

Positive Youth Development & Life Skill Development

**Presented by
Steve McKinley
mckinles@purdue.edu;
765-494-8435**

Objectives:

- 1. Discuss characteristics of youth development.**
- 2. Identify life skills developed by 4-H members.**
- 3. Explain the components of the Experiential Learning Model.**
- 4. Discuss methods to help youth develop life skills.**
- 5. Identify characteristics of successful youth and adult partnerships.**



Objective 1

Discuss characteristics of youth development.

Youth Development Approach

- Focus on positive outcomes desired for youth, not on negative outcomes to prevent.
- Provide programs that are available to all young people.
- Youth are seen as “central actors in their own development.”
- Develop the whole person - not just a single characteristic or problem.

Youth Development Approach

- Mastery of competencies for productive adult life.
- Not something done TO youth, but results from programming WITH youth.
- Guided by caring, knowledgeable adults - dependent on family and other adults in community.
- Programs offered in safe, nurturing, healthy environments.

To master skills young people need...

- Safety and structure
- Sense of belonging and membership
- Closeness and several good relationships
- Experience of gaining competence and mastering skills



To master skills young people need...

- Independence and control over some part of their lives
- Self-awareness and ability and opportunities to act on that understanding
- Sense of self-worth and ability and opportunities to contribute



Positive Youth Development

- Is an intentional process
- Promotes positive outcomes for young people
- Provides opportunities, relationships and the support to fully participate.
- Takes place in families, peer groups, schools, neighborhoods and communities.

• Source: *National 4-H Leadership Trust*

4-H Youth Development

- Non-formal, youth education program
- Housed in the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Part of land grant university system
- Access to most current knowledge and research
- Located in each county in the nation



4-H Program Strengths

- Nationally-recognized
- Strong local, state, and national infrastructure
- Outreach opportunities support community efforts
- Research-based curriculum
- Professionals trained in adult education and youth programming
- Record of successful partnerships with youth-serving organizations

Approaches to 4-H Youth Development

PREVENTION

Focus: Risks & Risk Factors
Target: Social Norms
Goal: Fewer Problems

Focus: Skills & Knowledge
Target: Individual Learners

Goal: Competency in knowledge or skill

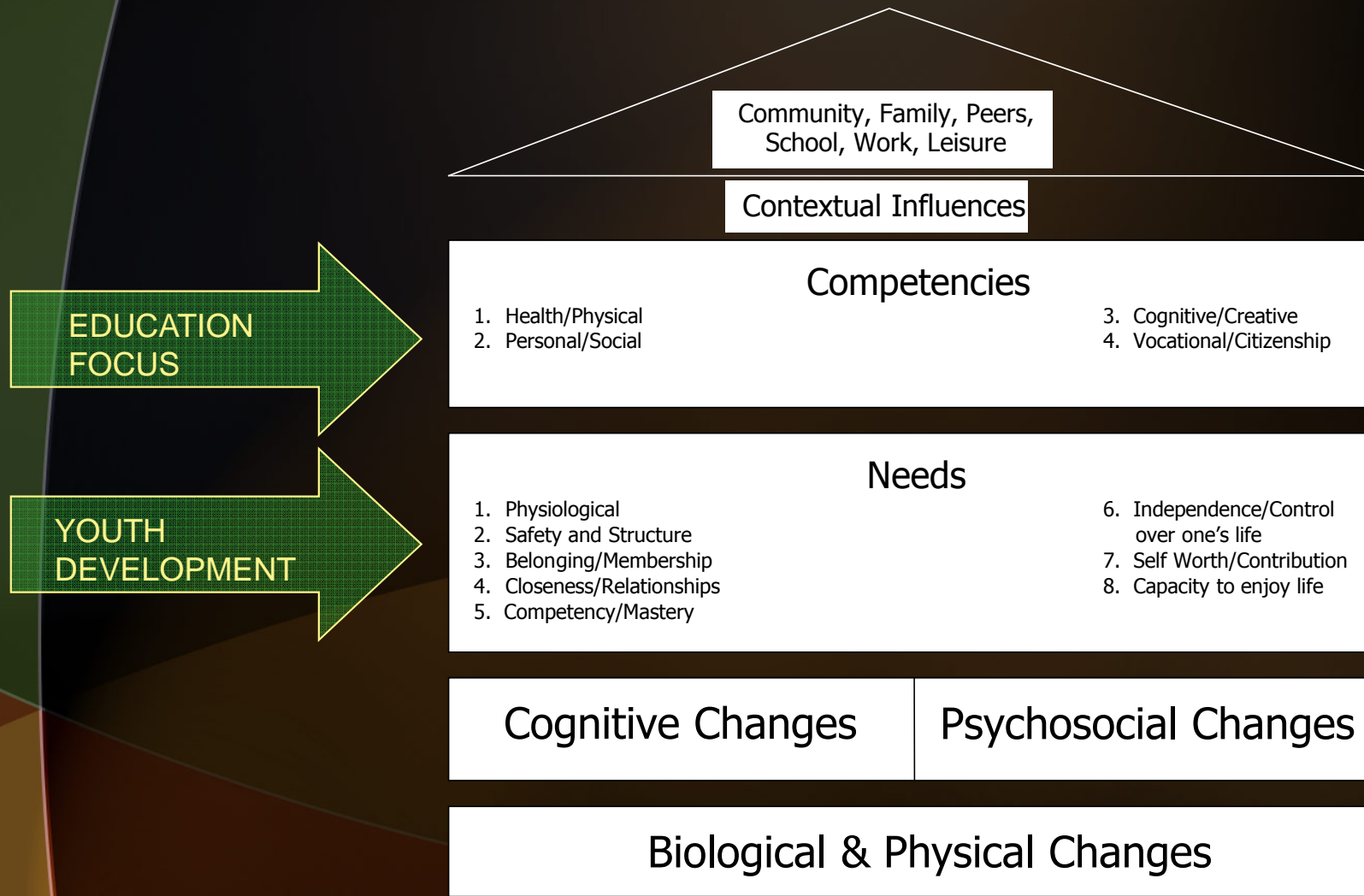
EDUCATION

Focus: Developmental Needs
Target: Opportunities for Youth

Goal: Maturity & Potential

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Understanding the Different Approaches





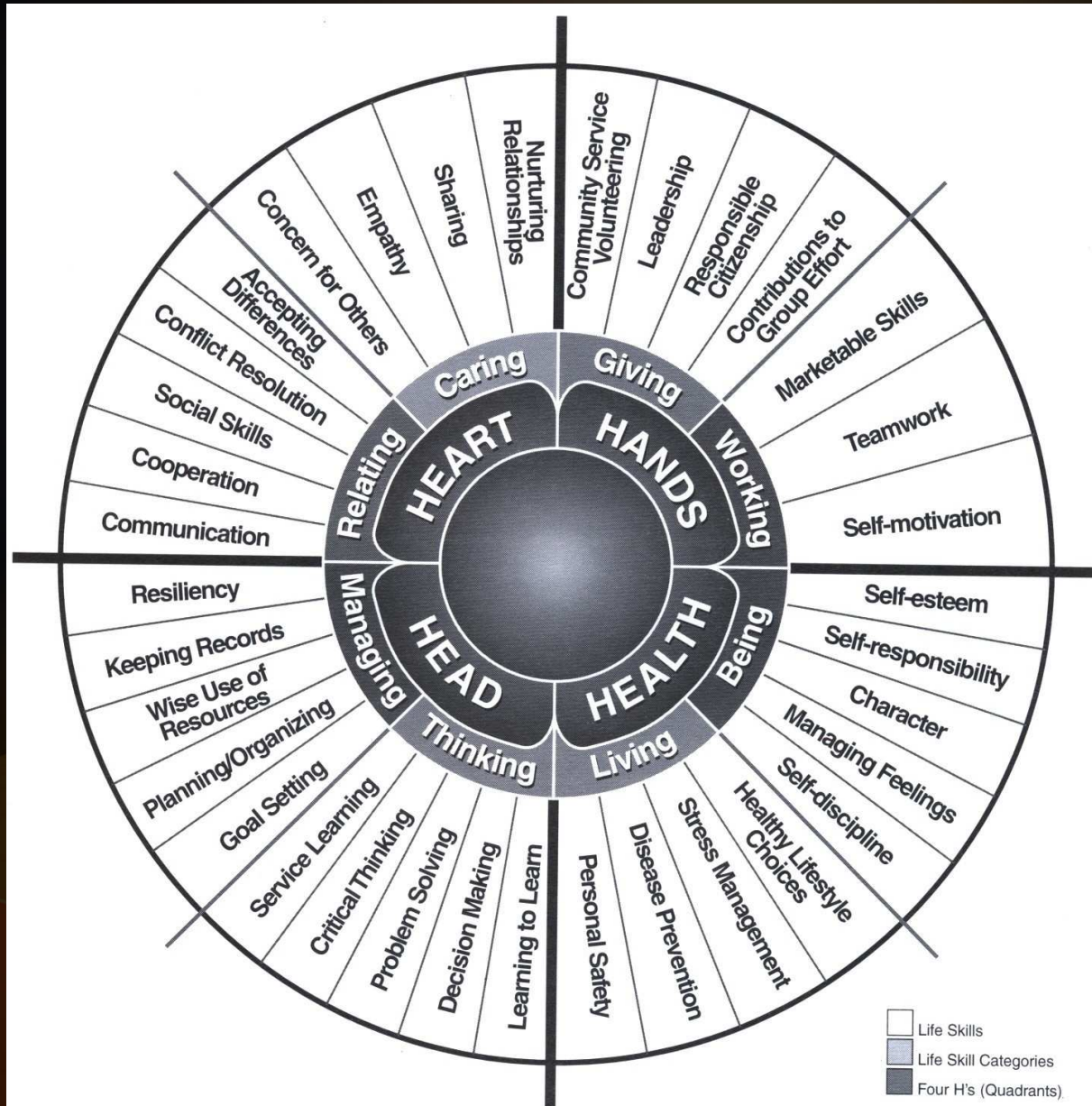
Objective 2

Identify life skills developed by 4-H members.

Life Skill Development

- Life Skills - competencies that help people function well in their environments.
- Learned in sequential steps related to their age and developmental stage.
- Acquired through “learn-by-doing” activities.

Targeting Life Skills Model

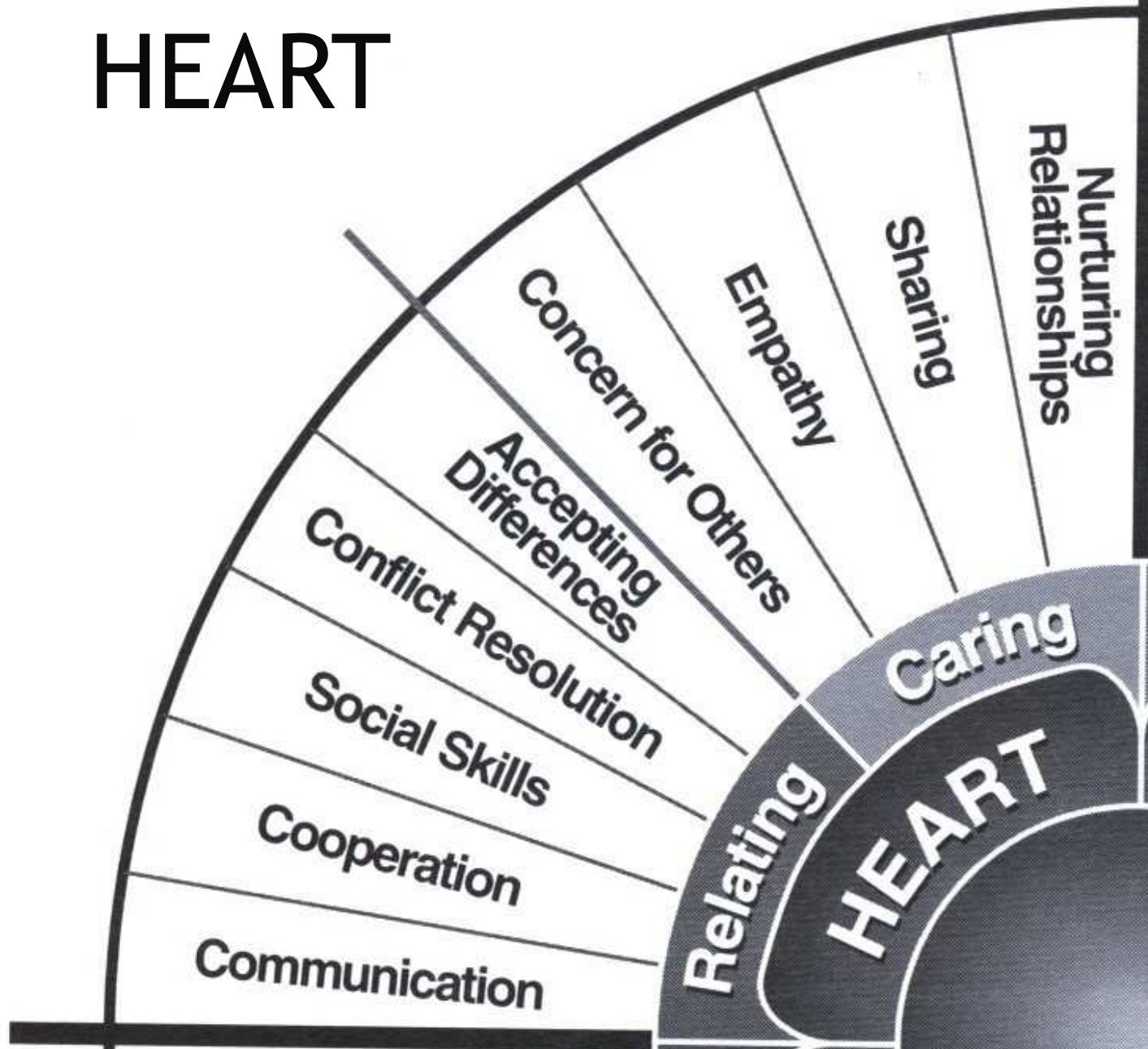


Source: Pat Hendricks, Iowa State

HEAD

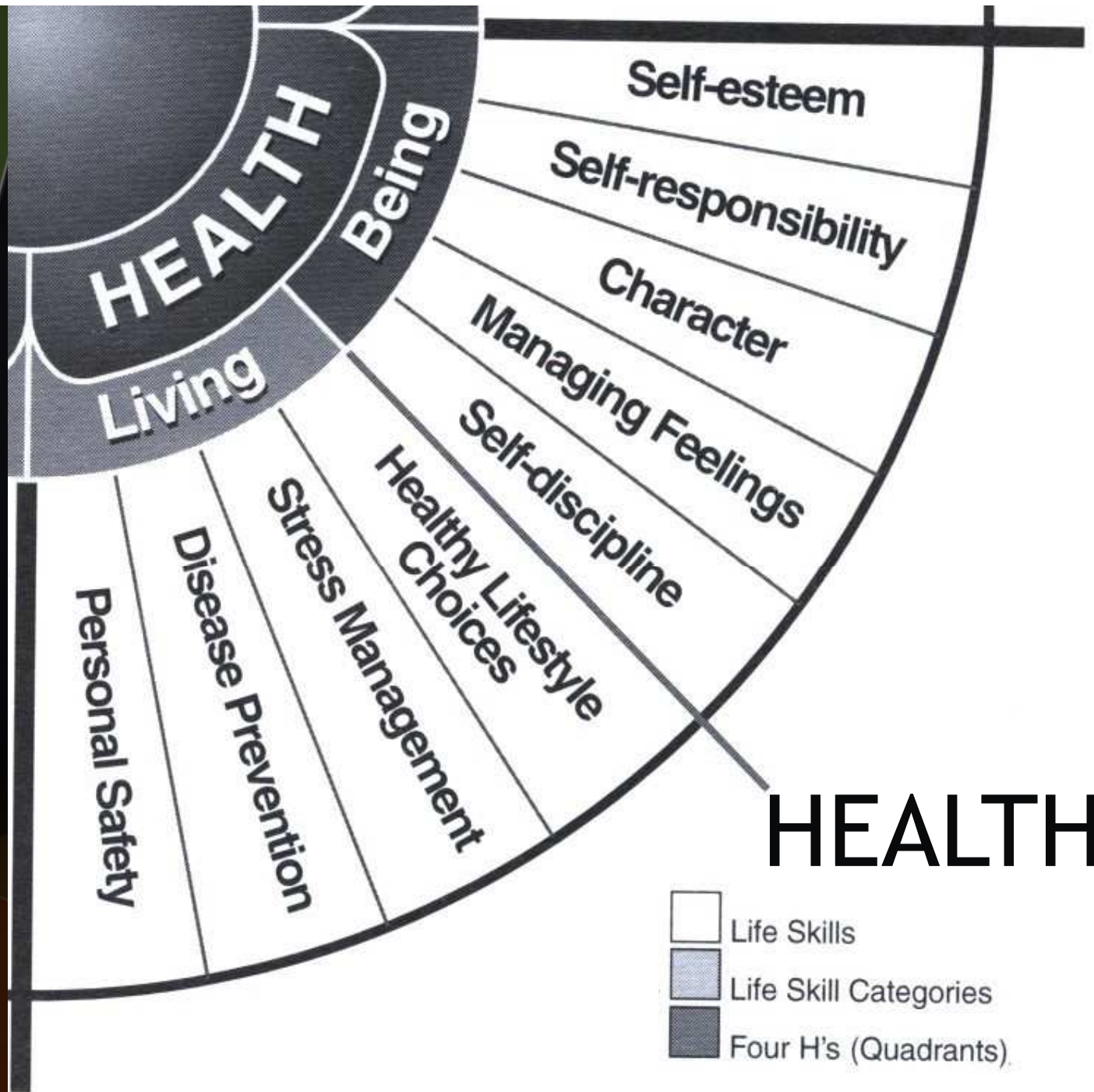


HEART



HANDS







Objective 3

Explain the components of the
Experiential Learning Model

Experiential Learning Model

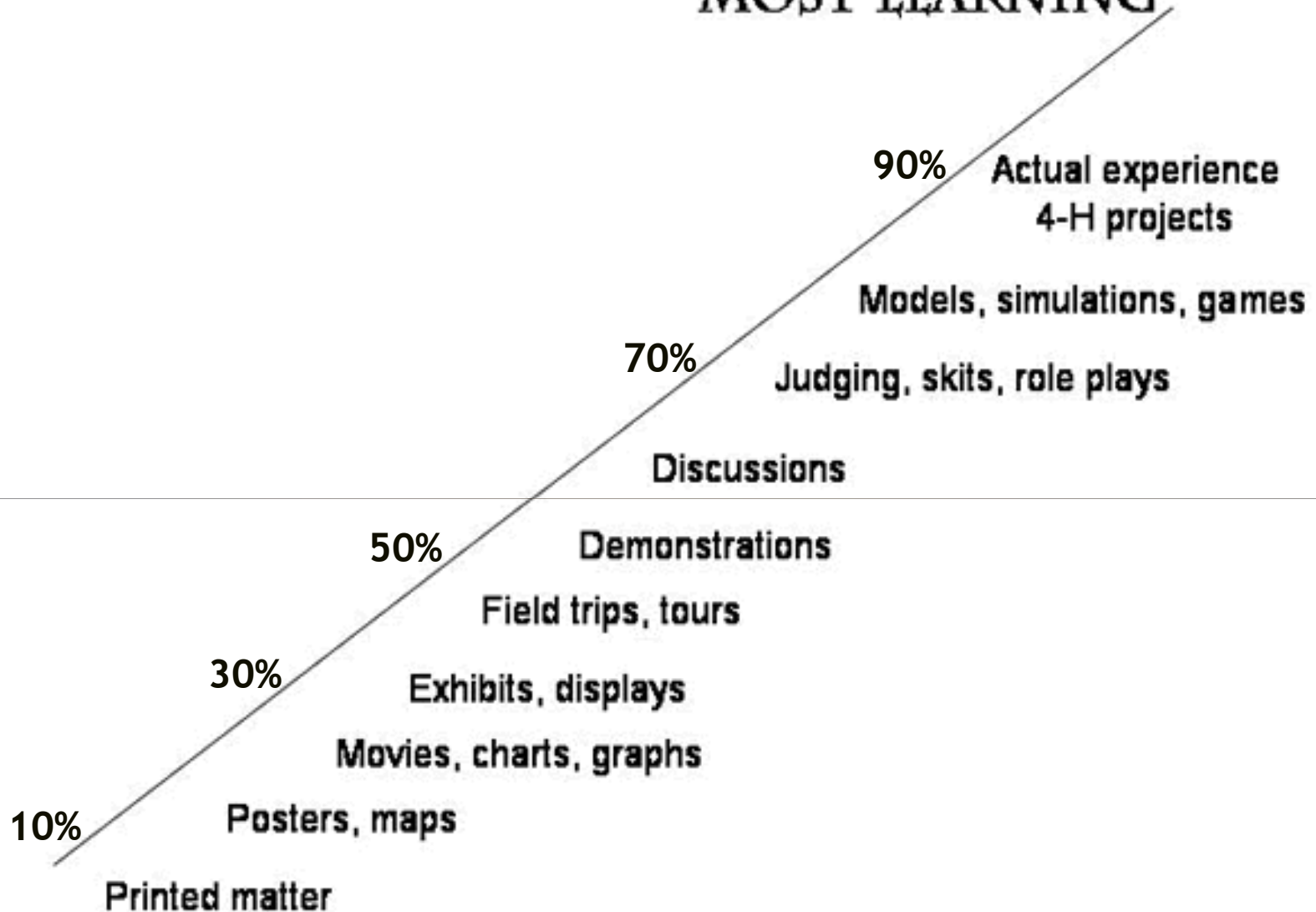
- Process for youth to learn through a carefully planned experience followed by leader-led discussion questions
- Basis for 4-H activity manuals



"Learn by Doing"

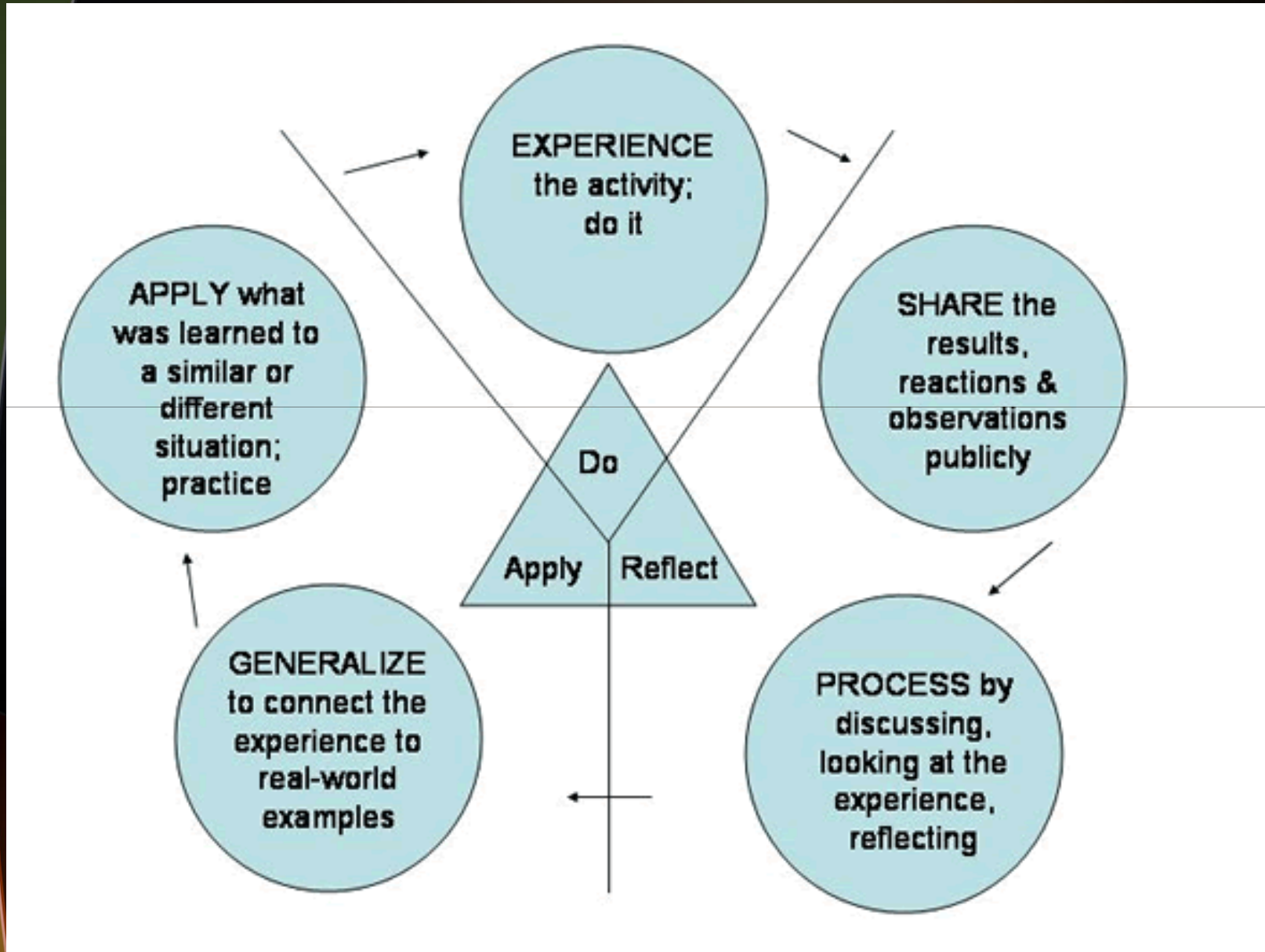
- **We remember:**
 - 10% of what we read
 - 20% of what we hear
 - 30% of what we see
 - 50% of what we see and hear
 - 70% of what we see, hear and discuss
 - 90% of what we see, hear, discuss and practice
- **You can tell or show members how to do something, but the actual experience of doing it themselves is the best way to reinforce learning**

MOST LEARNING



LEAST LEARNING

Experiential Learning Model



Experience... “Just do it!”

- Action on the part of the learner
- Leader provides guidance, but is not directive
- Goal is for youth to “experience” the activity to develop life skills
- Opportunities for practice



Share... “What happened?”

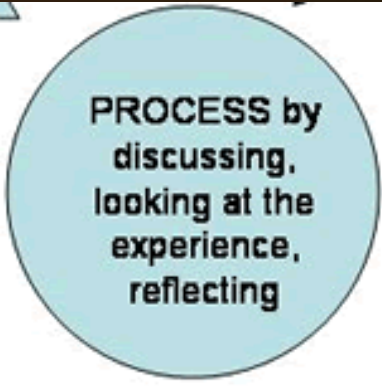
- Ask the group some of the following questions...
 - What did you do?
 - What happened?
 - What did it feel like to do this?
 - What was most difficult? Easiest?



SHARE the
results,
reactions &
observations
publicly

Process... “What’s important?”

- Ask questions to focus on thinking about the process...
 - How was the experience conducted?
 - How was the activity performed?
 - What steps did you complete during this activity?
 - What problems did you encounter? How did you overcome them?



PROCESS by
discussing,
looking at the
experience,
reflecting

Generalize... “So what?”

- Focus questions on individual experiences...
 - What did you learn or discover?
 - How does what you learned relate to other things you have been doing?
 - What skill did you practice? What similar experiences have you had with learning this skill?



GENERALIZE
to connect the
experience to
real-world
examples

Apply... “Now what?”

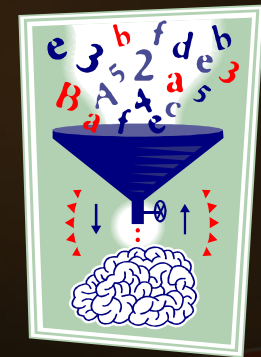
- Emphasize how this activity helped the members learn subject matter skills and practice life skills.
 - How does what you learned relate to other parts of your life?
 - How can you use what you learned?
 - How might this experience change the way you will approach a similar task in the future?



APPLY what
was learned to
a similar or
different
situation;
practice

Debriefing the Activity

- Debriefing allows members to complete their learning from the activity.
- Leaders should be well-prepared for the debriefing.
- Build in adequate time for members to reflect on their experiences.
- Listen to youth carefully.
- Most important outcome: members demonstrate new knowledge gain & practice targeted life skill.





Objective 4

Discuss methods to help youth develop life skills.

Methods used in 4-H to help youth develop life skills

- 4-H projects
- Activity manuals
- Demonstrations/Public Speaking
- Judging events
- Skill-a-thons
- Project workshops
- Educational trips
- Resume building
- Camp Counselors



Skill-a-thon

- Method to involve 4-H members and parents
- Challenging, non-competitive, learn-by-doing activities
- Series of mini learning stations with assistants at each station
- Participants rotate from station to station to perform the given task



Skill-a-thon

- All team members test their knowledge and ability before assistant provides hints
- Can involve several project groups at one time on the program
- Entire club can be actively involved at one time
- Provides recognition to projects and leaders

Planning a Skill-a-thon

- Determine subject matter for stations.
- Create realistic tasks to complete at each station.
- Delegate responsibility for securing adequate equipment and supplies.
- Identify an assistant for each station (youth or adult) familiar with the topic.
- Identify volunteer to divide group into teams of 2-4 and to assign each team to a workstation.
- Advertise event to members and parents.

Conducting a Skill-a-thon

- Set up stations
- Divide group into teams by age
- Allow teams to experience activities
- Listen to answers and presentations
- Ask questions to help build on presentation
- Praise efforts
- Review major points and appropriate solutions
- Evaluate the skill-a-thon



Objective 5

Identify characteristics of successful youth and adult partnerships.

Youth-Adult Partnerships

- Provides opportunities for youth and adults to work together
- Excellent learning opportunity for both groups
- Adults work with youth as equals in the partnership (not do activities to or for youth)



Youth-Adult Partnerships

- **Benefits of youth involvement:**
 - Youth recruit other youth more effectively than adults
 - Youth have a fresh perspective
 - Youth have access to information
 - Youth gain self-esteem and new skills.
 - Communities gain new source of potential leaders



Youth-Adult Partnerships

- **Benefits of youth involvement:**
 - **New role models are formed.**
 - **Negative youth activities are reduced.**
 - **Adults learn they don't need to be responsible for everything.**
 - **Adults better understand youth and become re-energized.**
 - **Youth better understand adults and the roles they play.**

Tips to develop effective YAP's

- Don't expect more from youth than you would from an adult. Youth have busy schedules and deadlines too.
- Treat youth as individuals. Don't ask one youth to represent all youth.
- Encourage youth & adults to work as equal partners with balanced voices.
- Respect youth as having a significant contribution to make and do not view them only as program beneficiaries.



Tips to develop effective YAP's

- **Don't interrupt. Allow youth the chance to finish their thoughts.**
- **Help the group feel comfortable with each other and overcome the initial anxiety.**
- **Outline expectations and responsibilities of youth and adult members. Establish a set of shared values, such as respect, equality, openness, listening, and trust.**
- **Work toward outcomes that address real issues and needs of youth & community.**

Tips to develop effective YAP's



- Allow youth and adults to learn together and explore beneficial new program ideas.
- Take joint responsibility for decision-making, identifying issues, planning, and implementing plans.
- Provide challenging and relevant roles for participation in the organization.
- Evaluate results and give positive reinforcement. Allow time to reflect on the work accomplished.

Overcoming Barriers to Youth Service

- Discuss organizational “mindset” so that adults and youth working together is a productive and enjoyable experience for both groups
- Advise adults about “dos and don’ts” on how to work with youth, and youth on how to work with adults
- Hold open discussion about stereotypes that adults and youth have of each other
- Lead exercises to practice “shared power”



Overcoming Barriers to Youth Service

- Train various age groups appropriately
- Provide clear definition of roles and responsibilities for both adults and youth
- Include youth in meaningful decision-making processes
- Be sensitive to logistics such as the availability of transportation, suitable scheduling, and snacks for young volunteers who come after school

Source: Independent Sector

Youth as Volunteers



- 44% of adults volunteer and 2/3 of these began volunteering when they were young.
- Adults who began volunteering as youth are twice as likely to volunteer as those who did not volunteer when they were younger.
- High school volunteering recently reached the highest levels in the past 50 years.
- In every income and age group, those who volunteered as youth give and volunteer more than those who did not.
- Those who volunteered as youth and whose parents volunteered became the most generous adults in giving time.

Source: “Youth Service America”, Independent Sector

This I Believe...

- **The 4-H boy and girl are more important than the 4-H projects.**
- **4-H is not trying to replace the home, the church, and the school, only to supplement them.**
- **4-H'ers are their own best exhibit.**
- **No 4-H award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a 4-H member or leader.**
- **Competition is a natural human trait and should be recognized as such in 4-H club work. It should be given no more emphasis than other fundamentals in 4-H.**



This I Believe...



- Learning how to do the project is more important than the project itself.
- A blue ribbon 4-H'er with a red ribbon pig is more desirable than a red ribbon 4-H'er with a blue ribbon pig.
- To “learn by doing” is fundamental in any sound educational program and is characteristic of the 4-H program.
- Generally speaking, there is more than one good way of doing most things.
- Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to be important, to achieve, and to be praised.
- Our job is to teach 4-H members HOW to think, NOT what to think.

Source: Utah 4-H

Resources

- Hendricks, Pat. 1998. “Targeting Life Skills Model.”
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/lifeskills/previewwheel.html>.
- Independent Sector.
<http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/engagingyouth.html>.
- Kress, Cathann. “Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development.” National 4-H Headquarters. <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/elements.ppt>.

Resources

- USDA/Army Youth Development Project. 2003. “4-H 101, The Basics of Starting 4-H Clubs.” http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h_docs.htm.
- Utah 4-H website. “This I Believe...” <http://utah4h.org/vol-handbook/handouts.htm>.
- Woessner, Lisa. “Youth and Adult Partnerships.” University of Illinois 4-H. <http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/opps/articles003.html>.