



Questions to Ask at Each Stage of the Experiential Learning Cycle

Asking questions that are written into the designs helps guide adult learners through the ELC.

Experiencing

Questions at this stage help learners stay focused on the experience they are engaged in or recall details of a past experience. These questions might include:

- What is going on?
- What do you need to know to...?
- Would you be willing to try?
- Could you offer a suggestion?
- What would you prefer?
- What are your suspicions?
- What is your objection?
- If you could guess at the answer, what would it be?
- Can you say that in another way?
- What else?
- Would you say more about that?

Publishing

Questions at this stage help learners reflect on the experience and share their feelings or observations about it. These questions might include:

- Who would volunteer to share? Who else?
- How was this for you?

- How did you feel about that?
- Who else had the same experience?
- Who reacted differently?
- Were there any surprises/puzzlements?
- How many felt that way?
- How many felt differently?
- What did you observe?
- What were you aware of?

Processing

Questions at this stage help learners begin to identify patterns or common themes in the data. These questions might include:

- How did you account for that?
- What does that mean to you?
- How was that significant?
- How was that good/bad?
- What struck you about that?
- How do those fit together?
- What are the pluses/minuses here?
- What's the good/bad news?
- Do you see any similarities/differences here?
- How might it have been different?
- Do you see something operating there?

- What does that suggest to you about yourself/your group?
- What do you understand better about yourself/your group?

Generalizing

Questions at this stage help learners identify key points, develop theories, and build models or relate their experience to existing theories or models. These questions might include:

- What might we draw/pull from that?
- Is that plugging into anything?
- What did you learn/relearn?
- What does that suggest to you about _____ in general?
- Does that remind you of anything?
- What principle/law do you see operating here?
- What does that help explain?
- How does this relate to other experiences?
- What do you associate with that?
- So what?

Applying

Questions at this stage help learners to understand and plan for how their learning can be applied within or outside of the classroom setting. These questions might include:

- How could you apply/transfer that?
- What would you like to do with that?
- What could you do to hold on to that?
- What are your options?
- How might this help or hinder you in the future?
- How could you make it better?
- What would be the consequences of doing/not doing that?
- What modifications can you make work for you?
- What could you imagine/fantasize about that?
- Now what...?



Methods to Use at Different Stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle

Experiencing

Select methods at this stage that will provide learners with the opportunity to participate in an experience together or connect with past experiences. These methods could include:

- Individual or small group tasks or assignments.
- Data collection.
- Making products.
- Creating art objects.
- Skits.
- Role-playing.
- Experiments.
- Self-disclosure.
- Guided imagery.
- Directed reading.
- Completing questionnaires.
- Problem-solving.
- Data analysis.
- Writing.
- Instrumentation.
- Panel presentation.
- Brainstorming.
- Fishbowls. (See next page for definition.)
- Demonstrations.

- Videotapes.
- Field trips.
- Educational games.

Publishing

Select methods at this stage that will help learners share feelings and observations. These methods could include:

- Recording data.
- Establishing a rating system.
- Graphing, tallying, averaging.
- Whips: Trainer “whips” around the room, asking participants to respond quickly to a question.
- Subgroup sharing: Generating lists of “what was seen and felt.”
- Discussion: Using questions to move through this stage of the ELC.
- Posting: Recording data on newsprint paper or transparencies and sharing.
- Writing notes to share.
- Go-around: Systematic interviewing of individuals.
- Round robin listing: Moving from newsprint to newsprint responding to questions listed on each.
- Nonrepetitive lists: Listing individual or subgroup data on newsprint without repetition by the facilitator.

Processing

Select methods at this stage that will help learners reflect on the data and begin to perceive patterns. These methods could include:

- Sorting data into categories.
- Thematic discussion: Looking for recurring topics from individual reports, and discussing questions designed to determine trends.
- Sentence completion: Writing individual responses to items.
- Panels: A number of participants who observed the activity present their findings and conclusions.
- Fishbowl: A number of people sit in an inner circle and discuss specific topics while those in the outside circle observe and take notes. The outer circle can only speak by moving into the inner circle by a process that is determined in advance.
- Questionnaires: Writing individual responses to items developed for a specific activity.
- Discussion: Using questions to move through this stage of the ELC.
- Videotape replay.
- Data analysis: Studying trends and correlations.
- Key terms: Posting a list of items to guide the discussion.

Generalizing

Select methods at this stage to help learners explore implications of the data and develop theories or models. These methods could include:

- Individual analysis: Writing answers to questions such as “What I learned...” or “What I am beginning to learn....”
- Truth with a little “t”: Writing statements from the discussion about what is “true” in real life.

- Sentence completion: Writing completions to conceptual questions or statements.
- Key terms: Posting topics for generalization.
- Theory input: Lecturette on a related theory.
- Research input: Lecturette on related research findings.
- Building models: Drawing or illustrating the way information fits into a model.

Applying

Select methods at this stage to help learners apply what they’ve learned to future situations. These methods could include:

- Interviewing: Pairing up to interview each other in order to determine how new learning will be applied.
- Goal-setting: Writing specific, measurable goals for use back home.
- Consulting pairs and trios: Taking turns helping each other with post-course problem situations.
- Action planning: Developing a plan for putting learning to use after the course is completed.
- Problem-solving: Putting the newly learned information to work to solve a current problem.
- Contracting: Making explicit promises to one another or to the trainers about future applications after the course.
- Skill practice: Using the newly learned skill.
- Generating products: Developing a product, such as a training design, and applying the information newly learned.
- Note-taking: Writing down specific learning in session notes.
- Journal: Keeping a journal of what has been learned and determining how it will be used.