

Professor Alan Ngim
Music Appreciation

Project / Lesson Plan

Data collection: Students go to their own neighborhoods and take photographs of the area around their home. At the same time, using their phones (or other recording devices), students record the sound that accompanies these photos. The sound recordings may be made at different times of the day, including sounds of traffic, or natural sounds of animals and so forth. If possible, students may also take temperature recordings from open areas, and areas shaded by trees.

From these photographs and sound recordings, students create PowerPoint presentations showing the sites with accompanying recordings. Recorded temperatures (if taken) may be indicated in the photographs.

In class presentations: Students show their PowerPoint presentations in class. To expedite this process, students may work in groups to string their presentations together. Students are asked to focus on their individual response to each new location.

Discussion and follow-up: Discuss the impact of trees and other plant life on the environment. What changes could be heard in areas with a greater amount of plant life? What role do acoustics play in the perception of sounds (such a traffic noise)?

It would be interesting to look at these neighborhoods from several perspectives. From satellite photos (using Google maps or Google Earth) it would be easy to see the tree canopy (or lack of). The average price of neighborhood home prices and crime rates could be checked using the Miami-Dade government web site, and a comparison could be made. While it may be a bit much to ask the students to include this in their presentations, the instructor could make the comparison among a few contrasting locations.

From the above, some conclusions may be drawn about the importance of trees, such as temperature reduction, noise reduction, improving air quality, aesthetics. Other benefits not derived from the study above should be mentioned such as wildlife habitat. But the question of human habitation is the one that is most important in this project.