Please write no more than 300 words on the following topic:

How have you put blended learning (i.e. combining online and classroom learning) or technology into practice to help your students prepare for an exam? How did you know this method was successful?

Entry from Jelena Perišić

Despite not being much of a techie myself, I managed to create an activity which is thoroughly enjoyed by my students who are deeply attached to their mobile phones. So, instead of seizing them, I decided to make use of that little (all)mighty gadget.

Since I do a lot of FCE preparation courses I struggle with students' obsession of describing pictures in Part II of the Speaking test where they are supposed to compare them, noticing their differences and similarities and trying to speculate on the situation.

I use what I know all of them have on their phones: the photo gallery. No matter how weak the camera may be, they all take photos with it. The activity goes like this: I set two topics and write them on the board. I may write something like: "pictures from a holiday", "a school trip", "a night out" or "my family doing something together". The students get into pairs of As and Bs, and after they have picked their photos I say the inevitable: "Student A, here you can see friends spending time together. Compare the pictures and say in which one the people seem more relaxed". For student B: "Student B, how do you like to relax?" I specifically ask them to use some introductory phrases and language of speculation, which would also be provided on the board if necessary. Then I time them. When they finish with one set of photos, they go to the second one and I set a different task.

In the end, they get plenty of exam-like speaking practice and they get to know about each other. I know this works because all of them have passed the test so far. Not bad for a technologically underdeveloped teacher, eh?