

Goumbe – A Celebration Dance with Nondi Wontanara

Grades 1 – 5

This lesson introduces students to the African dance, Goumbe, while introducing vocabulary to help them distinguish the shades of meaning of certain words. The lesson also challenges them to use information they learned about the dance to create a theatrical story that expresses the vocabulary words learned through pantomime.

Materials: None

The Lesson:

Part 1

Summary - An introduction is given telling students that we will be covering the difference between the meaning of the words glad, overjoyed, ecstatic, and proud. Students are introduced to the purpose of the dance and its country of origin. The question is posed, “Can you tell what is being celebrated in this scene?” A short theatrical scene is pantomimed showing a mother and father caring for their newborn baby. Others gather around to congratulate her then break into dance. The question is posed again, and then the answer, “The birth of a new baby was being celebrated,” will be given. Students are asked, “What emotions did you see expressed in that scene? Who was overjoyed? Who was ecstatic? Who was proud? What emotion would you use to describe the overall feeling of the entire group? Would it be glad or ecstatic?” After this, various steps from the dance will be taught.

Challenge - Create a scene using music, but no words, about something that you would celebrate. Incorporate 2 or 3 of the emotions we discussed in your scene. Think of places in your scene where you can add some movements from the Goumbe Dance.

Perform the scene for your family or friends and see if they can guess the event. Get feedback from your them on your performance. Ask them these questions.

1. Were there any movements in the scene that I did that you did not understand? (If they did not understand, show them the movements again and explain why you chose that movement and what it means.)
2. What emotions did you see me display in the scene? (If they do not get the emotions correct, perform that part of the scene again, and explain how the emotion you performed is different from the one they thought.) .

Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts

- Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external content.
- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.

Theatre Standards: TH:Cr1.1.3 - Identify ways in which gestures and movement may be used to create or retell a story in guided drama experiences.

TH:Cr1.4.1 - Articulate the visual details of imagined worlds, and improvised stories that support the given circumstances in a theatre work.

English Language Arts Standards: SL.4.1c - Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
L.4.3a - Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

Connection to Literacy:

This lesson connects with literacy through the challenge option that is outlined in the lesson. The lesson offers students the opportunity to utilize what they have learned and apply it in a manner that activates creative expression and growth in an academic context. The challenge for this lesson requires students to demonstrate an understanding of the shades of meaning of different vocabulary words. It challenges students to use the precise word for the emotion they want to portray. This connects to literacy by broadening vocabulary. There is also a speaking and listening component which allows students to pose questions and respond to feedback, justifying their reasoning for selecting certain movements to display certain emotions. All of these components combined help to enhance student literacy in the areas of vocabulary acquisition and strengthening language skills.

About the Artist

Nondi Wontanara

Nondi Wontanara Multi-Cultural Performing Arts Company is a performing arts group that was started in Las Vegas in March of 2015. The members of the group have been a part of the grassroots Las Vegas dance community for a combined total of 20 years, and have trained with master instructors from Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast. These dance and drum enthusiasts came together to share with the world the beauty of traditional African cultures by singing, dancing, and drumming traditional rhythms from countries throughout the western region of Africa. Nondi Wontanara aims to educate the community and build an appreciation of the beautiful and rich traditions of African culture.

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Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster

The Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at <https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/>