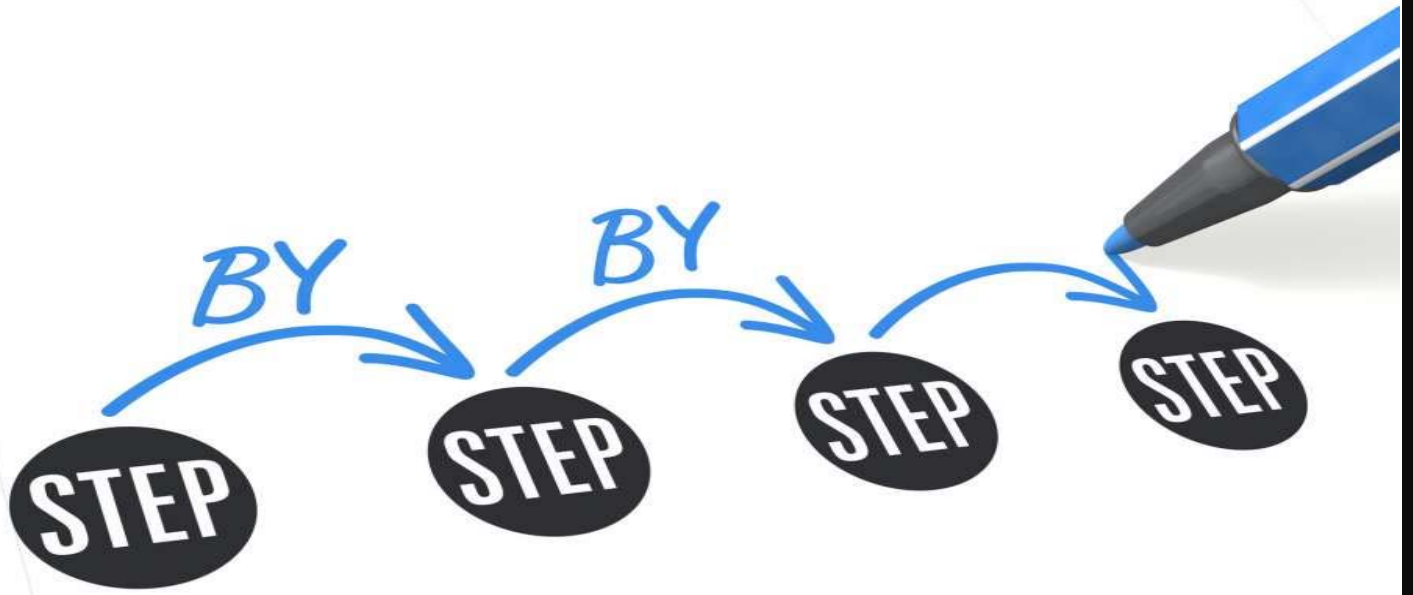


You Decide!



Decision Making Guide for

Self-Determined Projects

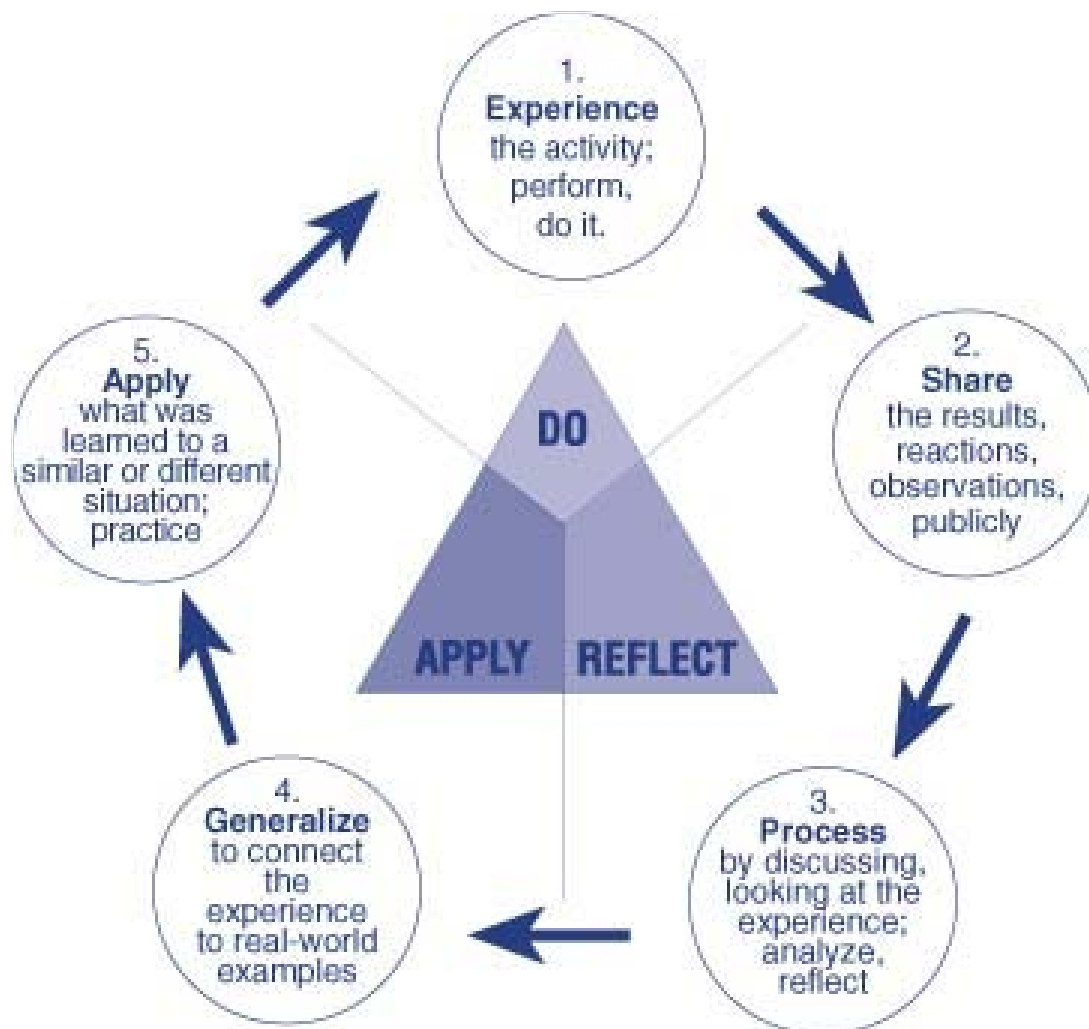


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Experiential Learning Model

The 4-H Youth Development Program promotes the five steps of the experiential learning model as essential parts of all educational experiences. The experiential learning process engages the learners in the activity and encourages them to think more, work harder, and ultimately learn more thoroughly than with traditional teaching methods such as telling or showing.



Source: Experiential Learning Model adapted from Pfeiffer, J. W., and Jones, J.E. (1985). The Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals, vol 1-10, 1972-85. San Diego, CA: University Associates Published and Consultants.

Contents

Experiential Learning Model	2
Overview	4
Selecting A Project	5
Planning Your Project	7
Setting Goals	7
Developing An Action Plan	8
Preparing Your Project Plan	8
Sample Project Plan	10
Implementing Your Plan	11
Evaluating Your Project	12
When To Evaluate Your Project	12
How To Evaluate Your Project	12
Preparing Your Project Report	13
Exhibiting And Sharing Your Project	15

Brainstorming

Use the extra space provided to help make decisions and record thoughts, ideas, and expressions as you use this guide. This can help you throughout your planning and evaluations of the project.

Overview

Self-Determined Projects enable youth 14-18 to further explore appropriate educational interests in subjects where either no Idaho-approved 4-H curriculum exists, or after members have completed all levels of existing curriculum. Additional parameters are set forth within the Self-Determined section of the Idaho 4-H Project Requirement Handbook. Because of inherent risk management issues, Self-Determined projects related to the 4-H Shooting Sports program are not permitted.

What will you do?

- ◆ Choose a subject for project study.
- ◆ Set your own project goals.
- ◆ Develop a plan to reach your project goals.
- ◆ Implement your plan.
- ◆ Report your accomplishments.
- ◆ Evaluate your progress toward your goals.
- ◆ Make changes or revisions in your plan.
- ◆ Prepare a project report.
- ◆ Give an oral presentation (speech, demonstration, or illustrated talk) about your project.

What will you exhibit?

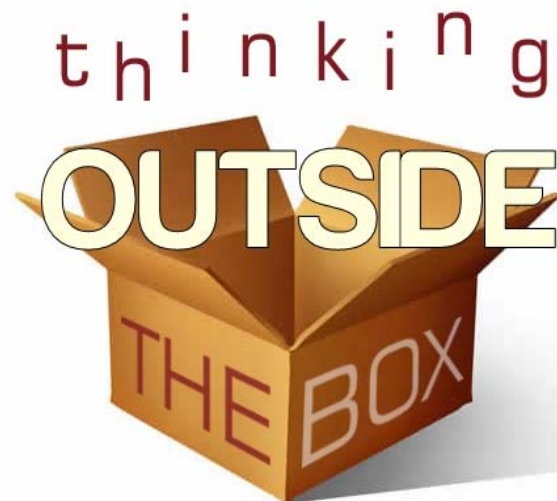
This manual #91001, a project report and 4-H Involvement Report #91910. Make sure your report includes the following:

- ◆ Your project idea and how you chose it
- ◆ The goals you set
- ◆ The methods and techniques you used to meet your goals
- ◆ What you learned
- ◆ Your conclusions and observations
- ◆ A self-evaluation of your project

Your report can take many forms, for example:

- ◆ A YouTube video that is 3-5 minutes
- ◆ PowerPoint presentation with 20 to 30 slides
- ◆ Web page with at least five pages
- ◆ 3-minute audiotape suitable for playing on a local radio station
- ◆ Five-to-seven-page written report in notebook form
- ◆ Portfolio with at least 10 pictures and supportive information
- ◆ Journal with at least 30 entries, including personal art, photography or technologies.

Before starting your self-determined project, read this entire project guide. It will help you SELECT, PLAN, IMPLEMENT, and EVALUATE your project.



Selecting A Project

A self-determined project should:

- ◆ Expand on a project area beyond the scope of existing 4-H curricula, or explore a specific topic not addressed by 4-H project materials. Self-Determined projects related to the 4-H Shooting Sports program are not permitted.
- ◆ Increase your level of knowledge and experience within the selected topic.

Need some general ideas on what to do?

Consider:

- ◆ Ideas or problems you would like to investigate.
- ◆ A topic you want to learn more about.
- ◆ Situations that you feel strongly about.
- ◆ Skills you would like to learn or activities that you would like to do.
- ◆ Ways you can help others.

Make sure the project idea you decide on is specific. If the idea is too general, it will take a long time to accomplish.

Jot down potential ideas for your Self-Determined project that could interest you:

Sample Project Ideas!

- ◆ Build a robot using the Robotic Kit
- ◆ Teach senior citizens how to use the Internet.
- ◆ Cook using only a campfire or a fire pit.
- ◆ Explore careers in the NSA, Homeland Security, CIA, or FBI.
- ◆ Restore an old car.
- ◆ Create a four-generation family tree.
- ◆ Create an 'everyday life' blog and send it to seldom-seen family and friends.
- ◆ Investigate a specific additive used in livestock feeds.
- ◆ Learn the traditions and customs of another culture.



Here are some questions to help you make your final decision:

- ◆What are your personal experiences?
- ◆How and where can you get information?
- ◆How much is it going to cost?
- ◆How worthwhile is the project going to be for you?
- ◆What do you think you might learn from it?
- ◆Do you have the family or personal support needed to complete this project?
- ◆Is your idea specific enough to complete in the time you have available?

After thinking about your answers to these questions, you need to decide on an idea. My Self-Determined project is...

Why did you decide on this project idea? What things did you consider when making this selection?

Now that you have chosen your project, let's develop a plan to carry out.

Developing An Action Plan

An action plan includes methods, procedures, tasks, responsibilities, and timelines that will help you reach your goals.

When developing your action plan keep in mind:

- ◆ What do you need to do to reach your goals?
- ◆ Where can you get help?
- ◆ What resources do you need?
- ◆ How will you track your progress and record your accomplishments?
- ◆ What learning experiences will help you accomplish your goals?

In Review:

After selecting your specific project idea:

- ◆ Decide on your goals.
- ◆ Describe how you plan to accomplish these goals.

Preparing Your Project Plan

Determining the project:

You already took the first steps in developing your project plan when you determined your specific project and explained why you made that choice (page 6). Review those items to ensure they are accurate. If so, you are now ready to take the next step in developing your project plan.

Setting your goals:

Knowledge: What facts, information or understanding do you hope to gain?

Attitudes: What changes in your feelings, values or beliefs do you expect?

Skills: What actions, behaviors or ways of doing things will you develop? (Refer to Targeting Life Skills Model, page 7, for ideas.)

Developing Your Action Plan

Use the following chart to help develop your action plan. Feel free to add more pages, use a separate piece of paper, or develop your own format.

Goal	Steps	Help and Resources Needed	Timeline

Double-check your plan. Can you accomplish all your goals with the methods you've selected? Will you be able to accomplish all the goals within the time frame you have set for completion of this project? Adjust your goals (action plan) if needed.

Signature of 4-H Professional Approving Project

Date

Sample Project Plan *(use this example to help develop your own on page 9)*

Project:

Building a robot with the Robotic Kit

Why I chose this Project:

I like working with technology and I am interested in learning more about programming computers and putting together robots.

Goals and Action Plan:

Goal	Steps	Help and Resources Needed	Timeline
Learn to program a handheld computer and assemble a two-function robot.	Use the companionship manual to construct and program a robot	Companionship manual, Robotic kit, 4 hours	January 15-31
Gain confidence in programming and putting together robot	Practice my skills by constructing and programming various kinds of robots	Companionship manual, Robotic kit, a few evenings a week	February 1-15
Become more aware of what is needed to program a robot	Do two more sessions of programming and research on the Internet for more information on programming robots	Companionship manual, computer, internet access, 5 hours	February 20– March 20
Increase problem-solving skills	Build more complicated robots and learn to program them	Manual, Robotic kit, 5-7 hours	March 15– April 15
Develop my teamwork skills and share what I learned	Work together in a group of two to three to construct a two-function robot.	Robotic kits, Saturday afternoon	April

Who will my project benefit:

The youth I teach about the Robotic kit and myself.

What will be the final result of my project and how do I plan to record what I have done?

I will have increased my knowledge and skills with robots and will have taught at least two other 4-H members about the Robotic kit. I plan to use pictures to develop a portfolio that will show my goals, progress, and accomplishments.

Evaluating Your Project

You feel satisfaction when you see your progress or improvement. Progress (or growth) is measured in movement toward the goals you set at the beginning of your self-determined project.

To evaluate your project, you need to ask yourself and others:

- ◆What am I learning?
- ◆How well am I doing?
- ◆What am I accomplishing?
- ◆How do I feel about what I am doing?
- ◆Am I meeting the goals that I set for myself?
- ◆What changes or revisions would improve your plan?
- ◆Do I need to keep track of money I have spent and received?
- ◆How can I share with other people what I have learned?
- ◆Do I need to keep a written record to show how I am progressing?
- ◆Is this Project really helping me to learn what I set out to learn?

When To Evaluate Your Project

Evaluate during the entire planning and activity process and at the end of the project. Continual evaluation will help keep you heading in the right direction. It may also show you where you need to change, add, or skip a step in your plan.

How To Evaluate Your Project

In order to evaluate your own growth in your self-determined project, you will want to collect and record evidence of progress toward your goals. Consider these methods:

Take pictures— Photographs, movies, videos, or color slides can tell a story. You could take before and after pictures. You can plan a series of pictures to show the steps or different stages in the development of your project. Through pictures you can record experiences data, or results of the investigation, and tell a story of your project.

Keep Records— There are many kinds of records, such as a diary, an outline, a story book, a notebook, a written report, tables, charts, drawings, or pictures. You will need to decide the best fit for your project. Whatever method you use, your record should:

- ◆Describe or show what you did.
- ◆Summarize the results of your investigation or work.
- ◆Describe the benefits to you or others.
- ◆List resources you used: money, your and others' time, energy, references.

Consider The Following When Preparing Your Report:

Goals

- ◆ How did I select a worthwhile idea to explore?
- ◆ What did I hope to do (skill), hope to learn (knowledge), or hope to gain in my new awareness (attitude)?
- ◆ Were my goals measurable?

Methods and Techniques

- ◆ What changes did I make from my original plan?
- ◆ Was I able to locate the resources I needed?
- ◆ Did I identify any additional resources that would help me in the future?
- ◆ Was I able to complete my project plan in the time allotted?
- ◆ Where and from who did I obtain information?
- ◆ What methods did I use to help me reach my goals?

Accomplishments

- ◆ Did I gain any skills, knowledge, or attitudes that I didn't have before?
- ◆ Did my learning relate to my goals? What additional information did I gain?
- ◆ Did I develop any leadership skills by completing this project?
- ◆ Did I use new and different technology while doing the project? How?

Conclusions or Evaluations

- ◆ Was the idea I explored worthwhile?
- ◆ Did I give recognition for the help I received?
- ◆ What else could I have done?
- ◆ What changes in the future would be desirable to make my project better?
- ◆ How did the project help me personally?
- ◆ How far did I come toward meeting my goals?
- ◆ Were my plans adequate for reaching my goals?
- ◆ Was I able to locate needed resources and, if not, what could I have done differently?

Remember! Your project report will cover not only what you made, did, or learned, it will also include how you set up your project, determined your goals, and measured how successful you were in reaching those goals.

Exhibiting Your Project

Further satisfaction and opportunities for growth come from sharing what you have learned with others. Sharing can help you summarize or generalize, analyze, further assess, and apply what you're accomplishing to other areas.

You can gain insights about your projects by discussing your project with people who have experiences different from yours, or in addition to yours.

At the fair (or other approved public place) display:

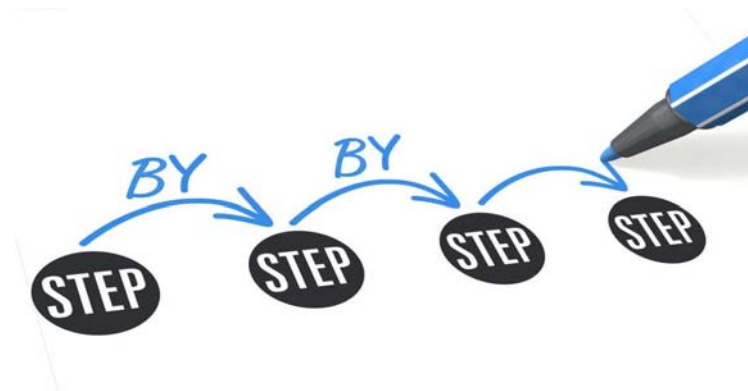
- You Decide! Decision Making Guide for Self-Determined Projects #91001
- Your Project Report with required contents; use one of the suggested methods
- 4-H Involvement Report #91910
- Any other local UI Extension Office requirements

Think about how you will exhibit your project report. Will you need special equipment or materials to exhibit and share your project with others? Be aware of your local county 4-H display requirements and ask about special arrangements if needed.

As part of an exhibit you may be formally interviewed by someone from the news media or by a fair judge or informally questioned by participants.

Be Prepared to answer questions such as:

- How and why did you decide on this project?
- What did you learn?
- Can you explain (some part of the project?)
- How will you use this information?
- What resources did you use?
- What would you do differently next time?





The Ability To Make Decisions Is Yours!

Additional Resources:

Washington State University Extension: <http://extension.wsu.edu/4h/projects/all-projects/self-determined-projects/>

Ohio State University Extension: <https://u.osu.edu/portage4h/2017/03/08/self-determined-project-guide/>

Iowa State University Extension: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects/selfdetermined>

References:

Experiential Learning Model adapted from Pfeiffer, J. W., and Jones, J.E. (1985). The Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals, vol 1-10, 1972-85. San Diego, CA: University Associates Published and Consultants.

Targeting Life Skills Model adapted from P.A. Hendricks (1996). Iowa State University Extension

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