Lesson Plan Abstract

LESSON TITLE:  Intro to unsuccessful landscape design

LESSON TOPIC:  (Design, spatial qualities)

PURPOSE OF LESSON:
The purpose of this exercise is to introduce the profession of Landscape Architecture to students as well as the basic principles of what distinguishes good design from bad. Students will start by looking at examples of successful designs followed by poor designs and are encouraged to discuss what characteristic distinguish the two. Students will brainstorm in order to come up with two places they know; one successful space and one that isn’t. In a second phase, students will develop an improved design for the space they picked as not successful.

KEYWORDS:  (Design, environmental ethics)

TARGET GRADES:  (10th-12th)

DURATION:  (2 classes. 2 hours each)

STUDENT RATIO:  (1:10)

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT:

First Class
• Projector
• Paper, pens and pencils
• List of successful and unsuccessful landscape projects. Projects should vary amongst students but can be repeated.

Second Class
• 11x17 aerial printouts of real sites chosen by the students
• Trace Paper Roll
• Markers, pens, colored pencils, rulers, tape

PREPARATION:
• Read through the lesson plan
• Review the Power Point presentation
• Print large images of functioning and non functioning landscapes. An example of non functioning landscape could be anything from a flooded garden to a poorly shaded space.
Second Class

- Print 11x17 aerial base maps of sites individually chosen by students. Students should email their aerials in order for the instructor to print ahead of the second class.
LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION: (15 minutes)
- Personal Introduction
- Etymology of “Landscape”
- Landscape categories
  1. Artists landscape
  2. Geographers landscape
  3. Designer’s landscape.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN: (20 minutes)
- Q & A with the students
- Fundamentals of landscape architecture
  • Ecology
  • Community
  • Economics
  • Aesthetics
- Examples of existing successful landscape projects
- Address what makes each project successful

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN: (20 minutes)
- Importance of context
- Provide real world examples
- Students share their own examples

GROUP ACTIVITY: (25 minutes)
- Break up the students into groups
- Assign two projects to research. One good and one bad
- Students list their positive and negative observations of each

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: (30 minutes)
- Gather students together and have them share their findings

ASSIGN HOMEWORK + ANSWER QUESTIONS (10 minutes)
- Ask the students to pick a site that they wish to improve through landscape architecture and to provide an aerial base for the chosen site
LESSON 2

INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT (15 minutes)
- Introduce the students to the in class design charrette
- Ask some students what they are hoping to gain from the charrette

DESIGN CHARETTE (40 minutes)
- Students work individually to create a master plan for their chosen sites utilizing the list they did for homework

PRESENTATIONS: (time will vary depending on how many students are in class)
- Have students tape their drawings on the wall and have them discuss their designs
LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION: (15 minutes)
- Introduce yourself
- Define landscape architecture and its etymological derivation (Old English noun land to which the suffix scape was added)
- Discuss Tom Turner’s three categories of landscape: the artists landscape, the geographers landscape and the designer’s landscape.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN: (20 minutes)
- Ask the students the following questions: For what purpose do we intervene in the landscape? When we intervene how do we measure what is good and bad?
- Explain the concept of “Environmental ethics”
- Go over some of the fundamentals at the core of landscape architecture by providing real world examples for each: ecology, community, economics, and aesthetics. Clearly state what makes each project successful in addressing a specific topic.
- Examples of projects to consider mentioning as successful examples in targeting one or more categories mentioned above are listed below. Consider including images of these projects in your supporting slide show.
  • Chicago Riverwalk (reclaims the Chicago River for the ecological, recreation and economic benefit of the city.)
  • High Line (repurposes an old elevated rail line into a greenway benefitting New York city’s ecology, economy, community and aesthetics.)
  • Kokkedal Climate Adaptation (addresses climate change derived issues while educating and promoting improved urban life in its community)

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN: (20 minutes)
- Discuss the importance of creating a design that responds to its time and place (context) and give real world examples where these were not taken into account.
- Ask the students if they can think of other examples where landscape design fails to address issues in its context. (Could be as simple as lack of shade, excess runoff.)
- Emphasize why mass production of landscape is not appropriate for today’s diverse multicultural society

GROUP ACTIVITY: (25 minutes)
- Break up the students into groups. Depending on the class size the ideal group size should not exceed 4 students. Assign each group one successful project and one that is not as successful.
- Ask the students to come up with a list of 10 things that the “successful” design is doing that makes it successful.
- Ask the students to make a list of 10 negative things they could think of by either researching or brainstorming that the unsuccessful project is doing and how those can be improved.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: (30 minutes)
- This is an opportunity for students to share their findings and compare their opinions. Project images of the projects the students have been assigned as a quick visual to back up their presentations.

ASSIGN HOMEWORK + ANSWER QUESTIONS (10 minutes)
- Tell the students to pick a site (ideally one they have been to first hand) that they believe could be better improved through design. Ask them to write 10 negative things about the chosen site and how each could be improved.
  Once the student has picked a site (this would be anytime between now and next class), ask the students to email you an aerial of the site that you will then be printing for the following class.
- Answer any questions the students may have in regards to the assignment

LESSON 2

INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT (15 minutes)
- Ensure that all the students have completed their homework and thus created a list of 10 negative aspects that they believe are present in their site.
- Pick a couple volunteers to briefly share the sites they have chosen and the main issues they believe need to be addressed.
- Hand each student a couple of sheets of tracing paper to put over their base images
- Tell the students they will have 30 minutes to draw their own improved version of the site addressing the 10 issues they researched.
- Encourage students to use all the supplies they may need to get their vision across: markers, water colors, crayons.

DESIGN CHARETTE (40 minutes)
- Have the students sitting at their own desks or in groups at large tables
- Students should work individually to create an improved design for their chosen site
- Actively walk around as students begin the design process and check in with each student at least once to make sure they are on the right track
- Make sure to occasionally warn them on how much time they have left before the presentations
PRESENTATIONS: (time will vary depending on how many students are in class)
- Have students tape their drawings on the wall (over their base maps to provide context)
- Have each student present their design, making sure all 10 issues they aimed to solve are addressed in their speech. All other students should gather around.
- After each presentation ask any clarifying questions you may have and give students feedback

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INTRO TO UNSUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN

BY: SELENE BASILE
LANDSCAPE

**ARTIST’S LANDSCAPE**
Natural features of a landscape in terms of their appearance

**GEOGRAPHER’S LANDSCAPE**
Tracts of land such as streams, oceans, and forests.

**DESIGNER’S LANDSCAPE**
A planned park of garden both aesthetically and programmatically functional
The composition of elements that nature provides

Creation of human activity
HOW DO WE MEASURE A PROJECT’S SUCCESS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE?
OBJECTIVES OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ECOLOGY

COMMUNITY

ECONOMICS

AESTHETICS
OBJECTIVES OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ECOLOGY
- Preservation of land, water and habitat
- Water conservation
- Waste reduction

COMMUNITY
- Cultural preservation
- Recreational and educational opportunities
- Improved access and equity

ECONOMICS
- Job creation
- Economic development
- Increased property value

AESTHETICS
- Creation of functional spaces
- Improved ambience
- Scenic quality & views
IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT
(Big idea that drives a design)

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING A SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS BEFORE INTERVENING

WHAT ASSETS DOES THE CONTEXT PROVIDE?

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED?
CHICAGO RIVERWALK

LOCATION: Chicago, Illinois, USA
SIZE: 3.5 acres (almost three football fields!!)
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: Sasaki
YEAR BUILT: 2016
BUDGET: 100 million

PROJECT OVERVIEW:
Open uninterrupted pedestrian trail along the south bank of the Chicago River. Initiative to reclaim the Chicago River for the ecological, recreational and economic benefit of the city.
PROJECT HISTORY

-In the past the Chicago River and lake were important trade routes

-As the city enjoyed an industrial boom the river became polluted and so did the drinking water from lake Michigan

-In 1889 the Sanitary district of Chicago decided to permanently reverse the flow of the river to prevent pollution from entering lake Michigan

-The Chicago Riverwalk aims to reconnect Chicagoans with the river
HOW DOES THE PROJECT MEET THESE OBJECTIVES?
CHICAGO RIVERWALK
OBJECTIVES MET

ECOLOGY
RESTORES AQUATIC HABITAT
IMPROVES WATER QUALITY
CULTIVATES TERRESTRIAL HABITAT

COMMUNITY
BRINGS PEOPLE TO THE WATER
PROVIDES ACCESS TO EVERYONE
ESTABLISHES NEW PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

ECONOMICS
IMPROVES RIVERWALK COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS
DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF RIVERWALK VENDORS

AESTHETICS
CREATES UNIQUE PLACES ON THE RIVER
ENHANCES STOREFRONTS THROUGH LIGHTING AND TREESCAPING
HIGH LINE

LOCATION: New York, New York, USA
SIZE: 1.5 miles long or 7.4 acres
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: James Corner Field Operations
YEAR BUILT: 2011
BUDGET: $190 million

PROJECT OVERVIEW:
The High Line is a New York City public park built on a 1.5 mile-long, elevated freight rail structure on Manhattan’s West Side. The project establishes an urban corridor for habitat, wildlife and people.
PROJECT HISTORY

- High line was originally built in 1934 as a part of a massive infrastructure project known as “West Side Improvement”

- Lifted trains 30 ft above streets to improve pedestrian safety

- Trains carried mostly food and agricultural goods to factories

- Due to the rise of interstate trucking, train traffic stopped in 1980

- The high line reclaims this space, for the good of the people.
HOW DOES THE PROJECT MEET THESE OBJECTIVES?

ECOLOGY

COMMUNITY

ECONOMICS

AESTHETICS
HIGH LINE
OBJECTIVES MET

ECOLOGY
- Sequesters over 1.3 tons of atmospheric carbon annually
- Increases plant species diversity by over 200%

COMMUNITY
- Connects previously separated neighborhoods
- Hosts more than 26,000 people annually for events

ECONOMICS
- Generates private investment in adjacent buildings
- Attracts over 20 million visitors a year

AESTHETICS
- Provides new views of the city’s surroundings
- Nature reclaims a once vital piece of urban infrastructure
**ADDITIONAL PROJECTS**

**ECOLOGICAL OBJECTIVE**

**Dutch Kills Green**
Prevents over 20.2 million gallons of stormwater from entering the city’s combined sewer system annually, avoiding a projected $3.4 million in future capital costs to upgrade stormwater infrastructure.

**SOCIAL OBJECTIVE**

**Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail**
Promotes physical activity for 90% of 100 surveyed trail users, and 70% of surveyed users self-reported that they exercise more since the opening of the trail.

**ECONOMIC OBJECTIVE**

**Cavallo Point**
Saved nearly $140,000 in earthwork costs during construction by using the building pads of 14 demolished non-historic buildings to support new structures.
UNSUCCESSFUL LANDSCAPE DESIGN

DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

ECOLOGY
COMMUNITY
ECONOMICS
AESTHETICS
TURNING THE “BAD” INTO “GOOD”

HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THE PARK PICTURED BELOW?

LACK OF SHADE
LACK OF CONNECTIVITY
LACK OF SIGNEAGE
LACK OF SAFETY
Shade trees to provide protection from UV radiation

Native vegetation to treat stormwater as well as attract native wildlife

Lighting to improve safety at night

Permeable environmentally friendly paving to provide stormwater management
NOW IS YOUR TURN TO TURN THE NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES!
SOURCES

https://www.fieldoperations.net/project-details/project/the-high-line.html
https://www.landscapeperformance.org/case-study-briefs/chicago-riverwalk