

Music In Our Schools Month®
General Music: 1st Grade
2018–2019

**Exploring Music and Movement of South Africa—The *Tshigombela* Dance
“Children Dance at Tshigombela Practice” video recording by Andrea
Emberly via Smithsonian Folkways**

*Lesson by Sarah Watts, Penn State, University Park, and a member-at-large for the Council for
General Music (2015–18), National Association for Music Education (NAfME)*

Overview

Throughout these lesson-plan launching points, students will explore the music and dance of Venda children and young people in South Africa and make connections to the movement traditions of their own cultures. Tshigombela is traditionally a female communal dance. For more information on this dance, please see <https://folkways.si.edu/magazine-spring-2014-proud-of-who-i-am-venda-childrens-musical-cultures/south-africa/music/article/smithsonian>

Prerequisite Skills

For students to be successful in this unit, they will need knowledge of and experiences with the following:

- Appropriate vocabulary for discussing music that they hear (i.e., issues of vocal and instrumental timbre) and the movements they view
- Steady beat
- Eurhythmic movement skills.

Instructional Goals/Objectives

Launching Point 1

- I can observe aspects of music and dance from other cultures.

Launching Point 2

- I can participate with the South African dancing model.

Launching Point 3

- I can perform the traditional dances that are representative of my community.

National Core Arts Standards (2014)

The Responding Artistic Processes addressed in are displayed below:

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators’/performers’ expressive intent.

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Enduring Understanding

- Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.

Essential Question

- How do we discern the musical creators' and performers' expressive intent?

Specific Performance Standards

MU:Re8.1.1a With limited guidance, demonstrate and identify expressive qualities (such as dynamics and tempo) that reflect creators'/ performers' expressive intent.

MU:Pr5.1.1a With limited guidance, apply personal, teacher, and peer feedback to refine performances.

Connecting: Relate musical ideas and works with varied context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding

- Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

Essential Question

- How do the other arts, other disciplines, contexts, and daily life inform creating, performing, and responding to music?

Specific Performance Standard

MU:Cn11.0.2a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Resource Link

Video Link: <https://folkways.si.edu/children-dance-at-tshigombela-practice/music/video/smithsonian>

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Launching Point 1

Objectives

- I can observe aspects of music and dance from other cultures.

Essential Question

- How do people across the world use music and dance together?

Specific Performance Standards

- *MU:Re8.1.1a* With limited guidance, demonstrate and identify expressive qualities (such as dynamics and tempo) that reflect creators'/ performers' expressive intent.
- *MU:Cn11.0.1a* Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Procedure

1. Set up the video clip: “Tshigombela” is a dance performed by women and girls of the Venda culture of South Africa. Please watch and listen, and tell me something about what you notice, such as the instruments you hear or the way the people are dancing.”
2. Students will view video clip of South African children and young people and discuss their observations of the musicking and dance they observe (i.e., call-and-response singing, percussive accompaniment, dancing posture and props). Follow up with the directed viewing/listening question: “What was one thing that you noticed about the traditional dance?” Field student answers.
3. Students will connect to manifestations of music and dance in their own lives. “You might have noticed that the music and dance were happening at the same time. This is very common in this culture—you wouldn’t have one without the other! What some of the ways you know about where music and dance are combined? Are there some ways you dance at school with your friends? Or at home with your family? Did the children’s music and dance from the video look like the music and dance you know how to do?” Field student answers.

Assessment

- Teacher will field student answers and give feedback or redirection as appropriate regarding observations of instruments they hear, the style of dancing, and how music and dance may be combined. Teachers may need to draw out, develop, or contextualize student answers pertaining to their own personal experiences.

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Launching Point 2

Objective

- I can participate with the South African dancing model.

Essential Question

- How do children and youth from South Africa use their bodies and voices in music and dance?

Specific Performance Standards

- *MU:Pr5.1.1a* With limited guidance, apply personal, teacher, and peer feedback to refine performances.
- *MU:Cn11.0.1a* Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Procedure

1. Using the video as a model, students will try the movements as modeled by the South African children. Play the video and dance along! (See scaffolding suggestions below. Implement the phases as appropriate, or focus on one component as an adapted dance.)
 - a. Try the footwork in place.
 - b. Try the arm movements in place.
 - c. Try the footwork in a circular formation.
 - d. Add in the arm movements.
 - e. Listen and sing along with the call-and-response vocal part.
 - f. Put it all together!

Assessment

- Teacher will observe students' beat keeping and timing of movement adapting the dance as appropriate according to the scaffolding suggestions above.

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Launching Point 3

Objective

- I can perform the traditional dances that are representative of my community.

Essential Question

- What cultures are represented in my community and what kinds of dances are important to this community?

Specific Performance Standard

- *MU:Cn11.0.1a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.*

Procedure

1. Students and teachers will explore the music and dance traditions of their school and community and learn/perform a traditional dance representing their local culture.
2. Consider engaging with a local culture bearer to visit the classroom to teach a traditional dance.
3. Learn and practice dance in the classroom.
4. Facilitate a school community folk dance for children and families where traditional dances of local cultures are featured.

Assessment

- Teacher’s assessment will vary according to the dances selected to reflect local cultures.

Teacher Talk

These three launching points allow students to engage in thoughtful discussion about music and dance at an age-appropriate level, move to a new kind of music, and discover/perform the music and dance of traditions in their local communities. The video clip in this lesson provides a point of departure for teachers to more deeply explore the music and movement traditions cherished by their students and the surrounding community—a great way to link the classroom, community, and culture!