

Photo Scavenger Hunt

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Context: Out of class; Statics

Keywords: statics, course reflection

Student Activity Time: 2-3 hours

At the end of the course, students reflected on the material and developed a team photo presentation of various structures in the local area.

Introducing the Reflection Activity

Courses like statics can easily feel like abstract knowledge for students after solving many problems on paper. In order to reconnect the material in the statics course to real engineering artifacts, an educator implemented a photo scavenger hunt as a course reflection. The purpose of this activity was to support students' connection of the course content to the real world.

In the last three weeks of the academic term, the educator assigned the photo scavenger hunt to students. Students created teams of up to four members and explored the surrounding area to take pictures with the six kinds of engineering structures that were covered in the course, plus a bonus structure that they find. In the last class session, the students presented short photo presentations of their scavenger hunt findings and explained the kind of structure that each photo represented.

As a result of this activity, students were able to demonstrate recognition of statics concepts in tangible examples and presented those examples to their peers. The primary outcome of this activity related to students' ability to recognize and reconnect abstract course knowledge to real engineering solutions.

Recreating the Reflection Activity

	Description
1	Assign the structures photo scavenger hunt toward the end of the academic term.
2	Facilitate students getting into groups of up to 4 members.
3	Provide students an adequate amount of time to complete the assignment.
4	Provide each group up to 5 minutes to present during the final class meeting.
5	Grade each group's presentation for accuracy.

In the words of the Educator: Tips and Inspiration

Focus on the images. The slides are really about having a presentation of photos that represent the concepts that are taught in the class. Having students find all of these structures in the area help to make the material more relevant and real for them.

What was the inspiration for the reflection activity? I really wanted students to be able to do something fun together that was related to the class. A friend of mine has “engineering moments” and often gets out of the car to take a picture or look at different engineering structures that he sees. A statics textbook is filled with thousands of images and we solve hundreds of problems throughout the course. I really wanted them to connect those images with things that really exist in the real world. The photo scavenger hunt really helps them see the pictures in the book as real world objects. The goal is to help students contextualize what they are learning about structures. Going out and looking at these objects will help the course material have more meaning that they can recall. We don’t want students to only solve problems in a textbook without seeing how it works in the real world.