British Council Webinar 17th November 2022

In the first part of the session, we'll take a quick look at five simple tips to plant the seed of environmentalism and start a greener mindset in ourselves and our students. Then we'll talk about some of the common objections to raising climate change awareness in class. Then we'll look at some of the practical solutions to get beyond those objections.

Simple Seeds to a greener mindset

Click here

Objections

1. I simply don't have time in class to cover sustainability issues as well as my coursebook, exam work and general class bits and pieces.

2. I'm not an expert

3. I'm not comfortable telling people how they should live their lives.

4. It is all very negative; students don't want to hear that it's such a downer.

5. Students aren't interested.

Solutions

1. Make it a routine.
        a. 5-minute focus on the planet. How does (unit we're studying) have an effect on the planet and what students can do about it. This can also be a homework task.
        b. Planet news. Each student has a chance to bring in something they've read about the environment.
        c. Classroom decorations (historical temperature, Co2 levels)
        d. Numbers, especially big ones are often forgotten in ELT.
        https://www.worldometers.info/ is great for some number work. As well

as raising awareness. I use this as an opening and closing routine. Also the number of trees planted by www.ecosia.com is a great little routine.

2. As Seneca said: "While we teach, we learn."
Were you a grammar expert before you became a teacher? Don't fear the unknown.
It's ok to not be an expert. You can show your students you're also learning which will create a greater bond between you. It will even give a great chance for the students to become teachers, lending itself beautifully to the flipped classroom approach.

3. Don't tell students what to do, show them how to do it. Give a man a fish and all. Work on projects like how to grow a plant, how to make your own deodorant, make banners, learn chants.
Work on projects like how to grow a plant, how to make your own deodorant, make banners, learn chants, challenge your students to make a video of "the most colourful meal"

Remember this is where you lead by example. Show them how easy it is to start making changes and see how quickly their mindset will switch.

4. Focus on the positives.
   a. Look for good news stories
   b. Focus on behaviours we can change easily
   c. Give ideas on what we can do to make a difference.
   d. Encourage action outside the classroom, community litter picks etc.

5. It's up to you to engage your students. If you're interested; they'll be interested. I've never met a student who was mad about reported speech. The way we present a subject is vital. A great way to do this is make it about your students. Create a birthday list. Making each day about them.
You can also find loads of fun interactive games like https://freerice.com/ to keep students interested and empower them to make a difference.

Celebrate important environmental days. Look through the calendar eg. April 22nd World Earth Day. Make a big deal out of these in class. My favourite idea for this is to create your very own calendar. Take your students birthdays and celebrate or fight against an issue that is close to their heart.

Thanks for coming along, thanks for your input and interest. If you have any questions or would like a workshop for your teachers and/or students, please give us a follow and get in touch.

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Some useful places to look.

My favourite sources of inspiration and materials are
ELT footprint
ELT sustainable
Speak Out for Sustainability
British Council Climate Connection
Subject to Climate

If you're looking to find out more, please check out:

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