Back to the Future

**Language level:** Intermediate (B1) – Upper Intermediate (B2)
**Learner type:** Teens and adults
**Time:** 90 minutes
**Activity:** Describing a favourite photo, comparing photos, watching a short film, and writing
**Topic:** Old photos, memories and emotions
**Language:** Comparatives, vocabulary to describe photos, emotions and memories
**Materials:** Photos and a short film
Overview

This lesson plan is designed around a photo project called *Back to the Future* by Irmina Werning and a short film about the project by Jamie Jessett. Students describe a cherished photo, compare photos old photos and recreated photos, watch a short film and write an email.

Step 1

Show students a photo of yourself which was taken at least 10 years ago and which is important to you. Describe the photo, tell students how you were feeling when the photo was taken, what emotions it brings to mind when you look at it now and why it is important to you.

Step 2

At the end of the class ask students to bring a photo of themselves to the next class which was taken at least 10 years before and which is important to them.

Step 3

In the next class each student has to describe their photo to their partner, explain how they were feeling when the photo was taken, what emotions it brings to mind when they look at it now and why the photo is important to them.
Step 4

Now put your students into small groups, show them these photos and ask them to discuss the following questions.

How are the photos similar?

How are the photos different?

How did the second photo come to be taken?

How do the photos make you feel?
Step 5

After 10 minutes get feedback from the groups.

Step 6

Tell your students that they are going to watch a short film which shows how the photos came to be recreated. As they watch the film they should answer the following questions:

Who is the photographer?
How did the project start?

Show the film

Link: https://vimeo.com/28051776

**Step 7**

Get feedback from students (answers: the photographer is Irina Werning, and the project started when she began looking at old photos of family and friends and then creating them).

**Step 8**

Tell your students they are going to watch the film a second time and as they watch they should answer the following questions:

How did the project get bigger?

Answer: people found her photos on the Internet, she invited people to create their photos and go back to the future, and people contacted her to create their old photos.

How many pictures does she work on at a time?

Answer: 10

What sort of a budget does she have for her project?

Answer: she has a very limited budget.
Homework

Ask students to imagine that they have just seen this post on Irina Verning’s Facebook page:

I am looking for people with old pictures who might want to participate in my project. Spread the word. Please email to: backtothefuturepics@gmail.com

Tell them that they should imagine that they want to recreate one of their old cherished photos and that they should think of what they have to do to recreate it as accurately as possible. They should think about location, clothes, hair, make-up, accessories etc. They should send an email to Irina Werning telling her about the photo, why it’s important to them and making suggestions about how to recreate the photo.

I hope you enjoy the lesson.