

# **A Picture *Shared* is Worth a Thousand Words**

## **Travelling in China: Photography, Social Media and Shanghai**

### ***Ideas for collaborating in a digital ~~classroom~~ world***

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#### **Introduction: Photography, Travel and Collaboration**

Many learning professionals enjoy travel and use the experiences garnered overseas to inform their teaching, especially of languages, geography, history and Asian Studies. However, more can be done to positively leverage their experiences travelling by using the internet to share and collaborate.

The following teaching and learning ideas are designed to assist students and teachers in a number of subjects and contexts. The focus is on those travelling, particularly in Asia but teachers will find they can readily adapt the ideas, especially when learning about photography, visual literacy, online collaboration using social media and copyright using creative commons licenses.

The photographs in this unit, and video, all taken on a trip to Shanghai in October 2010, have a share and share-alike creative commons license.

#### **Rationale**

Australian teachers and students travelling in Asia can explore their experiences with peers, further collaborate with new friends and develop creative, digital and cultural literacies by using social media tools to share original content. Students and teachers are encouraged to photograph, blog and use online tools to leverage their experiences in Asia. Teachers who do this effectively are likely to assist students to be digitally, as well as culturally literate.

NB the NSW DET code of conduct should be considered closely, especially in regards to social media use.

#### **Key Competencies and Cross-curriculum Content**

Key competencies are embedded in the *NSW 7–10 Syllabi* to enhance students' learning and their continuing development of the effective thinking skills necessary for further education, work and everyday life. The key competencies of ***collecting, analysing and organising information, communicating ideas and information, planning and organising activities and working with others and in teams*** reflect core processes and are explicit in the objectives, outcomes and content of the syllabi. The competency of ***problem-solving*** is developed through the methodologies of each syllabus and through classroom teaching. In order to achieve the outcomes, particularly the

outcomes that specifically focus on technology and texts, students need to learn about and use appropriate information technologies, thereby developing the key competency of **using technology**.

**Information and Communication Technologies** (ICT) content enables students to develop and apply skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT in their composing, responding and presenting, and as part of the imaginative and critical thinking they undertake, especially in English. The ICT content has been incorporated into the content to ensure that all students have the opportunity to become competent, discriminating and creative users of ICT and are better able to demonstrate the syllabus outcomes through the effective use of ICT.

### **Focus Objectives**

- express themselves and their relationships with others and the world
- the power of language to explore and express views of themselves, others and the world
- the power of effective communication using the language modes of speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing
- the role of language in developing positive interaction and cooperation with others
- the power of language to express the personal, social, cultural, ethical, moral, spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of human experiences.

### **Focus Outcomes**

A student:

3. selects, uses, describes and explains how different technologies affect and shape meaning
6. experiments with different ways of imaginatively and interpretively transforming experience, information and ideas into texts
9. demonstrates understanding of the ways texts reflect personal and public worlds
11. uses, reflects on, assesses and adapts their individual and collaborative skills for learning with increasing independence and effectiveness.

(rationale, cross-curriculum content competencies, objectives and outcomes adapted from the current NSW English 7-10 syllabus)

## Are you a savvy 21<sup>st</sup> century traveller?

### *(10 Ideas about online collaboration and photography for those preparing to travel)*

1. Decide on the appropriate camera and lenses to take on your travels. A DSLR with several lenses may be bulky but does provide better quality images than a lighter, 'point and click' camera. Current advice on equipment and prices can be gleaned from popular glossy magazines at the newsagent or library, online Australian photography and technology forums like [photoforum.com.au](http://photoforum.com.au) or [whirlpool.net.au](http://whirlpool.net.au) or [nikonians.org](http://nikonians.org) if you like Nikon cameras. The camera used for the photos in this unit: Nikon D90 with 105mm and 70-300mm Nikkor lenses, as well as a 11-16mm Tamron lens.

Here is an article on learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if you are new to digital photography  
<http://darcymoore.net/2010/07/08/learning-to-be-a-shooter/>

2. Consider a system/process, including naming conventions, to sort and store your photographs on your laptop, perhaps using Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom 3 and Adobe Bridge. Adobe software can be purchased inexpensively using the DET Home User agreement or trialled for one month free when downloaded from the Adobe website. Tutorials can be accessed free via YouTube or Adobe TV but [lynda.com](http://lynda.com) is a highly respected source of online learning for technology, with a very methodical approach to instruction with Adobe products and photography workflows that is worth a subscription (they have a good iPhone and iPad app too). If you already have good skills consider trying some HDR (High Dynamic Range) photography to create absolutely stunning travel photographs using Photomatix which has clear tutorials at their site [hdrsoft.com](http://hdrsoft.com)
3. Establish a personal flickr.com account and then a travel group for the trip. You are able to restrict the access to just members you invite. There are many resources at the site to assist you as a new user. Flickr is the most widely used photo-sharing place on the web and has many associated tools that integrate cleverly to make your experience fulfilling. Another tool for displaying your photography, that works well, especially for slideshows, with a blog or email and facebook.com, can be found at [photopeach.com/](http://photopeach.com/)
4. Establish a travel blog using the DET blogging platform blogED (found at the portal page) or wordpress.com. Here's a video about using blogED to help you establish the blog:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqwKtF68V74>
5. Microblogging is a good way to complement email: establish a yammer.com account for staff with their NSWDET email account and establish a travel group for the trip. Yammer is being trialled by NSW DET and many resources exist to assist new users. Other users will be the greatest source of support. Communicate via yammer with the group about issues of interest pertaining to the trip.

6. Ensure that the tools being used have very clear guidelines for use when you advertise the yammer, flickr account and blog to participants and relevant colleagues and students. Ensure guidelines for appropriate use are clear to all involved with the trip and that appropriate parental permission is sought. NB the NSW DET code of conduct should be considered closely, especially in regards to social media use.
7. Practise organising your images using Adobe Bridge and resizing photos for the web using Adobe Photoshop before departure. Ensure you have a good workflow that allows your images to be stored and backed-up effectively before being displayed.
8. Do a trial run before flying using your camera, flickr and your blog –share by posting the links to your yammer group. Here are some blog posts, from a recent DET exchange tour to Shanghai, that collaborate, share, use flickr, photography and social media tools:

<http://darcymoore.net/2010/08/15/shanghai-your-ideas/>

<http://darcymoore.net/2010/10/05/shanghai-better-city-better-life/>

<http://darcymoore.net/2010/10/10/reflections-on-education-learning-in-shanghai/>

<http://darcymoore.net/2010/10/13/shanghai-cao-yang-neighbourhood/>

9. Discuss with students the above ideas and see what suggestions they can contribute about using digital technologies, especially social media to assist the tour. Discuss issues to do with creative commons licensing photos as ‘share and share-alike’ – will everyone in the group be happy to do this? What are the strengths and weakness of any guidelines? How can they be improved? How can the skills needed to communicate using the tools above assist students to be 21<sup>st</sup> century savvy citizens and employees?
10. Creative Commons (CC) licences in Australia are increasingly popular with students and educators needing to learn about copyright in the digital age or wishing to share their work. It is recommended that photos shared online for your trip have a particular kind of licence that allows you to reuse and remix the images as long as you attribute to the original creator. Explore CC licenses prior to embarking and license your flickr page accordingly. You can read more about Australian CC licenses here: <http://creativecommons.org.au/learn-more/licences>

Contact [Darcy.Moore@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Darcy.Moore@det.nsw.edu.au) re: any ideas that you need additional resources for, or wish to discuss further.

# Critical Thinking

## Sample Student Activities

### Activity

Choose one photo taken during the trip that encapsulates an aspect of what you have learned while travelling. Write a 250 word description, using first person language, explaining why you have chosen the image.

Here's an example photo and a 250 word description



Nanjing Road, Shanghai 2010

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/darcymoore/5038827982/in/set-72157625078068594/>

Nanjing Road in Shanghai, the most populous city in China, is one of the busiest places on Earth. The moment my eyes swept along the row of flags to the corporate logos, especially McDonalds, I knew it was a vista pregnant with symbolic meaning and one that could be 'read' on a number of levels depending on the viewer's own ideology.

The photo encapsulates the paradoxical nature of the metropolis, a city in a communist country that is also a corporate and capitalist powerhouse. Residents can shop, choosing from a vast range of products, as any citizen of a western, capitalist democracy is able to do.

This was a challenging photo to take as the bustling crowds made it difficult to hold the camera steady. This shot juxtaposes China's communist flags, which dot the entire length of Nanjing Road, with the logos of many Asian and Western corporate, capitalist businesses. The reading path for many, hopefully, is the same as what it was for me looking at the scene I photographed. The eyes viewing this image will commence with the flags in the left hand side of the frame then halt at the McDonald's logo. Most will note the similarity of colours before registering the plethora of other businesses. Eyes then continue along the road, noting more flags stretching into the distance.

This photo is the most representative of the experience I had in Shanghai during October of 2010.

### Activity

The photo above has been poorly cropped and could use some refinements in Photoshop. Explain what you would do to improve the image, or even better, fix it, in an editor like Photoshop.

### Activity

Annotate the image in groups, deconstructing the visual features using appropriate metalanguage.

(frame, framing, symbolism, vector, colour, visual language, context, reading path, juxtaposition etc.)

### Activity

Search flickr.com for images of Shanghai, China (or your destination) that tell a story. Explain your choices.

Here are some slideshows from a recent trip to get you started:

Best of Shanghai: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/darcymoore/sets/72157625078068594/show/>

Shanghai faces: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/darcymoore/sets/72157625096962230/show/>

Silk Farm: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/darcymoore/5038827982/in/set-72157625078068594/>

Cricket market: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/darcymoore/sets/72157625001905203/show/>

## Resources

Australian Photography Forum <http://www.photoforum.com.au/>

Cobley, Paul and Jansz, Litza, *Introducing Semiotics*, Allen and Unwin, 2004

Kress, Gunther, *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Routledge, 2003

Kress, Gunther and Leeuwen, Theo van, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Routledge, 1998

Pope, Rob, *The English Studies Book*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Routledge, 2006

Quinn, Rod and Rayner, Hugh, *Contexts and Conventions*, Longman, 2001

Flickr.com

Facebook.com

NSWDET (Portal), blogED

Photopeach.com

Wordpress.com

Yammer.com

Contact [Darcy.Moore@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Darcy.Moore@det.nsw.edu.au) re: any ideas that you need additional resources for, or wish to discuss further. Access to closed yammer and flickr groups may be possible for those seeking exemplars.