

8 Easy Steps for Developing Teaching Activities

Opening premise: Borrowing teaching exercises from other people can be fun and easy. However, when we develop our own activities, our learning of the topic that we're teaching is deepened. It can also be a powerful consciousness-building process that helps us clarify our own way of learning and to develop our unique style of teaching.

Here are a few tips for starting to develop your own teaching exercises:

1. Identify the topic you want to teach. Be specific.
2. Ponder how you experience the topic in your own life. For instance, consider how it feels in your body, your thoughts, and any sensations that you can identify. Also consider what goes on in other people when you engage in the topic for which you're referring. The trick here is to be *SPECIFIC*.
3. If you can't remember how you experience the topic, go out into your life and watch yourself and others experiencing it. Take notes and start to notice patterns. For instance, if you want to teach empathy, notice as much as you can about what happens in other people when you empathize with them. Or, notice what happens in you when you receive empathy. What happens when you and others don't receive empathy? For me this is fun learning and helps me to deepen my understanding of how the topic affects my life.
4. Now ponder how you learned the topic. Was there a particular "aha" moment for you when you "got" it? What was happening in that moment? Try to discern what it was that helped you get it and how it felt in your body. Include the order of how you learned the topic (for instance, with empathy I first learned feelings and needs and then the rote technique, and then I learned that the purpose was to connect rather than reflect the "right" words, then I learned that empathy met my own need to connect, then to start trusting my gut instincts, and then I learned that empathy is a tool that helps me stay out of judgment.)
5. Ponder how you could recreate that moment in a workshop; play with ideas.
6. When you have an exercise that you like, try it out on friends - NVC practitioners or not. (I used to try mine out with a group of women friends who I met with twice a month. Some of them didn't know NVC except what they garnered from being in relationship with me, but they were willing players in my work and they helped me perfect my new exercises.)
7. Fine tune it and then try it out on one of your NVC groups. Make notes to yourself about what you liked and didn't. Continue to fine tune it until it becomes something you use often and freely.
8. Keep copies of all the activities that you develop, and add your name and contact information to the bottom of any papers you hand out.