

**Best Education Practices (BEPs) for Water Outreach Professionals**  
**Defining BEPs, Refining New Resources and Recommending Future Actions**

***RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION***

**Presenter(s): Richard Enfield and Richard Ponzio, University of California Cooperative Extension**

**Title: From Dewey To Doing: How Experiential Education Theory Can Be Effectively Used As A Best Education Practice**

**Abstract:** The presentation documents how the promise of best educational theory fares in the real world crucible of community-based education programs. For almost a hundred years, the work of John Dewey has inspired educators who adhere to an idea proposed by Aristotle that "what one learns to do, one learns by doing." We will argue that the need for experiences, distributed over time, and with time built in for individual and group reflection on action provide the best opportunity for learning.

The paper builds upon program and assessment examples, and the outcome data gleaned from hard-won lessons to describe how Dewey's principles of interaction and continuity are brought into play day after day in 4-H. The presentation makes visible the impacts of interaction and continuity in the context of a strong and ongoing experiential Ridges to Rivers: Watershed Explorations Program for youth. We will also discuss what makes an "experience" valuable to learners and how these principles can help educators understand the participant's learning experience.

The authors assert that although the principles of interaction and continuity are vague and often overlooked, they are important underpinnings of Dewey's philosophy of experiential education. Furthermore, a good understanding of the principles can help a practitioner in the field of experiential education refine and strengthen the effectiveness of their work.

**Target Audience(s):** Neighborhood Organizatins, service Clubs and organizations with applied education components

**Educational Purpose:** Education

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