Global Issues through ELT

A seminar course for MA in ELT students

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Feedback & Reflections on the course

What are you taking away from this course?
What are some of the key concepts/ideas that you would like to remember as a future teacher?
What is one activity / classroom idea that you would like to try out?
What is one idea that you’d like to think more about?
What did you miss from the course?

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Feedback & Reflections on the course

I first taught this course in the Fall Semester of 2015. In this final unit, I’d like to highlight some of the student feedback on the course, and comment on some lessons learnt.

Quoting from actual student feedback will give the reader a better indication of what it was like to participate in the course.
“Most people may think that it is easy to deal with global issues because we live in ‘the middle’ of them, the media shows global problems almost all day…. However, it is not for sure that everyone has the most appropriate and reliable sources.” (Dóri)

My comment:
The migrant crisis was reaching Hungary while the course was going on. Several students commented that it can help to see more clearly if different sources are compared and contrasted, and if everyone’s views are listened to.
Student feedback 2

“I loved the way this course combined methodology with global issues because the topics we discussed in class (or read / listened to as homework) are worth thinking and talking about.” (Györgyi)

My comment:
It is important to involve the students in choosing the topics. The course requirements included giving a presentation in pairs on a special ‘awareness-raising day’, and students could choose their own topics.
Student feedback 3

“What am I taking away? That we, teachers, need to emphasize the importance of global issues. We got instant lessons and maybe this will motivate us to take the first step and get out of our comfort zone and then ask our students to do the same.”

(Zsófi)

My comment:
My aim was to model good practice and to get students to reflect on how they could implement this approach in their own teaching.
Student feedback 4

“I really wish we had more time to give each other more feedback. I agree with Eszti on the fact that we barely had time to properly discuss some of the activities and sometimes I felt like we lost something without these valuable comments.” (Zsófi)

My comment:
Reflection formed an integral part of the course. At times, though we were pressed for time and some of the presentations did not get proper feedback. This was a missed opportunity. Students could have been asked to give each other written feedback after class.
“Thanks to Margit’s open-mindedness, combined with everyone’s enthusiasm and cheerful attitude, we had all that it takes to have the perfect setting for a very profitable, yet very animated course. We were able to open up and discuss any topics we wanted, to share our experiences and thoughts from the very first class of the semester.” (Lili)

My comment:
The above highlights that open and honest discussion can not take place without an open and trusting atmosphere.
Student feedback 6

“I really liked that we didn’t just talk about how to teach something, we actually tried things out. We learn so much more by doing, and I am really thankful for having had the chance to do so.” (Lili)

My comment:

Learning by doing is the essential nature of this course. Beginner teachers will become good facilitators if they have the chance to practice the skills involved.
Student feedback 7

“The best part was learning not only from Margit, but from each and every one of you. I loved the way you presented the special days you chose in different ways, and that we could collect dozens of useful ideas on how to use them in class.”

(Andi)

My comment:
On a participant-centered course, group members can learn a lot from each other.
Student feedback 8

“I loved the article introducing the concept of compassionate thinking, and throughout the semester, empathy was a key concept for us. It is moving and a bit scary to think how we affect each other’s life every day, and how we are going to affect our students’ lives later as teachers.” (Gyöngyi)

*My comment:*

Several students commented that dealing with global issues requires emotional involvement, as well. It is not just a purely intellectual activity.
Final comments

We used an electronic platform for communicating between sessions, posting comments on articles and videos, raising questions, reflecting on sessions.

It also needs to be noted that this particular MA group had already taken a Methodology of ELT seminar and were familiar with a wide range of classroom tasks and activities. In addition, they had already spent a year together and had become a very cohesive and trusting group.