
4-H LEADS FOR LEADERS

TEACHING METHODS

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Leader's Guide



There are many different methods that can be used to help teach. The right method is determined by what you want to teach, who you teach (age, size of group) and where you will teach (facilities and equipment available).

The “Cone of Experience,” devised by Edgar Dale, attempts to explain the effectiveness of different teaching methods. The most effective methods are shown on the bottom of the pyramid and the least effective at the top.

Successful leaders use a variety of learning experiences for their club, but select as many as possible from the “doing” rather than the “listening” end of the pyramid. More than one method may be used to teach a single idea.

Workshop or Project Meeting

The workshop or project meeting consists of showing 4-H members how to do a job and then letting them perform and practice the same job under supervision.

When conducting a workshop:

- explain and show how to do the job;
- have members practice; and
- discuss and evaluate what was done.

Experience

4-H members learn by doing. Provide time for them to practice what has been taught. Assign work assignments between meetings. Help them find jobs to use the experience they gained in their project work.

Judging

To judge is to compare, or evaluate a product or process. To be able to make a judgement the members must have some understanding of an ideal product.

When products are judged at a meeting, keep the activity simple. Judge one kind of product at a time.

The *Judging at Club Meetings* guide gives step-by-step instructions for using judging in the club meeting.

Dramatization and Role Playing

Being able to act out a situation often makes it more real and provides a shared experience that a group may discuss.

- Use skits for entertainment, education, announcements or icebreakers. For something different, have a narrator read the story while the players act it out; do a pantomime or pantomime to a recording; make your own tape recording complete with sound effects and act along with it; or put on a shadow show with the light behind the players so their shadows are projected on a sheet between them and the audience.

- Puppets have become a popular teaching tool. Any message that can be presented in the form of a conversation (serious or entertaining) may become a puppet show. Puppets can say things the individual would not say because it is the puppet who is talking.

In role playing, participants have an opportunity to see what a situation looks like from another point of view.

Games and Quizzes

Learning can be fun. Many games can be adapted to provide 4-H learning experiences such as matching words and meanings, doing quiz TV programs and asking questions that relate to projects.

Discussion

Some topics are better understood through group discussion. Learning can take place when people talk together. In discussion, the president or leader should get things going, keep conversation on the topic and make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Talk should go back and forth, spark a new concept, confirm an idea, seek an expression and have a chain reaction that keeps changing. You can set the stage for discussion by helping to provide a relaxed atmosphere, a friendly feeling, stating clear procedures and a common purpose.

Base the discussion on something the entire group has read or about a topic of general interest to the group.

Many variations of the discussion method have been developed. You might like to try:

Buzz Groups

If the group is large, divide into small groups of five or six people. The questions given each group may be the same or each can be different. Report back.

Circle Response

Each member contributes to the discussion as his or her turn comes in the circle.

Panel

Three or four members and/or adults discuss a topic for the group and answer questions.

Opposing Panel

Ask two or more panels or groups to ask questions of each other, or use a form of debate if the topic is controversial.

Demonstrations

Members may serve as teachers as they demonstrate skills they have learned. Or, leaders may demonstrate a new practice or skill for the club members.

To demonstrate, show and tell others how to do something you are interested in and can do well. A demonstration is often called “show and tell” because you show how to do something and tell why you do it that way.

A demonstration is divided into three main parts: introduction, body and conclusion.

Introduction

Get the attention of the audience. Tell what you are going to do, why it is important and the steps you will follow.

Body

“Do” whatever you have chosen to show. As you work, tell the audience:

- what your are doing;
- why your are doing it; and
- how you do it.

Conclusion

Summarize what you did and why it is important.

Demonstrations develop poise, self-confidence and the ability to express ideas to others.

A *Demonstration and Illustrated Talks* guide is available for more complete instructions on developing and using demonstrations. Ask your Extension agent for information on the county demonstration contest.

Field Trips and Tours

A club might plan a field trip or tour to learn about the community. Communities often have interesting industry, spots of historic interest or scenic areas that should be understood and appreciated by the members. These are great opportunities to explore careers!

Tours often provide the opportunity to see projects in their real setting. A club might plan a tour related to their project—a trip to the supermarket or bakery, a trip to the fabric store or other business. The tours might also be to see the member's projects.

The process of planning and carrying out the tour provides many leadership opportunities.

Plan

Decide what you will see, where, when, size of group, publicity, transportation, route, meals and rest stops. Be sure to call or write and make definite arrangements for the tour. Go to the locations ahead of time and see what could be pointed out to the members to help them manage their own projects or career development.

Enjoy the Tour

Keep the tour moving on schedule, allow time for questions and use opportunities to show good and poor practices.

Evaluate the Tour

A good tour should have a definite purpose, promote a worthwhile project, show results of practices taught and justify time and effort spent.

Exhibits

Members exhibit when they show the public what they have done at fairs and shows. These exhibits give members an opportunity to evaluate their own project and become aware of other projects. The standards of good work can be shown and an incentive provided for project completion.

You must plan with members and parents so they know what exhibits to prepare, how they should be taken to the show, who will care for them, how and when they will be returned.

Prepare members and parents to accept and understand the judge's decision.

Teach that it is as important to lose with a smile as to win.

Educational Displays

A booth or display can present an idea or display an item in order to get a point across. A good booth or display must be well planned to deliver one message directly and simply.

Booths and displays give people an opportunity to stop, look and listen. They make people more aware of a subject than is possible with a poster.

A booth should:

- attract attention;
- hold interest;
- give a message; and
- tell the story in a brief, simple, factual and attractive manner.

Movies, Slides and Filmstrips

Films, filmstrips and slides add variety to learning. They provide enjoyment as well as information.

A visual aid loan library is maintained at Colorado State University for use by Cooperative Extension. Check your *4-H Project Selection and Educational Media Guides*, 90505-90506. Your Extension office may have additional information or materials available for your use.

Guest Speakers and Talks

Inviting someone from outside the club to speak is a common way to bring information to the members. Every community has people who can be called on for this purpose. Business and professional people, people with special talents, interest or experiences, visitors from other areas and experienced 4-H members from other parts of the county are just a few possibilities.

Before inviting someone as a speaker, ask yourself these questions:

- Is the speaker well informed about a topic of interest to the club?
- Is the speaker reasonably capable of speaking on the level of the members?

Be sure the speakers know when and where the meeting will be, how much time they have, and the age and interest of the audience. They must know what you expect of them to be effective.

Arrange for a proper welcome when the speakers arrive and an appropriate introduction. Older members can assume this responsibility.

It is not always necessary to bring in speakers. Members can be given topics on which to prepare a talk that will not only inform the rest of the club, but give them valuable speaking experience.

Ask your Extension agent for information on the state public speaking contest or a county contest.

Summary

Helping youth learn, by arranging interesting learning experiences, is the role of the leader. Challenging them to want to continue learning is a mark of success.

There are many teaching methods—more than are included in this leaflet. Using a variety of methods adds interest to the program for the learner and the leader. A change of pace from meeting to meeting, even within the same meeting, helps to get away from the feeling of “it’s the same old thing.” Variety also is important because some members learn more effectively from one method and some from another.

Leaders should not be afraid to experiment with different methods. Discuss with the members why the method is good or poor. Measure the effectiveness of the method by the results that were achieved.

