



2013 CCE Summer Internships

CATEGORY ARCHIVES: COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE TO NEW YORKERS

Thoughts/Advice on Creating 4-H Curriculum (Part 2)

Posted on **August 5, 2013** by **angara2450**

Thoughts/Advice on Creating 4-H Curriculum (Part 2)

Hello. Here is the second part of my reflection creating 4-H curriculum.

How can I create a 4-H Program? (Continued...)

- **Research:** What has already been done in the area you're creating programs for? Can you add to already existing programs? Can you organize an idea better? Scour the internet for more information regarding youth education and your topic of interest. It's likely there's already some material out there related to what you want to publish. You don't want to recreate the wheel, so try to adjust your ideas so that your 4-H program can either make something new, add to a program that already exists (maybe it doesn't exist as a 4-H program), or reorganizes some activity that seems great but isn't organized well (again, this would probably mean reorganizing some activity other than 4-H because 4-H activities go through a rigorous review process).
- **Experiment:** If your idea involves a science experiment – try it out before beginning any writing. You want to make sure your result can be recreated over and over again. Even if the activity does not involve a science experiment, you'll want to test any part of the activity that can be tested.
- **Writing out the Activity:** After you have a strong idea of what you want to do for your activity and you're sure that the activity works, you may use the [4-H curriculum development guides](#) to help you craft a youth program. By following the 4-H development guides, you'll be encouraged to make your program fit into the experiential learning cycle. In other words, students will learn from trying things out and discussing complex questions rather than just being lectured. There are many important points to pay attention to when writing up the activity, but if you read through the "Descriptors for Non-Formatted Development Template" you'll have a good understanding of what to pay attention to.
- **First Revision:** Get in contact with experts in the field who would be interested in helping you develop youth

programming. Experts in the field of your topic can provide helpful insight regarding whether you're conveying a relevant and research-proved message; They can also nitpick technical wording choice to ensure you're using up-to-date scientific/technical vocabulary. Also, contact educators, especially 4-H state educators, who would be willing to make sure your activity goes through the experiential learning cycle and asks effective questions. Of course, make the changes advised. Remember, you may not always want to take all of the advice you're given – sometimes you'll have to pick and choose what to change about your activity.

- **Test out the activity:** If possible, you may want to try out the idea on your target youth group. For example, talk to a local library's youth program or talk to a 4-H group and see if you can pilot the activity at one of their meetings. Make note of what worked, and what didn't work. What questions were effective? Did youth feel engaged in the activity? If the audience is old enough, you might even have them evaluate the activity to see what could be improved.
- **Further revisions:** Based on your experience actually carrying out the activity, you can make more revisions on the activity. Finally, you can send the activity out to someone who has already looked at the activity and see what they think about the changes you made.
- **Publishing:** Ask 4-H state or national educators about possibilities for publishing your activity for the national curriculum.

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Thoughts/Advice on Creating 4-H Curriculum (Part 1)

Posted on **July 19, 2013** by [angara2450](#)

As someone very interested in youth education, I took it upon myself to create climate change youth materials this summer. After all, educating the youth about climate change is just as important as educating adults about climate change.

If you're interested in youth programming and you work for CCE, then you've probably heard of 4-H STEM. 4-H creates all sorts of educational tools to bring science into the minds of youth. There are many different types of 4-H clubs that use these tools and enrich kids' minds.

Why create a 4-H program?

- **Succinct:** Unlike entire lesson plans or PowerPoints, 4-H activities are short and sweet. The brevity of 4-H activities means that more educators will likely take the time to read through the activity and actually implement it.
- **Effective:** By definition, 4-H activities must engage youth and get them to share, reflect, generalize, and apply

what they've learned. Each activity clearly outlines procedures, necessary background information, materials, time needed, and even provides links to other 4-H activities or websites that might help youth learn more.

- **Interchangeable:** 4-H activities can be done in clubs, incorporated into the classroom, or many times, even completed at home.
- **User-friendly:** By following [4-H's curriculum development aids](#) like the "Guided Inquiry Template" and "Guided Inquiry Descriptions," one can more easily create an effective program. The development aids keep curriculum makers focused on creating very interactive and powerful educational tools. So many professionals understand the weight of a 4-H activity that it's likely you can find someone great to edit your materials for maximum efficacy.

How can I create a 4-H Program?

- **Find your topic:** 4-H programs handle a diverse array of important topics that will play a heavy role in future generations. Is there an important topic you'd love for youth to tackle? Search [the curriculum database](#) to see if that topic has already been covered sufficiently. If not, there may be a need for more programming.
- **Read through examples:** By reading through published 4-H activities in coordination with the 4-H Guided Inquiry template, you will better understand just what these activities require. You will consider many pivotal factors before even brainstorming ideas for your activity.
- **Brainstorm:** Take some time to jot down interactive ideas about your topic. How can you make your topic come alive to kids? How will the activities they engage in convey your message? Importantly, will they have FUN and actually remember the message? Many topics (like climate change) lack youth 4-H programming because it's pretty hard to make a really interactive and accurate lesson that will make kids remember the topic. If you're having trouble, chat with a professor or other person in your area who may be able to give you some ideas or direction.

(To be continued...)

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CCE Climate Change – Q&A's + 4-H Activity Making

Posted on **July 12, 2013** by **angara2450**

This past week has been pretty busy, but also rewarding.

For the most part, I worked on two different projects:

- Finalizing Q&A's for the Climate Change website.
- Drafting climate change 4-H activities for youth.

Drafting responses for the Q&A's was very interesting because I learned a lot of specifics about climate change impacts that I had not known about before. For example, I learned that only aerobic composting is good for the environment; Anaerobic composting actually contributes to climate change. Aerobic composting evolves little CO₂ and returns most carbon to the soil, while anaerobic composting evolves some CO₂, some methane, and possibly some nitrous oxide. Both methane and nitrous oxide are more potent greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide.

The Q&A's will be a great resource for municipal officials, farmers, or gardeners who wish to understand climate change impacts. The questions deal with the climate science behind anything from increased poison ivy in gardens, to increased flooding, to invasive insect species devouring crops.

Municipal officials could really use a site like this for information to make the community safer. If you thought that this summer was wet, precipitation in New York State is supposed to increase by 5% in the coming decade. There is a 66% likelihood that intense precipitation events will increase.

The 4-H activities for youth are coming along, slowly but surely. One activity is an actual outdoors science experiment involving a terrarium, CO₂ (from baking powder and vinegar), and the greenhouse effect. Hopefully, the experiment will give kids a very tangible understanding of why our planet is warming up.

I want the other activity to deal with explaining the connection between climate change and energy use.

Unfortunately, that is not something so easy to do – probably one of the reasons why so little youth programming has explained this connection. Some questions that deal with the topic –

Where does our electricity come from?

How does using electricity involve fossil fuels?

What are more sustainable forms of energy?

The question, then, is how to make such a topic interesting and engaging for youth. My supervisor and I discussed possibly having a game.

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