



Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL) Core Competencies

Final 5/1/2015

1 UNIT One: Foundations, knowledge and skills in learning for certification of EAL Professionals

1.1 Describe the theoretical foundations of EAL

- 1.1.1 Define EAL (PATH Intl. official definition)
- 1.1.2 Identify the three main applied areas of concentration for EAL and their benefits to participants:
 - A. Education
 - B. Corporate/Professional Development
 - C. Coaching/Personal Development
- 1.1.3 Identify examples of EAL life skills in each area:
 - 1.1.3.1 Education
 - A. Academic achievement skills
 - B. Critical thinking
 - C. Special Education
 - D. Alternative Education
 - E. Social and interpersonal skill development
 - 1.1.3.2 Corporate/Professional Development
 - A. Teambuilding
 - B. Organizational development
 - C. Executive coaching
 - D. Leadership Development
 - E. Career development
 - F. Interpersonal skill development for a corporate environment
 - 1.1.3.3 Coaching/Personal Development
 - A. Life coaching
 - B. Personal growth
 - C. Health and Wellness
 - D. Interpersonal relationship development

1.2 Define roles within the scope of an EAL experience

- 1.2.1 Identify the role of the equine professionals within an EAL session.
- 1.2.2 Identify the role of the human professional within an EAL session.
- 1.2.3 Identify the role of the dually-qualified professional within an EAL session.
- 1.2.4 Identify the role of a mental health professional within the EAL process including referrals and consulting.
- 1.2.5 Identify the role of a volunteer in an EAL session.

1.3 Identify suitable candidates who might benefit from EAL

- 1.3.1 Identify Precautions and Contraindications for participants in an EAL session.
 - 1.3.1.1 Identify possible contraindication that might preclude someone from participating in an individual or group EAL experience according to PATH standards.
- 1.3.2 Identify strategies for screening, assessing, setting goals and objectives to identifying the appropriate EAL professional(s).
- 1.3.3 Identify strategies for recognizing when a participant needs to be dismissed or referred out to an appropriate professional who has specific expertise to support the needs of the participant or group.

1.4 Foundations of basic facilitation (facilitation includes teaching and instruction) commonly used in EAL services

- 1.4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of basic experiential learning theory related to facilitation of EAL (e.g. Dewey ¹, Kolb ², etc.).
 - 1.4.1.1 Identify a specific model of experiential learning that could be applicable to EAL activities (ex. 4-H model of leadership development ³, Lukner and Nadler experiential learning model ⁴, Kolb's Learning Cycle ⁵, COASTR model of facilitation ⁶, Rogers Learning cycle ⁷, Pfeiffer and Jones Stage Model of Questioning⁸).

¹ Dewey, John (1938). *Experience & Education*. New York, NY: Kappa Delta Pi. ISBN 0-684-83828-1.

² Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. p. 21

³ Hendricks, P. A. (1996). *Developing youth curriculum, using the targeting life skills model*. A publication of Iowa State University Extension (4H-137A). Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University.

⁴ Luckner, J.L., and R.S. Nadler. 1997. *Processing the Experience: Enhancing and Generalizing Learning*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

⁵ Kolb, David A., Richard E. Boyatzis, and Charalampos Mainemelis. "Experiential learning theory: Previous research and new directions." *Perspectives on thinking, learning, and cognitive styles* 1 (2001): 227-247.

⁶ McKissock, H.B., Anderson, Debbie. *Equine Assisted Ground Activities and Tools*. (2013): 15-17

⁷ Rogers, Ronald W. "A protection motivation theory of fear appeals and attitude change1." *The journal of psychology* 91.1 (1975): 93-114.

⁸ Pfeiffer, J. W., & Jones, J. E. (1969-1977). *A handbook of structured experiences for human*

- 1.4.1.2 Demonstrate how this model would be applied during an EAL/EFL session.
- 1.4.2 Compare the advantages and disadvantages of co-facilitation and solo-facilitation in an EAL session.
 - 1.4.2 Identify strategies that help co-facilitators work together effectively.
- 1.4.2 Identify basic life skills that facilitate communication.
- 1.4.3 Demonstrate understanding of group dynamics (e.g. Tuckman ⁹, Lewin ¹⁰).
 - 1.4.3.1 Explain how group dynamic effects learning and behavior of EAL participants.
 - 1.4.3.2 Explain how a facilitator influences the dynamic and learning of a group.
 - 1.4.3.3 Explain how group dynamics can affect equine behavior.
- 1.4.4 List components needed for creating an EAL session plan.
 - 1.4.4.1 Demonstrate ability to develop learning goals and objectives for participant(s).
 - 1.4.4.3 Demonstrate ability to create a session plan with EAL goals and the ability to modify the goals as needed.
 - 1.4.4.4 Demonstrate ability to determine the effectiveness of an EAL experience or series of activities.
 - 1.4.4.5 Demonstrate ability to write an EAL session progress note and/or final summary that assesses an individual's or group's development/achievement over time.
 - 1.4.4.6 Demonstrate the ability to select a purposeful activity that reflects the individual or group learning goals.
- 1.4.5 Identify the components of a EAL session:
 - 1.4.5.1 Identify a typical activity design including flow, opening, middle, ending sessions.
 - 1.4.5.2 Identify strategies for opening a session.
 - 1.4.5.3 Identify ways of introducing or structuring of an activity.
 - 1.4.5.5 Demonstrate understanding of how to shift dynamics to create an optimal learning experience.
 - 1.4.5.6 Identify strategies for guiding individuals or groups who are struggling with an activity or task.
 - 1.4.5.7 Identify strategies for debriefing and processing for learning.

relations training (Vols. 1-6). La Jolla, CA: University Associates Press.

⁹ Tuckman, Bruce (1965). "Developmental sequence in small groups". *Psychological Bulletin* **63** (6): 384–99. doi:10.1037/h0022100. PMID 14314073. Retrieved 2008-11-10

¹⁰ Lewin, K. (1947). *Frontiers of Group Dynamics: Concept, method and reality in social science, social equilibria, and social change*. *Human Relations*, 1,5-41

- 1.4.5.8 Identify strategies for redirecting a participant to remain within the guidelines of EAL during a session.
- 1.4.5.9 Demonstrate effective adaptation of learning material and content to re-engage individuals in an EAL activity.
- 1.4.5.10 Demonstrate the principles of differentiated instruction to accommodate different learning styles in group and individual settings.

1.5 Equipment in a EAL session

- 1.5.1 Identify basic approved equipment, according to PATH Intl. Standards and/or guidelines for potential use in the following EAL sessions:
 - A. Therapeutic Riding
 - B. Vaulting
 - C. Driving
 - D. Ground work

1.6 Utilizing the facility/equine center environment for the benefit of the participant

- 1.6.1 Identify areas of the farm/facility or equine center that can be integrated into EAL session.
- 1.6.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how the overall barn environment has an impact on the participant's experience.
- 1.6.3 Describe the suggested dimensions and characteristics of a safe round pen according the PATH Intl. Standards.

1.7 Confidentiality Requirements

- 1.7.1 Describe basic confidentiality practices as they apply to your EAL program.
- 1.7.2 Define a covered entity as it pertains to HIPAA (Health Information Portability and Accountability Act)
 - 1.7.2.1 Define when HIPAA may apply to a business associate contractor of a HIPAA-covered entity.
- 1.7.3 Define FERPA and when it may apply (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

2. Unit Two: Equine Skills and Knowledge needed for facilitating EAL
(Recognizing the characteristics of equines appropriate for EAL)

2.1 Understanding of the emotional aspects of the equine

2.1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of how an equine displays emotion through behavior.

2.1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how to interpret equine emotional responses.

2.1.3 Describe how human emotions can or could affect the equine

2.1.4 Describe the behavior of an equine who is willing to engage and why this is important.

2.1.5 Describe the behavior of an equine who is unwilling to engage and why this is important.

2.2 Understanding of how to evaluate an equine for suitability for EAL

2.2.1 Demonstrate the ability to assess an equine's appropriateness for EAL activities.

- a. Prior training
- b. Ground handling
- c. Health and condition
- d. Herd related behaviors
- e. Personality traits

2.2.2 Identify the difference between equines that are suitable for active versus passive activities.

2.2.3 Demonstrate understanding how lameness/health can affect the decision to select an equine in an EAL activity.

2.2.4 List possible responses an equine might exhibit in response to environmental stimuli that could cause a safety risk to a participant during an EAL activity.

2.2.5 Demonstrate ability to evaluate an equine's individual flight response/recovery time and explain why that is important.

2.2.6 Recognize equine behaviors that may indicate stress or burnout.

2.4 Recognizing and applying Equine Behavior- Inclusion Pending

2.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of the equine behaviors listed below (this is not an inclusive list of all equine behaviors only a partial list that will be included in education.)

- Alert
- Threatening
- Retreating
- Chasing
- Ear positions - laid back vs forward , to sides etc.
- Biting
- Herding
- Lowering or raising of the head or head carriage
- Striking behavior, kicking or threatening to kick
- Mutual grooming
- Sexual behaviors
- Pawing and stamping
- Rearing
- Presenting the hind end
- Feces sniffing
- Expelling feces
- Dominance behaviors
- Licking/chewing
- Yawning
- Lying down and rolling
- Sighing
- Holding the breath
- Muscle tension
- Resting a leg
- Tail carriage
- Vices

2.4.2 Demonstrate ability to recognize and incorporate horse behavior in the context of the session.

2.5 Recognizing and applying herd dynamics

2.5.1 Demonstrate how to leverage knowledge of the herd dynamic to create effective participant learning

2.5.2 Identify how EAL activities could be impacted by herd dynamics

2.5.3 Demonstrate ability to safely incorporate multiple equines for activities that include liberty work

2.5.4 Identify how EAL activities could be impacted by herd bound equines

2.6 Equine welfare specific to EAL

- 2.6.1 Describe the difference between active participation vs passive participation of an equine in an activity ¹¹.
- 2.6.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the effects of a flight/fight response on equine welfare.
- 2.6.3 Demonstrate ability to conduct a safety discussion with a participant or group for an EAL session.
- 2.6.4 Demonstrate strategies for responding to a participant who disregards personal safety during an EAL activity including discontinuing an activity or session.
- 2.6.5 Demonstrate understanding of when it is appropriate to intervene when the participant or the equine may be in a potentially dangerous or stressful situation.
- 2.6.6 Demonstrate the ability to intervene on behalf of the equine when a participant or group is putting the equine in a potentially stressful or dangerous situation.
- 2.6.7 Describe a strategy for keeping equines healthy, mentally and emotionally.
- 2.6.8 Identify strategies for preventing equine stress and burnout.

¹¹ A. **Active participation** is defined as direct contact with the equine where the equine is being asked to interact with the participant and where the equine does not necessarily have a choice to disengage from the process or activity. The intention or purpose of the interaction between the equine and participant also has a consideration in this definition

B. **Passive participation** is defined as non-contact interaction from an observational point of view where the human presence does not have a direct effect on the equine.