The Experiential Learning Process

Process

1. Experiencing/Exploring "Doing"

Students perform or do a hands-on/minds-on experience with little or no help from the teacher. Examples might include:

- making products or models
- role-playing
- giving a presentation
- solving a problem
- playing a game.

A key facet of experiential learning is what the student learns from the experience rather than the quantity or quality of the experience.

2. Sharing/Reflecting "What Happened?"

Students share the results, reactions and observations with their peers.

Students will also get other peers to talk about their own experience, share their reactions and observations and discuss feelings generated by the experience.

The sharing equates to reflecting on what they discovered and relating it to past experiences, which can be put to future use.

3. Processing/Analyzing "What's Important?"

Students discuss, analyze and reflect upon the experience. Describing and analyzing their experiences allows students to relate them to future learning experiences.

Students will also discuss how:

- the experience was carried out and
- themes, problems and issues emerged as a result of the experience
- specific problems or issues were addressed and identify recurring themes.

4. Generalizing "So What?"

Students will:

- connect the experience with real world examples
- find trends or common truths in the experience and
- identify "real life" principles that emerged.

5. Application "Now what?"

Students will apply what they have learned in the experience

- apply what they have learned in the experience (and what they learned from past experiences and practice) to a similar or different situation.
- discuss how the newly learned process can be applied to other situations
- discuss how issues raised can be useful in future situations and how more effective behaviours can develop from what they learned.

Note: The teacher should help each student feel a sense of ownership for what was learned.

Content taken from Northern Illinois University, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center facdev@niu.edu, www.niu.edu/facdev