

Images

10

Jamie Keddie's classes go digital.

Photography has been thrust into a new phase of its history. The development of digital cameras and camera phones, as well as online photo sharing sites, image manipulation software and other applications, has resulted in our taking and sharing more pictures than ever before. In the news media, we see an increasing number of images that have come from ordinary people, and last year the mayor of New York City even announced a programme in which members of the public will be able to send mobile phone images of crimes in progress directly to the emergency services.

Inevitably, photographic devices find their way into the classroom. At their worst, they can be disruptive and cause privacy concerns. But at their best, they can be a valuable classroom resource. In this article, which is the last in the series, we will look at a few ideas for ways in which they can be used with our language learners.

Privacy

Of course, if you intend to photograph your students, it is absolutely essential to consider their privacy. Most people are unenthusiastic about having a camera thrust into their face, especially if it is first thing on a Monday morning. If possible, give prior warning of your

intentions. That way, at least, everyone will have the opportunity to make themselves look good on the day should they want to. Alternatively, focus in on the extroverts who will do anything for a laugh and shy away from those who may feel self-conscious. Use your discretion.

If you intend to photograph young learners, you must get permission from their parents first.

Idea 1: Remembering students' names

For classes of good-humoured students, creating mug shots is an effective way of learning new names at the beginning of any new course. Start off by showing them a real police booking photograph (there are thousands at www.mugshots.com) and then asking individuals to write their names clearly on pieces of paper before posing for the camera.



Later in the lesson, when your new students are engaged in an activity, you can discreetly scroll through the photographs in your digital camera and memorise their names.

Your students will want to see their pictures, so prepare a slideshow for the next day, and use the images to teach, practise or drill language such as:

- *Julio looks very serious.*
- *Elke is smiling.*
- *Elke is grinning.*
- *Pilar looks like she is trying to keep a straight face.*
- *Pilar looks as if she is trying not to laugh.*

Idea 2: What were we wearing?

Take a group photograph of your class and before the next lesson prepare a number of statements – some true and some false – which describe what individuals were wearing. For example:

- *Safa was wearing a T-shirt that said: 'I am the boss'.*
- *Daniela and Graziella were both wearing white blouses.*
- *Teresa was wearing a waistcoat.*
- *Marta was wearing her hair tied back.*
- *Toni was wearing a light grey suit.*
- *Lourdes was wearing a T-shirt that had little hearts on it.*

The next day, dictate the sentences to your students, ask them to decide whether they are true or false and then show them the previous day's photograph to let them check their answers.

Idea 3: Snap the board

Digital cameras are ideal for documenting the language that arises in the classroom and gets written up on a non-interactive whiteboard. Simply write the date in a corner of the board and take a picture at the end of the class for your records.

Photographs of the whiteboard can



also be used to revise and recap language at later dates. For example, I used the following display to represent nine things that a group of Italian learners on a summer course in England said they would have to get used to if they lived in Britain.

If I lived in England I would have to get used to:

- ... driving on the left.
- ... spicy food.
- ... carrying an umbrella everywhere.
- ... having two showers a day because there are no bidets.
- ... having dinner at half past six.
- ... being polite all the time.
- ... the rain.
- ... big coffees.
- ... using an adaptor for electrical appliances.



Later that evening, I emailed the photograph of the whiteboard to each of my students. Their homework task was to send me back an email containing the nine sentences written out in full. Note: During the speaking activity, I had not let any of the students take notes or write down the target language.

Idea 4: Scared students

For this activity, which practises adjectives of emotion ending in *-ing* and *-ed*, I started by writing the following on the board:

- *Your pet hate*
- *A time when you felt very tired or exhausted*
- *The most boring job in the world (What do you think it would be?)*
- *Your phobias*
- *What do you do to relax?*
- *A confusing aspect of the English language*
- *An embarrassing incident that you remember (When you are embarrassed, your face goes red.)*
- *The most disappointing/over-rated/predictable film you have ever seen*

Before getting students to share their ideas in pairs, I told them about some of mine. For example, my pet hate is people who block the escalator on the Barcelona metro. The most boring job in the world has to be the one that Mr Bucket had in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* – screwing tops onto tubes of toothpaste.

Once everyone had discussed their ideas, they were encouraged to share them with the rest of the class. Following these exchanges, the students were invited to select one of eight banners to describe how they felt/would feel in the situations considered (*annoyed, tired/exhausted, bored, frightened, relaxed, confused, embarrassed and disappointed*).

The students were then photographed holding the appropriate banner and acting out the emotion.

Finally, I sent the images to my students on a pdf file and asked them to send me their original ideas and experiences (pet hates, etc). **ETP**

Thanks to Maria Grazia (annoyed), Roberto (tired and exhausted), Daniela (bored), Graziella (relaxed), Marta (confused), Elena (bored), Delia (frightened), Monica (embarrassed), Santina (disappointed), and Rossella (frightened).



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