



Inclusive & Diverse Learning Experiences

Learning experiences that are inclusive in nature enrich the educational experiences of youth as they engage with and accommodate diversity while building knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Youth that value inclusive environments and appreciate diversity will be better equipped to function effectively and creatively in a rapidly changing and globally networked world.

The 4-H youth development program recognizes the importance of inclusivity and diversity as it seeks, according to the 4-H Pledge, “better living for my club, my community, my country, and my world.”

Diversity is acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing, and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices, and public assistance status. Appreciating and valuing diversity is an attitude of openness.

Dealing positively with diversity is a value transmitted by an example of inclusivity. Youth tend to model what they experience, and actions, speech, and visual materials are all part of the learning environment. When learning experiences take place in an environment of openness, sharing, and interest, it provides a setting for growth in understanding and appreciation.

The following is a partial list of strategies showing how learning experiences can be designed to be inclusive and diverse. These examples could be portrayed in learning materials through content, graphics, photographs, or opportunities for engagement and interaction with the community.

- Recognize the social and cultural issues associated with environmental sustainability.
- Recognize the social and cultural dimensions of community responsibility.
- Reflect understanding of the forms, roles, and uses of communication across different social and cultural groups.
- Compare social practices between cultural groups.
- Introduce youth to the paradigm changes or competing schools of thought within a content area by providing examples of knowledge which has been accepted at one point in history but which is not currently seen as legitimate and analyze the reasons for this.
- Show how accepted approaches to, and outcomes of, research have the potential to differentially affect or inform various social or cultural groups.
- Demonstrate how one maintains (or develops) a concept of self in relation to, and which is informed by, wider social and cultural perspectives.
- Use a range of registers, language styles and vocabularies in different media to model communication practices which include rather than exclude.
- Respect, value and make provisions for different kinds of physical and mental participation.

Adapted from The Ohio State University Fact Sheet 4H-016-99 (Appreciating Diversity in 4-H) and from the University of South Australia Learning and Teaching Unit (Inclusivity).



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