leadership Work Team: September 2005



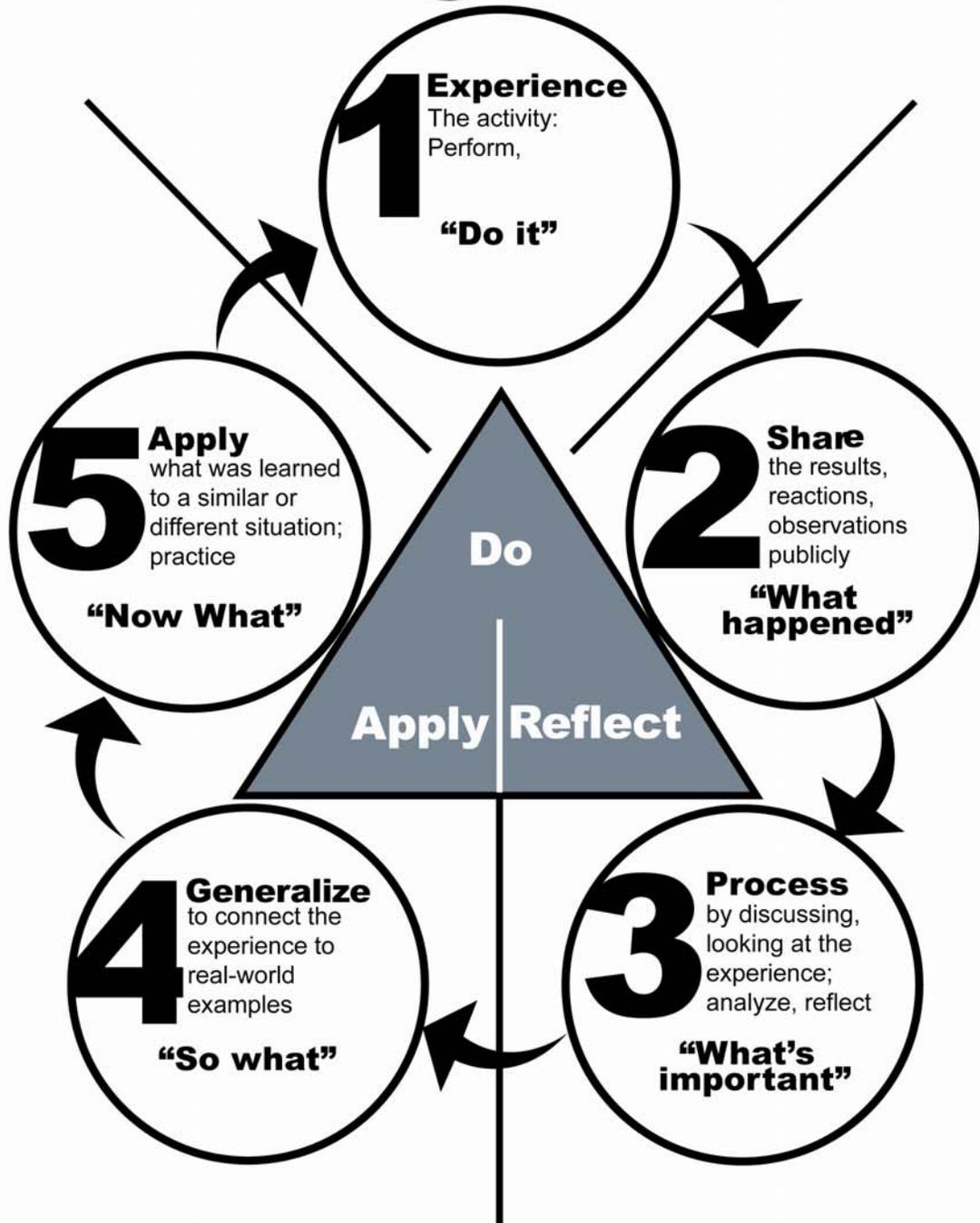
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Life Skills Wheel



“Targeting Life Skills” Wheel created by Iowa State University Extension 4-H

Experiential Learning Model



It's All About Education! Evaluation

1. How useful will this information be to help you communicate the role of education in the 4-H program?
(circle one response)

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Sure Not Useful

2. How valuable was this program to you in regards to your role as an organizational leader?
(circle one response)

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Sure Not Useful

3. How many new ideas did you learn?
(circle one response)

0 1-2 3-4 5 or more

4. What will you do as a result of this program?