

DO, REFLECT, APPLY

Program development is fundamental to Extension Education. The program development model includes planning, designing, implementing, measuring, and interpreting. For Extension professionals, these steps lead to program excellence.

So, how can we strengthen this model when working with youth? Do youth programs offer other concepts to consider?

Keith G. Diem suggests specific steps to follow when working with youth. His model includes three steps to consider—they are “Do,” “Reflect,” and “Apply.”

Before examining the Do, Reflect, and Apply in Diem’s model (Fig. 1), it is important to understand that education takes place first. This is the time to review objectives and introduce topics through exploration. There are, of course, many avenues of exploration. These include traditional lectures, self-discovery (pre-reading), or group learning through open-ended discussion.

DO

“Doing” is an extension of the education step. It involves hands-on application that allows youth to learn. Doing provides experience that supports the education step. This includes all the different methodologies used in an educational program.

REFLECT

“Reflecting” focuses on sharing and processing the activity and is the step where you facilitate discussion. To maximize learning, pose questions so youth can discuss what they have learned individually and within the group. This process allows youth learn from each other as they share results, reactions, and observations, and then analyze and reflect on the experience. Some questions to consider are:

Sharing

- What did you just do—what just happened?
- What decisions did you make that affected the outcome of the activity?
- How did your decisions affect the results?
- What were the most and least difficult parts of the activity?

Processing

- Did other group members experience similar results?
- What solutions, problems or challenges seemed to occur repeatedly?
- What were the keys to achieving or failing to achieve the desired results?
- What did others experience that might affect how you would conduct this activity in the future?
- Based on what you have learned, what would you change about this activity?

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APPLY

“Applying” is the step where you help youth generalize as to how they can apply what they have learned to their lives and the world around them. This step asks them to think beyond their own growth. Some example questions could include:

- Why is this important to your community?
- How could this affect others?
- Where else could this knowledge be applicable?
- How is this information useful to you and others?
- How will you use this knowledge with other audiences?

Remember, the examples above are generic. As you are leading youth through this process, pose questions that are specific to the activity.

4-H truly is “making the best better.” As 4-H educators, we strive to ensure that 4-H experiences help youth learn and grow. The Do, Reflect, and Apply model can help us meet that goal.

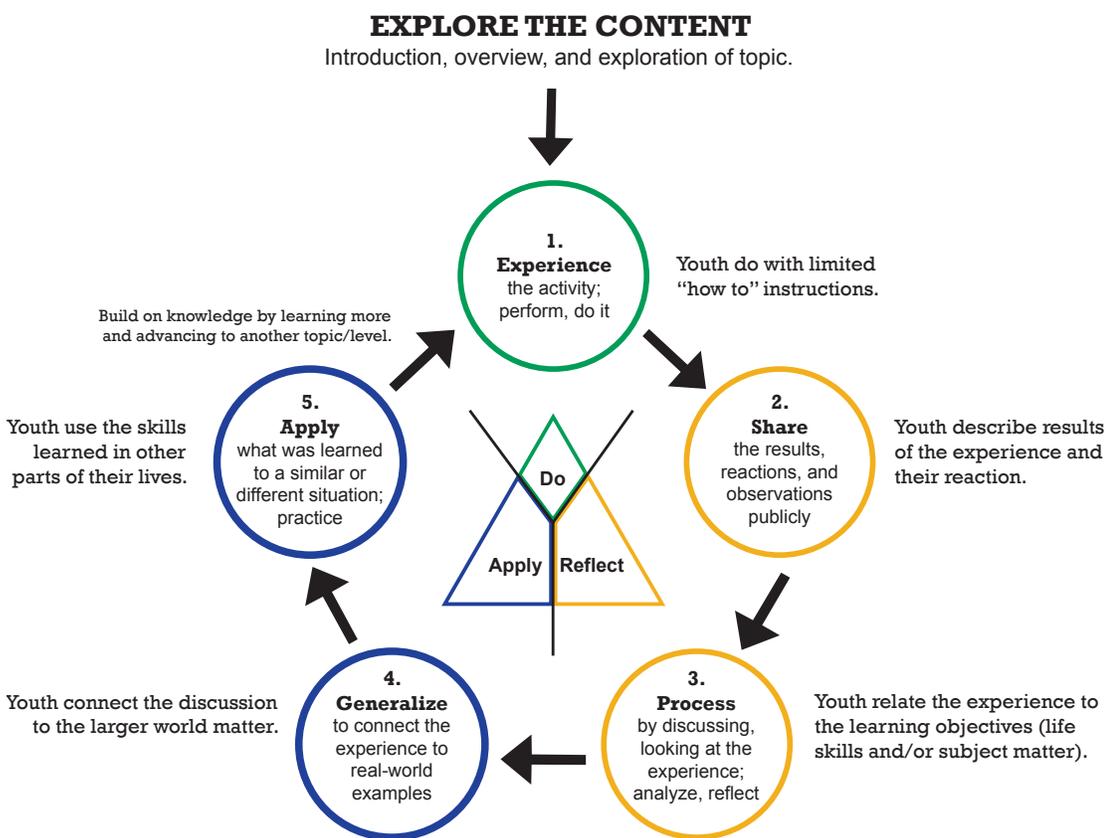


Figure 1. Keith G. Diem’s three step “Do, Reflect, Apply” model for working with youth. *Source:* Diem, K.G. (2001). Learn by doing the 4-H way. New Jersey 4-H Leader Training Series. Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

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