

A Living Laboratory: Activity Template

We are creating a cross-disciplinary collection of teaching activities that use the best practice approaches fostered in the “Living Lab”: adoption of City Tech’s General Education Student Learning Outcomes, George Kuh’s High Impact Educational Practices, place-based learning, open digital pedagogy (the OpenLab), and formal assessment methods.

Share your best practices with your colleagues! Use this form to record a favorite activity; an activity can be as small as an in-class exercise or as large as a semester-long project. Your description can be short or extensive – take as much space as you need.

Activity Title:	Interpreting, Understanding, and Discussing Nonverbal Communication
Your Name:	Kelsey Fox
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Course:	ESOL 032R (high level ESOL reading course)
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Activity Description:

Provide a brief description of the activity.

This is a two-part activity which encourages ESL students to apply what they’re reading in Unit 3 from the book *Academic Encounters 2nd ed.* by Bernard Seal to out-of-class data collection, research, and group collaboration, culminating in a presentation for the class. Students work in groups to observe and collect data on nonverbal communication in the Brooklyn Waterfront and elsewhere, research the way nonverbal communication varies across cultures, and present their findings to the class.

Part one of the project involves students working in groups to observe and collect data on the nonverbal communication that goes on around them in the Brooklyn Waterfront and elsewhere. They will have to use vocabulary and concepts from the unit to categorize and infer about the nonverbal communication they see.

Part two of the project involves group members each researching a different country’s social norms in relation to nonverbal communication and working as a group to present to the class what the differences are between the way people would behave in each country. They must discuss these behaviors using vocabulary and concepts presented in the chapter.

Learning Goals:

What do you aim to achieve with this activity?

As we read about nonverbal communication in class, we will also be learning many vocabulary words and phrases. This exercise should encourage students to be aware of the nonverbal communication around them and also give them the language to consider and discuss what they see. They will have to apply the concepts and vocabulary that we learn in the unit to their data collection (see attached worksheet), research (see attached), and in the presentations they give the class. The goal is that this repetitive use of new vocabulary will help it stick while students also become more aware of nonverbal communication as a whole.

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Timing:

At what point in the lesson or semester to you use this activity? How much classroom time do you devote to it? How much out-of-class time is expected?

This project comes in the second half of the semester and stretches across the entire unit. After handing out clear explanations of the assignment (attached), class time will mostly be devoted to discussing the readings and related activities in the unit, each day giving the students more information to work into their projects. The unit consists of two chapters. During the first chapter, students will be given twenty minutes of class time to go out into the waterfront and observe behavior and collect data. Students will report what they find to the class. At the first chapter's close, students post to OpenLab a mid-project check-in that consists of the data collection they have gathered so far. During the second chapter, students will be researching primarily out of the classroom, but some class time will be spent intermittently discussing where they are with their projects, and what they have learned so far. About halfway through the chapter I ask students to list the sources they are gathering information from to the OpenLab so I can ensure they are doing the work and are using adequate sources.

Logistics:

What preparation is needed for this activity? What instructions do you give students?

I post templates and instructions (see attached) on the OpenLab.

General Education SLOs:

Which of City Tech's [General Education Student Learning Outcomes](#) does this activity address?

- Communicate in diverse settings and groups, using written (both reading and writing), oral (both speaking and listening), and visual means, and in more than one language.
- Derive meaning from experience, as well as gather information from observation.
- Gather, interpret, evaluate, and apply information discerningly from a variety of sources.
- Demonstrate expanded cultural and global awareness and sensitivity.
- Demonstrate proficiencies and capacities in deal with a diverse society.
- Communicate across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

High Impact Educational Practices:

Which of [George Kuh's High Impact Educational Practices](#) does this activity incorporate? Does it use the [OpenLab](#) for [open digital pedagogy](#)? Does it include [place-based learning](#)? Choose all that apply and/or add your own.

George Kuh's High Impact Educational Practices:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-year seminars and experiences | <input type="checkbox"/> Common intellectual experiences (core curriculum) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing-intensive courses |
| X Collaborative assignments and projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate research |
| X Diversity and global learning ("difficult differences") | <input type="checkbox"/> Service- or community-based learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internships | <input type="checkbox"/> Capstone courses and projects |

X Open Digital Pedagogy (the OpenLab)

X Place-Based Learning

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Assessment:

How do you assess this activity? What assessment measures do you use? Do you include your evaluation in grade calculations?

Students have 3 expectations to complete in this project: Data collection and recording, research, and presentations. Each part must be completed exactly as I specify for students to get full credit, including their application of terms and concepts from the chapter to their work.

Reflection:

How has this assignment impacted your teaching? What challenges did you encounter and how did you address them? What feedback did students provide? How would you imagine this activity being used in different disciplines?

I have yet to use this assignment in its entirety in my classroom.

I think the observe, report; research, report model of this activity could easily be adapted to other disciplines.

Additional Information:

Please share any additional comments and further documentation of the activity - e.g. assignment instructions, rubrics, examples of student work, etc. These could be in the form of PDF or Word files, links to posts or files on the OpenLab, etc.

See Attached.