

Experiential Learning Model

Facilitating experiential learning is as much art as science. Facilitators guide the process without really controlling it.* As the learners process their experiences (or activities), facilitators help draw out generalizations and principles that learners can then apply in future settings. The long term benefit of experiential learning is to increase the learner's ability to use (apply) what they learned.

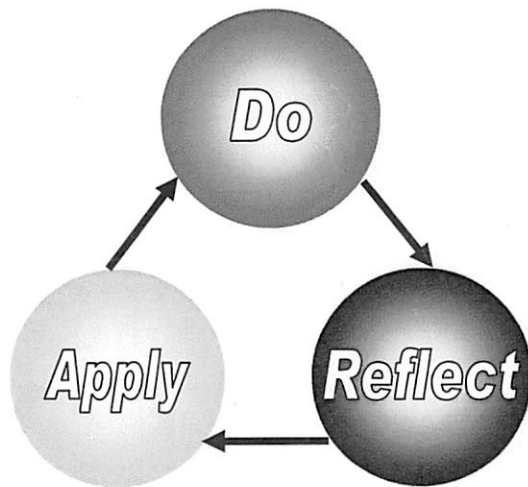
The facilitator/leader should have in mind the outcomes desired, as in the life skill to be developed, the principle learned or desired learning to be applied in the future, i.e. eating healthy snacks, eating more fruit, reading food labels, proper food handling, cooking safety, ability to prepare foods, increasing physical activity, etc. This desired outcome will guide the questions asked in the reflect and apply steps.

Do, Reflect, Apply, are the steps in the three-step Experiential Learning model. In the simplest terms, youth:

- **Do** an activity and share about the experience. [**What Happened?**]
- **Reflect** about what they did including what they learned. [**So What?**]
- **Apply**—thinking about how to use what they did and learned and how they can apply it now and in the future. [**Now What?**]

Following the full Experiential Learning Model steps take an activity from entertainment to education. That is, it takes the activity from just being fun to adding value to the learner's life.

*Heads-On, Hands-On: The Power of Experiential Learning. N4-HCCS



Experiential Learning Model

Do [What happened?]: *In this step, youth do an activity and share about the experience (always hands on, actually doing something).* **Leader:** Describe the experience or activity you have planned for youth before they are told or shown what or how to do it. Then have (let) them do the activity. This allows the youth to have some idea of the activity, yet experience figuring out how to do it. This facilitates development of independent learning skills. The leader guides during the activity by asking questions such as “What do you think you should do next?” or “What is the next step?” The leader should resist stepping in and doing it for the youth. It’s O.K. to let them struggle a little bit. Phrase “suggestions” as questions like “What do you think would happen if you did....., or tried.....? Key sharing questions to ask after the activity is completed are: “What did you do? What did you see? Smell? Hear? Taste? Touch?” “What part of the experience was most difficult?” “What part was the easiest?” These type of questions encourage youth to share.

Reflect [So What?]: *In this step, youth find the meaning in and the value of the experience.* **Leader:** Ask questions that will guide youth to think about their experience. Use questions that continue youth sharing what they did and then thinking about what they learned doing the activity. Ask questions that start the youth on finding the meaning of the activity. “How did you go about doing this activity?” “How did you feel doing this activity?” “What surprised you doing the activity?” “What problems or issues came up as you did the activity?” How did you deal with these problems?“ “What did you (we) learn doing this activity?”

Apply [Now What?]: *In this step youth begin to see how they can use what they learned.* **Leader:** Ask questions that help the youth see how they can use what they learned now and in the future. “How can you (we) use what you (we) learned?” “Where else can you do this activity?” “When is another time you can use this?” “How can you make this at home and share it with your family?” “Who else can you share this activity with?” “How might you (we) be able to use this experience now? In the future?”