

“Who Am I?": A self-portrait activity

Group/Level: Upper level conversation

Length: 1.5 hrs. for picture taking, sharing, and conversation

Resources needed: Smartphones with camera, Instagram accounts

Areas/Functions/Skills: speaking, writing, self-reflection, talking about self

Objective: Students will practice talking about themselves in an appropriate, clear, and meaningful way.

Activities

Preparation (15 min.)

- Start by asking the students to take a self-portrait ('selfie') or have portraits taken by someone else. The teacher can take the picture of students that don't have a smartphone
- Upload portraits to the class Instagram account, and write a short description (probably just the first name)
- Hashtag each photo with appropriate tags #BHercESOL #IAm #UpperConversation
- Ask the students to follow the class Instagram account if they haven't done so

Reflection and writing (10 min.)

- Each student start reflecting and writing about themselves with statements that start with "I am..."

Sharing and conversation (1 hr.)

- Students share their writing (students may have that person's photo in their phone screen via Instagram, or the teacher can have the image projected)
- Teacher facilitates appropriate corrections on the go (grammar, vocabulary, idioms, pronunciation)

Follow Up

Once the activity is over, the teacher will add the "I am..." text to each portrait on Instagram, and students can comment or ask questions to each portrait over the days/weeks.

Modification/Expansion

1. This activity can become a long-term project. Students may add information over the semester or term of instruction. Instead of Instagram, the teacher can print each portrait and assemble a mural where students can write in information about themselves over several weeks.
2. The process can be modified having the students portraying each other, both photographically and in writing [third person account]. The student portraying will have to write a series of questions to interview another student; then write a single paragraph account [separate activity sheet]. Use *Writers: Literary Lives in Focus* as “background reading” (photographers writing about the portraits they took, which illustrates that behind a portrait there’s a story in the mind of the photographer).