Creating a Better Tomorrow: A Curriculum for Teaching Children about Planning

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CREATING A BETTER TOMORROW
A Curriculum for Teaching Children about Planning

Cities exist for many reasons, and the diversity of urban forms can be traced to the complex functions that cities perform. They serve as the center of markets and the intersections of transportation routes. They can be the center of cultural development and communications. Yet, with all these great responsibilities, cities do not develop haphazardly, but are the result of a planning process that involves both planning professionals and the public at large. Creating a Better Tomorrow is a curriculum that teaches children the importance of their city and community, as well as how to impact their communities through planning and involvement.

Planning is a way to prepare for the future. Just as we plan a vacation, we plan for the future of our cities. Although the profession of city planning has existed less than a century, cities have naturally planned with the future in mind. Most planning begins with the idea of determining land use. When land is available, the question is “how should this land be developed?” However, as land becomes scarce and open space more valuable, the question becomes, “should this land be developed?”

Planners are involved in planning for land use, transportation, environmental protection, housing, neighborhood issues, economic development and historic preservation. With all these diverse issues, the field impacts much of our daily lives.

Planning for cities takes a dedication to the future. Changes inevitably occur and by looking forward and trying to prepare for change, planners with the help of the community, set priorities for the city.

While planners provide the expertise, the direction of a city comes from its people. Neighborhood meetings are held to discuss issues and gain input from the public. There are citizen involvement committees, planning commission and public hearings that all require citizen participation. Through this curriculum, we hope to expose children to some of the facets of planning so as they grow older they will want to take part in their community planning process.

The packet contains a variety of information for students, parents and teachers. Included in the packet is:
- 8 lesson set to be used for ten 40 minute classes
- Resources for further teaching
- Worksheets to be used with some lessons

We hope you enjoy Creating a Better Tomorrow and find it useful in teaching students the importance of the urban environment and their communities.
The goal of this packet is to make students aware of their urban environment and demonstrate that their actions influence their community.

Lesson 1: What is a City?
Students will:
• define a city
• identify those components needed for a city to survive
• recognize the differences between urban and rural settings
Time: two 40 minute classes

Lesson 2: Main Street
Students will:
• recognize the history of main streets
• explore the importance of main streets
• develop and plan their city
Time: one 40 minute class

Lesson 3: Getting Around Town
Students will:
• recognize various modes of transportation
• explore pollution levels associated with each mode
• recognize the impact they can have on mode choices
Time: one 40 minute class

Lesson 4: Ponds + Streams + Rivers = Watersheds
Students will:
• identify the path water takes in its journey to the sea
• explore what actions to take to reduce pollution in the watershed
• recognize what human activities can harm the environment
• realize the dangers of polluted waters
Time: one 40 minute class

Lesson 5: People Make a Community
Students will:
• identify their place in many communities
• explore ways in which they can effect their communities
• recognize all the responsibilities/roles needed to make a community whole
Time: one 40 minute class
Lesson 6: Goals: Steps for Success
Students will:
• recognize the importance of setting and reaching goals
• sequence objectives to reach a goal
• identify objectives needed to obtain a goal
Time: one 40 minute class
Includes one worksheet

Lesson 7: Community Garden
Students will:
• learn the steps necessary to plant a garden
• recognize the importance of community through gardening
Time: one 40 minute class
Includes one worksheet

Lesson 8: Festival
Students will:
• understand that events are planned
• recognize why communities have festivals
• plan an activity
• create their own festival
Time: two 40 minute classes
Includes one worksheet
Lesson 1

Objectives:
Students will
- define a city
- identify those components needed for a city to survive
- recognize the differences between urban and rural settings

Subjects:
Social studies, Language Arts, Art

Time:
Two 40 minute classes

Materials:
- Slides depicting urban and rural life
- City maps
- Aerial Photos of city
- Reflection Journals
- Milk cartons
- Construction paper
- Paint, brushes

Vocabulary:
city
rural
urban

Background/ Rationale
Children are very familiar with the world around them, but it is not until they are exposed to other surroundings that they start to see and comprehend why differences exist. By going through images depicting both urban and rural life, students will begin to understand the complex components needed for a city to survive.

Procedure
1. Begin the lesson by asking children to write in their reflection journals answering the question: what is a city? Prompt them by asking what types of things do they see in a city? How do they feel when they are in a city?

2. Using the aerial photo and/or maps, have the children identify their school, their house, and other landmarks. Explain that maps are representations of the area. Point out different things on the map/photo, such as parks, offices, businesses, community centers, etc.

3. Using the slides slowly go through them asking whether each slide is a city or country. Ask the students to further explore why they believe a particular slide is urban in nature or rural.

4. After the slides have been completed, explain to the students they are going to build their own city and proceed by asking the students what buildings and things they will need/want in their city. Write on the chalkboard all uses that are named (try to include houses, apartments, businesses, offices, factories, parks, hospitals, city hall, school).

5. Put the students into cooperative groups of two and delegate each group to a building (larger buildings may wish to have three). Explain to the children the
6. End the session by asking the children to again define what a city is in their journals. Ask them to draw a picture of what they would like their building to look like. Have them describe it.

7. Assessment may be extended by also asking the children to write how cities and rural areas differ.
Lesson 2

Objectives:
Students will
- understand the history of main streets
- explore the importance of main streets
- construct their city

Subjects:
Social studies, Language Arts, History, Art

Time:
One 40 minute class

Materials:
- Large piece of cardboard with grid system drawn or painted on it
- worksheets
- Reflection Journals
- crayons/ markers

Vocabulary:
main street
devlopment

Background/ Rationale
Cities and towns have historically developed around a main street. It has been the place where goods and services could be obtained and people could meet. Today, main streets are being replaced by malls. City planners are trying to reestablish main streets as a focus for a community.

Procedure
1. Begin by talking about the history of development of main streets, using information above. Cities like Portland have grown so much that we have many main streets in the city. Where are some places we go to do our shopping?

2. Ask the students to write in their journals: have they ever shopped in a mall, Fred Meyer store, or downtown Portland? Ask them to write about one experience. What did they buy? Who went with them?

3. Explain that main streets were at one time very popular. Read from page 93 of Portland Our Community about Mrs. Henrietta Johnson and her experience in Albina community. But now many people do their shopping at one large store, or at mall. Ask if any students have been to a mall, such as Lloyd Center, what was it like?

4. Explain that there are people who want to bring back main streets to our communities because they are valuable to a community. People meet on main street and can buy everything they need. People can walk from their home, or ride their bike.

5. Using the large cardboard grid, ask the students where they would like to place their buildings. Should houses be close to businesses? Have them place their buildings one by one, leaving space for parks and vacant land. Have the students...
students name their town (note: in subsequent lessons this is referred to as Ourtown).

6. Students should be given the blank map and color it according to the following key:

   yellow: someone lives there  
   red: someone works there, you buy something  
   blue: something is made there  
   green: vacant or park  
   pink: library, school, city hall

7. Use maps for directions exercise. Have the students write how they would go from one place to another (ex. North on Elm Street, West 2 blocks on 1st Ave, North on Birch Street), realizing there can be more than one right way.

8. Journal question: ask the students if they would like to live in their town? Why?
Lesson 3

Objectives:
Students will
- recognize various modes of transportation
- explore pollution levels associated with each mode
- recognize the impact they can have on mode choices

Subjects:
Science, social studies, language arts, art

Time:
One 40 minute class

Materials:
- tag board for posters
- markers/crayons
- Reflection Journal
- Black Butcher Paper

Background/ Rationale
Automobile is the predominant mode of transportation that is used on our community, and are the biggest cause of air pollution. This endangers the health of our community. By choosing to use a bus, or walk or ride a bike, we can reduce pollution. Taking responsibility for our actions can improve our community.

Procedure
1. Have the students write in their journals: how do you get to school. Car? Bike? Walk? Bus? Why? Discuss as a class. What other modes of transportation have the students experienced?

2. Place a piece of black butcher paper over Ourtown so that it covers the whole city (butcher paper represents pollution). Ask students: What is it? Why do they think it is there? Discuss with the class the harmful effects of pollution and the various sources of pollution.

3. Next discuss with the students how they can help to reduce air pollution by their transportation choices. Demonstrate this by dividing the class into drivers, bus riders, bikers and walkers. Allow those with the more responsible transportation choice to actually cut some of the pollution away from Ourtown. By the end of this exercise the pollution covering Ourtown will be drastically reduced.

4. Divide the class into groups of two and ask them to design a poster to encourage others to walk, bike or take the bus.

5. Display their posters around the school or have the students take them home.
Lesson 4

Objectives:

Students will
- identify the path water takes in its journey to the sea
- explore what actions to take to reduce pollution in their watershed
- recognize what human activities can harm the environment
- realize the dangers of polluted waters

Subjects:
- Environmental Science
- Language Arts

Time:
- One 40 minute class

Materials:
- Free to Be... A Family (album) "On My Pond" song
- Where the River Begins (story)
- River Rangers handout
- fish bowl or large glass jar filled with water
- food coloring
- Reflection Journal
- Transparency

Vocabulary:
- watershed
- environment

Background/Rationale

Just about all human activity has some effect on the quality and condition of area watersheds. To improve the condition of watersheds, people must be educated as to what behavioral changes they can make to have less of an impact on the water flowing through our streams and rivers.

Procedure

1. Ask the for the name of the river in Portland? (Willamette). Read the students the story “Where the River Begins.” After reading the story map out the path of the water (including storm drains) with the students using the transparency.

2. Listen to “On My Pond.” Ask the students why Kermit was upset with all the pond activity. Have the students recall that pollution was discussed in the last exercise. Then we focused on air pollution, today we will focus on water pollution. Demonstrate the widespread effect of pollution on a body of water by dropping a couple of drops of food coloring in the glass container of water.

3. Remind students that ponds are the beginning of the river and discuss what polluted water could mean (unhealthy drinking water, sick fish, could kill plants near the water).

4. Hand out River Rangers worksheet and remind the children of the path of the water, including gutters and storm drains. The first picture shows many ways rivers get polluted. Ask them to write in their journals: what would happen if the river in their town was polluted?

5. Using the Stormwater Stenciling Program, take the students outside to the nearest storm drain. Stencil the storm drain, reminding the students that pro-
testing our streams and rivers from pollution is a big job and an important job for everyone.

6. Have the students complete the River Rangers worksheet.
Lesson 5

Objectives:
Students will
- Identify their place in many communities
- Explore ways in which they can effect their communities
- Recognize all the responsibilities/roles needed to make a community whole

Subjects:
Social Studies, Language Arts

Time:
One 40 minute class

Materials:
- Book What Ever Happened to the Baxter Place by Pat Ross
- Book Portland, Our Community
- Reflection Journal

Vocabulary:
community
responsibility

Background/Rationale
It takes a number of people, each with a role and responsibility, to make a community function. Whether a community is defined as a family or a city, communities at all levels are comprised of a group of people, any of who can influence the whole.

Procedure
1. Have the students write in their journal: what is a community? Discuss what a community means to the students. Write on the chalkboard all those words which the students believe describe community. Next, describe the different levels of community which the students are a part of: school, classroom, family, church, neighborhood.

2. Read an excerpt from What Ever Happened to the Baxter Place? (read the first five pages of text). After reading, begin a discussion of different roles/responsibilities on the farm and in a community. Ask the children to write in their journals what roles/responsibilities they have in a community in which they are a part. Extend the discussion by asking the students how roles change when somebody leaves a community.

3. Next ask the students what happens to a community if one person does something extra special. How does one person's actions make the community feel? Read the story of the Benson Bubblers on page 149 in Portland, Our Community. How did Mr. Benson help the people in his community?

4. Ask the students what things at their school they could change to help students in their community and make Beach Elementary a better place? Write all the options on the chalkboard and ask the children to vote on the option they feel would help their community the most. Take note of the option chosen because it will be used in the next lesson.
5. End the session by asking the children to write in their journal. Pose the question: what is something you could do at home to make it a better place? How would it make your family or those you live with feel?
Lesson 6

Objectives:

Students will
- Recognize the importance of setting and reaching goals
- Sequence objectives to reach a goal
- Identify objectives needed to obtain a goal

Subjects:
Language Arts

Time:
One 40 minute class

Materials:
- album Free to be... A Family "Another Cinderella" Story
- Reflection Journal
- event worksheet

Vocabulary:
goal
achievement
challenge
satisfaction

Background/Rationale
Throughout life a person sets and obtains goals. Whether large or small, people are always going through tasks in order to reach some end. For example, teachers set daily plans to achieve a larger goal for the lesson. Learning how to set and successfully reach goals is a lifetime skill that helps one to obtain their dreams. Like individuals, communities also have goals they wish to obtain.

Procedure
1. Begin the lesson by asking the students to write in their journal what the word goal means to them. After writing is complete, listen to the "Another Cinderella" story. Discuss with the students why Cinderella was so happy with herself at the end of the story. Ask the children when they are happy with themselves.

2. Next discuss the concept of goals and explain to the students the reason why they were happy with themselves and the reason Cinderella was happy with herself (they are reaching their goals). Have the students go through a simple goal on the chalkboard, outlining all the tasks one must go through to bake a cake, or to make a goal playing soccer. Have students complete side one of Goals worksheet.

3. Remind the students of the goal they set in the Communities are People lesson. Putting light on the fact that last week they set a goal, ask the children what must be done to obtain that goal.

4. Help the students sequence the events that must happen to reach their goal. Have the students fill out the Goals worksheet, side two, in order that they may see and understand the work to be done.

5. Delegate a task each student must complete in order for the class to reach its goal.
6. Have the students write in their reflection journals: why they think it is important to set and reach goals.

7. Give time during the week to complete the goal.
GOALS
and the steps to get to them

1. Place the order of events needed to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

   - put the sandwich together
   - spread the peanut butter and jelly
   - get the bread from the cupboard
   - goal peanut butter and jelly sandwich

2. If you wanted to buy someone a present, what are all the steps you would have to take to buy the present?

   [Sequence of steps]

3. Make a flow chart like the one in number 1 ordering the events needed to buy your friend a present.
My Classroom's goal is to _________________.

Below draw the flow chart ordering the events needed to reach your classroom's goal.

My task is to __________________________________________.

After our classroom has reached our goal, I hope to feel_______________________________.

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________.
Lesson 7

Objectives:
Students will
- Learn how to plant a garden
- Recognize the importance of community through gardening

Subjects:
Science, Math, Social Studies

Time:
One 40 minute class

Materials:
- planter box
- soil
- hand shovel
- watering container
- worksheet
- seeds
- Reflection Journal

Vocabulary:
soil
herbs

Background/Rationale
Food gardens maintained by a neighborhood can produce fresh food for people as well as promote cooperation among neighbors. By working together, a garden can lead to a healthy community.

Procedure
1. Ask the students is dirt is good. Discuss the good and bad sides of dirt, it's fun to play in, makes houses dirty, gets in our shoes, etc. Tell the students another word for dirt is soil, and when people talk about soil, it is used to mean dirt that food is grown in. There are big farms that grow food and there are little gardens that grow food.

2. Ask the students to write in their journals: have they ever helped in a garden? Would they like to?

3. Explain that many people work together in gardens because it takes a lot of work and it's fun to work together.

4. Explain that we want to put a garden in Ourtown. Why would this be good for the community? Within Ourtown there should be vacant land where the garden should be put. Have the students decide:
   - Where should it go?
   - Who would work there?
   - What should be grow?
   - What do we need?

5. Have the students complete soil worksheet.

6. Talk about community - what happens when people work together? Explain that if everyone worked in the garden they all could enjoy the benefits. What happens if someone won't work in the garden? Or someone won't share the food?
7. Tell the students they will plant a small garden of herbs for their classroom. Herbs can be grown easily within a classroom because of their short growing season. Break the students into groups to do the following things:
   - fill the tray with soil.
   - spread it evenly.
   - dig small holes for the seeds.
   - put seeds in the holes.
   - cover the seeds with soil.
   - water the soil.
   - make a sign for the garden.
Have the students take turns watering it every other day.

8. End the lesson having the students write in their journals: how will the garden help the people of Ourtown?
Creating a Garden

1. In the box below, draw what you would like your garden to look like.
2. There are 5 rows in the garden. If each row of the garden is 2 feet wide, how wide is the garden? ____________

3. The length of the garden is 10 feet, we multiply the length by the width to get the size of the garden area. What is the size of the garden? ____________. We call this square feet.

4. We want to mix compost with our soil so our plants will grow to be healthy. We need one bag of compost for every 50 square feet of garden. How many bags of compost should we buy? ____________

5. The following is a list of things that need to be done to plant a garden. Put the events in the order that they should occur.

   - Dig holes for the seeds
   - Water the soil
   - Fill the garden area with soil
   - Buy soil and Compost
   - Plant the seeds

   1. _____________________
   2. _____________________
   3. _____________________
   4. _____________________
   5. _____________________
Lesson 8

Objectives:

Students will
- Understand that events are planned
- Recognize why communities have festivals
- Plan an activity
- Create their own festival

Subjects:
Social Studies, Art

Time:
Two 40 minute classes

Materials:
- Depending upon festival chosen, generally:
  - butcher paper
  - scissors
  - crayons/ markers
  - construction paper
- worksheet
- Reflection Journal

Vocabulary:
- festival
- celebration
- plan

Background/Rationale

Festivals occur in every community. Festivals bring together a community to celebrate the beginning of a season (such as May Day) or to celebrate a harvest (such as Octoberfest). The Rose Festival is the most popular festival in Portland. Many months of planning goes into making a successful event. Allowing the class to build their own festival can show them how to plan for events.

Procedure

1. Have the students write in their journals: why do people celebrate?

2. Tell the students we are going to have a festival. Ask if they have ever gone to a festival. Festivals include fairs and local neighborhood gatherings. Maybe the school has had one.

3. Discuss what the students have written, why are there celebrations? Talk about Rose Festival. It is a celebration of the roses that are grown in Portland. Who organizes it? How much time do you think it takes to plan Rose Festival? Explain that festivals are planned using goals, much like what we did in the earlier lesson.

4. Tell the students they will plan a festival for Ourtown to happen the following week (or appropriate time).

5. Have the students decide what type of celebration they would like to have in Ourtown. List all suggestions on the board. Encourage choices that are realistic to celebrate, such as Spring, the coming of Summer, the planting of the garden, another culture, or the earth.
6. With the class, talk about all the things that need to happen in order for the festival to occur. Ask questions such as:

   What type of event?
   What is the theme?
   What will it be like?
   Will we invite anyone?
   What materials do we need?
   Where will we have it?
   How will we remember it?

7. Divide the students into working groups, each responsible for some part of the festival planning during the next week.

8. The following class time will be dedicated to having the festival.

9. Following the festival, have the students write: did they enjoy the festival? Did it work the way they had planned? Would they do anything differently?
My Classroom's goal is to ____________________________.

Below draw the flow chart ordering the events needed to reach your classroom's goal.

My task is to ____________________________________________.

After our classroom has reached our goal, I hope to feel ____________________________________________.

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
Center for Understanding the Built Environment, 5328 W. 67 Street, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Publishes a catalogue of items used to teach children about architecture and planning.

City of Portland, Bureau of Environmental Services. They have many resources available to teach about water pollution.

*If You Lived at the Time of the Great San Francisco Earthquake*, Ellen Leaven. A book that will initiate discussion about how to plan in face of a disaster.

*Investing in our Future: Teaching Children about Local Government*, A wonderful resource describing lessons and exercises concerning local government.

*Kids on the Move*, City of Portland, Office of Transportation (curriculum packet about traffic safety)


*Rivers and Lakes*, Earth Science Library. A book which explores both the physical and social importance of water ways.

*Road Closed: What Happens when a Road is Rebuilt*, Michael Kehoe. This book describes the consequence of Road Closures.

*SimCity: The City Simulator*, by Maxis. A software program in which users act a mayor and build their own city.

*The Changing City, the Changing Countryside*, Jorg Muller. A book of photographs depicting various landscapes.

*The World of Tomorrow*, Robin Kerrod. An account of concerns we should be involved with in planning our future world.