English

Designing a Teen Friendly Urban Park: an Introduction
Landscape Design and Architecture

Subject: English **Grades 9 to 12**

Lesson Overview

Landscape Architecture involves design of the space from the outer perimeters of a building or structure to the city or county street or sidewalk (from the building's outer wall out to the public access). A Landscape Architect has completed a 4 to 6 year degree. Coursework includes botany, ecology, art (drawing, sculpture and painting), art history, design theory and a progressive curriculum of Landscape Architecture courses that must be taken in sequence (first, second, third and fourth years). Other required classes include trigonometry, chemistry and business. Among the many notable Landscape Architecture degree programs are those offered at: UC Davis, UCLA, UC Irvine, Cal Poly, USC, UC Berkeley, UN Las Vegas, WSU, Utah State, Texas Tech, Texas A & M, and Purdue.

Students who excel at creative thinking, visualization, design or art and / or have technical skills make good candidates for a career in Landscape Architecture. Entry salaries begin at around $45,000 annually. A highly skilled Landscape Architect with about 10 years experience might make around $110,000. The current economy is dismal for aesthetic / beautification projects. However, Landscape Architects are in the forefront of the "green" movement and are being used extensively for water conservation, shade, energy efficiency, etc. Landscape Architects are being called on to create "green" campuses, communities and entire towns.

Connecting this project to the curriculum of an English class: Since 90 % of college reading is non-fiction, this project will give students a chance to investigate a teen problem (no where to go), analyze the problem and offer a solution in the form of an inclusive neighborhood or community park. In addition to developing their research and application skills, students will learn about the work of a landscape architect.

Materials included in this lesson:

Vocabulary lists for "Teen Friendly Park Design"

Six articles outlining the lack of recreational space for teens plus comprehension questions for students and teacher's answer sheets.

Templates for 30 feet to 1 inch scale park sections and equipment

An **optional** cost template if students are to estimate the cost of their park

Other materials for this lesson:

Dictionaries

Butcher paper

Skills the student will learn:

Reading comprehension and analysis

Problem solving

Landscape design vocabulary and basics

Division of labor within a group

Speaking and listening skills

Ratio and landscape design

Student deliverables:
Students will complete a 75 word pre-reading vocabulary list.

Students will complete reading comprehension packets assigned to them.

Students will share vocabulary findings and reading research with members outside their assigned group.

Each group of students will create a teen friendly park using scale templates and adding any scale sections that don't appear on a pre-made template.

Each group will number sections and features of their park then identify them in a legend to appear on the right hand side.

Length of Lesson: 6 in class hours plus outside research

Activity day one: pre-reading vocabulary

1.) Introduce the project. Tell students they will be doing project based reading research. They will learn landscape design vocabulary and read articles that establish the need for teen friendly urban parks. In groups, they will design an inclusive park that meets the needs of teens as well as other age groups.
2.) Number students from 1 to 5. Have students sit in a group with all other students with their number (ex.: all 5's together).
3.) Pass out a vocabulary list to every student and at least two dictionaries to every group.

4.) Allow students 20 to 25 minutes to define each word on their own list.
5.) One by one, each group will share their definitions with the rest of class who must write the definitions on their own lists. The result is that every student has a definition for every word.

Activity day two: reading the research

1.) Students will remain in their regularly assigned seats to individually read the article(s) assigned to them completing the comprehension packets as they do so.
2.) Number the students from 1 to 5. Pass out the articles and worksheets as follows:
1 = "That Same Old Participation" and "Natural Landscapes, Gathering Places Prospect Refuges"
2 = "Teen Places in Sunshine, Australia: Then and Now"
3 = "Teenagers and Public Space"
4 = "No Teens Allowed: the Exclusion of Adolescents from Public Spaces"
5 = "Recreation and Restrictions: Community Skateboard Parks in the US"
3.) Allow students 50 minutes to read and answer the questions. Any student who finishes, should turn in the article and the answer packet. All other students must take home the article plus packet for homework.

Activity day three: group and class sharing

1.) After homework has been collected, allow students to group according to their reading numbers (ex.: all 3's together).
2.) Instruct students to discuss article(s) they read making a list of key points to share with the rest of the class. Allow 15 to 20 minutes for these group discussions.
3.) Have each group share the main ideas with the rest of the class. Give class an opportunity to ask questions of each group.

Activity day four: re-grouping to plan park design

1.) Tell students they will now be in groups with a representative of every article Read (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and put them in such groups.
2.) Each group must decide what should be included in a neighborhood park that welcomes teens. They must create a focal point that would attract teens (boulders, circular seating, interactive waters, skateboard arena, etc.)
3.) Tell students to divide the tasks for further park design research. Suggest that one or two students go to a favorite park and bring back pictures of features they like. Have other students go on line to down load park products and innovations from web sites such as: Aquatics International, caddetails.com/most dependable/product pages, dancing waters.com, landscape design, park planning, playground equipment, skateboard parks, etc.
4.) Tell students they have one week to obtain additional information to add to their knowledge of park design.

One week later: Activity day 5: group creates park

1.) Each group is given a large piece of butcher paper and 9 park feature templates. The group must use a combination of templates and their own design (scaled to fit in with the 30:1 pieces) to create a park.
2.) They must number the various feature and sections then create a legend on the right side of the plan telling what each number stands for (ex: 1 = soccer field).
3.) If all of the groups finish before the bell rings, they can begin to share with the class explaining why and where they put their park features. They should point out items in their legend as they present.

Activity day 6: finish group presentations

1.) Allow each group to present their park and explain their choices to the class.
2.) Hang designs on classroom walls.

Enrichment suggestions: cost estimates

1.) Using the **Cost Template** each group can estimate the capital needed to create the park they've designed.
2.) Each group can create a list of funding sources for their park.

Student Resources:

1. Students are provided with the basic research, templates and butcher paper.
2. Students are advised to visit local parks or go online for additional ideas.

California State Standards met:

Reading 2.3: non-fiction reading comprehension and analysis
Reading 2.4 and 2.5: non-fiction reading application
Speaking 2.1: speaking/class presentation
Listening 1.6: listening and note taking

Lesson Plan relevance to externship:

Students will be exposed to the science and psychology of landscape design. They will take on the role of a landscape designer in order to solve a problem relevant to themselves: finding a welcome space among people both younger and older than themselves.