

Urban Goddess: Jane Jacobs Reconsidered Teacher Resource

for
Home Economics 10-12
Civic Studies 11
Social Justice 12

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Introduction

Jane Jacobs challenged the accepted norms of mid-to-late 20th Century urban design, and her ideas have had a direct impact on the cityscape many of us now take for granted. She also furthered the concept of residents not only having a voice at city hall, but input into plans that affected their neighbourhoods. Today, public consultation is a regular part of the planning process at many city halls. Her influence, and her fight for “liveable cities,” provide a platform from which to explore these issues as they relate to the learning outcomes for such high school courses as Home Economics 10-12, Civic Studies 11, and Social Justice 12.

Using this Resource

This resource offers the following lessons for secondary school teachers:

Lesson 1: Blueprint for a Liveable City (3 hours). This lesson uses the video as a focus for discussion of urban planning and the idea of a “liveable city.” Students sketch their own ideas for an ideal community, then create a photo essay to depict their views on whether or not their own community is a liveable city.

Lesson 2: Jane Jacobs, Social Activist (2 hours). This lesson uses a key inquiry approach to have students examine how Jane Jacobs’ work relates to concepts of civic action and social justice.

Lesson 3: Civic Discourse (3 hours). This lesson uses a town hall simulation to have students consider the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in an urban planning scenario.

Each lesson includes a viewing of the video, *Urban Goddess: Jane Jacobs Reconsidered*. If you are using more than one lesson, you may wish to adapt the procedure to eliminate multiple viewings.

Lesson 1: Blueprint for a Liveable City

Overview

This lesson uses the video as a focus for discussion of urban planning and the idea of a “liveable city.” Students sketch their own ideas for an ideal community, then create a photo essay to depict their views on whether or not their own community is a liveable city.

Curriculum Correlation

This lesson can be used to address a number of learning objectives from the following BC provincial curriculum:

- Home Economics: Family Studies 10-12 — Housing and Living Environments module

For a list of the BC prescribed learning outcomes related to this lesson, see the Curriculum Correlation section at the end of this resource. Comparable learning outcomes/objectives from other provinces can also be addressed by this lesson.

Suggested Time

3 hours

Materials and Resources

The following resources are used in this lesson:

- video: *Urban Goddess: Jane Jacobs Reconsidered* (52 minutes)
- cameras, one for each student or group of students
- student resource:
 Photo Essay—Peer and Self-Assessment

Preparation

- Preview the video in order to familiarize yourself with the information and to prepare for any questions that might arise in the course of the lesson. You may also decide to show only portions of the video. In addition, you may wish to identify points in the video to pause for discussion. (Note: at approximately 49:00 in the video, one of the speakers says “She was one of the world’s great shit disturbers.” You may wish to fast-forward through this short section, or set the appropriate context for viewing.)
- Make copies of the Peer and Self-Assessment student resource to distribute to the students:

Procedure

1. Begin with a brief brainstorm around the question, “What makes an ideal community?” As students brainstorm, use cues to have them consider characteristics such as the following:
 - living spaces, working spaces, commercial facilities, recreational spaces
 - green spaces
 - aesthetic appeal, variety
 - transportation routes
 - services for all age groups (e.g., daycare, schools, seniors)

2. Have students work in small groups to create a rough design for an urban environment that reflects as many of these features as they see fit. Students' designs need not be polished; the purpose is only to identify the relevant elements of a community.
3. View the video as a class.
4. Debrief by focussing on the idea of "the blueprint for a liveable city" brought up by the video. What characteristics did Jane Jacobs favour? (e.g., organic mix of old and new, diversity of population, ability to walk to work)
5. Have students return to their groups to revisit their sketches, modifying any features they deem necessary based on what they have seen in the film.
6. Next, assign the task of a photo essay to students. Give each student a camera, and have them go out into the community to compile photographic evidence that shows how their community is or is not "a liveable city." Students may choose to take photos to depict only one side of the argument, or may chose to show both sides. (Students may work in pairs or groups if they prefer, or if not enough cameras are available.)
7. Have students present their photo essays for the rest of the class, in print or electronically.
8. Debrief as a class: Is our community a liveable city? Why or why not? Which elements work best? Which elements are most in need of change?

Assessment

- As students present their photo essays, provide opportunities for peer assessment based on criteria such as those outlined in accompanying the assessment tool. Students should also complete a self-assessment of their own work before handing it in for teacher assessment.

Extensions

Students can further develop their rough urban designs to incorporate more specific detail about living spaces, addressing any or all of the following prescribed learning outcomes from the Design for Living curriculum organizer:

- F12 analyse and use the elements and principles of design
- F13 use basic terminology associated with furniture, architectural, and decorating styles
- F14 analyse and interpret floor plans for personal preference, efficiency, and safety
- F15 apply criteria for selecting housing and interior products
- F16 describe ways in which consumers can conserve energy, water, and other resources in the home
- F17 demonstrate an understanding of the importance of home maintenance and safety

Photo Essay—Peer and Self-Assessment

Use the following key to mark your group on the criteria below:
 4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, 1=unsatisfactory / not evident

To what extent does the photo essay	Peer Assessment	Self-Assessment
▪ depict how the community includes / does not include a mix of old and new		
▪ illustrate how the community includes / does not include diversity		
▪ depicts how the community facilitates / fails to facilitate alternatives to car transportation		
▪ show how service needs at various life stages (e.g., infants, school-age children, families, working adults, seniors) are met / not met		
▪ show how the community meets / does not meet physical, social, and emotional needs of its residents		
▪ present images in an organized and coherent fashion		
Teacher comments:		

Lesson 2:

Jane Jacobs, Social Activist

Overview

This lesson uses a key inquiry approach to have students examine how Jane Jacobs' work relates to concepts of civic action and social justice.

Curriculum Correlation

This lesson can be used to address a number of learning objectives from the following BC provincial curricula:

- Civic Studies 11
- Social Justice 12

For a list of the BC prescribed learning outcomes related to this lesson, see the Curriculum Correlation section at the end of this resource. Comparable learning outcomes/objectives from other provinces can also be addressed by this lesson.

Suggested Time

2 hours

Materials and Resources

The following resources are used in this lesson:

- video: Urban Goddess: Jane Jacobs Reconsidered (52 minutes)
- student resource:
Discussion Questions

Preparation

- Preview the video in order to familiarize yourself with the information and to prepare for any questions that might arise in the course of the lesson. You may also decide to show only portions of the video. In addition, you may wish to identify points in the video to pause for discussion. (Note: at approximately 49:00 in the video, one of the speakers says "She was one of the world's great shit disturbers." You may wish to fast-forward through this short section, or set the appropriate context for viewing.)
- Make copies of the Discussion Questions student resource to distribute to the students.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that they are about to view video depicting the life and work of Jane Jacobs, who was a crusader for urban design that reflected the goals of "a liveable city," and who worked for citizen participation in the urban planning process.

Distribute the Discussion Questions handout to students, and allow a few minutes for them to read the questions.

2. View the video.
3. Allow a few minutes for students to jot down their initial ideas in response to the questions. Then facilitate a class discussion of the questions.

Assessment

Observe students as they participate in the class discussion. Note the extent to which they

- articulate the key ideas of a liveable city as depicted in the film (e.g., design on the human scale, organic mix of old and new, diversity of population, ability to walk to work)
- demonstrate critical thinking skills
- are able to make connections to their own community
- are able to make connections to other case studies of civic participation and activism
- demonstrate respect for others' views and contributions.

Extension

Select one of the discussion questions in the handout to use as the basis for a resolution for a formal debate (e.g., "Be it resolved that our community is a liveable city.")

Discussion Questions

1. Is Jane's vision of "the liveable city" applicable only for large urban metropolises, or for all communities? If not, how would it differ for small towns or rural areas?
2. Jane talked about "the ballet of the sidewalk," with the first step being looking and listening. How does this relate to principles of social change? (i.e., finding out what is really needed for the people involved)
3. Jim Neilas says, "There are always people who don't want any change." How much is this an issue in effecting any social change? What strategies are appropriate for reaching people who simply want things to stay the way they are?
4. Consider the following quote: "When there is no political process open to residents and citizens, then I believe there is no choice but to be confrontational." Do you agree? Is confrontation the only way to open dialogue in such a situation?
5. Is it realistic for all businesses to adopt the goal of positive or neutral impact? What would the effect be on the economy if that were the case for all development projects? What would the effect be on the environment? On society?
6. The video depicts people working "within the system" as well as "outside the system." Which methods are most successful? Why? Is this always the case?
7. Toward the end of the video, the narrator says, "... her greatest accomplishment was in mobilizing people; she told us it was ok for ordinary citizens to stand up for themselves, and if politicians didn't listen to their complaints, they were going to hear about it." Do you agree? How does this relate to other models of social change?
8. Which of Jane's ideas from the late 50s/early 60s about urban development relevant today? Are there any that are not?
9. Do you think Jane Jacobs is a role model for civic action and social change? Why or why not?

Lesson 3: Civic Discourse

Overview

This lesson uses a town hall meeting simulation to have students consider the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in an urban planning scenario.

Curriculum Correlation

This lesson can be used to address a number of learning objectives from the following BC provincial curricula:

- Civic Studies 11
- Social Justice 12

For a list of the BC prescribed learning outcomes related to this lesson, see the Curriculum Correlation section at the end of this resource. Comparable learning outcomes/objectives from other provinces can also be addressed by this lesson.

Suggested Time

3 hours

Materials and Resources

The following resources are used in this lesson:

- video: Urban Goddess: Jane Jacobs Reconsidered (52 minutes)
- student resources:
 - Rivercrest—The Scenario
 - Stakeholders
 - Assessment Tool—Civic Studies 11
 - Assessment Tool—Social Justice 12

Preparation

- Preview the video in order to familiarize yourself with the information and to prepare for any questions that might arise in the course of the lesson. In addition, you may wish to identify points in the video to pause for discussion. (Note: at approximately 49:00 in the video, one of the speakers says “She was one of the world’s great shit disturbers.” You may wish to fast-forward through this short section, or set the appropriate context for viewing.)
- Copy the Stakeholders student resource, and cut it up so that each group receives only their own role description. Make copies of the student handout, Rivercrest—The Scenario (one per student), as well as the applicable Civic Studies 11 or Social Justice 12 assessment resources (one per group).

Procedure

1. Inform the class that they will be taking part in a town hall simulation role play to consider the various points of view that might exist in relation to an urban development project.
2. Introduce the scenario by distributing the student handout, Rivercrest—The Scenario.

3. Divide the class into seven groups, and distribute the appropriate Stakeholder description to each group. Allow time for students to study their descriptions and discuss the motivations of their own and other groups. Encourage them to consider questions such as the following:
 - What is our ideal outcome? What will we settle for?
 - What will the other stakeholders be looking for? Which of our positions are they likely to agree with? Which are they likely to disagree with?
4. When groups have had sufficient time to plan their positions, bring the class together in a town hall simulation to discuss the issues. Explain that, although this is a town hall simulation, the intent is to try to reach a compromise agreement and ensure that as many needs are met, rather than to replicate the exact workings of such a meeting in real life.

One member from each group should give a short presentation (e.g., one or two minutes) outlining their position. Members from the other groups can ask questions, but should not argue the points until they make their own presentations.

Once all groups have made their initial presentations, allow approximately 20 minutes for students to try to reach a compromise solution that will give each stakeholder group as much as possible.
5. End the simulation with a class debrief, focussing on questions such as the following:
 - Was this a successful compromise or consensus? Did every group get at least part of what they wanted?
 - Which points were easiest to agree on? Which were the most difficult? Why?
 - Did everyone within each group agree about how to approach the situation? If not, how were differences resolved within the group?
 - Was this process realistic? How are these decisions reached in real life? Is consensus and compromise used in this way, or do other decision-making processes (e.g., majority rule) tend to prevail?
6. View the film as a class. Then have students re-form their groups to discuss the following:
 - What positions were represented in the video that were similar to our stakeholder group?
 - After viewing the film, what could we have changed about our approach? What did we not include in our proposal that we could now go back and change?

Assessment—Civic Studies 11

Distribute the assessment tool. Have students conduct a group self-assessment based on the criteria outlined. Have them hand in the sheet for teacher assessment.

Assessment—Social Justice 12

Distribute the assessment tool. Have students conduct a group self-assessment based on the criteria outlined. Have them hand in the sheet for teacher assessment.

As an additional assessment task, have students research a similar development project in their own or another city. Have them create a table to compare the project with the simulation done in class as well as with the Queen Street Triangle project depicted in the film. Have them focus their comparison on questions such as the following:

- Who are the stakeholders?
- What methods were used to influence the decision? (e.g., protests, letter-writing, media campaigns, negotiation)

- What decision-making processes were used? (e.g., consensus, compromise, majority rule)
- Which stakeholders had their needs met? Which did not?

Rivercrest—The Scenario

Rivercrest is a plot of land that is currently occupied by a diverse mix of buildings. There are a number of older, low-rise apartment buildings, as well as a subdivision of newly developed townhouses known as Rivercrest Villas. There are some small stores and restaurants that have been in the area for decades. Also in the area is a 40 hectare undeveloped wooded area that is used as a park and is popular with local residents as well as visitors from other parts of the city.

This plot of land has recently been purchased by a developer.

The following stakeholder groups will attend a town planning council to discuss the proposed redevelopment:

- Developer—owns the land and is looking to redevelop it into a mix of high-density residential and commercial space
- City Planning Office representatives—responsible for zoning and for deciding to grant or deny building permits
- Rivercrest Tenants' Association—a recently formed organization of current residents of the various older apartment buildings
- Rivercrest Villas Homeowners—owners and residents of the townhouses in the Rivercrest Villas subdivision
- Rivercrest Business Community—representatives of the small businesses in the area
- Friends of Rivercrest Park—a community organization that has been lobbying to have the city protect the undeveloped area as municipal parkland
- Affordable Housing Advocates—a province-wide organization that builds partnerships between landowners and local governments to provide low-cost housing

Stakeholders

Developer

Your company owns the land and is looking to redevelop it into a mix of residential and commercial space. Your current plan is to tear down the existing low-rise apartment buildings and business buildings and build new high-rises that will allow for commercial and business space. The plan also includes building on most of the 40 hectare Rivercrest Park, keeping approximately 5 hectares as woodland. You have no plans to alter the Rivercrest Villas subdivision itself, although the part of the park adjacent to it will be developed for building high-rise condos.

Your goal is to maximize profits for your shareholders by building high-density housing and selling as many commercial and residential units as possible. However you know that if you cannot gain the support of the local government, it may take years longer before you get building permission and can begin construction.

✂ -----

City Planning Office Representatives

Your department is responsible for making recommendations to grant or deny building and zoning permits. You need to listen to and balance the needs of wants of all residents in the area. You are also concerned about the city’s current deficit, and know that an increased tax base that would come from a new development would be beneficial to the city’s financial situation.

✂ -----

Rivercrest Tenants’ Association

You are a recently formed organization of current residents of the various older apartment buildings in the area. Many of you have lived in the area for decades, while others have only recently arrived.

You are all concerned having significantly higher rents in the new proposed development, or losing your homes altogether. However many residents have to travel a great distance to their jobs, and would welcome new local businesses as an opportunity to work and live in the same area.

✂ -----

Rivercrest Villa Homeowners

You are all owners and residents of the townhouses in the new Rivercrest Villas subdivision that backs onto the undeveloped wooded area known as Rivercrest Park. Your homes were a relatively good bargain because they are built in an older, undeveloped area. You want the area to remain attractive and valuable, but also don’t want to pay a significant increase in taxes that goes along with a higher property value. You would welcome the convenience of having more businesses in the area, but are also concerned that having too much new development will affect the current quality of life the area currently enjoys.

✂ -----

Rivercrest Business Community

You are all owners of the various small retail and service businesses in the area. You are concerned about your commercial rents being raised significantly if the new development goes ahead as planned. However you also know that there is a potential for significantly increased business if more people are living in the area.

✂ -----

Friends of Rivercrest Park

You are a community organization that has been lobbying for the last 10 years to have the city purchase the undeveloped wooded area and protect it as municipal parkland.

Your intent is to preserve all the park land if possible. However you know that if this development project is not approved, the future of this natural habitat will be equally uncertain. You also are looking for a significant influx of funding to rehabilitate the park’s stream and pond for local wildlife.

✂ -----

Affordable Housing Advocates

You are local representatives of a province-wide organization that builds partnerships with corporations and local governments to provide low-cost housing. Your successes in the past have come from helping developers gain the support of the community for their building permits, and in return exacting between 10% and 25% of residential units as low-cost housing.

Assessment Tool—Civic Studies 11

Group members: _____

Use the following key to mark your group on the criteria below:
 4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, 1=unsatisfactory / not evident

	Group Self-Assessment	Teacher Assessment
▪ we defined our position clearly		
▪ we considered the beliefs and values of those in our stakeholder position		
▪ we anticipated the positions and concerns of the other stakeholder groups		
▪ we were able to effectively communicate our position to the other groups		
▪ our group worked efficiently and co-operatively together		
What we learned from this process about the citizen’s role in civic processes: 		
Teacher comments: 		

Assessment Tool—Social Justice 12

Group members: _____

Use the following key to mark your group on the criteria below:
 4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, 1=unsatisfactory / not evident

	Group Self-Assessment	Teacher Assessment
▪ we considered the situation from an ethical perspective		
▪ we applied principles of social justice in defining and communicating our position		
▪ we defined our position clearly		
▪ we were able to effectively communicate our position to the other groups		
▪ we demonstrated empathy and fair-mindedness in considering the positions of other groups		
▪ our group worked efficiently and co-operatively together		
What we learned from this process:		
Teacher comments:		

Curriculum Correlation

The following table illustrates which prescribed learning outcomes for the BC provincial curricula are addressed in whole or in part by the three lesson plans provided in this package.

The lesson plans can also be used to address comparable visual arts learning outcomes/objectives in other provinces.

Home Economics 10-12 (Housing and Living Environments module)

	<i>It is expected that students will:</i>	Lesson #
Housing and Society	F3 analyse how societal and cultural views and values influence housing	1
	F4 describe the role housing plays in meeting physical, social, and emotional needs	1
	F5 demonstrate an awareness of how housing needs change over the lifespan	1
	F6 identify ways in which local, provincial, self-governed, and federal governments influence housing in Canada	1

Civic Studies 11

	<i>It is expected that students will:</i>	Lesson #
<i>Skills and Processes of Civic Studies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ apply critical thinking skills—including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, and defending—to a range of issues, situations, and topics 	2,3
<i>Civic Deliberation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ evaluate the relative abilities of individuals, governments, and non-governmental organizations to effect civic change in Canada and the world, with reference to considerations such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> power and influence circumstances methods of decision making and action public opinion 	2,3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assess the role of beliefs and values in civic decision making 	2,3
<i>Civic Action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ evaluate the citizen's role in civic processes locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally 	2,3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ apply skills of civic discourse and dispute resolution, including consensus building, negotiation, compromise, and majority rule 	3

Social Justice 12

	<i>It is expected that students will:</i>	Lesson #
<i>Defining Social Justice</i>	A3 apply critical thinking skills to a range of social justice issues, situations, and topics	2,3
	A4 analyse selected social justice issues from an ethical perspective	2,3

	<i>It is expected that students will:</i>	Lesson #
	A5 assess how belief systems can affect perspectives and decisions in relation to social justice issues	3
	A7 demonstrate attributes and behaviours that promote social justice, including recognizing injustice fair-mindedness embracing diversity empathy taking action	3
<i>Recognizing and Analysing Social Injustice</i>	B7 assess the contributions of particular individuals and groups who are identified with struggles for social justice	2,3
<i>Moving toward a Socially Just World</i>	C1 assess various methods and models of promoting social justice	2,3