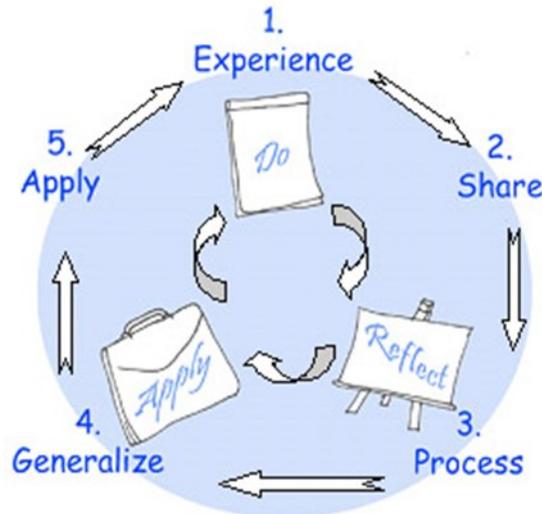




Experiential Learning

Experiential learning takes place when a youth is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity. 4-H uses this hand-on learning approach to teach new topics and life skills. 4-H activities use a hands-on learning approach to teach both new topics and life skills. A five-step experiential learning model guides the process turning activities into fun learning experiences. The Visual Arts series from 4-H CCS combines two of the five steps into a three-step model of Do, Reflect, and Apply. In the art activities the steps are labeled *Create*, *Reflect*, and *Imagine*. By following the experiential model youth learn new topics, practice the elements and principles of design (content skills), as well as learn and develop skills that will last a lifetime.

Providing an experience alone does not create “experiential learning.” The activity comes first. The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created as a result of the experience. This is a “learn by doing” or experiential process. Each step in the process needs to be followed to create a total learning experience.



Experience – Do

Create This is the exploring part of the activity focusing on engaging the youth in the creative process. The art helper facilitates the exploration, guiding the youth through the activity steps. It is important the art helper have the supplies ready and is prepared to start the activity. Reading the Artist Notes and art-i-fact information, and understanding the elements and principles of design in each activity helps in the preparation.

Share and Process – Reflect

Reflect Using the reflection questions the youth describe what happened in each art activity. It allows them to process their art experiences and to analyze and reflect upon what happened during the activity. This process becomes the beginning of critiquing their artwork.



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Critiquing one's artwork is a valuable skill. It helps the artist grow in developing compositions, techniques and skills. Critiquing builds a sense of appreciation and understanding for art. Learning to assess one's artwork builds the life skills, which can then be transferred to other learning situations.

Generalize and Apply

The Imagine questions allow the youth to generalize and apply the art techniques learned in each activity. Having youth generalize from their experiences allows them to form principles or guidelines that can be used in real life situations. This is the beginning of relating the experience to life skills. Application of the experience focuses the youth on their accomplishments and how they can take the skills and techniques learned and apply them to a different situation. Application can lead back to creating. With art it is a good idea to repeat the art activity more than once and allow the youth to build on each new skill learned.