

Kaitlyn Hardiman | Session 2:

Diggin' Up the Roots: African Dance (Lecture)

List of Required Supplies:

- Screen for PowerPoint/videos
- Sound for videos
- Students computers or worksheets
- Pencils (if using worksheets)

Additional Links :

Optional PowerPoint:

https://www.canva.com/design/DAE6FJ_6tIlg/Gi5NxzLmkBujF65P7JkcGA/edit?utm_content=DAE6FJ_6tIlg&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Space/Facility Requirements: Tables and chairs would be ideal for this lesson plan, but students can also sit on floor during lecture if in dance room

Student Time Required: 45 minutes

Step-by-step Instructions:

1. Before this lesson:
 - a. Students should have a basic understanding of social dance
 - b. Students should have knowledge of the elements of dance
2. Introduce lesson two: [Diggin' Up the Roots: African Dance](#)
 - a. Discuss the following as a class:
 - i. Reflect and discuss: Thinking about the last lesson, what role did African dance play in the creation of tap dance?
 - ii. Ask and discuss: Using your own words, what do you think African dance is?

1. Define: African dance is a social style of dance that originated in Africa and varies from tribe to tribe. The movement reflects communal values, social relationships, and can be used for spiritual and religious purposes.

b. Watch:

- i. Find an African dance example to play as an example of African dance movement. Play one to two minutes of the video
- ii. Discuss with the students: After watching the example, have the students describe the elements of dance that they saw (energy, time, action, space, body)

c. Movement quality

- i. Describe the movement quality of African dance
 1. African dance is usually done with high energy.
 2. Grounded to the earth at a medium level but has elements of both high and low movements.
 3. Movements are isolated or polycentric.
 4. Movements can be both sharp and smooth (even at the same time).
- ii. Define the following with students:
 1. Ask: What does it mean for a movement to be isolated?
 - a. Answer: An isolated movement refers to moving one part of the body while the rest stays still.
 2. Ask: What parts of your body can you isolate?
 - a. Spend a few moments allowing students to figure out what parts of their body that can be isolate.
 3. Ask: What does it mean for a movement to be polycentric?
 - a. Answer: A polycentric movement refers to various parts of the body moving independently from one another.

- iii. Find an example of African dance that students can watch and identify polycentric movement (show one to two minutes)
 1. Discuss after the video what types of polycentric movements they observed and what other qualities of dance they saw.
- d. Clothing:
 - i. Describe the clothing worn in African dance
 1. Lapa
 - a. A lapa is a wraparound skirt that is usually tied to the left of the body.
 2. Gailis:
 - a. A long piece of material that wraps around the head.
 3. Dashiki:
 - a. Traditionally worn by a male, and is a loose, brightly colored tunic.
 4. Kaftan:
 - a. A long, loose dress that is traditionally worn by women.
 5. Shoes
 - a. Dancers move in bare feet.
 - ii. Describe the types of drums used:
 1. Djembe
 - a. A goblet shaped hand drum
- e. Music:
 - i. Describe the type of music that is traditionally used
 1. The primary instrument used in African dance is the drum. They also use clapping, stomping, and their voices to create rhythm and communicate between dancers and musicians
 - ii. Describe the types of drums used:
 1. Djembe
 - a. A goblet shaped hand drum

2. Bougarabou
 - a. Can be played as a single drum or in a set of 3-4
 3. Talking Drum
 - a. Has an hourglass shape and is tuned to mimic a human tone. This instrument has two drumheads that can change pitch by squeezing the chords between the arm and body
 4. Bata
 - a. This instrument consists of three cylinders that vary in size and can be played with either the hands or a leather strap.
- f. Defining call and response
- i. During the dance, a call and response happens between the musicians and dancers. This can be seen as a musical conversation between the participants. The call and responses can give cues to one another as to what will happen next in the movement or rhythm.
- g. Watch and discuss:
- i. Find a third example of African dance movement and discuss the following:
 1. Did you hear any call and response?
 2. In what ways were dancers making noise?
 3. Describe the instruments being used.
 4. Listen carefully... Can the drumming be counted in an 8? How are you counting the music?
- h. Introduce polyrhythms:
- i. Polyrhythm is an idea of layering different rhythms over one another.
 1. These rhythms can take place on either instrument or within the body

- ii. Polyrhythm paired with polycentrism allows the dancer to use different parts of the body to move alongside various instruments that are playing different rhythms.
3. Group activity (This can be an activity the whole class does together, or the class can be divided into groups.)
 - a. Step One:
 - i. Create a simple rhythm that can be clapped with their hands. Practice that rhythm a few times.
 - b. Step Two:
 - i. Create a different rhythm that can be stomped with their feet. Practice that rhythm a few times.
 - c. Step Three:
 - i. Practice doing both rhythms at the same time.
 - d. Step Four:
 - i. If being done in groups, have each class quickly show what they created.
4. Exit ticket: Have students answer the following independently.
 - a. Describe your experience creating the polyrhythms. Did you consider it to be easy or difficult? Explain.
 - b. What do the movements of African dance reflect?
 - c. What is the movement quality of African dance?
 - d. Describe the role that the instruments play in this dance form.
 - e. Describe the clothing the dancers wear.