Welcome to The World of

UDC 4-H

PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU!

Leadership & Teaching Techniques

Basics For New Leaders

- The child-centered approach
- Ways to say "Very good"
- Helping youth learn
- Teaching tools
- Leadership styles and your club
- Leader characteristics
- What to do about kids who act up
- The activity, ideas, or meeting bombed! Now what?

UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Are you looking for ideas on teaching methods, or have you encountered some disruptive behavior problems? Here are some tips on teaching techniques and leadership styles to help you guide members in developing their life skills.

A wise teacher once observed, "If a child isn't interested, you can't teach him. If he is interested, you can't keep him from learning."

As a 4-H leader, you may not think of yourself as a teacher. However with your guidance and teaching 4-H members learn project skills and decision making, develop positive self esteem, learn and practice effective communication skills, take responsibility, and cooperate with others. 4-H leaders are successful teachers because they establish a personal relationship. A 4-H project is a tool to capture the interest of a child. It is through experience that a 4-H member learns.

The child-centered approach

4-H uses a child-centered approach to learning, which means focusing activities on the youth's needs and interests. For example, 4-H club members set their goals for the year, make plans to reach those goals, carry out their plans, and assess their progress.

You may be wondering, "What do they need me, their 4-H leader, for?" You play an important role. It's through your guidance, understanding, encouragement, and recognition that members will learn how to set a goal and reach it. You help each member set realistic goals and provide needed encouragement. Best of all, you see that proud smile that says, "I did it," when you recognize them for a job well done. Did you know that there are many ways to say, "Very good"? How many can you come up with?

Ways to say "Very good"

People thrive in a climate of love, so give family, friends, and 4-H members plenty of recognition, warmth, and signs of affection. People need smiles and approval.

Look for good behavior that you want to strengthen, then say, "Very good" to people in a variety of ways. Here are some suggestions:

I'm proud of you for the way you worked today.

I like the way you've made progress!

When I see what you can do, it makes my job fun.

FANTASTIC!

Congratulations!

You did that very well.

GREAT!

Now, you've figured it out!

That's quite an improvement. SUPERB!

Good thinking!

You are learning fast.

You are really learning a lot.

I'm very proud of you.

You're doing fine.

I've never seen anyone do it better.

It's a pleasure to teach when you work like that

I'm happy to see you working like that

That's the way to do it.

Keep up the good work.

Good for you!

That makes me feel good.

That's first-class work.

That's great!

EXCELLENT!

TERRIFIC!

That's RIGHT!

Now you have the hang of it!

You're on the right track now!

I'm proud of you for finishing.

That's good!

You've figured it out

Good!

You are very good at that

That's much better!

That's quality work.

GOOD WORK!

Helping youth learn

A leader can encourage the natural curiosity that youngsters have. You provide opportunities for "hands-on" learning and help members grow in self-confidence as they learn. Together, you and your 4-H members will have fun learning.

Because each age group has different characteristics and unique developmental needs, it helps to know what they are. These will have an impact on how different members learn. Ask your city Extension staff for information about developmental differences of boys and girls at various ages.

Teaching tools

There is a wealth of resources at your finger tips. The challenge is discovering them. Resources can be people, reading material, methods of teaching, or activities. Here are examples of teaching methods and resources to help 4-H members learn:

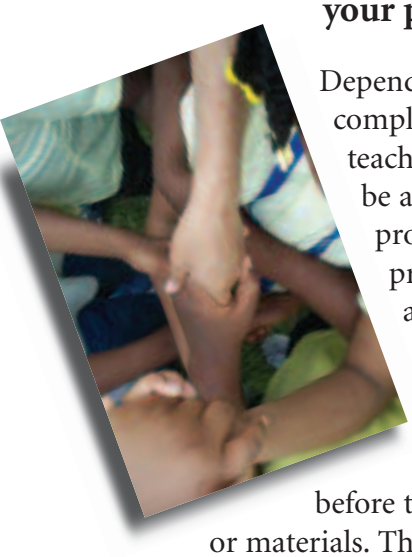
- Lectures
- Videos
- Workshops
- Slides
- Clinics
- Club Exchanges
- Tours
- Field Trips
- Discussions
- Charts
- 4-H Project Materials
- Rosters
- Games
- Posters
- Puzzles
- Guest Speakers
- Contests
- Fairs
- Presentations
- City Extension Office
- Judging
- 4-H Record Books
- Show and Tell
- Parents
- Camp
- Club Officers
- Movies
- Library

Ask an experienced volunteer for ideas on teaching resources. Another source of teaching tools is the leader guide for the project. Using a variety of resources will make 4-H meetings fun and educational. Check with your local 4-H staff for visual aids or resource kits that might be available for you to borrow. Plan ahead— these resources may be in high demand.

Recordkeeping can be a valuable life skill learned through 4-H participation. Records can show progress toward goals, and help to recall cost and other information needed to make management decisions. They can also provide a link to pleasant experiences or facts to recall for later use. Records need to be useful and appropriate for the project and age of members and not busy work.

Keep in mind the following six-step "do and watch" sequence when teaching a specific skill.

1. **I do, you watch.**
2. **I do, you help.**
3. **We do together.**
4. **You do, I help.**
5. **You do, I watch.**
6. **You do (and have someone take your picture doing).**

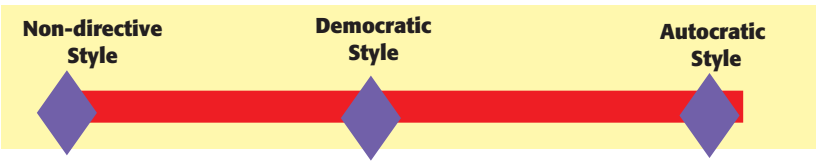


Depending on how simple or complex the skill you are teaching, steps 1, 3, and 5 may be all that are needed. Some projects have an advancement program or other optional activities members can complete. These work well to encourage members to develop important competencies or skill sets before trying more difficult skills or materials. They challenge and offer supplemental learning experiences for members who are especially interested in the subject.

Advancement or optional activities are arranged in steps of progressively high skill levels. They help members and leaders plan learning within a project. Members can work through the steps at their own pace. These experiences become part of the members' records.

Leadership styles & your club

What you do, and the results you get, depends a great deal on how you and your members relate to each other in the club. One way of looking at leadership styles is to think of them being placed somewhere along a line or scale. At one end is the directive or autocratic style. At the other end is the non-directive style, and in the middle is the democratic style.



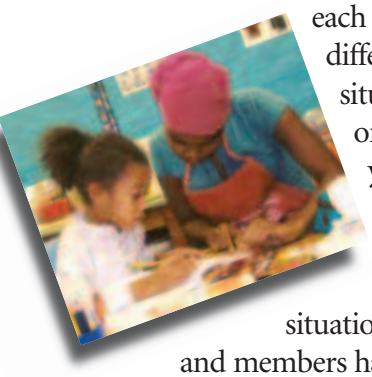
Using the democratic style, the leader knows and is interested in the individual members and what they do. She or he views the club as belonging to all the youth and considers the club successful when it exists for the members' benefit. While the leader may offer suggestions, set boundaries, and sometimes help do the work, he or she actively encourages member participation and decision making. For example, the leader says, "Let's go," "Let's find out," "How shall we best do this?" The leader takes an active part in club affairs, and enjoys being a leader, but does not control club decisions or have a feeling of owning the club. He or she sees getting the job done as helping individuals and the club as a group reach their goals.

The directive (or autocratic) style leader sees his or her role as gathering the club together and pushing or pulling them along. The leader may do all the planning and decision making and inform members of the plan. Sometimes she or he may involve members in decision making by giving them two or three choices to select from. The leader's goals for the club may be emphasized more than the members' goals.

The non-directive (or laissez-faire) approach to leadership is to sit back and make no decisions for the group. This may force the group and individuals to chart their own course. Useful as well as not-so-useful decisions, plans, and activities can develop. If there is strong leadership among

members, the club may get stronger with this type of leadership. A weak club, lacking members with leadership skills, may fall apart.

Is there a "right' style for leadership? No—each style is useful and appropriate at different times, depending on the situation. The trick is to find the one that works best for you and your group. It is not a stationary point, you may move in any direction along the scale, depending on the situation. Where are you comfortable and members happy with the relationship? As interests and experiences change, you may find it works best to change your leadership style.



For example, in a new club with young members, you might be most effective pushing or pulling the club along with a more directive approach. As members gain experience and maturity and you get to know them better and the relationship gains more trust and respect, a more democratic approach or sometimes a non-directive approach may work best. Giving members a strong voice in setting goals and making decisions may not produce perfect results, but it does enable members to learn and practice skills they will find useful for a lifetime.

Leader characteristics

A good leader has many characteristics, and some may work better than others. One characteristic is not more important than any other— together they may help you enjoy being a successful leader.

These characteristics relate to the way you work with your group of youth (your "facilitating style"). You may recognize some of your own qualities under "facilitating" style, and hopefully not too many under "not-so facilitating!"

"Facilitating" style

- **Guides or coaches a group through an experience**
- **Encourages participation**

- **Keeps action going**
- **Can tolerate low points in action**
- **Is flexible**
- **Encourages participation by all**
- **Is generally low key**
- **Is a good listener**
- **Cares**
- **Uses different leadership styles when appropriate**
- **Asks questions that need more than 'yes' or 'no' to answer**
- **Uses a problem-solving approach to resolve differences**

"Not-so-facilitating" style

- **Takes over leadership and directs others**
- **Makes decisions for the group**
- **Ignores suggestions**
- **Allows tension or anxiety to prevail**
- **Lacks preparation**
- **Evades issues**
- **Gives solutions rather than letting group come to their own**
- **More concerned with results than the people and relationships involved**

What to do about kids who act up?

Sometimes kids do act obnoxious ... admit it ... don't feel guilty. **The important thing to remember is that the action is obnoxious, not the person!** It's a very important distinction. The behavior is not okay, but the youth is.

Young people almost never act up for the sheer pleasure of it. Youth usually have a reason for what they do. Chances are a member who is acting up has a problem, and if you're perceptive (and patient), you might be able to discover the problem and help solve it. Stop a minute before you let yourself get upset, and ask yourself, "Why is he or she doing that?"

Some common reasons why youth act up

1 They want attention. If they disrupt a meeting, they get not only your attention, but attention from other members as well. How about giving the member some responsibilities during the meeting? That way, she/he gets needed attention in a positive way.

2. They might be uncomfortable in the situation. Maybe they don't know what's expected, or your group is doing something they have never done before. By acting up, the uncomfortable person doesn't have to figure out what is expected. A few words to explain what to do will probably do the trick. If it doesn't work, a quiet talk while others are occupied might clear the air.

3. They may be afraid of failure. Closely related to number two above is acting up because of fear of failure. If a person feels she or he can't do what is expected, it may be less embarrassing to be called a "troublemaker" than to be called a "failure."

4. They don't like what the group is doing. The activity or project may be too easy or too difficult. It's probably necessary to sit down, one-on-one, and help this member set some goals that he/she would really like to reach.

5. It's possible you have no idea why a particular member is acting up. The quickest way to find out is ... ask the member. For example, "Bob, from the kinds of things you have been doing, I get the idea you're not happy being in this group. I would like to work it out with you. How do you feel about it?"

The activity, ideas, or meeting bombed! Now what?

Don't be down in the mouth. It won't be the end of the world—as long as you figure out what went wrong and work to correct it.

Maybe the members just weren't interested in what you did. Why?

- **They don't care about the activity.**
- **They don't fit in, timing didn't work out, too familiar or unfamiliar.**
- **They don't feel the activity accomplishes anything.**

There could be other reasons. How can you find out? Ask the members! Does that sound simple? It is! No leader can have all the answers and insights into what young people want, so ask them. Your respect for their opinions and needs will make them feel you really care. You'll probably be surprised at the results of this positive communication. Just sit down with your members, either individually or as a group and find out what they wish to accomplish. (Goal setting ... remember?)

This can be a learning experience for you and your members. Start by asking what they like about an activity. Then ask what they would like to do differently, what help might be needed to do it differently. Together decide whether to try it again with changes or discard and search for a new idea.

Hang in there! Try some of these suggestions—and then try some of your own ideas! You and your club members will enjoy working together in 4-H!

Action steps

- **Find a resource for learning more about age and developmental stages of youth.**
- **Experiment with different activities and teaching styles.**
- **Attend training sessions for the project.**
- **Ask your city 4-H staff for references you could read.**
- **Ask your members for ideas on activities and topics that they would like.**
- **Let older members teach younger members.**
- **Try a game for teaching project-related facts.**

Contacting Your Local Extension Office

To locate an address and phone number, look in your local telephone directory. It may be listed in any number of ways in the white pages or in one of the special sections. For example, in the District of Columbia you may contact:

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