

Experiential Learning Workshop: Level I (Beginning Level)
Understanding the Experiential Learning Cycle

5-Step Experiential Learning Cycle Definitions

EXPLORATION: *“Do it”*

Perform or do an activity with little to no help from the facilitator/teacher. Examples might include making products or models; role-playing; giving a presentation; problem-solving; playing a game.

Features of experiences include:

- i) May be an individual or group experience but involves doing.
- ii) Most likely will be unfamiliar to the learners – a first-time activity.
- iii) Pushes the learner beyond previous performance levels.
- iv) May be “uncomfortable” to the learner.

SHARING: *“What Happened”*

Publicly share the results, reactions and 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.

Examples of sharing questions:

- i) What did you do?
- ii) What happened?
- iii) What did you see, feel, hear, taste?
- iv) What was the most difficult? Easiest?

PROCESSING: *“What’s Important?”*

Discussing, analyzing, reflecting, looking at 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 of members. Encourage the group to look for recurring themes.

Examples of processing questions:

- i) What problems or issues seemed to occur over and over?
- ii) What similar experience(s) have you had?

GENERALIZING: *“So What?”*

Connect 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.

Examples of generalizing questions:

- i) What did you learn about yourself through this activity?
- ii) Why is (life skill) important in your daily life?
- iii) How does what you learned relate to other parts of your life?

APPLICATION: *“Now What?”*

Apply what was learned to a similar or different situation, learn from past experiences, practice. 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 everyone feel a sense of ownership for what was learned.

Example questions about applying the experience:

- i) How can you apply what you learned to a new situation?
- ii) How will you act differently in the future?
- iii) How could you apply “X” (insert skill) learned through this practice in the future?