Materials

1. Power Point slides or posters of:
   - Definition of Life Skill Development
   - Examples of Life Skills
   - Experiential Learning Model
   - Step 1—Experience
   - Step 2—Share
   - Share Questions
   - Step 3—Process
   - Process Questions
   - Step 4—Generalize
   - Generalize Questions
   - Step 5—Apply
   - Apply Questions
   - Tips for Successful Use of the Experiential Learning Model
2. Supplies for Powerful Payload Balloon Shuttle Activity:
   - balloons
   - straws
   - string
   - paper cups
   - weights (such as nuts, bolts, paperclips, etc)
   - masking tape
   - tape measure
   - pads of paper
   - pencils
   - stop watches
3. Copies of Appendix, Lesson 6 handouts if participants are not receiving a copy of the 4-H 101 curriculum

Objectives

1. To define life skills and their importance to 4-H
2. To introduce the basic principles of the Experiential Learning Model
3. To provide a hands-on experience from the 4-H Aerospace curriculum
4. To experience an activity using the five steps of the Experiential Learning Model

Time

1 hour 30 minutes

Lesson 6

Life Skills and the Experiential Learning Model

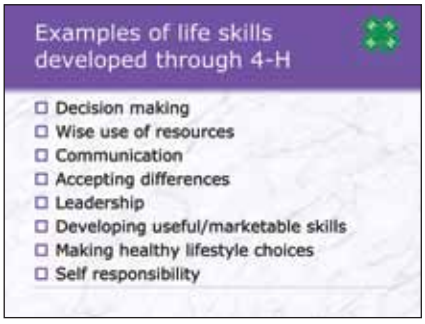
4-H PRKC: Youth Development (domain): Youth Development Theory (topic)

WHAT TO DO

Prior to participants' arrival, prepare the room for the balloon shuttle activity.

Show Power Point slide or poster of Definition of Life Skills Development.

Show Power Point slide or poster of Examples of Life Skills.



WHAT TO SAY

Life Skills are competencies that help people function well in their environments. One of the goals of 4-H programming is to help youth develop life skills they can use in their everyday lives that will help them successfully transition into adulthood. Some examples of typical life skills learned through 4-H programming include:

Decision making
Wise use of resources
Communication
Accepting differences
Leadership
Developing useful/marketable skills
Making healthy lifestyle choices
Self responsibility

These represent just a few examples of life skills learned by participation in 4-H project and club work. There are many other important skills that 4-H members develop. These skills cannot be learned in a single experience. Mastery only comes after trying, making mistakes and trying again.

Life skills are learned in sequential steps and are related to the age and development of the learner. 4-H teaches life skills through hands-on activities using the Experiential Learning Model. The sequential steps of the Experiential Learning Model help youth identify what they have learned and apply it to other situations. You will have a chance to see how this model works in the activity we are about to do.

WHAT TO DO	WHAT TO SAY
	We will talk more about the Experiential Learning Model after we have finished our activity. Now, let's get started.
Divide participants into groups of 4-6 and place groups as far away from each other as possible. Each group should have one piece of string long enough to reach from the floor to the ceiling on a diagonal and three smaller pieces of string. Place one of each of the remaining items listed under supplies at each group station. (This activity also can be done with the string running horizontally across the room from wall to wall.)	Today, you are going to create a balloon shuttle from the supplies we have provided at each station. We also have some stop watches that you can use to measure the time it takes for your shuttle to reach its destination and a tape measure, pad of paper and pencil to record times and distances.
	Listen carefully to the directions: First, thread the string through the drinking straw. Take your long piece of string and tape the ends to the ceiling and floor. (Or attach the string to a wall if ceilings are too high. The string should be long enough to reach to the opposite wall.)
Give participants 10 minutes to complete the experiment.	Designate someone as a timer and recorder. Inflate the balloon, pinch it closed but do not tie it. Attach the balloon to the straw with tape and release the balloon. Record the distance and speed.
After everyone has launched their balloon, give them a new set of instructions.	Now I want you to add a basket to your shuttle using the paper cup and three shorter pieces of string. Using tape, attach the basket to the balloon. Then, attach your balloon and basket to the straw again, release them and record the distance and speed.
Give participants about 5 minutes to add baskets and weights to their balloon shuttles.	Next, I would like you to add weights (paper clips, nuts, bolts, etc.) to your basket and try the experiment again. Don't forget to record your results.
Have participants return to their seats. Ask the following questions, allowing about 10-15 minutes for discussion.	How did you feel when you were building your balloon shuttle? How did it feel when you were testing it?

WHAT TO DO

WHAT TO SAY

What did you think would happen when you launched your shuttle?

What did you expect to happen when you put the baskets and the weights on your shuttles?

How did you make your shuttle?

How did your group decide who would do what part of the task?

What challenges did you have in making your shuttle?

What effect did the size of your balloon have on the distance and speed of your shuttle?

What did you learn about building and launching a shuttle?

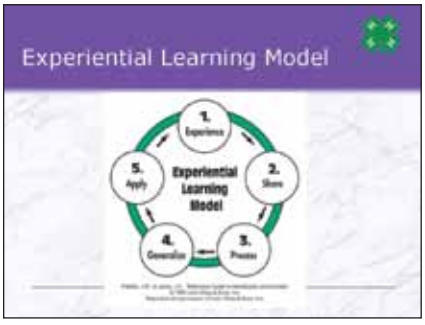
What did you learn about involving everyone in your group in the task?

How would you teach youth in your program to make a balloon shuttle?

What would you do differently when you teach this?

What did you learn from this experience that would help you teach other concepts to a group?

Show the Power Point slide or poster of the Experiential Learning Model.

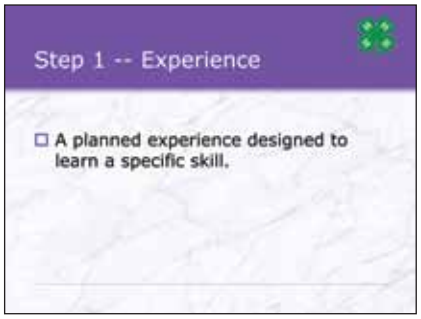


Here is a graphic of the Experiential Learning Model used by 4-H. This model involves a five-part process that incorporates doing something, reflecting upon it and applying what was learned. We just experienced it ourselves with the balloon shuttle experiment.

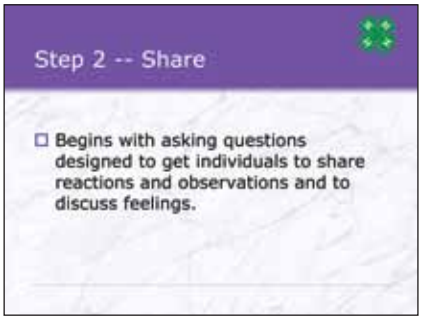
Let's look at each of the steps in the process.

WHAT TO DO

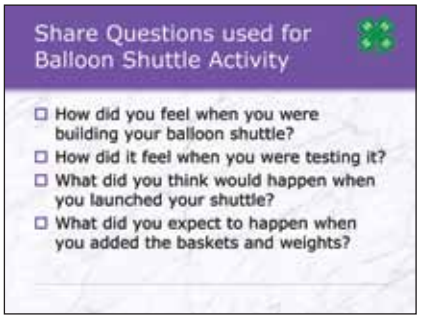
Show the Power Point slide or poster of Definition of Step 1 – Experience.



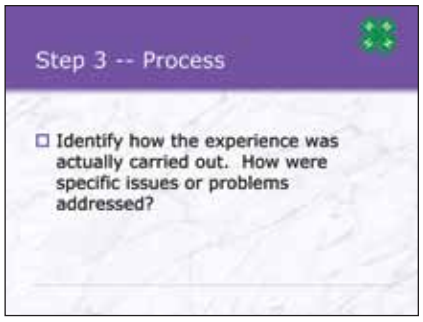
Show the Power Point slide or poster of Definition of Step 2 – Share.



Show the Power Point slide or poster of the Share Questions.



Show the Power Point slide or poster of Definition of Step 3 – Process.



WHAT TO SAY

As you can see, the model begins with a planned experience that is designed to provide an opportunity to learn a specific skill. It will probably be something new for the learner and should push individuals beyond previous experiences.

In the activity we just did, we used the building and launching of a balloon shuttle to involve you in a hands-on learning-by-doing activity.

The sharing process begins with asking questions designed to get individuals to share reactions and observations and to discuss feelings generated by the experience.

We ask these types of questions to help participants reflect on what they have done. These are generally questions associated with senses (seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting, etc.) and levels of difficulty.

In our discussion earlier, we asked the following share questions:

How did you feel when you were building your balloon shuttle?

How did it feel when you were testing it?

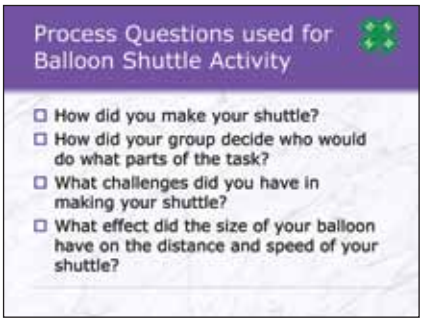
What did you think would happen when you launched your shuttle?

What did you expect to happen when you put the baskets and the weights on your shuttles?

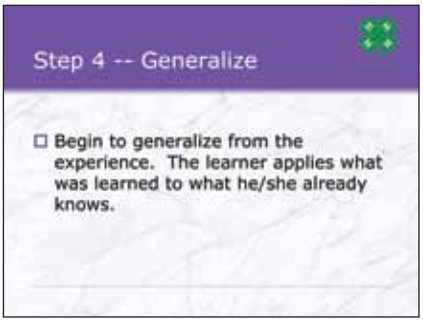
The next step in the model is to identify the process or how the experience was actually carried out. How were specific problems or issues addressed? In this step, you encourage the group to look for recurring themes.

WHAT TO DO

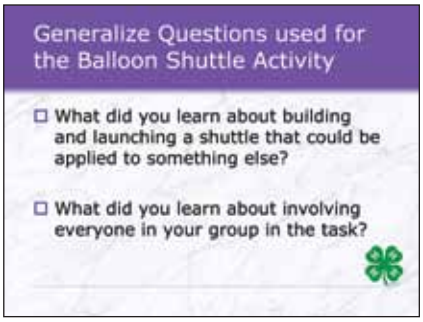
Show the Power Point slide or poster of the Process Questions.



Show the Power Point slide or poster of Definition of Step 4 – Generalize.



Show the Power Point slide or poster of the Generalize Questions.



WHAT TO SAY

Questions that encourage discussion about process usually involve how participants actually did the activity and if there were any problems that arose. If so, how were these problems dealt with?

In our discussion earlier, the process questions included:

How did you make your shuttle?

How did your group decide who would do what part of the task?

What challenges did you have in making your shuttle?

What effect did the size of your balloon have on the distance and speed of your shuttle?

Step four is when we can begin to generalize from the experience. This is when the learner begins to apply what was learned to what he/she already knew. This step helps participants determine how the experience was important for them. Listing key terms that capture the learning can be a helpful exercise in this step.

Questions that encourage discussion about generalizing include:

What was learned from the experience?

How does this new information relate to other things participants have learned?

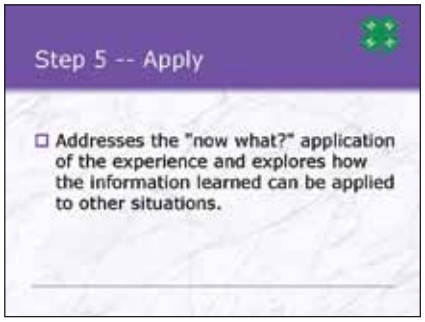
In our discussion earlier, the generalize questions I asked you were:

What did you learn about building and launching a shuttle that could be applied to something else?

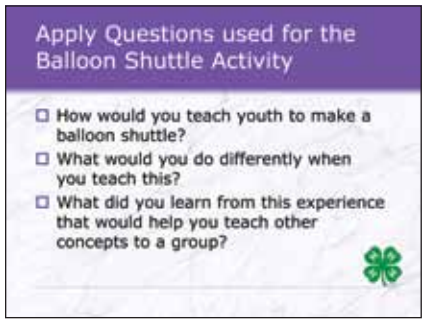
What did you learn about involving everyone in your group in the task?

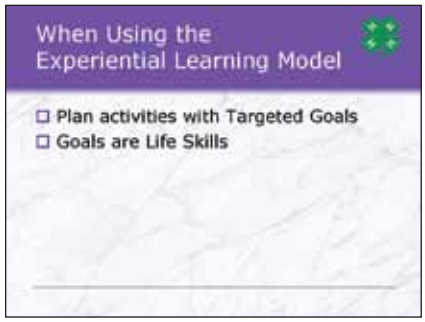
WHAT TO DO

Show the Power Point slide or poster of Definition of Step 5 – Apply.



Show the Power Point slide or poster of the Apply Questions.





Allow about 5 minutes for discussion. If not brought up in discussion, point out that this activity targets teamwork, observation, and problem-solving skills, among others.

WHAT TO SAY

In the last step, the Experiential Learning Model addresses the "now what" application of the experience and explores how the information learned can be applied to other situations.

Questions to use that encourage application include:

How can learners use what they learned? How does what they learned apply to other parts of their lives?

Apply questions that I asked you earlier in our discussion included:

How would you teach youth to make a balloon shuttle?

What would you do differently when you teach this?

What did you learn from this experience that would help you teach other concepts to a group?

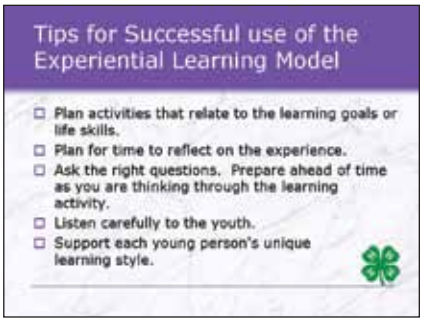
Debriefing is what moves an activity to a learning experience. The primary purpose of processing the experience is to allow participants the opportunity to integrate their learning and come to closure with the activity.

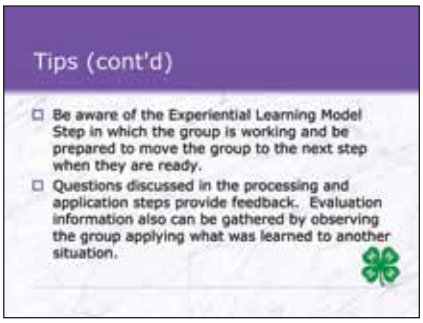
As we mentioned earlier, 4-H uses the Experiential Learning Model to teach life skills. Remember to plan activities that use this approach and start with targeted goals. These goals are the life skills that you wish to teach.

What life skills is the balloon activity intended to develop?

WHAT TO DO

Show Power Point slide or poster of Tips for Successful Use of the Experiential Learning Model.





WHAT TO SAY

The Experiential Learning Model is an effective way to teach youth and process the learning that occurs. Let's review some tips for using it successfully.

- Plan activities that relate to the learning goals.
- Plan for time to reflect on the experience.
- Ask the right questions. These must be prepared ahead of time as you are thinking through the learning activity. Sometimes a short activity where everyone answers a question like "I learned that…." will stimulate discussion.
- Listen carefully to the youth.
- Support each young person's unique learning style.
- Be aware of the step of the Experiential Learning Model in which the group is working and be prepared to help move the group to the next step when they are ready. Remember to adjust your questions based on their responses.

The questions discussed in the processing and application steps will often provide excellent feedback. Even better evaluation information can be gathered when you observe the group applying what they learned to another situation.

In the next lesson we are going to explore curricula that are based on the experiential learning model and that support a wide variety of learning styles.

REFERENCES

Kolb, D. 1984. Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.