



# Mastery

*MASTERY is the ability of our 4-H members to build on their knowledge, skills and attitudes related to subject areas in which they have interest. MASTERY also takes learning a step farther by allowing our 4-H members the opportunity to demonstrate what they are learning which the goal of helping youth become proficient practitioners. MASTERY is a process that happens over time. To master a skill a 4-H member is engaged in their learning. MASTERY is not the result of showing an animal at the fair but rather being engaged in the subject matter. MASTERY includes building relationships and connections in order to develop understanding. Through self-reflection youth who master a skill should be able to self-correct and learn from their experiences.*

## **Mastery is achieved when youth are provided with opportunities.**

### **What does this mean?**

- Youth are provided with practice skills until they are able to master them.
- Youth are provided with feedback on their attempts at mastering a skill or for their accomplishments.
- Youth are encouraged after their successes and their failures.
- Youth are provided with opportunities that are developmentally appropriate for their skill level and their abilities. This is best done by providing sequential activities that increase in difficulty and knowledge.
- Youth are provided with an opportunity to demonstrate their learning to others through project demonstrations, serving as a youth leader or mentor, exhibiting at a county fair, talking to others about their learning, participating in an event or contest, or other sharing opportunity.

## **What does this look like in a 4-H experience?**

- Members enroll in projects that capture their interest and a leader works with them to help them learn basic skills at the start increasing to higher level skills. If a leader is not available or the leader has limited knowledge of the subject area youth are encouraged to use project curriculum that can be found at your local UW Extension Office.
- Adult leaders work with youth to help them establish goals that are realistic, challenging, and achievable.
- Youth are provided with opportunities to practice and demonstrate skills during their entire 4-H year, not just in the summer or at the county fair. Mastery will happen over time.
- Youth are given opportunities to reflect on their successes, setbacks, and growth. Adult leaders can encourage this by asking questions that allow youth to think about and share their experiences.

- Youth who are at a higher skill level assist or mentor other youth who have the same area of interest. This allows members demonstrate their learning and learn from their peer group.

## Mastery is being engaged in learning.

### What does this mean?

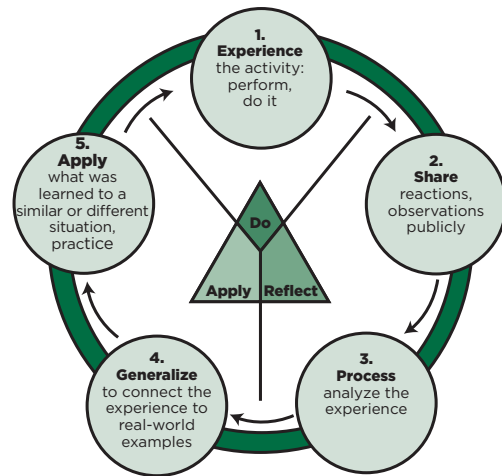
- When youth are engaged in learning they set their own goals and work to achieve them.
- Youth focus on learning experiences as a way of improving their knowledge instead of proving that they are the best or better than someone else.
- Youth are excited about learning.
- The learning is more than just an experience; youth are actually transforming their experience through hands-on learning.
- The learning experiences involves problem solving and the process of discovery of knowledge and finding solutions.

### What does this look like in a 4-H experience?

- 4-H members work together to plan activities and clearly enjoy being together and being involved.
- 4-H members work together doing community service projects.
- 4-H members design and participate in real projects that make a difference to others.
- Adults help youth discuss and reflect on what happened and then help them apply what they are learning.
- The activities and experiences encourage curiosity, questioning, and exploration.
- Adults understand the Experiential Learning Model and use it to enhance a members learning experience.

## Experiential Learning Model

Mastery happens when a youth is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity. This is called experiential learning. The activity comes first. The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created as a result of the



experience. Each step in the process needs to be followed to create a total learning experience.

### Experience

This is the doing part of the activity. It focuses on engaging the youth in the process.

### Share and Process

Youth share what they did with others and answer questions that allow them to reflect on what happened during the doing process. During this time youth can critique the experience. Assessing one's learning helps to transfer the knowledge and skills used to other learning situations.

### Generalize and Apply

Having youth generalize from their experiences allows them to realize that their experience can translate to real life situations. This is the beginning of relating the experience to career and life skills. Application of the experience focuses the youth on their accomplishments and how they can take the skills and techniques learned and apply them to a different situation.

*As a 4-H leader are you helping or hindering mastery in the 4-H experience? Check where you are by referencing the Mastery checklist. The checklist will give you ideas on ways to make sure mastery is happening in 4-H projects, meetings, and activities that you are helping to lead.*