Lesson C2–4

Applying the Principles of Art to the Landscape

Unit C. Nursery, Landscaping, and Gardening

Problem Area 2. Residential Landscape Design

Lesson 4. Applying the Principles of Art to the Landscape

New Mexico Content Standard:

Pathway Strand: Plant Systems

Standard: IV: Exercise elements of design to enhance an environment (e.g., floral, forest, landscape, farm).

Benchmark: IV-A: Apply basic design elements and principles to create a design using plants.

Performance Standard: 2. Apply elements of design (e.g., line, form, texture, color). 3. Incorporate principles of design (e.g., space, scale, proportion, order). 4. Use landscape design drawing tools including Computer Aided Design (CAD) and industry-specific software. 6. Select plant(s) for design.

Student Learning Objectives. Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. Describe the basic principles of art.
2. Explain how to use the principles of art in landscaping.
3. Design two planting beds that demonstrate the principles of design.
List of Resources. The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

Recommended Resources. One of the following resources should be selected to accompany the lesson:


Other Resources. The following resources will be useful to students and teachers:


List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities

Writing surface
Overhead projector
Transparencies from attached masters
Copies of student lab sheets
Tracing paper
Architect’s scale
T-square
Triangle
Flexible curve
Several shrubs, groundcovers, or flowering plants

Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

Accent
Balance
Corner planting
Form
Line planting
Repetition
Scale
Texture
Variety

Interest Approach. Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.
Begin the lesson by setting out several different plant materials. Be sure to include a variety of types, shapes, sizes, and colors in your plant selection. Have the students describe the plants to you. Tell the students that they should be as detailed as possible in their descriptions (Plant no. 1 is low to the ground, bluish-green in color, with wide leaves). Then have the students work in groups to decide which plants would work well together in the landscape. Have students describe why they put the plants together. Try to encourage the students to use the principles of art terminology in their discussions.

Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective 1: Describe the basic principles of art.

Anticipated Problem: What are the basic principles of art?

I. Artwork appeals to the visual senses. It is often pleasing to the eye and can many times affect the emotions of a person viewing the object. A basic set of principles are followed when putting together a composition of elements. These basic art principles are accent, balance, color, form, repetition, scale, texture, and variety.

A. Accent is the point in a design that grabs the viewer’s eye. A particular feature could be emphasized so that it stands out among the rest.

B. Balance provides a sense of stability or equilibrium to a design. There are two types of balance, symmetrical (formal) and asymmetrical (informal). If a line was drawn down the middle of a composition and each side was a mirror image of the other, it has symmetrical balance. If each side on the vertical axis is different, the composition is asymmetrical.

C. Color has a high visual impact on a design and is created by the absorption and reflection of light. Colors can be warm or cool. Warm colors like reds and oranges are visually stimulating and cheerful. Blues and greens are cool colors that are restful and relaxing. They also tend to recede into the background.

D. The form of an object is the outline or shape of the object. Form can affect a design visually by either creating an active composition or by proving a sense of space to an area.

E. Repetition is the repeating of a certain characteristic like color or form throughout a design. When objects are repeated, they simplify and unify a composition.

F. When an object is in scale, it is said to be in proportion to its surroundings. It does not look too large for its location or like it is about to topple over. An object in proper proportion or scale fits neatly into a composition with other elements.

G. Texture refers to the appearance of a component in a design. An object may appear light or heavy; it may have coarse texture (large particles) or fine texture (small details).

H. A design would be boring and monotonous if it did not have variety. Variety offers a change or break from the norm. If the design has several shades of color or tall forms as well as short forms, it would have some variety.
One way to help students master this objective is to have them create phrases that refer to one or another art principle. For example, “That blue shirt is very striking.”, “That tree seems to dwarf that one story home.”, or “That shrub has a rounded habit.”. Have the students challenge one another to determine which principle of design is being discussed. Display TM: C2–4A, TM: C2–4B, and TM: C2–4C to illustrate the principles balance, scale, and variety.

**Objective 2:** Explain how to use the principles of art in landscaping.

**Anticipated Problem:** How are the principles of art used in landscaping?

II. Landscape design is an art as well as a science. A designer must look at the physical features of a plant like the color of the leaves, the shape or form of the plant, and its texture. They must then decide how to group those plants together and make the most of those physical features. The goal of a designer is to achieve a unified design that is balanced and attractive to look at.

A. Plants come in a variety of colors, forms, and textures. By picking out one particular striking feature on a plant and placing it among unlike specimens, an accent can be created. A plant that flowers can be nestled among evergreens to provide a striking appearance.

B. The most common forms of plants are: round, weeping, oval, pyramidal, and columnar. Upright forms can provide accent within a design while rounded forms tend to do well in more natural settings of mass planting.

C. The size and style of the home can help the designer use balance and scale within the landscape. Large trees placed near the home will dwarf the home and make it appear smaller than it actually is. Small trees placed near a large home would make the home appear very large and the design would be out of scale. The architecture of the home would help a designer decide if they should use a more symmetrical design or a less formal one.

D. By repeating plant shapes, colors, or textures throughout the design, the design will be more visually pleasing. Too much repetition leads to boredom and the viewer will look elsewhere, so remember to add some variety into the design as well. Try to achieve an even balance between repetition and variety.

One way to help students master this objective is to have them view the video mentioned under the resource section. One could also take a walk in the neighborhood to view different landscapes. Have students point out any principles of art they see demonstrated on the site.

**Objective 3:** Design two planting beds that demonstrate the principles of design.

**Anticipated Problem:** How would you design a planting bed to demonstrate the principles of design?

III. Planting beds are designed to include trees, shrubs, flowers, and groundcovers. Plants can be placed along the corners of an area or they can form a line. When selecting and placing
plants in a bed, the designer needs to consider the characteristics of the plant and the function of the planting.

A. **Corner planting** helps tie the house to the foundation and can soften the harsh vertical lines at the corners of the home. Plants used in this location should not grow more than 2/3 as tall as the house. Rounded plant forms work well in corner planting.

B. **Line planting** can serve as a means of blocking an unsightly view or framing a view. Line planting should follow the curve of bed lines and small plants should be placed in front of taller plants.

One way to help students master this objective is to have them complete LS: C4–4A and LS: C4–4B. By having students look at the plant forms, colors, and textures, and choosing which ones to place in a design bed, they can demonstrate the design principles of scale, balance, repetition, and variety. Displaying TM: C2–4D will help reinforce the concepts in this objective.

**Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have the students explain how they demonstrated specific design principles within the planting.

**Application.** Application of this lesson can be achieved through the following ways:

- Showing the video *The Landscape Design Process Part 1*
- Completing LS: C2–4A and LS: C2–4B
- Reading the appropriate sections *Introduction to Landscaping: Design, Construction, and Maintenance*

**Evaluation.** The evaluation of the student achievement over the lesson objectives will be the successful completion of the drawings and the written test. A sample written test is attached.

**Answers to Sample Test:**

**Part One: Matching**

1=d, 2=b, 3=c, 4=e, 5=a

**Part Two: Completion**

1. Warm
2. Line
3. 2/3

**Part Three: Short Answer**

1. By changing the color, shape, or texture of the plant material, the designer can achieve variety.
2. oval, pyramidal, weeping, round, columnar
Lesson C2–4: Applying the Principles of Art to the Landscape

Part One: Matching
Instructions. Match the term with the correct response. Write the letter of the term by the definition.

a. accent  
 b. symmetrical balance  
 c. asymmetrical balance  
 d. form  
 e. texture

_____ 1. The shape of an object.
_____ 2. Formal appearance.
_____ 3. Informal appearance.
_____ 4. Coarse or fine.
_____ 5. Point of the design that grabs the viewer’s eye.

Part Two: Completion
Instructions. Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. ____________ colors are visually stimulating and advance toward the viewer.
2. ____________ planting can either block a view or frame a view.
3. The height of plants in corner planting should be no more than ________ of the way from the ground to the eves.

Part Three: Short Answer
Instructions. Provide information to answer the following questions.

1. How can a designer achieve variety in the landscape?
2. List three common forms (shapes) of plant material.
   a. 
   b. 
   c.
THE PRINCIPLES OF BALANCE

Symmetrical Balance (Formal)

Asymmetrical Balance (Informal)
THE PRINCIPLE OF SCALE

Trees are too large for the home. Not in scale.
THE PRINCIPLE OF VARIETY

A planting bed with no variety is boring to look at.

A planting bed with variety is visually pleasing.
A line planting can either screen a view or frame a view.
**Lab Sheet**

**Directions:**
You need to design a line planting for the side of the yard. This area is just off of a patio so it needs to be attractive. There is a board-on-board fence behind the planting. Draw the planting at a 1/8 scale. Your planting should be 20 feet long. (Width is up to you.) Remember to place all plants in a bed. Plants can be drawn using circles of the appropriate size. Choose your plants from the list below. Make sure to label all plants. The principles of repetition and balance should be demonstrated in this planting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downy Serviceberry</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>20–25'</td>
<td>15–20'</td>
<td>White flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Redbud</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>20–25'</td>
<td>20–25'</td>
<td>Pink flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forsythia</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>6–10'</td>
<td>8–12'</td>
<td>Yellow flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Spice Viburnum</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>4–6'</td>
<td>5–8'</td>
<td>White flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact Holly</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>4–5'</td>
<td>6–8'</td>
<td>Rounded habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird’s Nest Spruce</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>1–2'</td>
<td>3–5'</td>
<td>Blue-green in color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creeping Phlox</td>
<td>EGC</td>
<td>4–6&quot;</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Pink, White, Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Spurge</td>
<td>EGC</td>
<td>6–10&quot;</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: DT=Deciduous Tree, DS=Deciduous Shrub, ES=Evergreen Shrub, EGC=Evergreen Groundcover
Lab Sheet

_Directions:_

Use the same plants from the previous lab to design a plant for the corner of the home. Use a 1/8 scale and place all plants in a bed. Be sure to pay attention to scale and provide accent for the views from the windows.