

Youth + experiential learning activities = Life Skills Development

Happy Nebraska 4-H Month!

In the 118 years that 4-H has existed, being one of America's oldest and largest Youth Development organizations, it has stayed true to the four H's. According to the Targeting Life Skills Model, developed by the University of Florida IFAS Extension, the four H's are the "4-H Focus of Youth Competencies." They define a skill as a learned ability. "Life Skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environments in which they live". Explained in depth, the four H's are as follows:

HEAD: Knowledge, Reasoning and Creativity Competencies

Thinking: using one's mind to form ideas and make decisions; to imagine, to examine carefully in the mind, to consider.

Managing: using resources to accomplish a purpose.

HEART: Personal/Social Competencies

Relating: establishing a mutual or reciprocal connection between two people that is wholesome and meaningful to both.

Caring: showing understanding, kindness, concern and affection for others.

HAND: Vocational/Citizenship Competencies

Giving: providing, supplying, or causing to happen (social responsibility).

Working: accomplishing something or earning pay to support oneself through physical or mental effort.

HEALTH: Health/Physical Competencies

Living: Acting or behaving; the manner or style of daily life.

Being: living ones life; pursuing ones basic nature; involved in personal development.

The Targeting Life Skills Model further suggests that ***positive youth development programs*** identify the skills within the targeted competency areas that are appropriate to the age of the youth in the program and *offer experiences to teach* these skills. Because skills are best learned through practice, many experiences that teach or reinforce skills must be provided. Mastery of any skill requires **opportunities** to try, make mistakes, and try again.

What about 4-H specifically targets these skills? The answer lies within the experiential model used in 4-H programs. The steps within the experiential learning model:

1.) Experience, 2.) Share, 3.) Process, 4.) Generalize, and 5.) Apply

According to a Leader Guide resource created by Nebraska 4-H, Experiential Learning can occur when educators are purposeful in directing the youth experience and take time to reflect on what was learned. Through the steps of Experience, Share, Process, Generalize,

and Apply, youth are able to enhance and be engaged through their own learning. An important aspect of Experiential Learning includes active questioning:

1. What did the project mean to your everyday life?
2. Why was this project important to your life?
3. How will you act differently in the future as a result of this experience?
4. How can you use these skills or knowledge in different situations?

By putting youth in the driver's seat of their involvement, through hands-on experiential learning, educators and leaders can create memorable experiences that develop into life skills that can translate throughout their life from childhood to adulthood.

Are you interested in involving your child in 4-H Youth Development in Buffalo County?

Enroll now! Buffalo.unl.edu

Have questions? Call us! 308-236-1235

Want to see what we're doing in Buffalo County?

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-Prize giveaways will be posted the entire month of February!

Follow us on **Instagram:** @buffalocounty4h

Follow us on **Pinterest:** @buffalocounty4h

Kameran Ulferts

Asst Educator

4-H Youth Development in Buffalo County

Janning, E. Scholtz, Krehbiel, M. "Expanded Learning Opportunities: Experiential Learning"
<http://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/ec485.pdf>

Hendricks, P. (1998) "Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model"
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/skls.eval.htm>