



National  
Guidance  
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## Reviewing

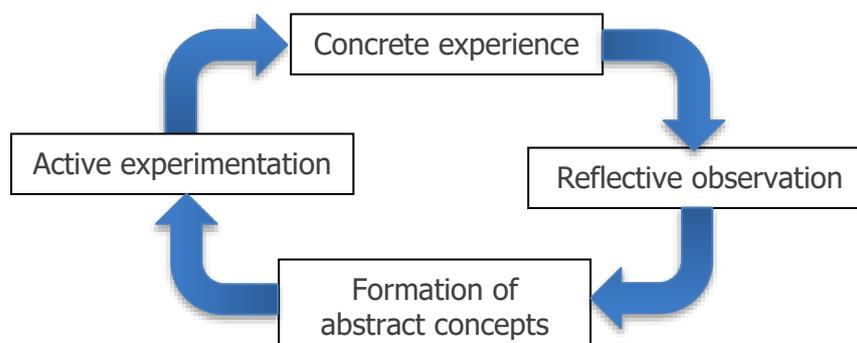
Reviewing is the process of reflecting upon an experience in order to learn from it.

Reviewing is different from but related to evaluation, which is the process of judging the quality of an experience – see National Guidance (NG) document [5.1d "Evaluation"](#).

This document uses the term "an experience" to mean any chosen episode of outdoor learning, off-site visits or learning outside the classroom: for example, it could mean a lesson, session, outing, visit, residential, expedition or programme, or a specific activity or moment that forms part of one of these.

### A Model of Learning from Experience

Research has shown that learning is most effective when there is an interplay between concrete experiences and analytic reflection upon them, with feedback from observation to action. Learning from experience, or experiential learning, is therefore often described as a cycle. The following model is based on the work of psychologists Kurt Lewin and David Kolb.



The experiential learning cycle has been described in many ways, for example:

- Act – Reflect – Conceptualise – Apply;
- Do – Review – Understand – Plan;
- Experience – Express – Examine – Explore.

Reviewing can be considered to be the part of the cycle which uses reflection to form concepts and thus makes meaning from the experience.

## Reviewing: Who and When?

Reviewing can take place at different levels, in different circumstances and for different purposes. It can be used by establishments, leaders, and participants.

### Reviewing by Establishments

It is good practice for an establishment to review its provision regularly. For example, after a programme of activities, a major visit such as a residential, or a new type of activity or visit, the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) might facilitate a review including the visit leader and other staff.

The establishment should also encourage leaders to review the experiences that they lead, and should have a system which ensures that any incidents, concerns, and lessons learned by leaders are communicated to the EVC, and incorporated as necessary into establishment policies, procedures, and training.

Reviews by establishments can form an integral part of the evaluation of experiences, and of the monitoring of provision for continual improvement – see NG documents [5.1d "Evaluation"](#) and [3.2b "Monitoring"](#).

### Reviewing by Leaders

Good leaders are reflective practitioners – they are continually reflecting upon and analysing their own practice in order to improve.

During an activity, a good activity leader is constantly observing the staff, the group, and the environment, reflecting upon what they notice, and making adjustments to their plan and leadership style accordingly. This is vital for effective dynamic risk assessment and management – see NG document [4.3b "Risk Management – an Overview"](#).

Leaders can also use reviews involving other staff and/or participants during an experience to monitor progress and to make necessary adjustments to plans.

It is good practice for a visit/activity leader to conduct a review of the visit/activity after it has finished, involving the staff and, if appropriate, the participants. The nature and scale of the review will depend on the nature and scale of the visit/activity: it might be a quick "how did that go?", or it might be a formal meeting using a structured format.

### Reviewing by Participants

Leaders can help participants to maximise their learning by encouraging them to review their experiences. The effective facilitation of learning by reviewing experience is often what distinguishes high quality outdoor learning from activities that are simply recreational.

Helping young people to learn by reviewing experience means that they learn how to learn, and are thus empowered to learn independently.

Encouraging participants to review their experience as part of a cycle of learning can enable leaders to personalise learning for participants with different learning styles. Different people learn in different ways, and grasp and transform their experiences differently. For example, when learning a new activity, some people

prefer to start with a practical experience of the activity, whereas others prefer to start by understanding the concepts involved in it.

Involving participants in reviewing can also help leaders and establishments to review and evaluate their provision.

## How to Review

It can be useful to use some questions as a guide to take you through the stages of a review. For example, you could ask yourself or others:

- What happened? – What was it like? – What do you think? – What next?
- What did you do? – What did you think and feel? – What went well? – What went badly? – Why did it happen like that? – What will you do differently next time?
- What? – So what? – Now what?

Alternatively, you could organise your responses to an experience under suitable headings, such as:

- Facts – Feelings – Findings – Futures;
- Description – Feelings – Evaluation – Analysis – Conclusion – Action plan.

Reviewing does not need to be a boring talking session: it can be active. Active reviewing can be fun and fit seamlessly into the activity, and it is more likely to engage people with different learning styles.

Ideas for active reviewing can be found in many publications, including:

- <https://reviewing.co.uk/review.htm>
- <https://reviewing.co.uk/toolkit/methods.htm>
- [www.coe.int/en/web/compass/activities-for-reviewing](http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/activities-for-reviewing)

