2018 Curriculum Challenge
Application
(Please use this as the cover page for your entry)

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LESSON TITLE: Landscape Architecture & Creative Communities
LESSON TOPIC: Community Planning

TARGET GRADES: 4th – 8th Grade

PURPOSE OF EXERCISE: In this lesson plan, you will be teaching students the fundamentals of landscape architecture and how to design their own communities. You will start with the basics and review the profession of landscape architecture, then move to graphics and what makes up a community, finishing with the students creating their own communities with templates provided. The total time of this activity is about 2 hours, depending on how detailed the students are with their final designs. Let’s begin!

Jury Notes (this area to be left blank)
Lesson Plan Abstract

LESSON TITLE: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE & CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

LESSON TOPIC: Community Planning

PURPOSE OF LESSON:
In this lesson plan, you will be teaching students the fundamentals of landscape architecture and how to design their own communities. You will start with the basics and review the profession of landscape architecture, then move to graphics and what makes up a community, finishing with the students creating their own communities with templates provided. The total time of this activity is about 2 hours, depending on how detailed the students are with their final designs. Let’s begin!

KEYWORDS: Community design, land planning, drawing

TARGET GRADES: 4th – 8th Grade

DURATION: About 2 Hours

STUDENT RATIO: 1:5 Teacher to Student Ratio

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT:
- 11x17 inch base maps of a real or imaginary community site
- Pens, markers, colored/regular pencils
- Dry erase board and dry erase markers

PREPARATION:
- Read through the lesson plan.
- Print one base map per student (and print a few extras).
- Print one large base map to use as an example.
- Print examples included with lesson plan.
Lesson Plan Outline

INTRODUCTIONS (15 MIN)
- Ask the students if they know what a landscape architect is or what a landscape architect does. (A professional who analyzes, plans, designs, and manages the built and natural environments.)
- Introduce yourself and explain what your role is as a landscape architect.
- Do an icebreaker exercise to get students moving and talking.

UNDERSTANDING PLAN VIEW (20 MIN)
Gather students around a dry erase board and hand them the markers. Instructors should provide the prompts and brief demonstration but allow the students time to draw.
- Students draw trees on the board. Explain elevation view.
- Ask students to draw trees from the top! Explain plan view.

BRAINSTORMING COMMUNITIES (30 MIN)
This is an interactive discussion period with students at their tables. What are the common or essential components of a community? Create lists on the board as a visual. Create broad categories to illustrate each use.
- Retail/Commercial, Industrial, Residential, Public, Agriculture, Institutional, Transportation
- Circulation, Environmental
- Where do you go on Sundays?
- Where do you go if you get sick?
- Where do you play after school?
- Where do your parents go during the day?
- Where do you go when the car needs repairs?
- How do you get there?
- Where do you get your food?

RELATIONSHIP DIAGRAM (10-15 MIN)
Explain how certain elements have strong relationships (such as a residential community and a park) versus weak relationships (such as a residential community and an industrial area). Describe these relationships on a dry erase board or on paper with circles and descriptions.
- Would you want your school to be close to your house?
- Would you want your house to be close to a fire department?
INVENTORY & ANALYSIS (10 MIN)
Pass out an 11x17 base map. Take few moments to explain what inventory and analysis are and how they relate to this project.

- Discuss wetland setbacks, buffers to the major road, access to the preserve, and connection to the local road.
- Have students draw buffers, setbacks, and access points on their communities.

THE DESIGN PROCESS (30-45 MIN)
Ensure each student has a base and plenty of markers/pens to work with. This is an individual exercise. Explain that it is now their turn to design their own community.

- Students should choose a minimum of three uses from the list compiled on the board for their community.
- Encourage students to come up with a concept and name for their community.

PRESENTATIONS (10-20 MIN)
Gather together and ask volunteers to talk about their community.

DOCUMENTATION
Document the activity with photos and video clips.
Lesson Plan

BUILDING YOUR COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTIONS (15 MIN)
Welcome the students to your activity! Introduce yourself and explain what your role is in landscape architecture (student, designer, licensed professional, etc.). Take a moment for the students to go around the room and introduce themselves too, including their names, ages, and hometowns. You can add a quick icebreaker here and have the students tell you their favorite place to go with their family, or you can ask a similar question related to their community.

Before detailing the profession, ask the students if they know what a landscape architect is, and allow them an opportunity to explain. Many of the students might not know and this is the perfect opportunity to tell them. When explaining, begin with what a landscape architect is: A landscape architect is someone who analyzes, plans, designs, and manages the built and natural environments. Discuss a few key areas of the profession, such as the difference between the private and public sectors, design studios vs. a design-build firm, and those who become professors for landscape architecture. Include how landscape architects work with plants, go over design and construction plans, and work with other professionals, such as civil engineers, urban planners, architects, and the city.

UNDERSTANDING PLAN VIEW (15-20 MIN)
Since the students will be designing their own communities, it’s important to go over some basic graphic types (plan versus elevation). Invite the students to the dry erase board and ask them to draw a tree. This usually gets a lot of response and excitement, but make sure to keep them on topic with drawing trees. The students will most likely draw a tree as they see them every day, elevation view. Next, ask the students to draw a tree from a bird’s eye plan view. If they seem to be stumped on what you are asking, describe it as a Google Earth view, and go draw an example yourself.

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Explain that the first tree they drew is called an elevation/section drawing, where you see what the tree may look like in real life. The second tree is drawn in plan view. Almost all landscape architecture plans are drawn in plan view. If you have work examples, feel free to use as reference, or use the graphics included to show the difference (see attached examples). If time allows, draw examples of common conceptual graphics, such as squiggles for buffers, stars for focal points, and arrows for circulation. This will show students that it is okay for their drawings to be sketchy and that it is okay if they don’t draw well.

**BRAINSTORMING COMMUNITIES (30 MIN)**

Have the students return to their seats before beginning this section. The best approach for this section is to have the students brainstorm while you write down their comments on the dry erase board. Begin by asking the broad question of “What is a community?” and start a discussion with the class. Ask what they see in their own community and write their responses on the board. The goal is to create a list of broad categories for the elements they see in their communities.

Create columns with the following categories:

- Retail/Commercial
- Industrial
- Residential
- Transportation
- Circulation
- Public
- Agricultural
- Institutional
- Environmental

*If possible, write each category title in a different color. The students can use these colors later for concept drawings to identify different uses.*

Write the different categories on the board and ask the students where each of the elements they see in their own communities fit. Provide prompts if the students get stuck or start repeating responses. Ask students the following questions:

- Where do you go on Sundays?
- Where do you go if you get sick?
- Where do you go to play after school?
- Where do your parents go during the day?

*Include ideas to help the instructor prompt the students. Everybody gets stuck sometimes!*

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• Where do you go when the car needs repairs?
• How do you get there?

Be sure to congratulate them on the great list they have made. Keep the list on the board, as you will use it later in the project.

RELATIONSHIP DIAGRAM (10-15 MIN)
Once you have gone over the different aspects of a community, it is time to show the students how these uses relate to each other. A relationship/bubble diagram is a great way to show them how the different elements in a community relate to each other. Go back to the dry erase board and make a generic outline of the base map, including the boundary, roads/highways, and any land markings you feel are important. Have the students tell you where they would put community elements and why. For example, they may want to place the school near the residential area so kids can walk to class. This is also an opportunity to give them advice on where certain elements of a community should not go, such as a parks or schools next to highways or busy roads. Connect the bubbles in the diagram with arrows or dashed lines, depending on what the students think are the best ways to travel between the spaces. Examples include: On foot, by car, public transit, bicycle, kayak, horseback, and any other modes of travel the students can come up with!

INVENTORY & ANALYSIS (10 MIN)
After discussing the relationship of the community elements on the site, discuss with the class the importance of knowing what is currently existing on the site through a site inventory and analysis. Begin by distributing the 11 x 17 base maps and drawing utensils. On this site, there are several wetland areas, the site is bordered by a preserve on two sides, and is bordered by a major interstate on another side. The remaining side is a local access road. Discuss what the positive and negative effects from these elements may have on their community, and why it is important to understand what is on a site before designing. As you discuss each element,
prompt the students towards a wetland setback, a buffer for the major road, the opportunity to access the preserve, and the opportunity to connect to the local road. Have the students draw buffers, setbacks, and access points on their communities as reminders for when they design. Feel free to provide a larger scale base taped up onto the dry erase board, and draw along with the students to give them an example of elements to use.

THE DESIGN PROCESS (30-45 MIN)
Now that you’ve gone over what makes a community, it is time to get the students started on their own designs. Describe how they will be creating their own designs based on the principles of a community, relationships, and analysis you just went over with them. Encourage the students to use the community list they have made and choose at least three of the uses to focus on in their designs. Give them 5-10 minutes to get their bearings on the site and be creative before answering questions. Encourage students to come up with a concept and name for their community.

Examples community names from previous students are:

- New Florida
- Green Land
- Venus
- Pineapple Palms
- Water World
- Music Land

Walk around the room and give guidance to students who seem to be stuck. The students can be as creative and imaginative with their communities as they want, or they can be realistic with their designs. Encourage students to think through relationships and site constraints and feel free to make suggestions. Try not to tell a student they can’t do something on their site. It is always up to the creative imagination! For the overachievers who finish early, encourage them to create another community or elaborate more on their first design.
PRESENTATIONS (10-20 MIN)
Once all the students are done designing their communities, congratulate them on their plans! Gather the students around and place all of the completed communities out on a table or on desks so the students can look and admire each other’s work. Invite volunteers to discuss their sites and explain why they chose the elements they did, and how they are incorporated into the design of their community. After all presentations have concluded, reflect on the exercise with the students, make any last remarks about landscape architecture, and take questions the students may have. To give the students an example of what a professional firm creates for their conceptual master plan, show them the included graphic of the design that was done for the site. Discuss what similarities and differences were done on their plans vs. the professional one.

DOCUMENTATION
Make sure you are documenting the activity with photos, video clips, or even drawings some of the students may want to leave with you. It is important to see how well the lesson went, but more important to show how the students were able to learn about the profession of landscape architecture and had fun in the process. FLAA encourages teachers and professionals to share their experiences and documents for future uses of the lesson plan.

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PLAN VIEW TREE EXAMPLES

SECTION EXAMPLE