WILL THE REAL LION KING HELP?

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PROJECT

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WILL THE REAL LION KING HELP?

A Project

by

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Abstract

of

WILL THE REAL LION KING HELP?

by

Tyehimba Kokayi

This project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Masters of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. This project follows pathway III: Developing a curriculum, program, or performance related to arts education or arts in education. The author developed a West African drumming and dance class with third, fourth, and fifth grade students with the purpose of keeping the West African culture alive through research, drumming and dancing. Ultimately this class was presented to the school and the students’ families and friends. The author used journals, student research, and other forms of authentic assessments to track student growth and success throughout the project. The author found this to be a very meaningful and engaging way to teach the arts of West African cultural drumming and dance.

______________________________, Committee Chair
Crystal Olson, Ed.D.

______________________________
Date
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all of my students, my teachers, my family, and my friends for giving me the richness of fulfillment; knowing that I have been able to share a small part of the gifts the most high has bestowed on me. I would also like to especially thank my parents for watching over me from above and giving me the inspiration and compassion to care enough about people and the world, to retain this great legacy.
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Dr. Kimenyi, and all of my other CSUS instructors,
I will never forget how far ahead you all saw for me, you obviously believed in me before I even knew what belief was,

The entire Ethnic Studies Department,
EOP-without you I would have never even had a college career,

All of my drumming and dance teachers, my children, my family, and the most highest spirit of them all, for without acknowledging that power we would all have nothing…
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Project Statement

This project introduced African American and low-income elementary and middle school aged students to the culture of the Ancient Mali Empire through drumming and dance. One study done concerning the benefits to African American youth learning more about Africa found the positive results of positive cultural values being predictors of positive moral reasoning in African American adolescents (Woods & Jagers, 2003). The researcher hoped to produce similar positive results in this study.

Significance of Study

There was a need for more art in schools for African American and disadvantaged low-income youth. African American and low-income communities are experiencing such epidemic amounts of trouble with gangs, violent TV, radio and video games, disrespect for authority, that there is a need for creative nontraditional solutions involving arts programming that promotes cultural diversity. The research indicates there are not enough non-traditional creative cultural arts programs.

Some arts programs work better in schools than others. A good arts researcher has to consider many factors when planning a program curriculum, such as, realizing all children do not share the same cognitive strengths and do not learn in the same manner. Realizing these facts, the researcher needs to facilitate creating a curriculum that uses many different ways of teaching in order to account for the different ways children learn.
Non-traditional creative cultural arts programs teaching West African culture through drumming and dance are needed for four main reasons: One, these programs would keep more youth off of the streets; Two, these programs would teach African American youth about the roots of their own culture; Three, teaching West African culture through drumming and dance would facilitate and enhance learning in African American education; and Four, these programs would teach children of various other cultures who do not know and need to learn about other cultures.

The Problem

There was a significant lack of successful engagement in traditional education by African American youth. This problem was addressed by introducing elementary and middle school students to the culture of the Ancient Mail Empire through drumming and dance.

Background

Many African American youth exhibit dysfunctional behavior because the African American people in general were torn away from their natural homes and connections with nature and therefore do not know how to nor have any interest in knowing how to manifest their true sense of value through the universe. African people were stolen away from Africa and brought to America. Many of their old ways were taken and they were punished if they tried to retain them, even their spirituality that is in nature and the balance of nature in life. Without the power or skill or wisdom to harness
and/or balance that power, great potential goes untapped and African Americans lose their ability to manifest their true sense of value and universal power.

There is an increase in violence during the hours of three and six o’clock p.m. in inner urban areas, which is where a majority of African American and low-income minorities live. One reason communities need more projects like this one is because these projects keep African American and low-income youth off the streets during those hours. Research indicates the hours between three and six in the afternoon are most dangerous for African American and low-income youth (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Weisman, 2001) because of the lack of supervision by parents who are not home from work yet. Most unattended youth will use this as an excuse to participate in all kinds of illicit activities like drugs, gang violence or actions that lead to teen pregnancy.

Context of Study

This researcher worked in an urban elementary/middle school in south Sacramento in the Sacramento Unified School District. The project worked with a population that does not receive the same arts opportunities afforded many other elementary schools in the greater Sacramento area.

Methodology

The researcher used mixed methods including conducting personal interviews, reading books, looking at charts, graphs and maps. The researcher used mostly qualitative research as the first choice of methodology. The researcher introduced West African culture through West African drumming and dance. The concept was, some of the skills
used in West African culture can be used to enhance, strengthen, and supplement the academic curriculum. In this study, the researcher intended to show that there is a particular need for alternative teaching methods in schools and the alternative of using West African drumming and dance to supplement the regular curriculum.

Limitations

1) There was not enough time to spend with the students to adequately convey the deeper benefits of increasing their self esteem through some of the finer nuances of the culture. This would require more contact hours than existed within the framework of the project.

2) Another limitation was not having enough drums for each for each one of the students to practice on. In order to reach their fullest potential as players, each student would have to practice several hours a day. Without the support of adequate funding to purchase a drum for each student, it was very difficult to keep the students focused on the subject matter at home. The Djembe’ is not just a drum, but a symbol of many other aspects of West African culture; a relationship needs to be cultivated between a student and his drum.

3) The language barrier was also a bit of a limitation. Some of my students spoke very little English, but I found the challenge exciting and very fulfilling. To see a child learn by just watching and observing proves how vital and powerful the arts are; they can be communicated cross culturally.
Definition of Terms

Abdoulia Diakite

From the Bamana ethnic group in Senegal, former lead drummer for the National Dance Company of Senegal, also co founder and director of Ceedo West African Dance Troupe

Ancient Mali Empire

Second of the great ancient empires of Africa, from about 1200 A.D.-1350 A.D.

Arrogance

To think you are better than someone else, for any reason

The “Break”

The signal in the music that alerts all to the upcoming occurrence of something

Clear sound

To distinctly play a note in such a way there is no mistaking which note you are playing

Djebebara

Unity drum, original name for the djembe’ in Bamana

Djembe’

Ancient drum from West Africa, made from carved hollow tree and topped on the larger side with goat skin.
Djun-Djun

The larger bass drum in family of three, long, cylindrical and topped on both ends with cowhide.

Flow

To continue producing and using the energy vital to the continuance of a groove

Focus

Single-minded concentration on the task at hand

Humility

To always be gracious and thankful

Humbleness

To not brag or be boastful

Kinkini

The middle drum in a family of three also long, cylindrical and topped on both ends with cowhide.

Listen

To honestly, actually try to take in and understand what is being heard

The “OK” Rule

Even if you were doing exactly what you were just told to do you simply say, “ok”
Rhythm

A recurring pattern that speaks and responds to itself and conveys a certain emotion.

Respect

To treat others in the same manner you would like to be treated.

Sangba

The middle drum in a family of three, also long, cylindrical and topped on both ends with cowhide.

Spirit

An intangible force

Spiritual Intent

To affect someone using an intangible force

Student

A person whose first responsibility is to actually try to retain information

Study

To actually try to retain information.

Sundiata

First king of the ancient Mali empire
Organization of the Project

This paper has been organized to introduce the reader to the study, review other pertinent research, confer how the study was conducted, analyze the data collected and discuss the study’s findings and recommendations.

This project is organized into four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The sections in this chapter are: the project statement, the significance of the study, a statement of the problem, background, context, methodology, definition of terms, limitations, and the organization of the project. The second chapter is the review of relevant literature. The sections of this chapter include, The Theory and Practice of the Arts in Education; We Had Great Kingdoms; Legacy for Youth of the African Diaspora and a summary. The third chapter is the methodology. It includes developing the project, background of the researcher, and the project itself. The fourth chapter is discussion and recommendations for the future. The project curriculum is contained in the Appendix and a reference section is available at the end of the paper.
The theory and practice of the arts in education in America is extremely archaic and Eurocentric; it does not take into account the immense increase in the ethnic diversity that has occurred over the last thirty years. It is extremely important to introduce children to other cultures’ ways of thought and art is the best way. All students should learn about the Japanese esthetic expressed by the cultural concepts of *In Praise of Shadows* by Jun’ichiro Tanizaki (1977), and the philosophy of Donald Arnstein. According to Lester Frank Ward education is, “…a direct and potent instrument of social progress” (as cited in Kliebard, 1982, p. 9). As a result of efficiency becoming the criterion of success in curriculum matters, there became an increasing need to keep track of what was being taught in the schools. “By applying the standardized techniques of industry to the business of schooling, waste could be eliminated, and the curriculum…could be made more functional…” (Kliebard, 1982, p. 11); a one curriculum fits all model and that is where education has stayed. The problem with this is that not everyone in the different cultures learns the same way. Some children do better with math; some do better with science, some with art. No one subject is better or should be held in any higher position than the other. Who is to say what knowledge is of most worth?

The curriculum reform movement of the 1960s was not very successful because during the 1970s attention was placed on improving test scores, setting minimum
academic standards, designing achievement tests and trying to monitor the system carefully by using terms like, “back to basics” as the unifying mantra. It still did not work because good teaching cannot be mandated and unless there are changes in education, especially with the inappropriate assessment criteria that do not strengthen the faulty educational system things are only going to get worse for our children.

A new educational theory would be a means to teach children the things they need to know in a format in which they are most comfortable. Children learn more effectively when they feel comfortable with not just the school or their friends, but about themselves. Dewey (1934) expresses that, learning occurs when the lesson is a true aesthetic experience. A true aesthetic experience is when the student is fully engaged and focused in on the lesson. What better way to make children feel good than to engage them in something they are good at and transfer the good feelings into other subjects. What a child learns now he knows forever; when it is an experience. Our brains are designed to do this, be elastic and hold onto experiences. The brain can retain thoughts about many things but can only focus on or attend to one thing at a time, but by working to maintain or even increase our brain plasticity, we are able to experience, and retain more of the brighter moments in life. One must exercise the brain to keep it strong. Learning new tasks, which is exactly what happens when children participate in the arts, is the best way to grow our children’s brains. “…stronger synapses…is what underlies all of learning.” (Brown, 2007). Dance a new dance, dancing old dances will not do it, doing things you
are comfortable doing will not make your brain grow. However if you spend your days learning new artistic things, your brain will grow (Brown, 2007).

What is art? Art is the process of bringing something into being, an act of creation. In Dewey (1934) chapter one entitled, *The Live Creature* he is saying it is ridiculous that the very things, “works of art” which were created for a functional purpose in a community, have been stripped of their original function and placed in a category where they are only looked at and not used. For example, some daily mundane articles like rugs, mats, and jars from the past were so uniquely designed and the artisans of the past worked so meticulously and skillfully that their work is considered to this day as a “work of art.” Most of these "masterpieces" have been stored in European museums built by tyrants and are simply monuments to them. Berger (1972) would like to see the layout of museums changed; he thinks that would allow people to have more of an experience with the arts. The art elites hold a very backward view of art based on the theories of those who hoarded art in the past (Berger, 1972). The world is unconscious to the aforementioned backwards theories, that is why the people are still so confused about the true nature of art and the inner joy it brings. Because these theories have destroyed the esthetic perceptions we need for the very conceptualization of art, our task is to correct the old perception of art, which has taken away the connection between our daily life and how to recognize the esthetic qualities of it. To accomplish this we will need a new theory that will show us how to combine our experiences into the most ideal. This will drive our collective experiences to a revelation that will reveal to us how to place
more value on the occurrences in our daily lives. This will give life a more vibrant outlook, which we can in turn model for our descendants (Berger, 1972).

The new theory will need to make us aware of three key points in order for this glorious chain of events to transpire: a) it should make us aware of the function of art in relation to other expressions, b) the second key is, it should reveal why the function is not sufficiently acknowledged, and c) it should suggest the best conditions to perform the activity (Eisner, 1998, p. 15). Once all these conditions are met a certain balance and harmony is the result; a byproduct attained through rhythm bringing about existence, equilibrium and form. Because of these supporting causes, coherence is reached which strengthens their endurance. Order for the diverse community is the result because of the different energies being brought together (Eisner, 1998, p. 63). Art fosters cognitive skills like the ability to experience qualitative nuance, thus we should think about the arts as forms that develop thinking skills and enlarge understanding. Educational experiences in the arts sustain experiences because students use different senses to experience each different art. Learning to appreciate the creations of each art form increases the minds achievement. Since teaching is artistic, everything can be taught more efficiently using art as a basis for the achievement of excellence! Because of the futility of the art classification system it is up to us as the recognizers of art to restore the proper balance to society on how art and daily life experiences are viewed; the example of the mechanic who meticulously cares for his tools is an artist who clearly dictates this concept. The arts foster so many wonderful things that will improve our way of living. The arts have
children practice skills like problem solving, working as a team, deciding details of importance, which is discernment.

Dewey (1934) said our life experiences are capable of being esthetic experiences and we should have more of them. When we think of something and it makes us feel really good and we anticipate more, that is the esthetic ideal. Because our past weighs us down in our present, if we can remember to take a good look around at our daily life experiences, where we live, where we work, where we exist every minute of our day, our life will be much richer and filled with esthetic experiences. To understand what Dewey means by “Having an Experience," we must first recognize two traits all experiences share and they are simply that both involve something living and both take place somewhere in the environment. According to Dewey (1934), the definition of an experience has many facets; it is something that is a complete happening in and of itself, has incoming and outgoing energy, and is somehow separated in our conscience mind from all of the rest of the previous experiences in our lives. The experience has some single something that ties and signifies this happening far above the rest. There is a continuous flow to the activity; if one does stop, it is only to enhance the total experience. Dewey pointed out there is a strong compulsion to complete the experience because it is internally gratifying while moving towards its close. An experience carries on until its full completion; the ending is more than just the finish of the activity. A true experience has very real significance in our lives separating itself from all others past and present. A true experience must possess esthetic qualities that move us emotionally. When the
experience is truly an artistic esthetic experience the whole body is engaged and guided by emotional purpose but controlled by order and fulfillment. This emotion holds together the experience for us by providing a unity that all share who witness the event. Aesthetic perception is what allows an experience to be lifted higher than most previously conceived. The true experience is brought into being for it’s own sake (Dewey, 1934). The compulsion to properly capture the esthetic part of the experience of a creation is what demands that the artist commit himself entirely until the cessation of a project. The experience demonstrates form and dynamic organization because it is a time consuming process for the experience to take place from it's inception through its development, to its fulfillment. True experiences have pattern and structure but Dewey believes they are hurried and rushed through. Most people want to do things in as little time as possible and this Dewey says, causes a great many true experiences to be lost.

In *Ways of Seeing*, Berger (1972) wrote that there is a way to see the world that is different from the way most people today mundanely see it. He begins our enlightenment with the concept that words can never live up to our actual visual experience. Berger goes on to explain vision-to-vision (looking into someone’s eyes or watching) is even more direct communication than using words, and this is why the arts should be a part of every educational curriculum. Berger wrote that an artist reflects what they see, and how they see it, however and whatever it is they see; a very important point to convey. According to Berger the meanings of art changes for us depending on what comes immediately before or after we see it. Berger feels art began as spiritual ritual power. He further
asserts that the spiritually of art was to use its power over man. Later however, as a result of the ruling class hoarding art it reversed the power roles and collecting and preserving art became a social power. He says the ability to mass reproduce works of art makes them become valueless, not like in the old days of hoarding holy relics. Now art is "free" he says and everybody can enjoy it and that is a good thing! Art lost its power over man as a result of the mass reproduction of it and, therefore, art has lost its authority to images (Berger, 1972).

Thinking and knowing should not be limited to linguistic thought. Since curriculum is a mind-altering device we should use that knowledge and alter young minds in a positive way instead of a standardizing the one size fits all model. Gardner’s 1983 Multiple Intelligence theory classified seven modes of intelligence and argued that if children were allowed to pursue what they were interested in, it would change the definition of what it means to be smart and broaden our view of intelligence. All so-called abstract knowledge is the ability to relate language to images. Knowledge cannot be held to just what is said. There are other ways to show that one knows something. Science is not the only way to convey knowledge, the arts convey knowledge are also, both have similar structure; Dewey said, “Science states meanings, art expresses them" (Dewey, 1934, p. 87). We have to reintegrate the two back together for a fuller educational experience.

In the seventh century, Rene' Descartes separated the mind from the body (Eisner, 1998, p. 70), that was a big mistake; visual learning is an attempt to put mind and body
back together. The misunderstood role of arts in human development is due to the ancient Eurocentric concept of mind, logic and intelligence. If no time is spent on a subject in the curriculum, that says to the society the subject is not important. If no time is spent on arts programs, then that says the arts are not important. Five widely held misconceptions about mind, knowledge, and intelligence directly affect how our schools run: 1) Human conceptual thinking requires the use of language, 2) Sensory experience is low on the hierarchy of intellectual functioning, 3) Intelligence requires the use of knowledge, 4) Detachment and distance are necessary for true understanding, and 5) Scientific method is the only legitimate way to generalize about the world (Eisner, 1998). These beliefs have nothing to do with what the arts really have to offer like: 1) Not all problems have single correct answers, and 2) The form of a thing is part of its content; 3) Having fixed objectives and pursuing clear-cut methods for achieving them are not always the most rational ways of dealing with the world, and 4) the arts have an expressive function (Eisner, 1998). The arts perform functions of critical importance; providing a decent place in education for the arts is the best step we can take.

Does achievement in the arts boost academic achievement? Arts activities seem to improve student’s attitudes. Achievements are most notable in the area of learning to read through the arts but how can an arts program can be assessed with non-arts assessment measures; a most convincing argument in favor of assessment improvements. A more complete and comprehensive study is needed. A good study would include a comprehensive analysis of students who took art against students who did not. Students
would have to be randomly selected and care needs to be given to the form and content of the study. The course aims need to be monitored and the quality of teaching to each group needs to be monitored. It should use assessment procedures that mattered educationally and only count if it is of educational worth; appraisal must show results are educationally significant.

The scientific method of evaluation does not work for proper education, it was expected to yield better results but the task was much more complicated so a branch of cultural anthropology known as "ethnography" was employed to render better results. Functions of assessment should include 1) education temperature taking, 2) serve as a gatekeeper, 3) show whether course of objectives has been attained, 4) provide feedback to teachers on the quality of their work, 5) provide information on the quality of a program. Different forms of evaluation are required for different functions. Assessment needs to reflect what the students need to know in the real world. It should reveal how to go about solving a problem, reflect the values of the intellectual community, and not be limited to solo performance. It would make it possible for there to be more than one solution and one acceptable answer. It would have curricular relevance, display sensitivity to wholeness and permit students to select a form of representation to display what has been learned. It is precisely in the diversity of response to "common experience" that our cultural lives are enriched. “The celebration of such diversity is the creation of a civilization in which what is unique flavors the common weal" (Eisner, 1998, p. 148). Skills developed through the arts would be compared against the demands made on
students in academic classes. This a theory that brings together the cognitive skills of the arts and the functions these skills contribute to academics. Their importance is located in their contribution to other subjects. Arts education contributes by making a contribution to community, encourages rightness of fit, seeks coherence among relationships, develops pride of place connection between content and form, and refines the awareness of the aesthetic qualities of life. Students must acquire a feel for what it means to transform a thought into an artwork. Dispositions are gained through artistic expression because the phenomenon that eludes literal meaning is best shown through the art (Eisner, 1998).

We should be rethinking Educational Research to include the meaning of alternative paradigms that reject the idea that there is only one single epistemology; we need a broader view of knowledge. The theory of alternative paradigms undermines the scientific theory because when alternatives are suppressed we tend to accept what is already accepted. With the emergence of new paradigms coming to know takes on a broader meaning. The minds relationship to culture is intelligence often considered biologically transferred, but we are composed of many intelligences according to Gardner’s (1983) Multiple Intelligence theory. This influences our conception of cognition, the process through which an organism becomes aware (Statt, 1981). To cognize is to think in language, thinking and knowing are mediated by whatever the senses generate, therefore cognitions are wider than words. In a pluralistic universe we find things we did not previously cognize, that is we re-cognize the world to include
cognition. Forms of representation are functionally unique resources. The resources of the arts should be recognized as cognitive in character and requiring multiple intelligences like insight, understanding, and experience.

Changes in our concept of mind can have significant changes in our society. What is taught is one thing; how we organize what we teach, is another. Curriculum forms that relate to each other are more likely to bring about a significant change for new ways to study education and assess it practices. Adaptation is a form of survival; assessment requires adaptation in teaching that is what it means to be accountable. A teacher's sense of what is needed is a critical aspect of skilled teaching. Researchers dig up old knowledge and pass it on to teachers but the new way calls for teachers to do their own research for themselves, called action research. If the primary mission of school is to transfer knowledge and to make sure the students get it right then it should not matter what method is used as long as the knowledge has been transmitted. Knowledge transmission means knowledge can be discovered, packaged, transported, stored, and tested so productive diversity would encourage individual differences, not be confused into using the one size fits all model. If teachers were researching in this manner, it would confer professional status to them. “...experience is the bedrock upon which meaning is constructed” (Eisner, 2005, p. 151). The experience is determined by how much we are able to "get in touch" with whatever our inspiration is in the world. This crucial aspect of getting in touch does not occur if the mind is not fully engaged; perception is a cognitive event where construal is critical. Humans have a hand in their experiences and the
outcome depends on how we employ our minds. The use of our mind is the most potent means of developing it, what we think about matters! What we try to do with what we think about matters…what schools allow children to think about shapes the kinds of minds they have (Eisner, 1998). Education is a mind-making process filled with imagination and individuality, which are both critical to art. As sensibility is refined our ability to construct meaning increases, learning how to experience this means you are increasing your mind. The limits of our comprehension exceed the limits of our language and our experience is linked to the process of increased sensory differentiation. Out of experience, concepts are formed and used to generate possibilities of aesthetic values. Intentions are rooted in the imagination and to make our intentions public we must find some means of cultural representation and use schools as our cultural agencies. Representation is also an act of invention made possible by the form we use; how we think is influenced by what we think about. “By selectively emphasizing some forms of representation over others, schools shape children's thinking skills and in the process privilege some students and handicap others; school is profoundly political” (Eisner, 1998, p. 121).

If history is just text then just the learning of text is important, but if history is "the past" then as many forms of representation of the past that can and should be employed. Representation requires the skills needed to treat a material so that it functions as a medium and each individual’s result of their work will differ. Premises of assessment have to change if practices are to change; the refinement of scientific as well as artistic
sensibilities is relevant for enlarging human understanding. Humans formulate different understandings related to the forms of representation they encounter or employ and the way those forms are treated. The new array of teaching might look like MTV with images and sound. We need improvements in education so lives of teacher and students improve. “...our work lives its ultimate life in the lives it enables others to lead” (Eisner, 1998, p. 129).

In conclusion, the potential of different forms of representation is limitless; for example visual arts give us an all at once perspective of the event. How the form is crafted depends on the artistry within form, creating an impact of clear images and ideas improving ways of assessment of students and teachers. Content of curriculum, the very structure of the schooling institutions themselves, and the quality of teaching, will bring about vast improvements in education. We cannot continue with just a "what works" theory in education; instead of continuing to try to quantify and measure all results, we should be pursuing educational theories that draw attention to the subtle and significant.

Three Great Kingdoms

Introduction

No one knows how Africa got its name. “Dr. Van Sertima said the name Africa came from 'Afri-uka" which means "Motherland," in the ancient Egyptian language and that term "Motherland" is one still used in reference to Africa even today” (How did Africa get its name, n.d.). Because the dates of past researchers do not always exactly coincide, what we now know is this; from around the year 300 up to somewhere around
1591 Africa produced three of the most powerful kingdoms the world has ever known.

Recent research shows the existence of people living in that region as far back as the year 300 A.D. (McKissack & McKissack, 1994; Shuter, 2003).

**Ancient Kingdom of Ghana**

The people of the ancient empire of Ghana called their land *Ouagadou* (wa-gado). The Soninke people speak a Mande language and in that language the term for king or “warrior king” was Ghana. Mande is not just one language but a group of languages; the best comparison is how the term, “Romantic languages” refers to all the European languages derived from Latin (Chu & Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994).

**Table 1**

**Major Ethnic Groups of Ghana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Mande Ethnic Groups</th>
<th>Mandinka</th>
<th>Mende</th>
<th>Susu</th>
<th>Soninke</th>
<th>Dialonke</th>
<th>Bambara</th>
<th>Dyula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Soninke Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>Drame</td>
<td>Kante</td>
<td>Sylla</td>
<td>Sisse</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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(McKissack & McKissack, 1994, p. xviii)

The ancient empire of Ghana is not located in the same place as the modern country of Ghana in West Africa, they are located in two different areas. Ancient Ghana was located about 400 miles northwest of the modern day country of the same name 1400 years earlier (Chu & Skinner, 1965; mrdonn.org, n.d.a).
According to the oldest oral accounts of the ancient empire of Ghana reveal the Mande ethnic group called the Soninke (McKissack & McKissack, 1994, p. 5) emerged as the regions leader. The king ruled and was assisted by a council of elders. The kingdom was divided into districts with leaders guiding each district and most people obeying the laws. When they had squabbles with their neighbors from time to time, they were ready for trouble. Ghana was a great military power, with a huge army. It was said there were 200,000 warriors and 40,000 more with bows and arrows (Chu & Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994). The king did not enjoy going to war, instead he preferred to conduct public prayer in the large open plazas of his city, as he had always done (mrdonn.org, n.d.a).

The people of Ghana loved their life; most were farmers or miners. There were artists who made the most beautiful fabrics, using mud to make designs on dyed cloth and set in the sun. When set in the sun, the sun bakes the mud created design into the cloth, it is called “Mud cloth.” The clothing was and still is very colorful, made from cotton and continued until this day (mrdonn.org, n.d.a).

In the ancient empire of Ghana the people had ample food, fresh fruit, sweet potatoes, fish and waterfowl to eat from the Niger River, which also provided water for irrigating the farms, washing the clothes, and bathing. Because everyone felt protected they worked very hard, enjoyed their good life and sang and laughed a lot (mrdonn.org, n.d.a)
The Griots (GREE-ohs), or Jolis (JOL-li) as they are known in some ethnic groups, were the storytellers. Their job was to combine as many arts as they were capable of combining and tell and re-tell the ethnic groups history (McKissack & McKissack, 1994) from one generation to another. Everyone made time for music, art, and the Griots or Jolis. Most of the people in the village would gather in the evenings to hear the words and see the presentations of the Griots or Jolis. The people in the villages enjoyed hearing the Griots or Jolis, tell the stories they loved so much. “Anansi the Spider” was one of the favorite and most famous Ghanaian stories to survive (mrdonn.org, n.d.a).

The most significant two ores of the time were gold and iron. By 500 B.C.E. iron was widely used in West Africa and allowed the Ghanaians to build and craft better tools and weapons. The Blacksmiths held high esteem and believed to have magic powers in a secret society passing the information on to each successive generation (McKissack & McKissack, 1994).

The people of ancient Ghana were rich but never owned the gold or salt mines. The salt mines were controlled by kingdoms to the north of Ghana, kingdoms in the north Sahara Desert. Gold was controlled by kingdoms to the south of Ghana. Ghana gained control of the trade routes between the salt mines and the gold mines and made traders pay a toll to pass. Because Ghana had such a large army they assured the traders of safe passage and in return, Ghana only allowed the trade of gold dust only, they kept the gold nuggets for themselves, thus becoming the guardians and the negotiators. Eventually some of the people Ghana traded with felt like they were being treated unfairly. As the
Trans-Saharan Trade Route became more and more popular the Kingdom of Ghana soon became known as The Gold Coast (Chu & Skinner, 1965; mrdonn.org, n.d.a; Shuter, 2003).

Its greatest natural resource was the Niger River. Some of its strongest industries were farming, trading salt and gold and defense because of its strong army. The most plentiful agricultural crops were yams (sweet potatoes), beans, rice, onions, sorghum, millet, papaya, gourds, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, cotton, and peanuts. Ancient Ghana’s economy specialized in trading, farming and blacksmithing (Chu & Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.a).

The king and the common people followed traditional African religions and customs; there was no one official religion. In early times most people believed in a supreme GOD who had lesser angels to assist with human matters. To them everything has spirit including trees, rocks, water, air, etc. They believed their ancestors would and could intercede with these lesser angels so they were very careful to always offer prayers and other forms of propitiation to insure all the spirits were happy Religion or some form of spirituality was practiced by all, nobles and common people both believed in many gods and goddesses (Chu & Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.a; Shuter, 2003).

Some Ghanaian societies were called pagans for their worship of a snake the called Oagadou-Bida Islam spread into ancient Ghana in the eighth or ninth century because the Mande and Wangara traders and clerics of North Africa were very
commercially active. Islam did not make its entry into modern Ghana until the fifteenth century (Chu/Skinner, 1965; mrdonn.org, n.d.a).

The ancient kingdom of Ghana which began somewhere between 300 and 400 CE and grew to power by 800 CE, was one of the most powerful empires in the world by between 1054 and 1070 CE. Sometime around 1057, after the death of its founder Ibn Yacine the Almoravids of North Africa recaptured a crucial trading post which they struggled to control. The empire began to break into smaller independent city-state kingdoms. One of these, Kinya, is where the Ancient Mali Empire began. The Almoravids control lasted until around 1230 CE, when the Kingdom of Mali established power. (Chu/Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.a; Shuter, 2003).

Ancient Kingdom of Mali

The second great ancient kingdom was Mali. Between the years of 5000 BCE-2000 BCE, northwest Africa became a desert forcing people south to form new societies. By the twelfth century the Mandinka (aka Mandingo) people of Mali became the most powerful. The Kieta clan produced the first king of the ancient Mali empire. Sundiata, adopted Islam to bring cohesion to the government and the people. The Songhay Empire brought the Ancient Mali Empire to its demise (Chu & Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.b; Shuter, 2003).

In the ancient Kingdom of Ghana, Mali was one of the districts, but around 1230 CE Mali grew into a power strong enough to cause Ghana’s’ reign to collapse (Maps of the World.com, 2010; mrdonn.org, n.d.b). On the Niger river was the capital city of the
ancient Mali empire Kangaba. Kangaba was also said to be the spiritual capital of ancient Mali (Chu/Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.b).

King Sundiata

Ancient Mali was along the major trade routes for caravans crossing the dessert to pass. King Sundiata unified many neighboring ethnic groups and under his leadership founded one of the most famous and powerful empires the world has ever seen. Sundiata, ruler of Mali was popularly referred to as “The Lion King.” The legend of Sundiata varies but in short, he was one of several sons of Maghan Kon Fatta. Before Sundiata’s birth it was foretold that an ugly hump back woman would come to his kingdom and he would have to father a child with her. The baby would be strong and eventually lead Mali to greatness. One day Maghan and his Griot were approached by two hunters escorting a very ugly woman. He agreed to marry her and her name was Sogolon. He knew he must have a child with her and also knew his first wife Sassouma Berete was furious. At Sundiata’s birth there was a great storm. Sundiata was born a cripple with very weak legs, but his arms became very strong. He didn’t talk until seven years old when he and, Bala Fasseke, his Griot, became friends. When Sundiata finally decided to stand, he sent for an iron bar, which he jammed into the ground and pulled himself up to his feet. Sundiata and his family fled their home out of fear for their lives, but knew it was his destiny to come back home and defeat Sumanguru/Soumaoro the evil sorcerer king who was taking control of Mail (Bertol, 1970; Niane, 1965; Wisniewski, 1992)
As a result of Sundiata’s rise to power he had a very strong and powerful army with which he used to build his empire and control the trade routes. As the new king, he was very good to his people and one of the first things he did with his new power was to restore trade with the neighboring villages in his area (Maps of the World.com, 2010). He was very smart and kept the drummers and Griots/Jolis busy telling tales about the achievements and accomplishments of he and his clan (mrdonn.org, n.d.b). These practices kept moral high and instilled in everyone a sense of community (mrdonn.org, n.d.b; Shuter, 2003).

Sundiata was the king who expanded Mali’s power enough to control the gold mines to the south and the salt mines in the north. Timbuktu was on one of the most important trade routes as traders in camel caravans carried salt from the northern mines to be traded for gold and other goods such as nuts and grain that were carried from the southern part (mrdonn.org, n.d.b).

Mansa Musa ruled the Mali Empire from 1312 to 1337 and built magnificent mosques and universities. Because of his love of knowledge and poetry. Mansa Musa built a university at Timbuktu, a city on the Trans-Sahara Trade Route on the Great Bend on the Niger river, in ancient Mali People came from all over to study at this famous center of learning. Under Mansa Musa’s rule, Timbuktu became a well-known cultural center in West Africa famous for its commerce where Arabic was spoken, written and read but it was not the official language. Another major cultural center was the
University/Mosque in DJenne’ (Chu & Skinner, 1965; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.b).

Mali unofficially adopted Islam after Sundiata took power. He used Islam’s order to increase the stability of his new kingdoms governmental structure. Though Islam was the unofficial spiritual practice Sundiata allowed ethnic groups to keep their own forms of spirituality. Other ethnic groups mixed their indigenous forms of spirituality with their oppressors like the Bamana people who used the Djembe‘ drum for many of their spiritual practices. Since the main religion was Islam most of the nobles were devout Muslims but many of the common people were polytheistic and believed in many gods and goddesses. Timbuktu became one of the main centers of learning and the main place to study Islam. The fame of Timbuktu spread far and wide (mrdonn.org, n.d.b).

When Europe was in the dark ages the ancient Mali Empire was flourishing The time period of the ancient empire of Mali was roughly from 1200 CE through the late 1400's. Mali had twice as many people and a land mass two times larger than its predecessor ancient Ghana by the year 1300. At its height the Ancient Mali Empire stretched from the Atlantic sea to the bend in the Niger river. The major exports of Mali were gold and salt, which means its most abundant natural resources were the Niger River, Gold, and Salt Mines. Their chief industries were also farming, mining, trading, and defense. Their most prevalent agricultural crops were beans, rice, onions, sorghum, millet, papaya, gourds, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, cotton, and peanuts. Mali’s economic specializations were traders, miners, farmers, blacksmiths and soldiers. Two of their most
famous people are Sundiata, a very clever, courageous, young and strong king and Mansa Musa. After the death of Sundiata, his son Wali continued to expand the borders of the empire until he too had a son who would one day grow up to inherit the throne.

Sundiata’s grandson, Mansa Musa who was the next great ruler who contributed to the meteoric rise of the ancient Mali Empire traveled across Africa in search of new places to trade and new people to meet (Chu & Skinner, 1965; mrdonn.org, n.d.b; Shuter, 2003).

The glorious period of history for the ancient Mali Empire began to decline after Mansa Musa's death from approximately 1332 and 1337 internal disputes, such as previously annexed states reasserting their independence, a lack of a dynamic king and extensive arguing over who would be next resulted in the downfall of the empire. The vast ancient Mali Empire broke off into small states. Songhay “broke off,” asserted its independence, and rose to power thus bringing an end to the ancient empire of Mali. (Haskins, Benson, & Cooper, 1998; McKissack & McKissack, 1994; mrdonn.org, n.d.b; Shuter, 2003).

*The Ancient Kingdom of Songhay*

The third and largest great ancient kingdom was the Songhay. By 1340, the ancient Mali Empire was in decline. Many of its outlaying provinces declined support for Mali. The Songhay, who made Gao their capital since the 11th century, were one of the first to declare their independence and by 1464 (28 years before Columbus) began annexing neighbor city-states. From the early 15th to the late 16th century, Songhay was one of the largest African empires in history and bore the same name as its leading ethnic
group, the Songhay (also spelled Songhai). Its base of power was on the bend of the Niger River in present day Niger and Burkina Faso. The Songhay state has existed for over a thousand years in one form or another, from the first settlement in Gao to its continuation as the Dendi Kingdom in Niger (Shuter, 2003; Songhai empire, n.d.).

The Songhay are thought to have settled in Gao in 800 CE, and when Gao was established as the capital in the 11th century, Dia Kossoi was in power. However, the Sunni took over the Dia dynasty, bringing into power Sulaiman-Mar, and he was a forbearer of Sunni Ali Ber. In all, the Sunni dynasty would count 18 kings. Mar is most often given the credit for the independence of the small Songhay kingdom (Songhai empire, n.d.).

*Sunni Ali Ber.* The first great emperor of Songhay was Sonni Ali, reigning from about 1464 to 1492. Ali was a Muslim like the Mali kings before him. He was also an efficient warrior who, in the 1460s, conquered many of the Songhai’s neighboring states, establishing himself as the empire’s most formidable military strategist and conquer. The empire of Sunni Ali expanded to more landmass than all of western Europe and to date the largest Africa has never seen. It was so vast it developed into twelve city-states. The great wealth brought to the Songhay Empire, would surpass the wealth of ancient Mali. This was because Sunni Ali eventually gained control of critical trade routes. (Shuter, 2003; Songhai empire, n.d.).

Sonni Ali finally conquered Timbuktu in 1468. Sonni, however, immediately met stark resistance trying to conquer Djenne; only after having starved them into surrender
after seven long years of fighting did he win in 1473. Under the rule of Muhammad Ture, it can be undoubtedly stated that the empire reached its Zenith. The Songhay city of Timbuktu became a thriving cultural and commercial center where all merchants gathered to trade especially in gold. However, by present day standards, the word Timbuktu simply means some very far off place. As children, while arguing with a friend, the phrase, “I will knock to all the way to Timbuctu!” might be heard yelled across the schoolyard. The Songhay Empire, was more than 1.4 million square km by the year 1500 (Chu & Skinner, 1965; Songhai empire, n.d.).

_Askia Muhammad the Great._ Sonni Ali was followed by an emperor named Muhammad Ture commonly called an Askiya or usurper, and he adopted the name as his title and name of his dynasty. Whereas Ali brought conquests, Muhammad brought political reform and revitalization (Songhai empire, n.d.).

While a Muslim in faith, Sunni Ali did not impose Islamic policy on non-Islamic peoples and instead allowed and acknowledged the observance of their own form of African traditional religion and practices. During his reign, Askia Muhammad was revered as a devout Muslim and respected statesman. He set up administration throughout the various lands previously conquered by his predecessor, Sonni Ali; decisions were motivated by his strict adherence to Islam. He declared Jihads against the neighboring Mossi, whom he could not get to convert to Islam, and eventually subdued them (Songhai empire, n.d.).
Under the reign of Sonni Ali, Djenne one of Mali’s oldest cities and Timbuktu were on their way to becoming great centers of learning. These were very elaborate structures made in traditional Muslim architecture from mud bricks. Islam was taught at the university in Timbuktu. Askia Muhammad the Great opened religious schools, constructed mosques, and opened up his court to scholars and poets from throughout the Muslim world. Early Arabic literature mentions the Songhay cities of Jenne and Timbuktu and listed them as important learning centers having major Islamic universities by the fifth tenth and sixteenth centuries. The importance of Timbuktu was not only were goods traded but concepts and ideas also (Shuter, 2003; Songhai empire, n.d.).

The decline of the Songhay occurred following Dauoud's death. A civil war of succession weakened the Empire, leading Saadi Sultan Ahmad I al-Mansur Saadi of Morocco to invade under the eunuch Judar Pasha who captured Gao, Timbuktu, and Djenné, destroying the Songhais’ regional power. These are but three examples of the greatness of the early African kingdoms; examples that most African Americans and low-income youth have no idea even existed.

Historical Cultural Background of African Americans

To teach African Americans about who we really are, we have to first realize and accept the fact that most African Americans do not know or care much about the rich history of the ancient African cultures, how beautiful and strong they were. This researcher believes if African Americans knew how great they were in the past they
would make themselves do a better job at striving for excellence and self-respect. Most of us don’t know or care about the rich history of the ancient African cultures, how beautiful and strong they were. Most of what we know is negative and about Africa being without. If we knew how great we were in the past we would make ourselves do better. Black American people are fascinated by the organization of the Asian people and the teamwork of the Mexican people, but we never see ourselves as being or having a culture worthy of the same kind of respect. I, the researcher, was influenced by Bruce Lee and Asian culture because he was such a positive role model with good morals, well disciplined and spiritually and ethereally deep. I was impressed by his philosophy of “fighting without fighting” expressed in his blockbuster movie *Enter The Dragon* in 1973 and the many references to nature and spirit being the most important elements.

The researcher wanted to know about those kinds of subjects but thought as an African American, we, Africans, had not studied such things, but the researcher was wrong. The Dogon people knew about the star “Sirius” hundreds years before European scientists. European anthropologists first learned of the connection between Sirius and the Dogon in 1931 from the French anthropologist Marcel Griaule who studied the Dogon from 1931 to 1956. The Dogon believe that the brightest star in the sky, Sirius (sigi tolo or 'star of the Sigui'), has two companion stars, pô tolo (the Digitaria star), and ëmë ya tolo, (the female Sorghum star), respectively the first and second companions of Sirius A. It was also claimed that the Dogon appeared to know of the rings of Saturn, and the moons of Jupiter.
This is but one example of how knowledgeable the societies of Africa are. They have extensive knowledge of every element in their environment, including spirituality. African people have always believed in spiritual power higher than themselves. To speak of spirituality we have to talk about the indigenous peoples of West Africa’s spirituality. Each of the many different indigenous ethnic groups have had some form of spirituality they practiced prior to the introduction of Islam around 1200 B.C.

Some African people resisted Islam, like my teacher’s people, the Malinke/Dogon ethnic group, the Bambara; this ethnic group is also referred to in literature as the Bamana people. The Bamana are from Tombacounda Senegal, which is near the present day Mali border. The Dogon is still one of the ethnic groups who worship some of their deities in the same fashion as their ancestors, with masks and dances (Shuter, 2003) and lots of drumming. They were called barbarians for not totally embracing Islam and the word Barbarian became Bambara…the words are strikingly similar (Abdoulia Diakite, personal communication, July 23, 1982).

This research is a tribute to my teachers, Abdoulia Diakite for the majority of my knowledge about Djembe’ and Alasane Kane for my knowledge of West African dance. The things I have learned about spirituality by being in their presence are astounding. It is from Abdoulia that I became convinced that astral projection is really possible; he actually comes to me in dreams. He would communicate with me through playing his drum; how? It was through the spirit. He is such a spiritually strong person that in the summer of June, 1994, I was working at the West African drum and dance camp, that our
dance company was hosting, mopping the dining hall floor after lunch. He would start teaching a drum class on the other side of the camp and when he would start playing his drum, it was as if he was whispering into my ear to come to him. I would hear and obey and go running off to find the sound of his drum. Once I found the class and he knew I was there, he would stop playing and continue teaching verbally. It was as if there was something that he was teaching he wanted to make sure I heard from him. I asked him about these instances several years later, whether he really was calling me and he said, “Yes, I was calling you.” I believe he wanted me to weave the dance information, I was gathering from my dance teachers with the drum information he was calling me to teach, into the same spiritual power he used.

When African people were stolen away from their countries they were also stolen away from their spirits and punished if they tried to retain them. Their spiritual and emotional ties were cut, their drums were taken and they were forbidden to dance. They were punished for speaking their own language, punished for trying to retain any bits of their culture. They were forced to only learn and use oppressors ways. From slavery until now there has been no acknowledgement of the importance of the spirit of the drum and dance. The stream of power was passed on to me, which is why I am compelled to past it on to all of my students. If all the descendants of the slaves only knew their heritage, how strong the black nation would be today! Spirituality was part of the overall culture for many Africans and it was disguised and diverted into Christianity; taken away from the slaves because it was our power; to disorientate us; since our indigenous forms of
spirituality were taken we were cut off from access to that power. It is unfortunate that so little has been retained. Our children need the Djembe’ drum and dance as a source of power and enlightenment. The slave masters knew how powerful the drum and dance were then and that is why they banned it so many years ago; and that is why African Americans do not see it in any regard today; and that is why it needs to be preserved, because there are still vestiges of that power today and it can still be accessed by the African American and low income youth. The African American and low-income youth of America can still use that power. The same spiritual power that was there in the ancient Mali empire is still here today, maybe not as strong or powerful but we still have access to the vestiges of it right now through the drum and dancing.

The researcher intends to give a sense of the spiritual power accessible through West African drum and dance. Spirits in the music, in the drumming even in the dancing and singing can be accessed but one has to play or dance or sing for a long time until the spirits will come. It is as if they will not come immediately, you have to really “give it up” for them to appear. That is what the repetition is for, you have to almost get on a spirit’s nerves, sometimes for them to come; for them to know you are really sincere. Once the African American and low-income students know we have this kind of power as a resource they will be happy to learn about it. The Christians did not really tell anyone how to actually conjure up spirits, in fact they want African Americans to be afraid of any other one than Jesus Christ’s spirit. They want us to feel guilty if we chose to learn about ourselves or our own spirituality. The researcher’s knowledge of Christianity
comes from his life experiences as the son of a southern Baptist pastor and was required to attend every service his family was even remotely associated with. This type of actual experience is rich and full with examples of how Africanisms are not celebrated in Christian environments.

Types of Drums and Spirituality

The researcher will give a brief explanation of the spirituality of the drums and dance originating in West Africa, specifically the Djembe’ and how we use it today. The music of Senegal, West Africa consists of variety of instruments and drums which all come together and inspire the people to dance. The drums, including the Djembe’, are used for everything from celebrations to ceremonies and most of their form and functions have not changed for centuries. The original name for the Djembe’, according to the Bambara (or Bamana) people from the Tambacounda region, is “Djebebara”, or unity drum, that is because when the Djebebara is played correctly it brings people together. (Tambacounda-Dunun ni Don, 1989, cover). The Bamana people believe that everything has spirit therefore they had songs and correspondingly Djembe' rhythms for literally everything in the culture from harvesting food to calling the blacksmith, the Bamana have a song, Djembe' rhythm and a corresponding dance to go with it.

The energy created by the Djembe’ when the people come together serves to invite and invoke Spirits for the healing of the people. When the people come together they would do Spiritual dances. For most Africans, dance is a big part of life. The inspiration to dance comes from the spirits of the land, and from the spirits of the organic
materials used to craft the drum. “The traditional religion of the Malinke…core of their belief was that it was the ‘spirits of the land’ who ensured the success of their crops. The earliest farmers…were believed to have made a deal with the spirits to ensure the successful production of their crops. And it was through spiritual contact with their ancestors that the people of the present were able to keep in touch with the original settlers and thus with the spirits of the land” (Shillington, 1995, p. 96)

The Djun_Djun family was its own music at one time in West Africa. Now they are quite frequently seen accompanying the Djembe’. The Djun_Djun family consist of three drums all cut from the same tree. They are cylindrical in shape and have heads on both ends. The three members in family are, the Djun-Djun or the papa drum, his tones are low sounds. Quite frequently a cow bell is attached to it. The Sangba, or the mama or middle drum, her sounds are in the middle range of the register, and the Kinkini, or baby drum; who plays the high sounds of the trio. All three are played with sticks and covered with cow skin. The Djembe’ is shaped like a chalice also. It is carved from a single piece of wood all the way through then given its shape. It is covered with goat skin on the large end and pulled tight and tuned by a very intricate rope system. Most ethnic groups who drum use a similar tuning system. No one knows exactly how or where the Djembe’ originated; every ethnic group that plays it credits themselves with its creation.

The Djembe’ is played with hands and struck in certain places asking it to return certain sounds. When the head is struck the skin vibrates, the vibrations are enhanced in the hollow chamber, and the sound comes out of the bottom of the drum. Moving along
the ground and through space the sound enters the ear and body simultaneously. The head must be struck very firmly and quickly with a “hands off” motion in order to allow the goat skin to vibrate and thus produce the requested sound. How to make the three notes…The Djembe’ notation consists of three basic notes which is the responsibility of the player to practice ceaselessly to find. Without this rudimentary vocabulary one’s drum cannot speak, it is said they have no voice. The notes are bass, tone, and slap. The bass is caused by a solidly firm hand striking the middle of the drum. The tone is heard when the four fingers of either hand strike the end of the drum and is again, lifted quickly. The slap is heard when the hand strikes the same place as the tone but this time the hand is held as loose as possible. How they fit together…The music is created when these three notes are intermixed at predetermined intervals and a recognizable pattern emerges. How it connects to the dancer?…The music connects to dancer inside. The result of a skilled Djembe’ player playing inevitably activates an internal mechanism which compels the dancer to move. What does dancer listens to…The dancer hears all the different drums but must train themselves to use the Djun-Djun for the tempo, and then can enjoy how the head drummer accentuates his step. How to listen to the drum…One must practice focusing in on one rhythm at a time in order to hear all of the complex rhythm patterns played by a skilled battery of drummers. The drum is seen as a cannon to the colonist, so it was demonized (Quadros, 2007). It is important to note that the creation of a drum is not a simple task.
Some of the different styles of drums in Senegal include Sabar, it is shaped like an elongated chalice, with a single head on the big end. The Sabar drum is played with a long slender stick in one hand and an open palm of the other hand. The Ceruba drum is a small chalice shaped drum with a single head on the large end. It is played with a stick in one hand while the other hand is open. The Tama or Talking drum is shaped like an hourglass, has two heads, one at each end usually covered with alligator skin. It is played by strapping to one’s underarm where the tuning rope can be tighten of loosened depending on how tightly it is squeezed under the arm, this raises and lowers the pitch. The Bugarbu are multiple drums played by one player. This style of drumming is from the Casamance region of Senegal. The player has bells tied onto his arms to enhance the rhythm and call the spirit (Kokayi, 2010).

Dance

We must begin with the Yoruba, a group of people from the west coast of Africa, Nigeria specifically. The researcher will refer to the dance and spirituality together. The Yoruba are famous for their story-telling, dancing and their spirituality,…Ifa’, a spiritual and cultural practice brought to the Americas and the Caribbean including, Cuba, Brazil, and Haiti by the West African slaves who believed heavily in the spiritual forces of nature. The Europeans threatened the Yoruba with death for practicing their customs so they cleverly hid their religion by aligning their gods, or Orishas, with the saints of the Catholic Church. Several million Yoruba were brought to the Americas and the Caribbean during slavery and to this day a version of their original spirituality, Ifa, is still
practiced by them. In Haiti, in spite of Christianity, it still exists and is called Vou Dou. In Brazil, Con Domble and in Cuba it is called Santeria. This form of spiritual expression has with it various elements including dance, divination, drumming and ebos. The dance associated with this is very expressive. It is combined with drums, each countries styles are a little different, and a series of prayers are said as the drums and dancing build to a frenzy. The spiritual leaders are calling their spirits, Loa in Brazil, Orisha in Cuba, the Americas and Haiti, to mount or possess a person and cause them to dance in a way that is peculiar only to this practice. In “Divine Horseman,” a movie by Maya Deren made in Haiti in the 1940s and 1950s as she completed her doctoral work, this dance and the process leading up to it can be seen very clearly. To see another example of this Afro Caribbean style dance in Cuba, Andy Garcia does an excellent job of showing glimpses of it in his movie titled, The Lost City (Garcia, 2005). The phrase “Divine Horseman” is used to show how a person dances and what happens when an orisha mounts or takes possession of a practitioner’s body. When the spirit enters the body the person is said to dance like they have been, “mounted” as in ridden like a horse, and the orisha, meaning the god, would be the divine rider of the person, the steed. The dance would continue until the dancer has a revelation and an awareness of a spiritual obligation has occurred. The obligation is then verified through a system known as divination, another element of their spirituality. The same type of spiritual possession is possible with the Djembe’ drum.
Divination is a method the practitioners use to contact and communicate with their gods. Many objects are used in divination for example, in Brazil, it is called Dilogun Ifa’ and it uses cowrie shells, in Haiti, Cuba, and the Americas, coconut pieces carved into a certain shape by the diviner and chicken bones were used by the slaves, and sacred palm nuts are also used. Some of the different West African types of divination are, Dida Obi (casting kola nuts), Erindinlogun (16 cowrie shells), Opele (a divining chain). Sometimes the divination calls for the practitioner to carryout a series of directions to further appease the gods; based on my own personal experiences, these directives are known as Ebos. Ebos are certain procedures performed by the person receiving the divination to call on or further satisfy the orisha. Some scholars believe the verb cognate to ebo is bo meaning to worship, or to worship by offering sacrifice, because sacrifice is regarded as food for the gods. The act of sacrificing as offering food to the gods was considered to be a very self-less act (Oduyoye, 1972).

Characteristics of West African derived dances in America include, high energy, bent knees, low to the ground-a “get down feel”, multiple meter isolations- each body part moving to a different rhythm, using circles. These same distinct features can be seen reflected in modern hip-hop dance. According to Robert Farris Thompson, (Armstrong, 1981), a vital aliveness, which is defined as, playing the body with percussive strength, is always apart of it. Flexibility; “the ability to dance like you have no bones” is one of the highest compliments which can be given a dancer according to many ethnic groups in African dance. Simultaneous suspending and preserving of the beat is another trait
highlighted by Thompson. The way some of the people dance is as if some of their moves were in slow motion; their legs were moving at one tempo and their arms would slow down and follow a different pattern. The “Get-Down Quality” is also made very apparent by the dancers performing West African dance. Their expressive solos brought them out onto the floor. They would whirl and spin then, directed by the lead drummer, rise back to their feet without the use of anything but the rhythm of the drums. The concept of Multiple Meter was also confirmed by these dancers. Whether they were born in Africa or Latin America or anywhere else on the planet, people of African descent seem to all have the ability to listen to one beat, keep time by stepping or clapping and then clap or step to follow another beat simultaneously. “Looking Smart” refers to a certain style with which the dance is performed. “Looking Smart” is an African English term which indicates a certain cleanliness or sharpness of movement. The concept of Correct Entrance and Exit was directed by the lead drummer to all of the dancers as they knew exactly when it was their turn to dance. No one encroached on anyone else’s solo. They all had an internal chronometer, which told them when the other was finished. Vividness Cast into Equilibrium speaks to how changing contrasting movements were displayed by the dancers. Fast jagged moves were tempered by the slow moving waves of elasticity. Stability or straightness: personal balance; the balance displayed by some of the soloists were simply amazing. One whorled around turning himself inside out and somehow knew the precise place and time to put his feet down, regained his personal balance and
walk out of the circle as if he had just done nothing. The dancers all yelled, “Wow!” (Armstrong, 1981)

Call and Response was another of the authentic West African traits inherently known and exhibited by these dancers. As the drummers would play a rhythm they would cheer or yell back in the exact rhythmic time to allow room for the process to repeat itself. It was through the rhythm that the drummers were able to communicate with the dancers spiritually. Ancestorism is the ability to incarnate destiny; each of the dancers were channeling the spirits of their ancestors. They all felt the beat and were at home with it. It gave them a sense of comfort and relaxation unattainable in the sounds they hear everyday. The goal of the drummers was to make all of the dancers aware of this peace of mind found only in their history and culture. Visibility, luminosity, smoothness, rebirth and reincarnation were all exhibited in the few minutes they performed. The dancers fully embodied their African selves.

The researcher has shown some of the similarities between three major African dance styles from Cuba, Brazil, Haiti and the Americas. All of these styles stem from the people of West Africa who were brought here as slaves. Although the people were brought to these places against their will, they were still able to maintain a small part of their culture and blend it with the indigenous people they encountered and created the beautiful rich dances we are fortunate to be able to witness today.

Modern African dance owes much to President Leopold Sengor. He founded the professional dance troupe known as, “Ballet National du Senegal” in 1960 with the help
of Katherine Dunham. Dunhams' dance style is based on the West African and Haitian culture. Dunham was invited to visit Senegal just after they received their independence and help Sengor develop and train the first National Dance Company of Senegal. The Ballet is responsible for creating dazzling representations of the various ethnic groups there (Senegal, 2007).

Legacy For Youth of The African Diaspora

Don’t care where you come from as long as you’re a Black man you are an African. No mind your nationality, you have got the identity of an African… (Tosh, 1977)

What the researcher wants to emphasize is how the use of West African drumming and dance will enhance learning in African American education. How?...by filling African American and low income youth with so much pride they will want to uphold the richness of the legacy. The researcher will reintroduce some of the elements taken away- drum, dance, song, spirit. The researcher will do a performance and see if the experience will help today’s students heal, end violence and help communities. It is not all about just hitting on something, its about what it takes and how to apply it that gets you there.

It will keep youth off the street because the African American and low income youth will have learned a better way to live. They will have more respect for how we should live and treat each other, how to have and show respect for family, elders and community. They will learn what true community means…how?…the students will be
trying to perfect a rhythm, by trying to perfect a rhythm they will be strengthening their focus. They have to listen to each other to make the rhythm flow. This develops an interconnectedness or dependence on each other that becomes a skill which can be transferred to our daily lives and help us learn how to depend on and coexist with family members thus enhancing our overall community. It is not easy to remember all the parts and elements to correctly play a rhythm. To play them correctly and call on the spirits, they will need to play for hours rehearsing.

At one time in some ancient African societies certain families controlled particular key community services or spiritual functions or powers, like the drummers, Griots/Jollis, Blacksmiths, or Kakilame's (or shaman or herb doctors). The Griots had oral traditions that kept and recited their history in one of two ways, one, by fixed text, the Griots said the same things each time they told a story verbatim and, two, free text, the Griots might not tell the same story the same way twice. If the youth were not born into a Griots’ family and they wanted to chose that as a path of life, they would actually go and live with the Griot’s family.

In today’s society, the researcher does not believe students would actually be willing to go and live with their instructor, but does intend to create an atmosphere of such positive energy and vigor that the students will want to spend as much time as they can devote to the drumming, dancing and singing. The drumming, dancing and singing would be more interesting than engaging in criminal or delinquent behavior. The
drumming and dance would be available to students after school and last until most parents are off work, the hours of between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Statistics show African American and low income youth are the most vulnerable to delinquent and gangland recruitment. The main reason is parents are not home from work so if the students are left to walk through neighborhoods with gangs and no parent is home they can be tempted to do something without supervision. Also police officers change shifts during those hours leaving fewer officers to patrol neighborhoods. "In 1982 over 500,000 men, women, and youths were incarcerated in more the 6,500 penal institutions of various types" (Marable, 1983, p. 126). "Every year, over 8 percent of all Afro-Americans are arrested. Blacks comprise over 25 percent of all Americans arrested in a given year" (Marable, 1983, p. 127).

Why is 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. so important and why is it such a critical time? According to Gottfredson et al. (2001) aggravated assaults by juvenile offenders peak at 3:00 p.m. on school days, coinciding with the end of the school day. Sexual assaults by juvenile offenders spike at 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. on both school and non-school days. Juveniles are most likely to commit a violent sexual assault between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. especially on school days. Without projects like this one that offer youth positive alternatives they are more likely to engage in violence and crime.

The researcher proposes, once today’s youth learn about and see in action the splendor and beauty of and feel the majesty and power of the drum and dance of the ancient Mali Empire, they will be compelled to learn how to possess that power. That is a
process that takes time so they will want to come to class so much they will not want to be out in the streets. They would not want to do anything in their community that would keep them from playing their drum or dancing to the music. The drive to reach the level where the bliss is attained can be so intoxicating that the students dedicate themselves to it with the same dedication as to a gang.

Learning about the culture of the ancient Mali empire helps students by empowering them with confidence, self worth, respect and inspiring them to aspire for excellence. The researcher believes the answer to many of the problems in the African American community is in returning to some of the old ways of Africa. We have the advantage of keeping what works: respect for elders, respect for spirituality and themselves and their own rich heritage, and of course, the Djembe'.
Chapter 3

DEVELOPING THE PROJECT

The focus of this chapter will be to tell about the process of developing the project itself and how effectively the project progressed. The project began as an idea in an art class. The focus of the art class was to send the art students into the community to teach art. The art teacher suggested I teach my art at the Language Academy of Sacramento. My art is West African drumming and dance. Since I knew I would be teaching in an actual school as opposed to a community center, I sought help developing a curriculum appropriate for that setting and that would serve as this masters project. The project itself was to teach students about the ancient Mali empire, their music, dance, about one king and have them recreate that environment, tell the story and behave as students of the time. See the Appendix for the developed curriculum.

The context for the development of this project was in the south area of Sacramento, California, on the corner of 44th Street and Roosevelt Avenue at the Language Academy of Sacramento. The Language Academy of Sacramento is a Spanish immersion school, which means that the curriculum is taught entirely in Spanish. The Language Academy is a charter school, which means, they were granted by the city, through a special charter, the ability to determine exactly what and how their students would be taught as long as the curriculum was in alignment with the California state standards. The school is in a low-income neighborhood set back behind Fruit Ridge
Elementary School. Most of the people in the neighborhood are of Hispanic or African American heritage.

The process the researcher went through developing the project itself included a personal analysis of the relations between the two communities. The researcher chose to do this project because it was an excellent opportunity to not only teach art, but to bridge the gaps between the people of the Hispanic diaspora and the people of the African diaspora. Most of us do not know our people have a very rich and deeply connected past. The “Olmecas” (people of African descent) or the Olmec society predates the Mayan and the Aztec society.

The theory behind why this project was so important was that once people see that we have more in common than we have different it will allow us to release the hostility that harbors fear and keeps us apart. The Eurocentric media releases to each of our communities visions that conjure impressions of distain about each other. We, in our simple minded innocence, do not question these visions and impressions and respond to each other by interacting negatively. The researcher intends to transform these negative responses to popular media into responses of positivity and familiarity.

How the researcher got to this point was from his early life in Oakland, California. In Oakland, California there is a large Hispanic population. The researcher was fortunate to befriend several people of Hispanic heritage and found out first hand we had more in common than we had differences. For example African Americans and Hispanic people are both very religious, we are both respectful to our elders, and we both
love to party and have a good time. These are but three of the most obvious and easy to point out similarities, of course there are many, many more.

Background of Researcher

The researcher lived in Oakland, California, and began his dance career in high school while teaching gymnastics at a dance studio in Alameda, California. At the dance studio, he studied jazz, tap, and ballet. Upon moving to Sacramento, he trained with James Wheatley and the Celebration Dancers, later to become Celebration Arts. The researcher also danced with Pepper Von before there was a Step 1 Dance Academy. To pursue his goal of being a choreographer, he joined the Black Repertory Dance Troupe of University of California at Davis. It was there that he began his West African dance training with Ceedo West African Dance Company, directed by Alasane Kane and Abdoulia Diakite in 1986. He was also a Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission Neighborhood Arts Program Grant Recipient in 2006 for teaching circus arts in two Sacramento elementary schools. One of the researcher most recent theater performances included the role of “Bynum” in August Wilson’s play “Joe Turner’s Come and Gone” at CSUS in 2007. The researcher conceived, organized and was President of The West African Drum and Dance Club at California State University at Sacramento in March of 2007. After completing his Bachelors of Arts degree in Ethnic Studies at the end of 2007, the researcher immediately began his Masters Program in Education.

The researcher has over 30 years of professional experience working with African American and low income children K-12, as a performing arts educator and office worker
who possesses excellent oral and writing skills and has a strong background in business operations. He has several years of mentoring youth and families in inner urban areas including families who require specific case management techniques. He also oversees a small nonprofit organization called Lions Den Entertainment Incorporated.

A former California State University, Sacramento student of the West African drum and dance club capture the experience of a club meeting in a letter based on club activities in the Fall Semester of 2007.

The West African Drum and Dance Club met on campus twice a week to perform the music and dance of West Africa. The goal was to share the beauty and spiritual uplifting of African culture with students on campus. The club was very active and provided an opportunity for students to enrich their minds by experiencing the art and culture of a foreign region. According to the researcher, this experience is extremely important for students of any major, ethnicity, or age because by learning about another country’s culture, students may develop a greater understanding and appreciation for their own. At the meetings, the researcher creates a true African cultural environment that strongly contrasts what most university students are surrounded by in their daily lives.

The researcher modeled the club meetings after a traditional African social gathering. They were held in a dance studio in Yosemite hall and there are about twenty dancers and five drummers performing. The drummers line up side by side on the front wall of the studio facing the center, while the dancers line up oppositely. The dancers break into groups of four and line up side by side in rows. As the drummers play, each
row of dancers moves down the length of the studio, following their group leader, who decides the dance. When the dancers reach the other end of the studio, the lead drummer, plays a special rhythmic break. The dancers then break their line and return to the opposite side of the studio and wait for their row to dance again. This basic performance structure is preserved for each different song and dance.

The instruments used are greatly different than those used in western music. Instead of harmonic instruments like pianos and guitars, Africans use mainly percussion instruments. There are two main drums: the djembe, and the djun djun. The djembe is a hand drum, which is played by striking the drumhead with an open palm in various places to create three different sounds, the bass, tone, and slap. The djun djun is a collection of three different size drums, which rest on the floor and are played with sticks. The three drums mimic the three sounds made by a djembe. These three sounds make up the foundation for West African drumming. There may be other instruments added also, but these are the ones used at the club.

Another obvious difference is the sound of the music itself. The rhythms used by the drummers are not commonly found in western music. Instead of using standard even note beat divisions and triplet divisions, the African songs often use quintuplet divisions and very complicated polyrhythmic structures. Polyrhythms occur when two people play two different time signatures at the same tempo. When one person’s measure is beginning, the other person’s may still have a few beats left. This creates musical tension, which is resolved when the two time signatures finally meet up again and begin on the
same beat. Western music does not normally involve such complicated rhythmic structures because western music centers on harmonic and melodic movement rather than percussion.

Even though some of the African rhythms can be described using western language, the songs themselves cannot be. At one of the meetings, two songs called Sunu and DunDun ba, which is a strong man’s dance, were played. The djun djun player found himself constantly forgetting the rhythm he was supposed to be playing. He asked the researcher if he could take a second to write it out on staff paper, and he responded with, “You cannot write Sunu or Dundun ba.” He was very confused because he was certain that he understood the rhythm and could easily transcribe it onto paper, making it easier to remember. Later, the researcher explained to me that African music is not simply a collection of notes and rhythms organized on a piece of staff paper. Their music transcends notes and rhythms and becomes a spiritual experience, which cannot be written or described. It must be felt, seen, and heard, to be understood. Throughout all of his experiences as a musician, he had never heard such a remarkable statement before.

The true cultural experience lies beyond the dances and the songs; it lies within the atmosphere and vibe of the room and within this atmosphere lies the most profound difference between African and western performance groups. The difference is the “collective sensibility” of African performers versus the “individuality” of western performers. In a western group, each person is given an individual identity, for example, the “lead guitarist” from a band. In African groups, the individuals are all part of a whole
and the strength of the whole is only as strong as the strength of the connection between the individuals. For example, the dancers will only dance as well as the drummers lead them to. As the researcher said to him, “the harder we drum, the harder they dance.” The two groups are dependent on each other. They perform as one, not as individuals. By creating an environment based on these principles of “collective sensibility,” the researcher creates a true culture shock experience.

College students today are expected to graduate as educated and functional members of society. In order be a truly functional member of society, one must first understand the society in which they live. The West African Drum and Dance club provides students an opportunity to better understand their own culture by comparing and contrasting it with that of West Africa. By seeing different approaches to social life, students may have a better chance at finding their place in the world and living in harmony with others. The experience described in this letter was replicated for the students in the project at the Language Academy.

The Project at the Language Academy

The researcher introduced the students to an historical overview of ancient West African culture before the actual drumming and dancing began. They were issued notebooks, given the opportunity to make posters of the drums to take home, and read a story about the first ancient Mali king, Sundiata.

The researcher went to the library, found books about Sundiata and read one of the books to the students so they would have a frame of reference about the music and
dance they were going to learn. They were then introduced to the drums and taught a basic rhythm to play. Once the students were proficient playing the rhythm, the dance steps were taught. We practiced dancing as the music was played and eventually the two elements came together resulting in a magical engaging experience for everyone.

The disposition necessary to produce art with African and low-income students and community members must be one of tolerance but also of strength. Tolerant because the discipline needed to do the art may not be apparent in the students but strong enough to show students the art is important. The researcher taught the students from a place of patience and love. Each of the 15 students chose to participate in the project. The early response was to try and test the researcher as so many students try to do. But once the researcher’s authority was established and the proper conduct required to be in the class was understood by all the students, we were able to settle in and get on with the lessons.

The project developed very rapidly into a very successful undertaking. The students came into the class each week excited and eager to learn what new things the researcher had for them. The students did achieve the goal of learning to play the drums and to perform the corresponding dance steps of the West African empire as a group. However, much more time was needed for each individual child to develop each individual skill. For example, the students who became proficient playing djembe’, unfortunately, were not able to become as proficient in their dancing. The reverse would of course be true of the dance students who did not have sufficient time to master their drumming.
Most of the challenges faced had to do with how to engage parents enough to get them to encourage their children to practice the material. The teachers and administrators were all extremely supportive and, of course, engaging the children was not a problem.
Chapter 4

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is an in-depth discussion and reflection about the project done at the Language Academy of Sacramento. It is a concise narrative about the development of the project; a reflection on the effectiveness of the project and feedback from the students. Every day was a truly magical experience. The students greeted me with smiles and hugs. They always told me how much fun they were having, how interesting the class was and how challenging the material. The principal and director routinely stopped by to say hello and enjoy the engagement of the students. The teachers as well as the office staff were always kind and friendly.

One thing I learned was that children as young as 9 and 10 years old have no problem just playing the rhythms, but they also have the cognitive and spiritual ability to grasp the concept of spirituality and incorporate this into their application of the drumming and dance. By the end of the project, sometimes when the students played and danced there was, of course, a marked increased in their abilities to perform the given tasks, but there was also a certain spiritual presence.

I also learned, children really do not like to practice, even if it is something they love. If they know they will have an opportunity the following week to participate, even despite my pleas, most of them would not practice. This is why the project should be repeated or continued so the students will continue to develop their skills of drumming and dancing.
Recommendations for the future include continuing to have projects like this one at this school, as well as at every school in every state. Since America’s claim to fame is that it has a melting pot character, what better way to hold true to that than by teaching in-depth about other cultures. Each ethnic group in each school should be afforded time to share their culture with fellow students.

Another recommendation for the future would be to devote more time to the arts and artful projects for African American and low-income students. Regardless of the level of education, African American and low-income students enjoy art time and gain immeasurably on a variety of levels. This increases the African American and low-income students confidence and self esteem. With heightened confidence and enhance self-esteem, African American and low income students are more likely to engage in more academic subjects where they are not historically proficient.

A third recommendation would be to incorporate some of the more positive aspects of the West African culture into schools core curriculum. The aspects of helping elders at home with household chores, respecting siblings in such a way that does away with petty bickering, and taking responsibility for individual actions. West African culture teaches students responsibility to the group, to be aware of their actions and how they affect those around them.

More time and research are definitely needed on the subject because learning aspects of a different culture take time to incorporate into the daily lives of the students. It is one thing for the students to recall answers for me on the specified day and time, but
to know, unequivocally, that the students’ behavior has actually changed, more time would be needed. Further research would include continuing the drum and dance program so that the aspects of West African culture taught would continually be practiced, thus furthering the current students knowledge. Continuing the project would also offer the opportunity for future students to learn aspects of West African culture.

The researcher would change the project, if he were going to do it again in another school or community setting in the future, by having the project happen on more than one day during the week; perhaps everyday. Once a week was just not enough time for some of the students to become familiar enough with the culture to fully incorporate it into their daily lives. To have the aspects of a culture become part of daily life would be an immersion approach, similar to the school itself.

The researcher would tell someone trying to do a project like this one to simply do it. Do more projects like this one! More projects like this one are needed to show low income and African American youth the value of learning about other cultures.

The researcher feels the project was a huge success. He ended the project with most of the same students he started with. All of the students learned about the culture of the ancient Mali empire, and became proficient in some aspect of either the drumming or the dance. Students realized how important it is to keep the information alive and all seem committed to doing so.

It was very gratifying for the researcher personally to see the students progress from knowing very little about Africa to being very knowledgeable about the geographic
location, some of the foods they eat, even how to basically communicate. The students know the religion, what, why and when to play certain rhythms and even how to store and care for the drums. With this information safely tucked into the hearts and minds of African American and low income youth the researcher is confident the students will be able to carry the knowledge and experience with them for the rest of their lives, thus insuring the West African culture will live on.
APPENDIX

Teaching Basics of West African Culture with Drumming and Dance
Teaching Basics of West African Culture with Drumming and Dance

Workshop Lesson Plan

Lesson 1

Lesson is designed for students 6th grade thru 12th grade

Supplies: 3 West African bass drums called "Djun-Djuns"
3 West African drums called "Djembe"
West African Fabric to design and fit traditional West African costumes for students
Journals, pens, pencils, 3 different small maps, Poster paper, Markers, Various children’s books regarding Africa, Mud cloth showing ancient city of Djenne’, Globe, big wall poster of Africa, CD of Abdoulia’s music,

Performing Arts Standards: 2.1, 3.1, 3.2-(Creative Expression- art perception, making history- artist)

Number of students: 10-20

Lesson objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum

Materials: Djembe’ drums- I will bring in my own drums.
Djun-djun
Drum Sticks

Artist/Mentors: Abdoulia Diakite, Abdoul Dumbia, Mamadou Kieta
Give research assignment: 5 words
Africa, Abdoulia Diakite, Senegal, Bambara/Bamana, Ancient Mali Empire (Write 5 things that stand out to you),

Introduction  10-15 minutes
Hook: Does anymore know anything about Africa?- Has anyone ever been to Africa? Do Africans Use drums? Why?/Why not? – students raise hands- wait to be called on- Chart answers on the board…list will be generated
Add visuals: of drums… artist who play/play drums… bring in drums and play for students…based on results facilitate discussion to West African drum/dance culture-Ancient Mali Empire
Activity 1  20 minutes
Introduce drums- say and write names; Djembe’, Djun-djun, Sangba, Kinkini---comparison of different types of drums.

Activity 2
Write, play, and show basic notes/sounds – bass, tone, slap…

Teacher demonstrates and introduces the following techniques to play notes:
How to makes notes, Hold to hold sticks…etc…

The Djembe’:

There are three basic notes to pay on the Djembe’: The Bass, Slap, Tone

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum in the center and lifting it off as quickly as possible.

Tone- The Tone is the mid-range note/sound played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum on the edge with the upper palm and top half of hand and lifting it off as quickly as possible.

Slap- The Slap is the highest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum in the on the edge with the upper palm and top half of hand and lifting it off as quickly as possible.

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of the Djembe’ orchestra; there are three in the family and are usually played together.

Djun-djun: The largest of the three with the deepest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

Sangba: The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

Kinkini: The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

All of these are repeated by the instructor and students repeat.
30 minutes
*Introduction of Rhythms:*

Discussion of: *What rhythm is?* Expand on this, give examples and define…
*How is it created? What is it used for?*

Students practice playing, holding and keeping a rhythm.

Choose a rhythm to play - teach the rhythm patterns – allow students to practice
Rhythm will vary according to students’ knowledge, coordination abilities, and skill.

*Introduction of Patterns:* What is a pattern? (Define and give examples) a pattern is series of things (objects, letters, numbers etc…) repeated in the same manner over and over again.

Combine patterns allow students to practice working together playing.

*Closure: 15-30 minutes*

Reflection- Stop Playing Music- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges with rhythms…

*Homework Assignment*
Hang poster on your wall; look at it/ study it at least 2x’s per day, when you wake up and just before going to sleep.

Questions to reflect on:
How did you feel playing the rhythms?
Did playing make you think about anything? What?
Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?
What are the challenges?
(Write them down and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by demonstrating.)

*Unit Overview*

*Week One:* Introduce aspects of West African culture by beginning reading the story of Sundiata. Stress importance of spirituality of drum and dance; talk about how culture and art interact. Choose notebooks, make posters of instruments to take home and study, distribute 3 maps, Learn vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, Play and practice basics of one West African Drumming Rhythm.
Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

**Week Two:** Review homework assignment, continue reading Sundiata story, introduce proper Djembe' playing hand technique, Review vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, Write vocabulary in notebooks – color decorate 3 maps, - Play and practice basics of one West African Drumming Rhythm.

Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

**Week Three:** Finish reading Sundiata story, Review vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, introduce proper West African Dance technique, Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm to be performed. Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks – color decorate 3 maps.
Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

**Week Four:** Vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, introduce proper West African Dance technique, Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed. Review and Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks – color decorate 3 maps,

Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

**Week Five:** Vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, introduce proper West African Dance technique, Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed. Review and Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks – color/decorate 3 maps,
Fit students in traditional West African costumes,
Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

**Week Six:** Vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, introduce proper West African Dance technique, Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed. Review and Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks – color decorate 3 maps,
Run first 1/2 of presentation in costumes playing and practicing the rhythm and dance to be presented

Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

**Week Seven:** Vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, introduce proper West
African Dance technique, Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed. Review and Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks – color decorate 3 maps,

Run second 1/2 of the presentation in costumes playing and practicing the rhythm and dance to be presented

Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.

*Week Eight:* Vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance, introduce proper West African Dance technique, Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed. Review and Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks – color decorate 3 maps,
Run the whole presentation in costumes playing and practicing the rhythm and dance to be presented

Journal entry: What you learned in today’s class.
90-120 minute classes
Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
Djun-djun
Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students...

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Hook: Does anyone know anything about Africa?—Has any one ever been to Africa? Do Africans use drums? Why? /Why not?

10-15 minutes: students raise hands- wait to be called on- chart answers on the board….a list will be generated and based on results facilitate discussion to West African drum/dance culture- Ancient Mali Empire-

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Introduce myself and how I learned, who taught me,
(3 of my Teacher Names: Abdoulia Diakite, Abdoul Dumbia, Karamba Diabate) where they are from,

Introduce aspects of West African culture by beginning reading the story of Sundiata.

Choose notebooks and decorate them,
Talk about and write down how culture and art interact in notebooks;
Stress importance of spirituality of drum and dance;

Distribute 3 maps of Africa, have students put into note books
Make posters of instruments to take home and study,
Learn vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance,

Middle: 20 minutes:
Introduce drums- say and write names:
Djembe’, Djun-djun, Sangba, Kinkini
Write, play and show basic notes/sounds- bass, tone, slap...

Introduce techniques to play notes: How to make notes

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.

Tone - The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

Slap- The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

The Djun-djuns

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of a Djembe orchestra. There are three in the family and are usually played together.

Djun-djun – The largest of the three with the deepest lowest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.
Sangba - The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

Kinkini - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate-students repeat

End: 30 Minutes - Introduction of Rhythm:
Discussion of what rhythm is, how is it created, what is it used for,
Basic practice playing, holding/keeping a rhythm

Choose a rhythm to play- Teach the rhythmic patterns - allow students to practice – Rhythm will vary according to students knowledge, coordination abilities, and skill. Combine patterns allow students to practice working together playing.
Once Rhythm is established introduce corresponding dance steps
Combine drum and dance, allow students to practice working together playing and dancing.

*Closure - 15-30 Minutes*

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

*Assessment Questions to reflect on:*
How did you feel playing the rhythms?

Did playing make you think about anything? What?

Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?

What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps

Teacher Materials: Djembe’ drums- I will bring in my own drums.
   Djun-djun
   Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students...

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Two:

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Continue reading Sundiata story
Review vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance,
Write vocabulary in notebooks
Color and decorate the 3 maps

Middle: 20 minutes:
Introduce drums- say and write names:
Djembe’, Djun-djun, Sangba, Kinkini
Write, play and show basic notes/sounds- bass, tone, slap...
Review proper Djembe' and Djun-djun playing techniques

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap
Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.

Tone- The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.
**Slap**- The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

**The Djun-djuns**

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of a Djembe orchestra. There are three in the family and are usually played together.

**Djun-djun** – The largest of the three with the deepest lowest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Sangba** - The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate-students repeat

Play and practice basics of one West African Drumming Rhythm.

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**End: 30 Minutes** -Introduction of Rhythm:
Discussion of what rhythm is, how is it created, what is it used for,
Basic practice playing, holding/keeping a rhythm

Choose a rhythm to play- Teach the rhythmic patterns - allow students to practice – Rhythm will vary according to students knowledge, coordination abilities, and skill.
Combine patterns allow students to practice working together playing.
Once Rhythm is established introduce corresponding dance steps
Combine drum and dance, allow students to practice working together playing and dancing.

**Closure -15-30 Minutes**

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

**Assessment Questions to reflect on:**
How did you feel playing the rhythms?

Did playing make you think about anything? What?
Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?

What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
90-120 minutes  
Grade Level: Middle- High School  
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1…3.1, 3.2  
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.  
Djun-djun  
Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students...

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

**Week Three:**

*Body of Lesson: 20 minutes*  
Finish reading Sundiata story  
Review vocabulary of West African Drumming and Dance  
Continue writing vocabulary in notebooks  
Continue color/decorating the 3 maps.  
Introduce proper West African Dance technique,  
Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm to be performed.

*Middle: 20 minutes:*
Introduce drums- say and write names:  
Djembe', Djun-djun, Sangba, Kinkini  
Write, play and show basic notes/sounds- bass, tone, slap...

Review techniques to play notes: How to make notes

*The Djembe’:*  
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

*Bass*- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.
**Tone** - The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

**Slap** - The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

**The Djun-djuns**

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of a Djembe orchestra. There are three in the family and are usually played together.

**Djun-djun** – The largest of the three with the deepest lowest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Sangba** - The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate-students repeat.

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*End: 30 Minutes - Review of Rhythm:*
Discussion of what rhythm is, how is it created, what is it used for, Basic practice playing, holding/keeping a rhythm

Choose a rhythm to play- Teach the rhythmic patterns - allow students to practice – Rhythm will vary according to students knowledge, coordination abilities, and skill. Combine patterns allow students to practice working together playing.
Once Rhythm is established introduce corresponding dance steps
Combine drum and dance, allow students to practice working together playing and dancing.

*Closure -15-30 Minutes*

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

*Assessment Questions to reflect on:*
How did you feel playing the rhythms?
Did playing make you think about anything? What?
Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?
What are the names of the drums?
What are they played with?
What are the names of 3 of my teachers?
What was the name of the rhythm?
What was the name of the dance?
What region of West Africa did it come from?
What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.
What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
90-120 minute classes
Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
                     Djun-djun
                     Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students...

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Four:

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Review and continue writing vocabulary in notebooks
Continue color decorate 3 maps
Introduce proper West African Dance technique,
Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed.

Middle: 20 minutes:
Introduce drums- say and write names:
Djembe', Djun-djun, Sangba, Kinkini
Write, play and show basic notes/sounds- bass, tone, slap...

Review techniques to play notes: How to make notes

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.

Tone- The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.
Slap - The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

**The Djun-djuns**

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of a Djembe orchestra. There are three in the family and are usually played together.

**Djun-djun** – The largest of the three with the deepest lowest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Sangba** - The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate - students repeat

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**End: 30 Minutes - Review of Rhythm:**

Discussion of what rhythm is, how is it created, what is it used for,
Basic practice playing, holding/keeping a rhythm

Choose a rhythm to play - Teach the rhythmic patterns - allow students to practice –
Rhythm will vary according to students knowledge, coordination abilities, and skill. Combine patterns allow students to practice working together playing.
Once Rhythm is established introduce corresponding dance steps
Combine drum and dance, allow students to practice working together playing and dancing.

**Closure - 15-30 Minutes**

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

**Assessment Questions to reflect on:**

How did you feel playing the rhythms?

Did playing make you think about anything? What?
Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?

What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…

*Special Needs Adaptation:* All Lessons can be adapted to accommodate any special needs.
90-120 minute classes
Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
Djum-djun
Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students...

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Five:

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Review and continue writing vocabulary in notebooks
Color/decorate 3 maps,
Review proper West African Dance technique
Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed. Fit students in traditional West African costumes,

Middle: 20 minutes:
Introduce drums- say and write names:
Djembe’, Djum-djun, Sangba, Kinkini
Write, play and show basic notes/sounds- bass, tone, slap...

Review techniques to play notes: How to make notes

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.
**Tone** - The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

**Slap** - The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

**The Djun-djuns**

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of a Djembe orchestra. There are three in the family and are usually played together.

**Djun-djun** – The largest of the three with the deepest lowest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

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**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate—students repeat

**End: 30 Minutes - Review of Rhythm:**
Discussion of what rhythm is, how is it created, what is it used for, Basic practice playing, holding/keeping a rhythm

Choose a rhythm to play- Teach the rhythmic patterns - allow students to practice – Rhythm will vary according to students knowledge, coordination abilities, and skill. Combine patterns allow students to practice working together playing. Once Rhythm is established introduce corresponding dance steps Combine drum and dance, allow students to practice working together playing and dancing.

**Closure -15-30 Minutes**

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

**Assessment Questions to reflect on:**
How did you feel playing the rhythms?
Did playing make you think about anything? What?

Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?

What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry*: What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered? Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
90-120 minute classes
Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
Djun-djun
Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students...

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Six:

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Review and continue writing vocabulary in notebooks
Continue color/decorate 3 maps
Whole group Warm up exercises

Middle: 20 minutes:
Review proper West African Dance technique,
Review techniques to play notes/How to make notes

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.

Tone- The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.
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**Sangba** - The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate-

students repeat

Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed.

*End: 30 Minutes*
Run first 1/2 of presentation in costumes playing and practicing the rhythm and dance to be presented

*Closure -15-30 Minutes*

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

*Assessment Questions to reflect on:*
How did you feel playing the rhythms?

Did playing make you think about anything? What?

Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

Did dancing make you think about anything? What?
Did dancing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?

What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
90-120 minute classes
Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
Djun-djun
Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students
Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Seven:

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Review and continue writing vocabulary in notebooks
Whole group Warm up exercises

Middle: 20 minutes
Review proper West African Dance technique,
Review techniques to play notes/How to make notes

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.

Tone- The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

Slap- The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.
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**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate—students repeat

Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed.

**End: 30 Minutes**
Run second 1/2 of the presentation in costumes playing and practicing the rhythm and dance to be presented

**Closure - 15-30 Minutes**

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

**Assessment Questions to reflect on:**
How did you feel playing the rhythms?

Did playing make you think about anything? What?

Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

Did dancing make you think about anything? What?

Did dancing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?
What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
90-120 minute classes
Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, and corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
Djun-djun
Drum sticks
Add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Eight:

Body of Lesson: 20 minutes
Review and continue writing vocabulary in notebooks
Whole group Warm up exercises

Middle: 20 minutes
Review proper West African Dance technique
Review techniques to play notes/How to make notes

The Djembe’:
There are three basic notes to play on the Djembe’: The Bass, Tone, and Slap

Bass- The bass is the lowest note played, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking in the drum in the center and lifting off as quickly as possible.

Tone- The tone is the mid-range sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very firmly and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.

Slap- The Slap is the high sound, it is achieved by the player holding their hand very loosely and striking the drum near the edge and lifting off as quickly as possible. Only the top half of the hand is to strike the drum.
The Djun-djuns

The Djun-djuns are the bass drums of a Djembe orchestra. There are three in the family and are usually played together.

**Djun-djun** – The largest of the three with the deepest lowest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Sangba** - The medium size of the three with the mid-range sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger.

**Kinkini** - The smallest of the three with the highest sound, played with two wooden sticks held lightly between the thumb and the fore or middle finger. I demonstrate - students repeat

Play and practice basics of West African Drumming rhythm and dance to be performed.

*End: 30 Minutes*
Run the whole presentation in costumes playing and practicing the rhythm and dance to be presented

*Closure -15-30 Minutes*

Reflection- Stop Playing Music and Dancing- Talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges...

*Assessment Questions to reflect on:*
How did you feel playing the rhythms?
Did playing make you think about anything? What?
Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?
Did dancing make you think about anything? What?
Did dancing make you think about being anywhere? Where?
What are the names of the drums?

What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?

What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

*Notebook entry:* What you learned in today’s class.

What are some of the challenges you encountered? Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
Duration: at least one hour before the performance + the performance + back stage clean up

Grade Level: Middle- High School
Performing Arts Standards – CA 2.1-3.1, 3.2
Number of students: 10-20

Lesson Objectives: Students learn the names of drums, purpose of each drum, how to play each drum, corresponding dance steps, purpose of each corresponding dance steps and how to combine it all into a performance.

Teacher Materials: Djembe' drums- I will bring in my own drums.
   Djun-djun
   Drum sticks
add: visuals of drums...artists who use/play drums...bring in drums and play for students

Student Materials: Open Heart, Enthusiasm, Desire

Week Nine:

THE PERFORMANCE

Body of Lesson: 30 minutes
Whole group Warm up exercises
Review West African Dance
Review the rhythms to be performed
Play and practice of West African Dance choreography to be performed.
Put on Costumes

Middle: 30 Minutes
Have the students visualize or mentally walk through whatever they do in the whole presentation in costumes; playing and practicing the rhythms in their heads.

Stop Playing Music and Dancing in their heads- Find a quiet room away from performance area and talk to students; allow them to talk about experiences and challenges of going on stage…

End:
Fifteen minutes before going on stage have students stand in a circle holding hands, slightly leaning forward into the center, eyes closed, someone can say some quiet encouraging words, then starting with a low hum, slowly increase the sound and intensity
of the hum to a moan, and the moan until it is uncontainable and reaches a roaring
crescendo with arms over head. EVERYONE SHOULD BE EXTREMELY
EXILERATED by then,
HIT the stage as soon as possible after that!!!

Then…it happens…the performance…nothing to do but watch and be ready to pick up
the pieces when they are done.

Once they are off stage, hustle them into your quiet room as soon as possible.

Closure (15-30 Minutes) There the can take place, the return and folding of costumes,

Assessment Questions to reflect on:
How did you feel playing the rhythms?
Did playing make you think about anything? What?
Did playing make you think about being anywhere? Where?
Did dancing make you think about anything? What?
Did dancing make you think about being anywhere? Where?

What are the names of the drums?
What are they played with?

What are the names of 3 of my teachers?

What was the name of the rhythm?
What was the name of the dance?

What region of West Africa did it come from?

What was most important to you in today’s lesson?

Notebook entry: What you learned in today’s performance

What are some of the challenges you encountered?
Write them on board and discuss how to overcome the different challenges by teacher demonstrating...

Clean up- Put Drums away while continually asking and answering questions…
REFERENCES


