

Needs Assessment

Goal: to gauge student interest in the class and learn how to structure the learning to meet their needs.

General Concept: to generate buy-in and shared responsibility for creating and sustaining a positive and relevant learning experience.

Process:

1. Hand each student an index card and ask them to write down their response to the following questions: Why are you taking this class? What do you want to achieve during this class? What do you want to learn?
2. Give each student 5 – 10 minutes to write down his or her answers.
3. Once they are done have them hang their note cards on the wall so that others can see what the rest of the class wants to achieve.
4. Ask the group if they read anyone else's response and developed a new goal for themselves in the class.

Ideal for: *intrapersonal learners* because the activity allows for quiet, individual reflection that gets at the purpose of one's education; *verbal-linguistic learners* because the activity allows them to outline their goals on paper; *bodily-kinesthetic learners* because they get to move around the classroom to view what others have written.

Important for peace education because it values the input, ideas, needs and wants of the learners and helps establish a partnership model of education (Eisler). It gives students ownership over their learning experience.

Modifications:

- Have the students work in small groups to discuss why they took the class and what they want to get out of it.
- Provide the students with a menu of themes, concepts, readings, assignments, and projects and let them decide as a class which ones they want to be a part of the course and their learning experience. In other words, have them help you develop the syllabus.
- Have the class draft up a needs assessment for you, the teacher. What should they know about your needs?