

Instructional Design

Lions Quest programs use a four-phase instructional design. Central to this instructional design is a view of students as active participants, initiating their own learning in a natural way that draws on their innate curiosity. The emphasis is on interaction—an essential element of a young person’s bonding to school.³⁶ Young people work together to learn concepts, practice thinking and social skills, and discover the benefits of cooperating toward mutual goals. The four instructional phases provide opportunities for students to build on their own knowledge and experiences, incorporate new information, practice what they are learning, reflect, and apply their new insights and knowledge to a variety of new situations.

Phase One: Discovering

The purpose of the Discovering phase of instruction is to find out what students already know about the topic. The facilitator shows enthusiasm for the topic, stimulates student interest, demonstrates active listening and respect for differing viewpoints, and begins to evaluate student knowledge of the topic. Primary teaching strategies include open-ended questions, respectful responding, and reflection.

Phase Two: Connecting

The purpose of the Connecting phase of instruction is to connect current knowledge to new concepts and skills. The facilitator uses short explanations, examples, and/or demonstrations to present new knowledge and skills and to model their appropriate use. Primary teaching strategies include presenting, modeling, and leading discussions.

Phase Three: Practicing

The purpose of the Practicing phase of instruction is to practice the new skill under the facilitator’s guidance and reflect on what has been learned. Students practice the new concept or skill in a meaningful and relevant context. The facilitator carefully monitors the activity to ensure that students understand the concept or skill and can use it correctly. Through higher-level processing questions, the facilitator facilitates application of skills, integration of knowledge, and summarization of key ideas. Primary teaching strategies include cooperative group work, guided practice, and reflection questions.

Phase Four: Applying

The purpose of the Applying phase of instruction is to apply the new concept and/or skill to new situations. Students consider how the concepts and skills learned in the lesson apply to their own lives. Additional activities may provide further application opportunities and discussions with caring adults at home and school. Primary teaching strategies include writing assignments, application activities, adult/student conversations, or guest speakers.