

Building Life-Changing Programs

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Experiential Learning

“We will learn no matter what! Learning is as natural as rest or play. With or without books, inspiring trainers or classrooms, we will manage to learn. Educators can, however make a difference in what people learn and how well they learn it. If we know why we are learning and if the reason fits our needs as we perceive them, we will learn quickly and deeply.”

- Malcolm Knowles, Educator

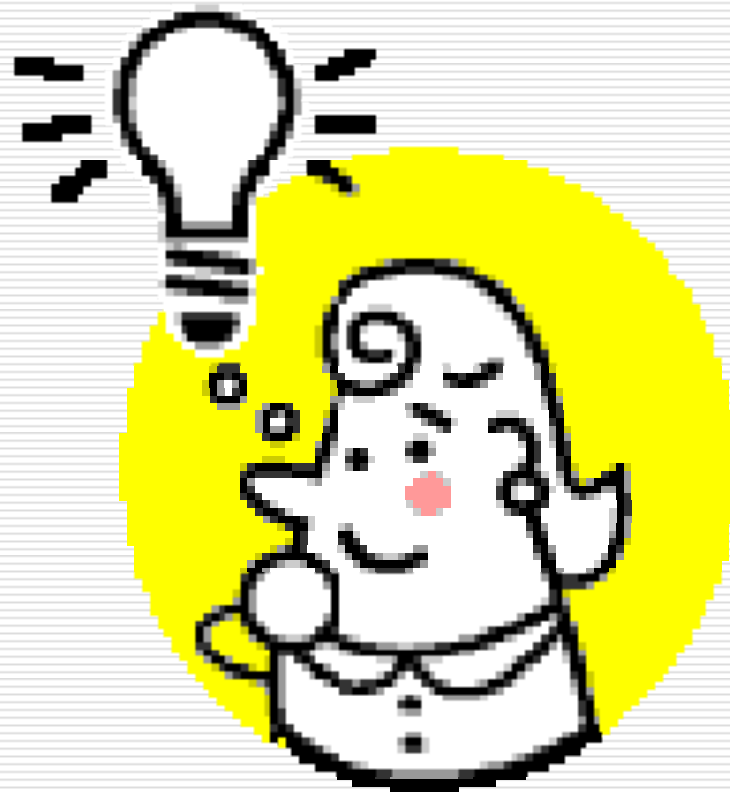
Workshop Goals:

1. To help participants improve their skills and confidence in understanding the Experiential Learning cycle.
 2. To help participants incorporate the Experiential Learning cycle into all aspects of camp.
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Presenter Role:

1. To provide an opportunity for you to share, think, and get involved in the learning process.
 2. We feel responsible for 20% of the learning that will take place in this workshop. That leaves 80% of the responsibility in your hands!
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What do you know or wonder about Experiential Learning?



What Experiential Learning is **NOT**



Building the Learning Cycle



The Experiential



Learning Cycle



Experiencing

Perform; do it



- Provide a concrete experience that:
 - Can be an individual or group experience, but involves doing.
 - Most likely will be unfamiliar to the learners – a first-time activity.
 - Pushes the learner beyond previous performance levels.
 - May be “uncomfortable” to the learner (The “Groan Zone”).
 - Includes the risk of failure.
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The Experiential



Learning Cycle



Sharing

Results; reactions; observations

- ❑ Get the participants to talk about their experience.
- ❑ Share reactions and observations
- ❑ Discuss feelings generated by the experience.
- ❑ Let the group (or individual) talk freely and acknowledge the ideas they generate.



The Experiential

Learning Cycle



Processing

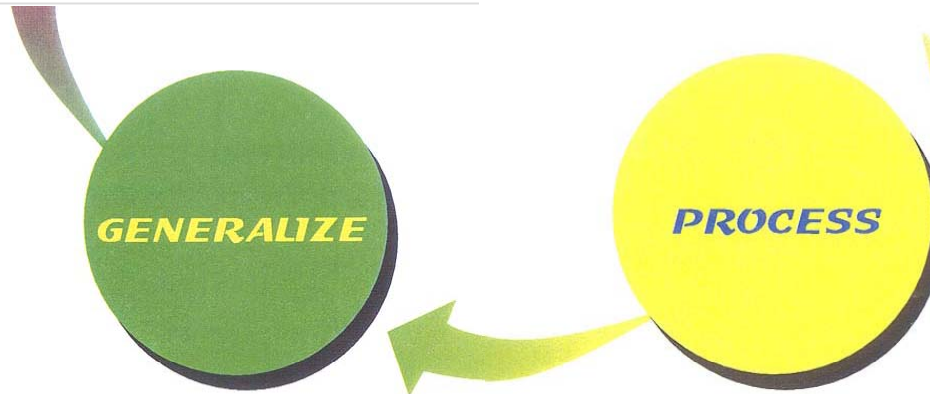
Discussing; analyzing; and reflecting on the experience

- ❑ Discuss how the experience was carried out.
- ❑ Discuss how themes, problems, and issues are brought out by the experience.
- ❑ Discuss how specific problems or issues were addressed.
- ❑ Discuss personal experiences members.
- ❑ Encourage the group to look for recurring themes.



The Experiential

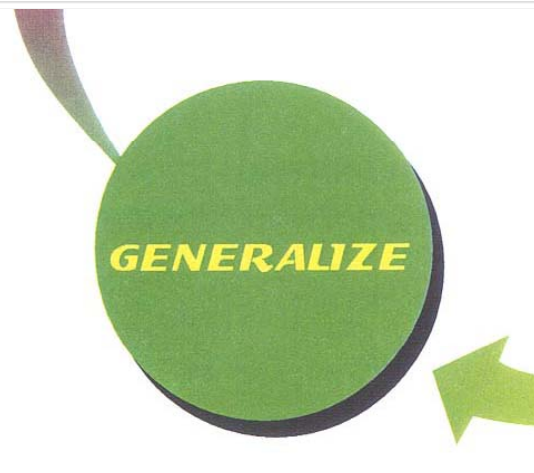
Learning Cycle



Generalizing

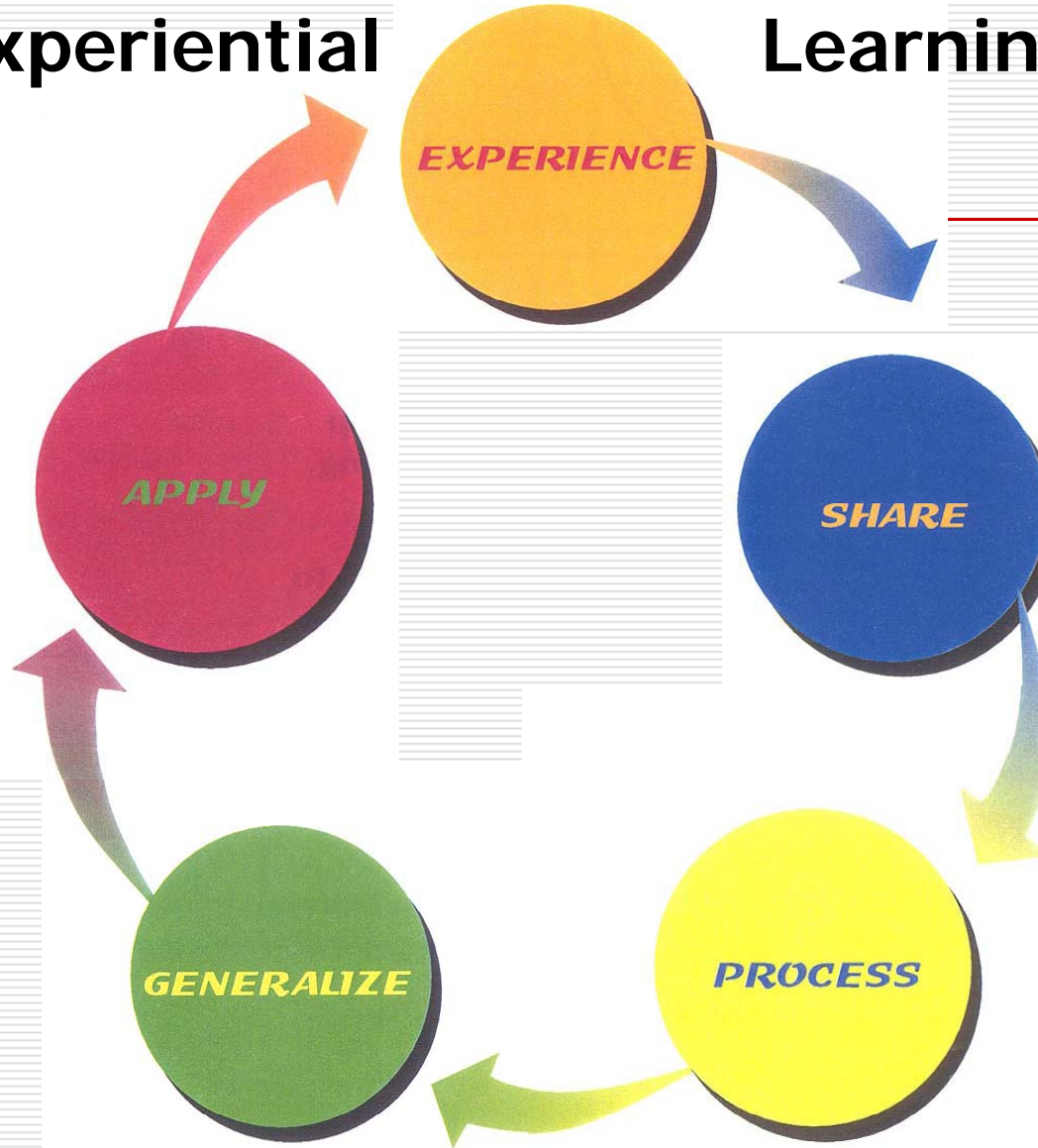
Connecting the experience with real world examples

- ❑ Find general trends or common truths in the experience.
- ❑ Identify “real life” principles that surfaced.
- ❑ List key terms that capture the learning.



The Experiential

Learning Cycle



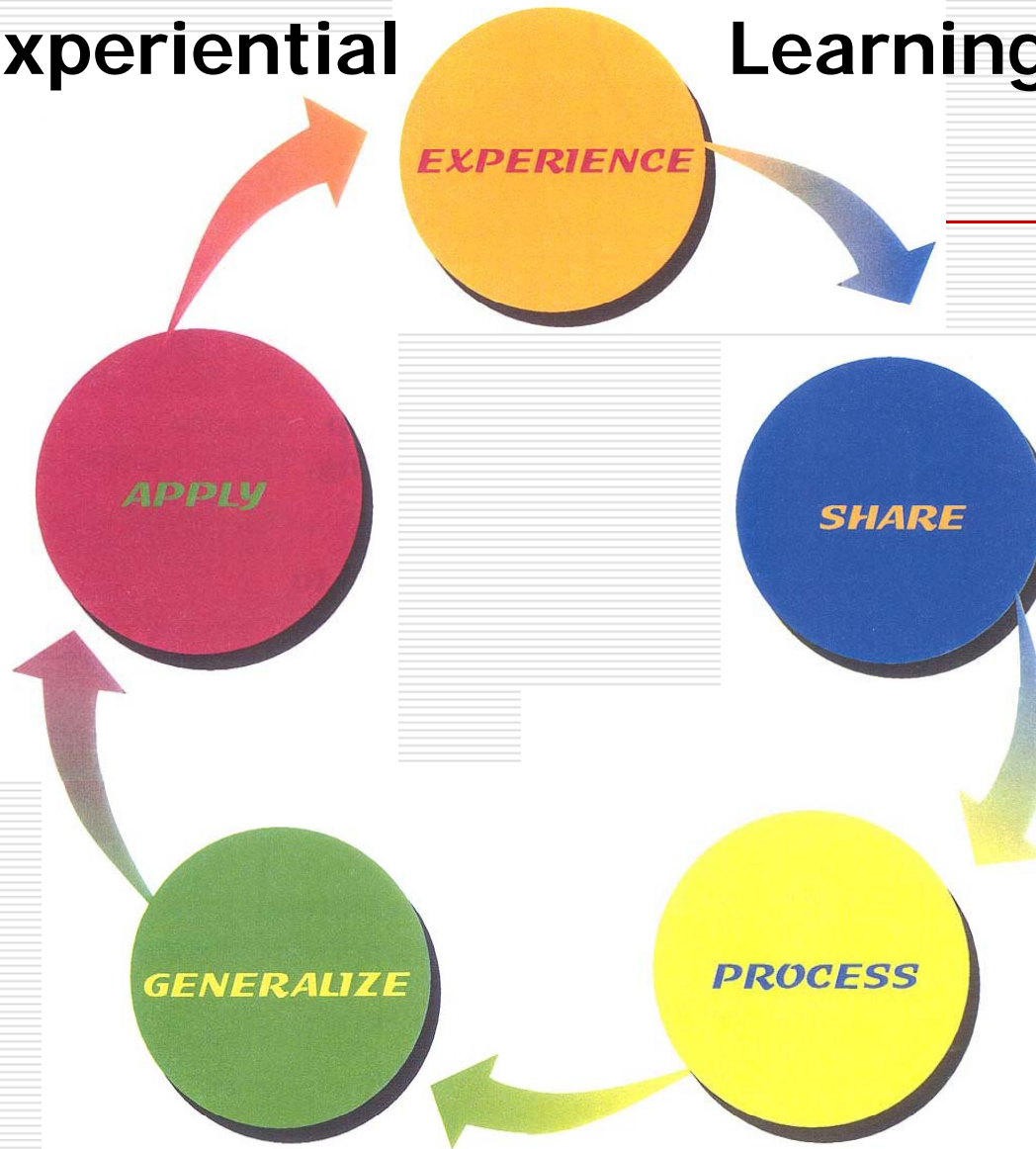
Applying

Apply what was learned to a similar or different situation



- Discuss how new learning can be applied to other situations.
 - Discuss how issues raised can be useful in the future.
 - Discuss how more effective behaviors can develop from the new learnings.
 - Help each individual feel a sense of ownership for what was learned.
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The Experiential Learning Cycle



Why Ask Questions?

- ❑ **Questions allow us to:**
 - ... access information
 - ... analyze information
 - ...draw sound conclusions

 - ❑ Good questions **stimulate thinking and creativity**
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Asking Questions

- ❑ **The goal is to have the questions reside with the learner**
 - ❑ *"The ability to think - to be a lifelong seeker and integrator of new knowledge - is based on the ability to ask and consider important questions." (Richetti & Sheerin, 1999)*
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Types of Questions

❑ Closed Questions

- ...have a limited number of acceptable responses or "right answers"

❑ Open Questions

- ... those that can be explored further
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Closed Questions

- ❑ Fact-based, or based on previously-learned information
 - ❑ Promote limited discussion and interaction
 - ❑ May be factual recall; may require convergent thinking (more analytical)
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Types of Closed Questions

Memory Recall

- Useful in checking information retention and determining the knowledge base of the participants.
 - Example: According to the Surgeon General, what is the ideal blood pressure range for 45-year-old man? A 45-year-old woman?
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Types of Closed Questions

Convergent (a.k.a., Synthesis/Analysis)

- Represents the analysis of given or remembered data...
 - Focuses on solving a problem or putting several pieces of data together...the learner has to reason, using given or remembered data.
 - The participant becomes a problem solver in which the task is to apply the proper operations at the proper time.
 - Example: "What aspects of wetlands make them susceptible to non-point pollutants?"
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Open Questions

- ❑ Those that promote discussion and interaction
 - ❑ Do not have a single “right” answer
 - ❑ Stimulate learner thinking and encourage ideas, speculation, and the formation of hypotheses...
 - allow learners to generate their own questions (REMEMBER: have the questions reside with the learner)
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Types of Open Questions

Evaluative

- Asks the learner to use judgement, value, and choice, and is characterized by its judgmental quality
 - Example: "Discuss some things you think need to be done to improve environmental literacy in California?"
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Types of Open Questions

Divergent

- Provides the opportunity to consider many different systems and try out many answers
 - Allows the opportunity for creativity and imagination
 - Everyone can participate at her/his own level and, since the response depends on the viewpoint of the individual, there are no “wrong” answers
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Types of Open Questions

□ Divergent

➤ *Examples:*

- “Compare the fitness levels of children who...”
 - “Explain different ways in which pet overpopulation...”
 - “Discuss opportunities to improve biodiversity...”
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How Do I Know if My Questions are Open or Closed?

□ Check your vocabulary:

- Questions that begin with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *name*, and sometimes *how* and *why* tend to be closed questions.
 - Questions that use the terms *discuss*, *interpret*, *explain*, *evaluate*, *compare*, *if*, or *what if*, are indicative of questions that can be explored further.
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Question Variety

- What's the benefit of asking closed questions? When are they appropriate?

 - What skills do open questions help students develop?
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"...and listen to the Sounds of Silence."

- Paul Simon

- ❑ Misconception: The more questions I ask, the more curious the students will be. Actuality: The more questions a teacher asks, the fewer students ask.
 - ❑ Misconception: If students don't respond immediately, ask another question. Avoid that *uncomfortable* silence. Actuality: **Wait time** is important. Student confidence increases; the number of questions students ask increases.
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Evaluation

- What was learned from the experience?
- What worked?
- What would you change?



Experiential Learning is...

Experiential education is not just about doing an activity. Experience becomes learning when it is pondered and reflected upon. This followed by determinations which are made about what to remember and utilize at a later time and in different contexts...Being a true leader is about sharing your world view with the youth you work with as well as trying to understand their world view. Through collaboration of feelings during the sharing of experiences, we all expand our knowledge."

- Richard Ponzio & Sally Stanley
4-H CYD, UC Davis
