

## Open Discussion: Our Classroom and the Ukraine Crisis

March 8, 7:30-8:30pm via Zoom

TESL Kingston hosted an open discussion for teachers looking to learn, share, and listen to others' ideas and challenges in the classroom in response to the war in Ukraine.

**Forum Summary:** No one felt they were expert in this area yet there was some previous experience with students who had faced similar conflict. This can be drawn upon to support students currently. In each teaching context, instructors can adapt to the needs of the students. It seemed that everyone paid attention to their students' responses and their own and were trying their best. Having come together, all participants felt they were no longer whistling in the dark.

A few points:

- 1) Trauma of past war crises was coming to the surface with some students.
- 2) Finding a physical or time space for expressing reactions to conflict were going to be established in some classes.
- 3) Instructors could respond to students as they lead issues raised.
- 4) When course content is related, this could be the opening for student expression.
- 5) Students should not feel pressured to participate or be evaluated in addressing the conflict.

A few ideas:

- 1) Create a "PEACE" board in the classroom.
- 2) Write a letter/video message to a refugee offering them comfort and advice. (Real or imaginary.)
- 3) Course content on war/global conflict could be compared/contrasted to the current crisis.
- 4) Student journaling on a regular basis.

There was interest in opening another forum at a later date.