

WHAT MAKES A PLACE SPECIAL?

Investigating the causes, effects, and responses to urban planning, zoning, & preservation on New York's Lower East Side.

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Kelsey Murphy, Veronica Cisneros, Rebecca Park, John Prothro



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This curriculum is an exploration of how neighborhoods are designed and used. The curriculum unpacks topics and policies that impact neighborhoods across the nation through a case study of New York's Lower East Side. This allows the study to be adapted to incorporate other neighborhood contexts, which allows for personal connection between participants and the materials.

Through a series of five investigations participants will engage in interactive experiences that build upon and unearth a deeper understanding of what makes a neighborhood, and also, what makes a neighborhood special. Investigation 1 is an introduction to the concept of neighborhood that invites participants to use their own personal experiences to design and define a neighborhood. In Investigation 2 participants explore the historical and present impacts of culture, and the role it has in shaping and developing a place. Investigation 3 examines how zoning impacts the ways in which people use space within a neighborhood. Investigation 4 explores how policy determines how a space is used, and then how people can use artistic activism in order to make political change. Finally, Investigation 5 asks participants to reimagine the future of the neighborhood using the information uncovered throughout the unit.

By the end of the unit participants will have a wider understanding of both what a neighborhood is and can be, will understand the various institutional and political processes that shape neighborhoods, and ultimately, will have and be able to use various tools for making political change in order to see their visions for neighborhoods through to realization.



OVERVIEW

When it comes to context, this curriculum prioritizes adaptability. While the conceptual exploration of urban planning, zoning, and development is grounded in a case study of New York's Lower East Side, each activity allows that participants to apply and connect the concepts to their own experiences and neighborhoods.

The curriculum is adaptable to a variety of age groups and educational settings. The curriculum provides educators with a sequence of interrelated Investigations and activities as well as a host of resources that may prove helpful for facilitating those activities. That said, the curriculum is probably best suited for anyone in 4th grade and up. It is up to the discretion of the educator to scale the activities, and incorporate resources, to best fit their participants.

Timing may vary widely given the different contexts in which this curriculum may be taught, and that is totally okay. For example, if the curriculum is being taught in a traditional school setting, where classes often meet for a brief 45 minutes, the curriculum might span the course of two or more weeks, individual Investigations may take 2 or 3 days to complete, and some activities may need to be adapted or eliminated. On the other hand, a workshop that meets for 3 hour sessions may only require two sessions in order to complete the curriculum. The sequence of activities included in each "Investigation", is specifically designed to conceptually move students with less substantial background knowledge about these issues to a solid understanding. That said, the sequence, too, can be revised or adapted to any given context.

In other words, we want the participants involved in any particular context to shape this curriculum more so than anything we've designed or written here. So take what you like, and make our suggestions work best for your particular time and place.



CONTEXT

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INVESTIGATION 1

INVESTIGATION

1

Title: What makes a neighborhood?

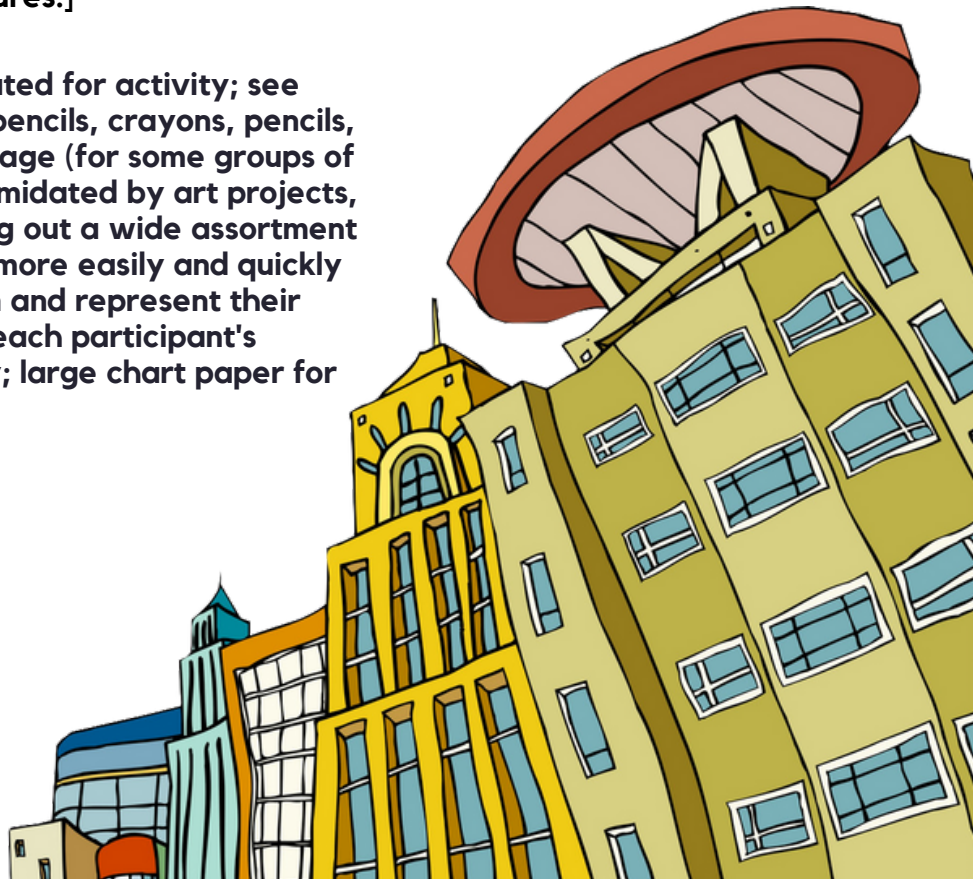
Overview: Investigation 1 is grounded in personal experiences & connections. The workshop begins by asking participants to complete a "Design a Neighborhood" art activity that serves as a visual representation of their initial understanding and experience of what a neighborhood is. Participants will use their neighborhood designs to facilitate a group discussion about neighborhoods, and, importantly, to construct a working, group definition of the word neighborhood. The discussion ends by asking participants to use their designed neighborhoods to consider what makes a place special. Investigation 1 includes an optional extension activity that acts as a follow up to this latter question; this activity is adaptable for groups based both in and outside of the LES.

Essential Question(s):

- What makes a neighborhood?
- What makes a place special?

Vocabulary: Neighborhood [a collection of people, places, and activities within a set of geographically & politically defined boundaries. Neighborhoods have their own distinct culture or set of cultures.]

Materials: Paper (blank or templated for activity; see appendix 1.A); markers, colored pencils, crayons, pencils, etc; images and materials for collage (for some groups of participants, especially those intimidated by art projects, you may want to consider printing out a wide assortment of pictures that participants can more easily and quickly collage in order to visually design and represent their neighborhood); space to display each participant's "Design a Neighborhood" activity; large chart paper for group definition.



1

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 1

1.1

Brief Intro to Curriculum & Instructions for Activity:

- The facilitator should begin with an introduction to the curriculum; however, this introduction should be brief, and somewhat general. The intention behind the unit is that participants define and discover the course themes and topics -urban planning, zoning, & preservation - for themselves. In other words, the facilitator needs to make sure that they do not introduce the unit in a way that feeds, or directs students towards, any one specific set of answers.

Potential Intro Activity: Find an engaging video, or other multimodal text (i.e. photo series, song/music video, brief oral history), that highlights a neighborhood familiar to your participants - perhaps the neighborhood that your school, community center, or other space where your teaching occurs, is located. Explain that our work for the next few days/weeks is grounded in an exploration of neighborhoods - what they are, what makes them special, and what shapes and changes them over time. Explain that you are going to show the multimodal resource as a way to jumpstart our thinking about neighborhoods. Have the participants watch/listen/view the resource, but do not require them to take notes.

- After the introduction, the facilitator introduces the "Design a Neighborhood Activity."

Design a Neighborhood Activity: The "Design a Neighborhood" activity is simultaneously a pre-assessment of participants understanding of what a neighborhood is and looks like as well as the means by which the group will write their own, working definition of the term neighborhood.

Each participant will be asked to visually represent a neighborhood - either their own neighborhood or their idea of neighborhood. We've included two potential activity templates that may prove helpful as a guide for your participants - one is a zoomed in street view, and the other is a birds-eye map view (see appendix item 1.1). Students are not limited to these templates, but they may give participants a helpful jumpstart, especially younger participants and those less accustomed to visually representing their ideas. As facilitator the more resources you are able to provide your participants, the better this activity will be. For instance, you may choose to support participants who are less comfortable drawing with relevant, pre-printed images that they can collage into their neighborhood. Just be sure that you print a wide variety of images, so as not to box them into one particular vision of a neighborhood. Participants should have access to colored pencils/pens/markers, paper, potentially magazines (another collaging option), or any other tool that is available to you and that would support or enhance the activity.

1

1.2

Design a Neighborhood Activity:

- Participants get started on their neighborhoods, and the facilitator circulates in order to assist and answer questions as needed. I suggest that the facilitator plan to work alongside their participants, by coming to the session with your own Design a Neighborhood activity started, so that you can participate in the workshop, too. Depending on your participants age-group/level of independence, you'll have more or less time to work versus answer questions - so come prepared accordingly. Ultimately, the idea is that you should demonstrate your willingness to participate in all activities that you ask participants to engage.

A note on timing: Timing for this activity depends entirely upon your particular situation. Younger participants will typically take longer to complete activities, as may participants who don't often work in the visual arts/collage, etc. You'll also, of course, likely be working within the institutional time constraints of your particular setting. That said, this activity typically takes anywhere from 15-35 minutes. As always, do what works best for you!



1.3

Design a Neighborhood Post-Activity Discussion:

- As participants complete their neighborhoods, ask them to hang them up on a designated wall in the classroom - try to hang them on a wall that everyone can gather around in order to get a closer look at everyone's work - alternatively, you can pass the neighborhoods around if you are working with limited space.
- Once participants have had enough time to look at their peers' work, transition into a group discussion of the pieces. The aim of this discussion is twofold. First and foremost, the discussion should arrive at a group definition of the term neighborhood. Secondly, you'll want to begin identifying the factors that your participants believe make a neighborhood special.

Discussion Guide: Feel free to use these questions to facilitate and scaffold the group discussion.

- What do the neighborhoods we produced have *in common*?
 - What are some *differences* you can see across the neighborhoods?
 - What do you *recognize*? What feels *familiar*?
 - What *surprises* you? What did you not expect to see?
 - What do you think is *missing* from our representations?
 - Based on your observations of our work, how would you begin to define neighborhood? What makes up a neighborhood?
 - What makes a neighborhood special? What are the special places within a neighborhood?
- Note that, of course, discussions will vary widely given the participants in any one group. Let your participants drive the discussion, but try to push the discussion beyond just the physical buildings/spaces present in a neighborhood in order to address both the *people* and what the people are *doing* in a neighborhood and its spaces. This does not need to be a comprehensive conversation at this point, but it is a good idea to introduce the broad concepts of *places, people, and activities* in this initial discussion.
 - By the end of the discussion make sure that the group has co-written a definition, and that the definition is posted (on chart paper, or otherwise) somewhere central and visible in your classroom space.

1

1.4

Optional Extension Activity: Neighborhood Walkaround

- If time and interest allows, take a tour of the neighborhood that your school/classroom/community center/workshop is in. Make observations about the real neighborhood around you versus the ones that students imagined in their "Design a Neighborhood" activity. Does the neighborhood live up to the newly written class definition of neighborhood? See appendix item 1.4 for a sample activity sheet that will help focus and facilitate the walkaround activity. After the walk around, tally up and analyze the data your group collects. Discuss your findings. What does the way space is used tell us about the neighborhood? Refer back to this data in Lesson 3 discussion of how space is used.

Lower East Side Extension: If your group is located in, or has easy access to, the Lower East side, this activity serves as a great transition into Investigation 2 . Try to visit LES landmarks (such as those listed at http://www.friendsofthelowereastside.org/?page_id=726) as well as sites of the new developments that are changing the face and shape of the neighborhood.

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INVESTIGATION 2

INVESTIGATION 2

Title: What contributes to making a neighborhood special?

Overview: Investigation 2 uses the Lower East Side as a case study for what factors contribute to the cultural vibrancy of a neighborhood. Through this investigation, facilitators and students should interrogate why the culture and art of a neighborhood changes and what aspects lead to this change.



Opening Discussion:

- Overview of the last investigation. Lead a conversation with the students around what makes a place special and consolidate and point out the common themes that arise in this discussion



Theme for the investigation: Begin with a brief discussion of the history of Lower East Side with a focus on housing, zoning and presentation and how art and culture play a role in and are changed by them.

2

A Brief History of the Lower East Side

2.1

The Lower East Side (LES) has long been known as an immigrant community, housing a diverse array of groups including: African Americans, Jews, Italians, Germans, Dominicans, Indians, Koreans, and many more.

As each community cycled in and out, a new one came and these waves brought new cultures and traditions, contributing to the Lower East side's vibrant artistic community.

Historical Lower East Side comprised the neighborhoods known today as East Village, Little Italy, NoLita, Alphabet City, the Bowery, Two Bridges, and Chinatown. The neighborhood was also home to notoriously terrible tenement housing.



For more information on the history of LES Tenements see:

<https://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/tenementmuseum/history-of-tenements/>

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/06/07/tenement-homes-new-york-history-cramped-apartments>

<https://www.tenement.org/>

2

A Brief History Continued

2.1a

By the turn of the twentieth century, the neighborhood had become closely associated with radical politics, such as anarchism, socialism and communism, and was also known as a place where many popular performers had grown up, such as the Marx Brothers, Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, George and Ira Gershwin, Jimmy Durante, and Irving Berlin. Later, more radical artists such as the Beat poets and writers were drawn to the neighborhood – especially the parts which later became the East Village – by the inexpensive housing and cheap food.

During the 1960s the LES drew artists, musicians, and young punk radicals. Many residents also began moving out of the neighborhood during this decade, which, coupled with a citywide bankruptcy - and a **"planned shrinkage program"** (<https://bit.ly/2CceeIt>) - plagued the neighborhood with persistent poverty, crime, drugs, and abandoned housing. This led to one of the most notorious squatting movements in the United States. They occupied and refurbished abandoned homes, and turned previously trash-strewn lots into community gardens. By the late 1980s, squatters would come to occupy more than a dozen old tenements on the Lower East Side.



For more information on the history of squatting in the Lower East Side see:

<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/squatters-lower-east-side/>

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/squatters-of-the-lower-east-side>

<https://radicalreference.info/radicalarchivesredux>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/aug/11/new-york-lower-east-side-community-gardens>

2

Even More History

2.1b

The squatters included an eclectic mix of artists, punks, transients, displaced locals, and political activists. Many of the squatters also saw themselves as activists for affordable, or free, housing in a city that was plagued by homelessness.

Many of these squats were home to famous artist communities like the Umbrella House (<https://bit.ly/2CbeRSv>) and the C Squat (<https://bit.ly/2SMWGYH>).

The area -- along with NYC's economy -- stabilized to some degree during the 1980s, and its inexpensive housing and neighborhood charm attracted students and members of the middle class. As a result, the Lower East Side saw increased gentrification beginning in the 1990s when older tenements were cleared and expensive apartment buildings took their place. This drastically changed the look and feel of the neighborhood, and its affordability for the people who contributed to its vibrant culture and art scene.



For more information on the history of gentrification in the Lower East Side see:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/02/realestate/the-gentrification-of-the-east-village.html>

<https://thelowereastside.wordpress.com/>

<https://ny.curbed.com/2017/11/16/16665922/lower-east-side-orchard-street-gentrification-photos>

2

Gentrification Reflected in Art

2.1c



The opening of the New Museum on Bowery in late 2007 reflected the change from grassroots artists to gentrified, "high" art (<https://bit.ly/2tYkMG9>) typically found in expensive galleries (<https://bit.ly/2UGK8nO>). This period was also marked by the appearance of a Whole Foods supermarket and high-end restaurants, hotels, clothing stores and nightclubs that pushed out smaller businesses.

The neighborhood is now home to numerous high-end contemporary art galleries. Resisting this change are galleries like ABC No Rio (<https://bit.ly/PhUwQt>). Founded by a group of Colab no wave artists (some living on Ludlow Street), ABC No Rio opened an outsider gallery space that invited community participation and encouraged the widespread production of art. Taking an activist approach to art that grew out of The Real Estate Show (<https://bit.ly/2zVPYJ0>) (the take over of an abandoned building by artists to open an outsider gallery only to have it chained closed by the police), ABC No Rio strives to cultivate a sense of activism, community, and outsidership. Their open, expansive approach to art facilitates a space for creating new works that don't have links to the art market place, allowing for the exploration of new artistic possibilities.

Additionally, long cherished community murals are disappearing as gentrification takes hold and the buildings that house them slated for demolition: <https://bit.ly/2QT743W>

For more information on the history of gentrification in the Lower East Side see:

<https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2014/07/25/revitalized-lower-east-side-becoming-trendy-but-also-very-expensive/>

<https://hyperallergic.com/466187/another-wave-of-gentrification-hits-the-lower-east-side/>

<https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-fea-lower-east-side-gentrification-big-box-20180829-story.html>

<https://nypost.com/2016/07/05/living-in-this-lower-east-side-building-went-from-costing-hundreds-to-millions/>

2.2

Title: Art Tour Field Trip

Overview: The goal of the art field trip is to familiarize students with the changing art scene in New York's Lower East Side. There are several options for exploring the LES's art scene:

1. **Go on a self guided mural tour:** <https://bit.ly/2LcXLGI>
2. **Go on a guided tour:**
 - **focusing on street art:** <https://bit.ly/2C9VaKN>
 - **focusing on galleries:** <https://bit.ly/2UEXiWY>
3. **View Projects that reflect the change in the Lower East Side:** <https://bit.ly/2S32hKQ>

Discussion Questions:

- What art do you notice in LES?
- What art is here?
- What art do you think used to be here?
- What art would you like to see here?
- Why do you think culture and art change?
- **How can we preserve what we think is important?**
- Preservation: To preserve the cultural history of a neighborhood which includes buildings, art, community gardens, open space

For more information on preservation in the Lower East Side see:

<http://www.lespi-nyc.org/presentation.html>

https://www.gvshp.org/_gvshp/index.htm

<http://www.neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/>

<https://www.nycjewishtours.org/>

Discuss specific artists example fighting gentrification on the LES:

Chinatown Arts Brigade: <http://www.chinatownartbrigade.org/about-the-brigade/>

Art Against Gentrification: <https://www.aren.aad-nyc>

How Has Zoning Affected Community Art on the LES:

Article to help aid thinking through the complicated relationship between art and gentrification: <https://bit.ly/2UIFd5u>

2.2

Title: Art Reflection Activity

Art Reflection Activity

Goal: use activity to reflect on what the students discovered while learning about the Lower East Side's history and art scene

Possible Activity: make a mural that reflects your heritage and what's important to you in your neighborhood or a space you inhabit (i.e.. a mural as a class to be displayed in a common space)

Resources for making a mural:

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/activate-activism-planning-our-mural>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hk0GcJMLzXiu9TVd4YcV9pM8RDNI1DxJ/view?usp=sharing>

Reflective Questions:

What might be causing all of these changes in the population and the artistic community in the Lower East Side and how can they be harmful? To whom? To what?



INVESTIGATION 3



INVESTIGATION 3

Title: What are your favorite things to do around the neighborhood?

Overview: Investigation 3 is focused on the activities that individuals from the community enjoy doing and have an accessible space in which they are able to enjoy being a part of these activities. This investigation will lead students to understand the ways in which maps are visual representations of these activities and how different maps are used by different entities to proclaim spaces for different activities that may or may not benefit community residents.

Essential Question(s):

- What types of spaces are activities meant for?
- What types of activities are taking place in your neighborhood?
- How do the spaces look for these types of activities?
- How do you envision these spaces looking like in the future?

vocabulary:

- **activities:** what one can do in a space, a space can be described as an indoor or outdoor space. Example of activities include shopping, exercising, riding a bike, playing in the park, gardening, and many other enjoyable aspects of a persons life.
- **Zoning:** Laws made by city that limit and guide where one can build and what one can build on a piece of land.
- **Urban planning:** The way a space is planned, designed, and built for the purposes of human life.

Materials:

- maps designed for different purposes and used by different communities of people such as locals, tourists, developers, real estate, transit (mta) *
- pencils
- scratch paper or notebooks

* links for maps are found in appendix

3

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 3

Use these next two slides as an introduction for students to understand how zoning and urban planning affect the types of activities one is able to do in their neighborhood. This will help strengthen students understanding of the vocabulary terms. Spend 10 minutes on each vocabulary emphasizing the way in which activities are important.

3.1

Further defining zoning and urban planning

- Zoning

What is Zoning?

According to the Center of Urban Pedagogy Zoning laws regulate land use across the city, and shapes buildings, blocks, and whole neighborhoods. It can be a tool for preservation or for rapid physical and economic development.

How do zoning laws affect what activities individuals are able to enjoy in their neighborhoods?

Zoning laws are made by the city that guide and limit what types of buildings can be built in a space. They restrict land for particular activities. For example some areas are by law only meant for single-family homes, while other areas are meant for large warehouses. Sometimes a city limits what types of buildings can be built next to each other. For example a large factory cannot be build directly next to a single family home, it however can be built a few blocks away if the city permits it depending on that lands zoning laws and regulations.

Available resources regarding zoning

The Center for Urban Pedagogy is a great resource to supplement the way zoning is defined and provides visual downloadable information for student's further understanding.

<http://welcometocup.org/Projects/EnvisioningDevelopment/WhatIsZoning>

3

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 3

3.1

Further defining zoning and urban planning

- Urban Planing

What is urban planning?

According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, Urban Planning is design and regulation of the use of spaces that focus on physical form, economic functions, and social impacts of the urban environment around the location of different activities with in.

How does urban planning affect what activities individuals are able to enjoy in their neighborhoods?

Urban planning affects what activities individuals can enjoy because it is influenced my urban developers who map the way in which neighborhoods will be built as a whole and the kind of individual that will benefit from this type of planning. Although zoning limits what type of structure can be built in that piece of land such as a commercial, family home, or warehouse structure, urban planning for example is focused on what type of commercial places will reside in that space. Think a fresh food restaurant versus a fast food restaurant, a grocery store versus a liquor store.

Available resources regarding urban planning

Share this video with students to strengthen their understanding of urban planning and how it affects what activities individuals can enjoy in their neighborhood.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5ot_1tbQX8

3

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 3

3.2

Title: Map Visual Comparisons

- Teacher will distribute maps that represent different communities that benefit from using available spaces. Emphasis is placed on why maps are structured a certain way and why they visually appeal to different people, companies, and organizations.
- Task should take approximately 30 minutes with both the group activity and the end of lesson discussion.

Groups

- Students should be split into groups
- Each group should be handed a map that they will analyze visually as a group.
- Students as a team should collect visual information about the map to supplement the end of lesson discussion.

Guide students by asking them questions that that help them critically think about the spaces and what types of activities can be done within those spaces.

Who benefits from these types of activities in these spaces?
What types of activities do you see highlighted in this map?
Make a note of those activities to share with the rest of the class.

* links for maps that can be used for activity are located in appendix

Ask each group:

Give a visual description of your map?

who do you think the map benefits and why?

Based on the map what types of activities are highlighted?

How can designing for activities we enjoy be forms of inclusion, empowerment, and advocacy?



INVESTIGATION 4

INVESTIGATION 4

Overview: Investigation 4 focuses on gaining an understanding of the different people and/or groups influencing the design of a neighborhood. The overarching question framing this discussion is: "Who is involved in the process of determining how a neighborhood is used?"

Opening Discussion: Opening Discussion (5 min): Participants should list the people and/or groups who they believe play a role in deciding the use of space within a neighborhood. The discussion should then change its focus on how different persons/groups can influence the decisions on the use of space within a neighborhood. The main objective of this discussion is to give examples of the various people and ways that decisions on the use of space is influenced. Through the introduction of advocacy and activism, participants will gain insight on how to influence these decisions as a community member and who the stakeholders are in these decisions. The included case studies investigate the various ways that art and activism can combine to influence change.

Essential Question(s):

- Who is involved in the process of determining how a neighborhood is used, and how it changes over time? Key terms: elected officials, stakeholders, special interest groups
- Is policy the only way that neighborhoods change? What are the limits to this?
- What else can influence neighborhood change?
- Key Vocabulary: activism, advocacy, elected officials, special interests groups, stakeholders
-

Materials:

Poster boards, banners

Drawing Utensils: markers, color pencils, drafting pencils

Painting supplies(optional)

Assortment of magazines for collage making

Tape, glue, tacs,

INVESTIGATION 4

Case Studies and Advocacy Group Analysis

Case Studies and Advocacy Group Analysis 10 min:

The purpose of the case studies and advocacy group analysis, is to allow participants to investigate real-life examples of advocacy and activism impacting decisions on the use of space within a neighborhood. Through their investigation of these case studies and neighborhood advocacy groups, participants will build upon their earlier discussion on advocacy and activism. Participants should be divided into four equal groups to briefly review the provided case studies or local advocacy group:

Essential Question(s): Advocacy & Activism (Divide class into four groups and assign one case study per group):

1. Homestead Squatters of the Lower East Side - Case Study
2. Tomkins Square Park Riot - Case Study
3. Save CHARAS - Case Study
4. Coalition to Protect Chinatown and LES - Neighborhood Advocacy Group

* See Appendix 4 for additional resources

Opening Discussion: Opening Discussion (5 min): Participants should list the people and/or groups who they believe play a role in deciding the use of space within a neighborhood. The discussion should then change its focus on how different persons/groups can influence the decisions on the use of space within a neighborhood. The main objective of this discussion is to give examples of the various people and ways that decisions on the use of space is influenced. Through the introduction of advocacy and activism, participants will gain insight on how to influence these decisions as a community member and who the stakeholders are in these decisions. The included case studies investigate the various ways that art and activism can combine to influence change.

4

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 4

4.1

Artistic Activism & Advocacy Activity

Overview of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to allow participants to put into practice ideas of advocacy and activism. Participants will reflect on the different tools and acts of advocacy and activism in preparation of executing similar acts through the use of various artistic mediums. The execution of the artistic activity will be art focus, using the combination of art and activism as a tools of advocacy. The class as a whole will briefly review themes learned through their investigations. Examples of themes and or reflections included:

1. Main issue and/or problem addressed
2. People and/or groups involved
3. Approach to addressing problem
4. Results(what was changed)

Step One: List some of the policy issues discussed in the above case studies and organization study. Also, list some other policy issues not included in the case studies that the participants are familiar with. Write them on Post-Its to be placed on wall or a place easily visible by entire group.

Useful prompts: homelessness, affordable housing, access/use of public space, crime, school funding

Step Two: Have each group choose one problem or issue from the ones posted on the wall, for the activity. For each question, individual should consider:

1. What is their understanding of the problem or issue?
 2. How do they think that the problem or issue can be addressed using artistic activism?
 3. How effective will their form of artistic expression communicate their idea(s)?
-

4

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 4

4.2

Artistic Activism & Advocacy Activity.....continued

Step Three: Using the materials provided, participants are going to use artistic activism to address their chosen problem or issue. Participants should be encouraged to use any mode of artistic production at their disposals. Such as: visual arts, theatre, drawing, sound production(limited to what is available), poetry, etc. Participants should also be encouraged to use non traditional approaches to the use of available artistic mediums.

Materials:

Poster boards, banners

Drawing Utensils: markers, color pencils, drafting pencils

Painting supplies(optional)

Assortment of magazines for collage making

Tape, glue, tacs,

Step Four: Each group are to present their artistic activism. Each individual presentation will be followed by a brief discussion framed by the following questions:

1. What was communicated?
2. How well was it communicated?
3. Who is the intended audience? Who are the stakeholders on either side of the issue?
4. How effective will it be?

Conclusion/Reflection: As a group, lead the participants in a discussion framed on various themes and examples from the exercise. Questions which can be used as prompts are as follows:

1. Who should determine how a neighborhood is zoned/designed? Why?
 2. What power do stakeholders have in influencing policy change?
 3. Who should determine how a neighborhood is used?
-

INVESTIGATION 5



INVESTIGATION 5

Title: The Future of the Neighborhood

Overview: Investigation 5 circles back to Investigation 1 by asking participants to complete a second "Design a Neighborhood" art activity. This second attempt at the activity should reflect participants' new understandings - of what neighborhoods are, how they come to be as well as change, and what they could become in the future - developed over the course of the unit. Participants will, again, use their neighborhood designs to facilitate a group discussion about neighborhoods, and to revisit and revise their working, group definition of the word neighborhood. This new definition should reflect the participants' ideal imaginings of neighborhood; in other words, it should encompass what participants' believe are the radical possibilities for neighborhoods of the future.

Essential Question(s):

- What makes a neighborhood?
- What makes a place special?
- What do we want the future of the neighborhood to be?
And how will we make that happen?

Vocabulary: Neighborhood (revisited): Neighborhood [a collection of people, places, and activities within a set of geographically & politically defined boundaries. Neighborhoods have their own distinct culture or set of cultures.]

Materials: Paper (blank or templated for activity; see appendix 1.A); markers, colored pencils, crayons, pencils, etc; images and materials for collage (for some groups of participants, especially those intimidated by art projects, you may want to consider printing out a wide assortment of pictures that participants can more easily and quickly collage in order to visually design and represent their neighborhood); space to display each participant's "Design a Neighborhood" activity; chart paper with groups initial definition of neighborhood; large chart paper for reworked group definition.

5

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 5

5.1

Introduction - Unit Overview & (re)Intro to Activity:

- The facilitator should begin with an overview of the content learned throughout the course of the interview. This can easily be facilitated by a review of the essential questions for each of the previous Investigations.

Essential Questions for Investigations 1-4:

1. What makes your neighborhood special?
2. How can a neighborhood change over time?
3. What type of spaces do I imagine being in my neighborhood?
4. How can I influence the decision on the usage of space in my neighborhood

- After the introduction, the facilitator (re)introduces the "Design a Neighborhood Activity." Explain that the intention behind repeating the activity at the end of this unit of study is to visualize the group's new understanding of what neighborhoods are, and can be, given the information learned in Investigations 1-4.

Design a Neighborhood Activity: The second "Design a Neighborhood" activity functions as a post assessment of the unit. Encourage participants to use this second attempt at the activity to explore the possibilities for the future of neighborhoods. You can use the following questions as prompts:

- What do you most want and need in a neighborhood?
- What are your favorite places to go in your neighborhood? What do you not have, but would like to have in the future?
- What does the neighborhood of your dreams look and feel like?

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5.2

Design a Neighborhood Activity Take 2:

- Participants get started on their neighborhoods, and the facilitator circulates in order to assist and answer questions as needed. Again, I suggest that the facilitator plan to work alongside their participants, meaning come to the session with your own Design a Neighborhood activity started, so that you can participate in the workshop, too. Depending on your participants age-group/level of independence, you'll have more or less time to work versus answer questions - so come prepared accordingly. Ultimately, the idea is that you should demonstrate your willingness to participate in all activities that you ask participants to engage.

5.3

Design a Neighborhood Post-Activity Discussion:

- As participants complete their neighborhoods, ask them to hang them up on a designated wall in the classroom - again, remember to try and hang them on a wall that everyone can gather around in order to get a closer look at everyone's work - alternatively, you can pass the neighborhoods around if you are working with limited space.
- Once participants have had enough time to look at their peers' work, transition into a group discussion of the pieces. The aim of this discussion is twofold. First and foremost, the discussion should arrive at a revised group definition of neighborhood. Secondly, you'll want to track changes between these and the first neighborhoods participants created. Ideally, if there is adequate space, hang the first neighborhoods somewhere nearby for reference.

Discussion Guide: Feel free to use these questions to facilitate and scaffold the group discussion.

- What similarities and differences do you notice between the neighborhoods designed?
- What similarities and differences do you notice between these and the first neighborhoods you designed?
- What surprises you? What did you not expect to see?
- Based on your observations, what revisions do we need to make to our group definition of neighborhood?
- Ask participants to elaborate on their future visions for neighborhoods.

5

Instructional Sequence & Activities for Investigation 5

5.3 cont.

Discussion cont.

- As with the initial discussion, be sure to address not only future visions for buildings/physical spaces present in a neighborhood, but for the people and activity that make up a neighborhood, too.
- Make sure to revisit the class definition of neighborhood to revise it so that it best reflects the groups' vision for the future of neighborhoods.

5.4

Reflection & Wrap Up:

- In order to assess participant experience, ask participants to respond to the following questions:
 - 1) What is one thing you learned that you didn't know about before? Or, what did you learn about that surprised you most?
 - 2) What was the most fun or interesting activity that we completed together?
 - 3) What changes would you suggest to make this investigation stronger or more engaging?