

Working with Images

A resource book for the language classroom

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Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers

Series Editor Scott Thornbury



familiar activities, such as picture dictations, but also many new ideas. One example is 'Google it', which has students compare mental images of a word with search results on *Google Images*.

Chapter 2, *Interpreting images*, invites students not only to describe pictures, but also to use their own thought processes. This chapter has some unique activities, including 'Out of focus', where students look at distorted pictures and attempt to determine what the original image was.

In Chapter 3, *Creating images*, students are put in touch with their creative sides through drawing, photography and collages. One clever example is the activity 'Movie storyboards', where students read a narrative and convert it into a movie storyboard.

Chapter 4, *Imaging*, is the final chapter in the first section of the book. It involves students' imaginations, engaging their mental imagery. In 'Questions to a portrait', students look at a portrait (in the

example given, Edvard Munch's self-portrait, *The Night Wanderer*) and generate a series of questions to ask, along with possible answers.

The second section of the book begins with Chapter 5, *Signs, symbols and icons*. Here, students explore masks, stamps, hand gestures, flags and more as intriguing topics for language learning. The author comments in the chapter's introduction on how many of these items have cultural aspects and therefore can help promote intercultural awareness. For example, in the activity 'Culture shock', students look at several unusual street signs and guess their cultural backgrounds.

Chapter 5, *Advertising*, uses advertisements as language learning material. The author usefully provides three

different procedures to help students examine advertising images. The procedures are ideal for classes that would like to analyse an advertisement in detail.

Chapter 7, *Art images*, concludes the book with a focus on art. This chapter asks students to look at and discuss artistic imagery. The author uses a broad definition of *art* here, including both paintings in art galleries and cover art from classic rock albums.

I used two activities from this book ('Hotel rooms' and 'Flashbacks') with my university English classes. In the first of these activities, the students listened to descriptions of views from six hotel rooms in locations all around the world. They made drawings based on what they heard, then compared their drawings in pairs. Finally, they saw actual photos of the views as they heard the descriptions again. This activity generated a lot of interest. The students enjoyed drawing exotic views, then seeing the photographs. I quite liked the vocabulary

in this activity (*revolving restaurant, glimpse, panoramic view*, etc).

'Flashbacks' begins with a picture of four people on a desolated beach and a short monologue from one of the people. Students are then asked to envision a film in which the picture they have just seen is the final image. They work in groups to produce a few drawings and a coherent plot for their imaginary movie. Finally, each group describes their movie to the class. My students found this more challenging, as they were required to think out and tell a story. However, I was impressed by the variety of stories generated by the initial input.

I think this book will have a lot of appeal for English language teachers. The sheer range of activities, from fun guessing games to discussions of art galleries, means that most teachers will find something well-suited to their teaching situation here. The extra CD is a great help, and it's very easy to find the images you need on it. Overall, I would recommend this book to any teacher who would like to explore imagery in their classroom.

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