



Crafts—developing kids

Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development

Importance of Crafts

Our time is limited with youth who have been entrusted to the 4-H program – whether it is at an overnight camp, day camp, 4-H club meeting or at a 4-H project group meeting. Make every minute “positive youth development.”

Crafts used in the context of an overnight camp, day camp, 4-H project meeting or a 4-H club meeting should in the following order of priority...

1. Stimulate learning
2. Reinforce a concept/skill/subject
3. Generate excitement
4. Entertain

The craft may be a group project or an individual based experience.

The finished “craft” is an important memento of a learning experience shared with friends and a vehicle for generating a family discussion about what was learned.



The Purpose for Crafts

“When I do a craft its purpose is to teach a concept and serve as a visual aid in further learning.”

Elizabeth the DomanMom

Crafts...

- Allow children to express their creativity
- Give children an opportunity to discover and be exposed to a idea/subject
- Enhance children’s ability to think and solve problems
- Build self-esteem
- Help children listen and follow directions
- Give children an opportunity to consider others by making a gift
- Encourage relationships in sharing supplies and cooperation on a common project
- Reinforce the lesson’s relevance to life
- Remind children of what they have learned
- Create fun!

Each of these purposes directly relate to both the 4-H Experiential Learning model and 4-H Life Skills model. Review each model as you begin planning craft projects.

Doing it “Right” is a PROCESS



The PROCESS, not the **product**, is the key in making crafts.

Selecting Projects

Keep these questions first and foremost in your mind:



- Will the kids leave excited about the new craft or finished product?
- Is the craft something which will be displayed in a place of honor at home or can it generate a timely family conversation about what was learned?
- Is it something that can be appreciated or is it something that will never make it out of the car?
- Does the finished product have a purpose? Purpose in teaching (knowledge/skill/concept/understanding) or improving quality of life (physically, aesthetically or mentally).

The process, not the product, is the key in making crafts. The exploration and experimentation are crucial parts of the learning process. Children need to be encouraged to express themselves freely as they learn a skill and/or apply information.

As the teacher/instructor/leader, be careful not to inhibit creativity by turning out a cookie cutter product. And, do not confuse teaching a skill (i.e. such as how to hold, care for, or achieve a specific stroke or effect with a paint brush) with discouraging creativity. Part of being a crafter is acquiring a fundamental knowledge and skill and then making the finished product uniquely yours.

As the instructor, you should have made one or more of the craft/project so you can give clear and concise directions. Show the

finished project so the group/individual has an idea of what theirs can look like, but then put the sample away or out of sight. Having an example on display can cause participants to give up or compare their product's "perceived" imperfections with disappointment.

Depending on the complexity of the project, you may want to have a variety of examples in various stages of completion. This can be extremely helpful for demonstrating a project with challenging or complicated steps.

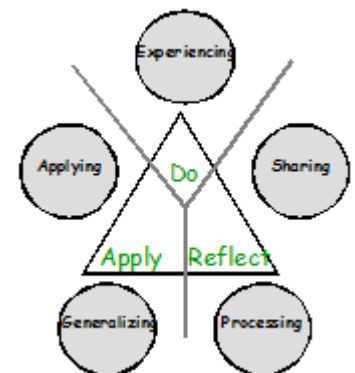
Remember, the process, not the product is key in making a craft. When possible, avoid pre-cutting/preparing kits/completing steps in advance. This may save time, but it takes away from the total experience and the knowledge and skill being learned.

Experiential Learning

The experiential learning model is the basis for crafting activities. The steps in the model are intentional and sequential.

1. Participants **experience** the activity - perform or do it.
2. Participants **share** the experience by describing what happened to them/ what they did.
3. Participants **process** the experience to determine what was most important and identify common themes and experiences.
4. Participants **generalize** from the experience and relate it to their daily lives.
5. Participants **apply** what they learned to a new situation.

Youth learn best at “learning by doing.” As they learn and discover new information and skills youth begin to feel competent and capable of mastering new skills.



Pieces and Parts of a Successful Craft Project

Consider these important factors as you lead children in making crafts.

Educational Connection – Class time is too precious to waste on anything that does not shed light on the objective of the camp/club meeting. Tie information about the subject into each craft, and it will help children learn, understand and apply information to the big picture.

Age-appropriateness - If the craft is above the child's ability level, the teacher is forced to “help” too much. On the other hand if the project is below the child's ability and does not challenge the participant, then they will be bored quickly.

Gender and Interest appropriateness— The project should be gender neutral for an audience of boys/girls, as well as have application/relevance to the life of the participants.

Clear directions - Make one or more samples so you can give directions in a clear concise way.

Materials – Always have enough supplies for visitors or someone who has trouble and needs to start over. Be sure supplies are in good condition and working (i.e. scissors cut well, left and right handed scissors, glue is fresh, adequate cleaning supplies, electricity/extension cords/power strips, table covering, etc)

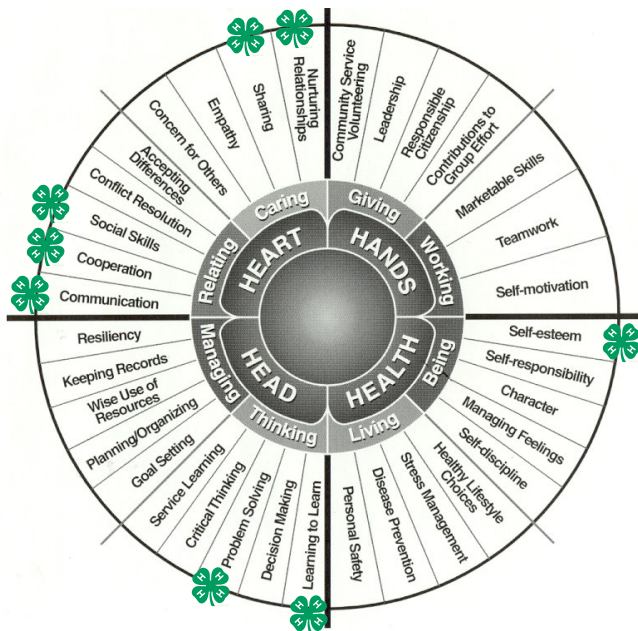
Safety – Adequate instruction is provided about using equipment

and materials, as well as class do's and do not's. Paints, glue and other materials should be nontoxic when possible. Scissors and glue guns are appropriate for the age of the participants. Keep work area clean and safe. Have a first aid kit for minor “boo-boo's.”

Responsibility – Teach respect for the work of others; equipment and supplies; a clean and safe work area and cleaning up after yourself.



Life Skills Development



Life Skills development is the foundation of any 4-H craft project. Start by asking “What life skill(s) will be taught, enhanced or challenged in the life of a 4-H member or youth participating in the experience?”

Life skills developed through crafts.

Learning to Learn — acquiring, evaluating and using information; understanding the methods and skills for learning.

Decision Making — choosing among several alternatives.

Communication — exchange of thoughts, information or messages between individuals; sending and receiving information using speech, writing, gestures and artistic

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expression.

Cooperation — to work or act together for a common purpose or mutual benefit.

Social Skills — skills people use when interacting with others and to behave in the accepted manner or customs of the society in which they live; adapting well to one's social environment.

Sharing — to have, use or do

together with another or others.

Nurturing Relationships — two or more people form a connection that contributes to their mutual well being, each providing care and attention to the other person.

Self-esteem — pride in oneself; proper regard for oneself as a human being; valuing oneself; a feeling of ability to cope; learning to accept and like oneself.



Principles of Visual Arts

Incorporate the **Elements of Design** as you teach crafts.

Color and value

Colors are light waves reflected and absorbed by objects. Hues are the names of colors.

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. By adding white to a hue, a tint is produced; adding black produces a shade.

Form

Three-dimensional shapes having length, width and depth are forms. They may be spheres, cylinders, boxes, prisms or organic.

Line

Lines are marks that have length and direction. Line quality is expressed by thickness, thinness, wavy curly, jagged, straight, etc.

Shape

Shapes are flat and two-dimensional. They may be circles, squares, triangles, organic, etc.

Space

Space is the area between and around objects. The object fills positive space while negative space surrounds the object.

Texture

The surface appearance or feel is texture, which may be smooth, rough, prickly, fuzzy, hard, etc.

Incorporate the **Principles of Design** as you teach crafts.

Balance

When both sides of an artwork are mirror images it is symmetrical balance; when one side is different than the other side, the artwork has asymmetric balance.

Emphasis

Emphasis calls attention to a point in the artwork, interest is usually in contrast to the surrounding space and is achieved by using several elements.

Movement

Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the artwork, often to a focal area. Movement is closely tied to rhythm.

Pattern

The repeating of an object or symbol throughout the artwork creates a pattern. The repetition may be organized or random.

Proportion

When all parts of an artwork - size, amount and location, fit well together the artwork has proportion.

To learn about the principles of Repetition, Rhythm, Unity, and Variety see 4-H Visual Arts <http://new.4-hcurriculum.org/projects/visualarts/teaching/ElementsPrinciplesDesign.htm>.

Sources:

Trafton-O'Neal, Debbie. More Than Glue & Glitter: A Classroom Guide for Volunteer Teachers (Games and Service Ideas). ISBN-10: 0806625619 or ISBN-13: 978-0806625614

Kelley, Stephanie. Kids Summer Camp Ideas for Crafts Themes and Activities

4-H Visual Arts <http://new.4-hcurriculum.org/projects/visualarts/teaching/ElementsPrinciplesDesign.htm>

2013 Online Resources:

Activities for Kids - <http://www.education.com/activity/arts-and-crafts/#topic:arts-and-crafts>

Crafts with Purpose: Lasting Crafts that Teach and Grow. <http://domanmom.com/2013/04/crafts-with-purpose/>

Love to Know Crafts. http://crafts.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Kids_Summer_Camp_Ideas_for_Crafts_Themes_and_Activities