

Classroom Action Research Project Report:

What happens in my lesson if I structure an entire class around a picture-prompt discussion?

1. Introduction

The Classroom Action Research Project is an initiative designed to foster evidence-based teaching practices through systematic reflection and inquiry. It enables teachers to investigate their own classroom strategies by posing a guiding research question, implementing targeted changes, and analyzing the outcomes. This process not only enhances pedagogical effectiveness but also promotes professional growth by linking theory with practice. Throughout the project, participants receive comprehensive support from the Goethe-Institut, including guidance in formulating research questions, implementing measures, evaluating results, and presenting findings.

The project is supported by the Victorian Government.

2. Teacher and School

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School: Mullauna Secondary College

Grade Level/Year: Year 11

Term 2/2025

3. Research Question

What happens in my lesson if I structure an entire class around a picture-prompt discussion?

4. Context and Rationale

In my lessons, I've noticed that many students describe visual content but rarely interpret or critically question it. They often stay on the surface level of the image without uncovering deeper intentions or cultural contexts.

With this project, I want to find out why this interpretative effort is avoided: Is it due to a lack of linguistic resources, insufficient practice, or uncertainty when dealing with open-ended tasks?

The topic is particularly relevant because image interpretation plays an important role in the second part of the oral VCE exam. As an examiner, I've observed that many candidates only describe pictures instead of interpreting them or making comparisons.

The new German Curriculum 2.0 also emphasizes the importance of viewing and calls for increased use of visual prompts.

This question is therefore central to my teaching - both for targeted exam preparation and for the long-term development of viewing competence across all year levels.

5. Approach

I'm planning a lesson for my Year 11 class on the topic "Volunteering Abroad." The starting point is a picture prompt (a screenshot from a satirical video) shown without context. Students should first describe it spontaneously and formulate initial hypotheses (in writing + Think-Pair-Share). Then, we'll discuss the image's impact and the presumed message in a plenary session.

In a second step, I'll explain the satirical background, which should lead to a shift in perspective.

After that, we'll discuss: What is voluntourism? Who benefits? What are the problems?

To support this, I'll introduce useful phrases and topic-related vocabulary. The lesson will end with a mini feedback sheet.

6. Data Collection

I plan to combine different data collection methods to make not only the outcome of the picture-prompt discussion visible but also the reasons why interpretations might be avoided:

- Observation sheet focusing on:
 - Image processing (description vs. interpretation)
 - Speaking time, use of phrases, spontaneous speech
 - Reaction to the change in context (satire revealed)

- Point at which interpretation begins (e.g., only after teacher's prompt?)
- Audio recording to analyze actual language use (vocabulary, argumentation structure)
- Comparison of written and oral contributions:
 - Students record initial thoughts about the image in writing
 - Later contributions are compared with these (depth, choice of words, confidence in expressing opinions)
- Short questionnaire afterwards:
 - How easy was image interpretation for you?
 - What caused difficulties? (e.g., missing vocabulary, uncertainty, lack of practice)
 - Did you have enough language resources to express your opinion?

7. Findings/Results

Many contributions remained at the descriptive level, even after the satirical context was revealed. The introduced phrases were only used occasionally. Students reacted somewhat hesitantly and rarely expressed personal evaluations or interpretations, regardless of language level.

In the questionnaires, seven students stated that they found the task "rather easy," three "rather difficult." The most frequently mentioned obstacles were uncertainty, lack of vocabulary, and insufficient practice. The provided phrases were generally considered helpful but only rarely perceived as spontaneously applicable.

Nevertheless, open responses show that key terms such as "voluntourism" were adopted. In some cases, critical observations were also formulated—both linguistically ("exploited," "staged," "racist") and in terms of content ("satire not always positive," "volunteering not always good").

The audio recording shows that the satirical context caused irritation and discussion. Individual students expressed nuanced views on the impact of volunteering. Switching to reflection in English enabled more

students to participate but did not lead to significantly more critical contributions.

8. Reflection

The results suggest that viewing competence needs to be developed over the long term. Individual lessons alone do not create confidence in interpretation. Picture prompts can be a valuable tool, but only in combination with regular practice, targeted language support, and reliable methodological guidance.

9. Next Steps

- Introduce viewing tasks early and regularly
- Explicitly build interpretation strategies
- Systematically train and repeat useful phrases
- Use multilingual resources for support

10. Attachments



Fragebogen Auswertung:

Wie leicht Interpretation?		Größte Schwierigkeit?		Wie hilfreich Vokabeln?		Was gelernt? (offen)
sehr leicht		wörter fehlend	3	sehr	3	Term volountorism and positives and negatives
eher leicht	7	unsicher ob richtig	5	etwas	5	New vocab - 6
eher schwer	3	unwissend, was zu sagen	2	nicht		Freiwilligenarbeit nicht immer gut
sehr schwer		noch nie solche eine Aufgabe				Satire nicht immer positiv