

ARTS

and the

COMMON CORE

Unit Plan

DANCE

Grade Level: 9-12

Title: West African Dance and Spatial Design

Length of Unit: 25 sessions

Unit Description: This dance unit uses the traditional West African dance of Lamban to introduce the form and structure of movement and cultural concepts found in West African dance. Students will also explore the use of spatial design in choreography.

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Sequence of Teaching and Learning Experiences

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West African Dance and Spatial Design

UNIT TOPIC AND LENGTH

Grade Level: Grades 9–12

Frequency of Sessions: Daily for 45 minutes. (However, the lessons may also be done once to three times a week, which would increase the length of the class.)

Length of Unit: This unit contains 25 sessions.

Learning Context:

Learner/Teacher

Context: Students need no previous experience with African dance training, but it would be useful for them to have explored the use of level, directional, and rhythmic changes to create dance phrases that are more three dimensions.

BIG IDEAS / ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- West African dance is full-body movement that is polyrhythmic and polycentric in nature.
- Within West African culture, dance, music, and cultural traditions are interconnected.
- Spatial design influences how the audience sees a dance.
- This unit will also broaden students' perspective on other cultures through a cultural/historical and kinesthetic experience and so create understanding and acceptance of differences amongst peoples of the world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the relationship between music and dance in West African culture?
- How does traditional West African dance evolve?
- How is personal space used in learning and performing dance?
- How does spatial design influence how the audience perceives a dance?
- How does West African dance in a cultural setting differ when danced in a theatrical performance setting?
- What is unique about West African dance and music compared to other styles of dance?
- What can music and dance tell us about people from other cultures?

COMMON CORE AND NYC ARTS BLUEPRINTS STANDARDS

NYS: CCLS: English Language Arts 6–12, NYS: 6th Grade, Capacities of the Literate Individual

Students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language:

- Demonstrate independence
- Build strong content knowledge

- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Comprehend as well as critique
- Value evidence
- Come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

CONTENT

This dance unit uses the traditional West African dance of Lamban to introduce the form and structure of movement and cultural concepts found in West African dance. Students will also explore the use of spatial design in choreography.

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of Lamban by writing a short essay on its history and meaning. Second, students will demonstrate eight steps of Lamban to music without the help of the teacher. Third, students will demonstrate an understanding of spatial designs by drawing four spatial designs that they explore physically. Fourth, students will study three West African dance pioneers and write an essay about them. Last, students will work in small groups to restage the eight Lamban steps in at least four different spatial designs. Students will then decide which spatial designs from their restaged work should go into a class staging of Lamban.

A glossary and other background materials are included under Resources.

SKILLS / STRATEGIES

Students will be able to:

- Perform traditional steps from West African Mali Lamban dance to the basic Lamban rhythm
- Perform polyrhythmic and polycentric movement
- Understand how to manipulate spatial designs in a dance
- Self-reflect and critique others in the execution of steps and in the choice of spatial designs
- Execute their group phrase using dynamic qualities which enhance a work of art
- Use technology and written materials as research tools for written assignments and choreographic ideas.

ASSESSMENTS

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels

In Class Performance of Lamban Dance Sequence

Summative: DOK 2 Basic Application: Performance: Skill Demonstration

Students in small groups perform the entire Lamban dance sequence to music with drum breaks. Students must add performance qualities and demonstrate professionalism.

Student Restaging of Lamban

Summative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Performance: Authentic Task

Students must arrange the steps of the Lamban sequence that they learned in a new order. Students must also use at least four spatial patterns that will highlight the movement for the audience. Students must draw the spatial patterns on paper and must be able to explain why they made the choices they did. Students may add solos and/or duets and choreographic structures such as canon.

Report on Lamban History

Summative: DOK 2 Basic Application: Written: Informative

Students write a report on the history of Mali and Lamban and the characteristics of West African dance.

Spatial Design Charts

Summative: DOK 4 Extended Thinking: Project: Visual Arts

Students will draw and label four different spatial designs in a chart. They will comment on advantages of each spatial design from the audience perspective.

Biographical Research Report

Formative: DOK 2 Basic Application: Written Report

Students will work in small groups to write a biographical report on Asadata Dafora, Pearl Primus, or Katherine Dunham.

Lesson 1: Introduction of West African Culture and Movement Concepts

Goals:

Students will:

Know:

- Music and dance are intertwined in African culture
- Where Africa is in relationship to the world
- How to identify Africa's Western region

Understand:

- African dance is grounded with bent knees
- Uses polyrhythms and polycentric movements
- A break communicates when to start, stop, and change a step

Do: Movement in center and across the floor that is grounded and polyrhythmic

Assessments:

Measure student learning by informally observing students' ability to imitate the steps and articulate the grounded feeling and polyrhythms of the movements. Through a verbal discussion, the teacher will ascertain the students' pre-knowledge of West African dance and music.

Materials/Music: Music by Heritage OP (distributed to all DOE teachers as a PD resource).

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: Journal assignment: What do you know of West African dance? Have the students list facts after warm-ups on paper on their own.

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Have students share what they wrote in their journal. Have one student write his/her responses on a big Post-it. You can refer to this chart throughout the unit. Briefly discuss what the students wrote about as a basis to build upon.
- Define polyrhythmic and polycentric.
- As the teacher, develop a phrase of movement that uses full-body movement that focuses on being grounded to teach to the class as an example.
- Add polyrhythmic and polycentric (use of head, chest, and hand gestures at the same time) movement.
- Integrate jumps as well.
- Have students learn via the traditional West African method — by watching and imitating. Try not to use words to explain the movement.
- The performance focus will be the use of energy and feeling rather than exact positions of the body.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Divide class into two groups to perform the movements learned in class. Groups will be asked to point out those who dance with lots of energy and full use of the body, and who accent their movement with use of the head and chest.

Explain that the culmination of this unit will be an in-class performance of the version of Lamban that they helped to create, and on which they will be tested.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 2: Relationship between Music and Dance in West African Dance

Goals:

Students will

Know:

- How musicians and dancers communicate with each other in West African culture

Understand:

- The drum break tells dancers when to start, stop, and change
- How the drum break is applied to movement

Do: Movement in center and across the floor that is grounded, polyrhythmic, polycentric, and uses the drum break

Assessments: Measure student learning by informally observing if students start and stop movement using the drum break. Assess learning by asking students to summarize discussion on the role of music in West African dance and culture.

Materials/Music: Traditional West African Music (see resource list).

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How can dancers and musicians communicate with each other?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss ways dancers and musicians communicate with each other.
- Musicians use the drum break to signal when movement to start, stop, and change a step.
- Breaks are given at the end of a musical phrase or movement combination.
- Review movement from previous day using a break to change the step.
- Add multi-step movement and polyrhythmic steps.
- Use the movement across the floor using the break.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

- Divide class into two groups to perform the learned sequence of movement in the center floor without teacher. Have each group observe and comment on the following: What examples do you see of dancers using the drum break? What examples do you see of polyrhythm, polycentric, and/or full-body movement?

- Designate two or three students to perform to see if they put the break in an appropriate place. Ask students to observe and comment with the same questions as above.

- Student will review the purpose and meaning of the break.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 3: Lamban and Its Symbolism

Goals:

Students will:

Know:

- That many movements in West African dance have symbolic meaning
- The history of the Lamban dance from the country of Mali. The dance depicts the legendary journey of King Mansa Musa, who made a pilgrimage with his people across the Sahara Desert to Mecca in 1294. The movement shows the undulating character of walking across sand and how the pilgrims used their clothes to shield themselves from the wind and sand.
- Four steps from Lamban

Understand:

- The relationship between symbolism and movement in West African dance
- That West African dance uses polyrhythms and polycentric movements

Do: The steps from Lamban center floor and across the floor

Assessments: Measure student learning by having them do the steps without the teacher to see if they can remember the sequence and articulate the movement.

Materials/Music: Heritage OP for warm-up/ Map of Africa (Attachment 1) and Mali/ Traditional Lamban rhythm (see resource list).

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How can dances have meaning?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss how dance can have meaning: mime, gestures, feelings etc.
- Teach the four steps of Lamban while telling the symbolism and history of the dance.
- Show where West Africa and Mali are on the map and show the path of the journey.
- Movement will be done in the center and then taken across the floor; rhythm “breaks” will be used consistently.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Divide class into two or three groups to perform for the rest of the class with a drum break to change groups. Let each group go two to three times. Tell students to watch each other for good points and make changes in their own performance of the movement. The focus is on practicing and observation. Afterwards, ask student to recall what changes they made in their own movement from watching someone else.

Assign research paper on Mali and Lamban (Attachment 2). The one-to-two-page paper will be due at your own timing. Review the grading rubric in class.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 4: Lamban and How Dance and Music Are Taught and Performed in the Village

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Four more steps from Lamban, their purpose and origin (from review); the characteristics of African dance (Attachment 3 in Resources).

Understand: How music and dance are taught and performed in the village: Music and dance are taught from a young age through repetition and continuous practice. As children grow older, they are given more responsibility and harder dances/music. The younger people are given more energetic steps while the elders choose more grounded steps. Movement and rhythms are taught by demonstrating instead of explaining.

Do: Steps in center floor and across the floor to review Lamban; perform one step in a circle to imitate a village setting.

Assessments: Measure student learning by having them do the steps without teacher to see if they remember the movement sequence and can articulate the steps.

Materials/Music: Heritage OP for warm-up / Traditional Lamban rhythm (see resource list).

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: Do other cultures teach differently?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss different ways of teaching: talking, modeling, copying.
- Discuss the difference between an American teaching model and a traditional West African teaching model.
- Teach four more steps of traditional Lamban dance.
- Focus teaching on learning through watching and repeated practice, rather than explanation.
- The performance focus will be in use of energy and feeling rather than exact position.
- Emphasize attention to overall position of hands and feet.
- Do movement in the center and take it across the floor; rhythm “breaks” will be used consistently.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Divide class into two or three groups to perform for the rest of the class with a drum break to change groups. Let each group go two to three times. Tell students to watch each other for good points and make changes in themselves, especially in the new steps. Afterwards, ask students to recall the changes they made in their own movement from watching someone else.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 5: West African Dances Performed on a Stage vs. in a Ceremonial Setting

Goals:

Students will:

Know: All eight Lamban steps.

Understand: Differences between West African dance for stage and ceremony.

Do: Eight Lamban steps (review) in center floor.

Watch video of West African dance of a recognizable African dance company done on stage and footage of in the village (see YouTube segments below).

Assessments: Measure student learning by asking students to compare and contrast the two videos, using a Venn diagram to record their observations (Attachment 4). Ask them to identify differences and similarities between the Lamban choreographed for stage and the one done in the village setting. Ask them to notice movement quality, the use of the break, clothing, the setting, and other aspects.

Materials/Music: Heritage OP for warm-up / traditional Lamban rhythm (see resources).

Video links:

Kulu Mele Dance Company performance of Lamban (this link shows Lamban performed for the stage): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCNXYOcles4>

Wedding Dancing of women, Mali, West African dance (this link shows Lamban done in a village): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMvGFR2Is1Y>

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What makes a show worth the ticket price for the audience member?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban steps, varying the timing of the breaks.
- Talk about what makes a show or performance worth paying for.
- Watch videos of dancers dancing in a village and on stage. Compare and contrast the two using a Venn diagram.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

- Students review the steps as a group without the teacher.
- Students share their responses with each other and teacher collects their Venn diagrams at the end of class.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 6: Combining Steps in West African Dance

Goals:

Students will

Know: Mali's borders were decided politically, not culturally. Inside and across Mali are different ethnic groups in existence since pre-colonial days. Each group performs Lamban in their own way.

Understand: The relationship between West African movements and their traditional rhythms.

Do: Eight basic Lamban moves and attempt more complicated steps in center floor.

Assessments: Measure student learning of movement by informally observing if they understand the steps well enough to transform them in a way that makes physical and musical sense.

Materials/Music:

- Music by Heritage for warm-up
- Traditional Lamban rhythm
- Map of Africa (part of Attachment 1)
- Map of Ethnic Groups in Mali (part of Attachment 1)

ACTIVITY

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How to combine Lamban dance movements

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review history of Lamban. Review geography of Mali and discuss how its political borders and ethnic groups affect the development and performance of the dance.
- Review the eight Lamban steps in the center floor. Focus on 'cleaning' the steps, and clear execution of movement.
- Teach four new, slightly harder Lamban steps.
- Have students combine two of the new or old steps to create two combination steps.
- The new combination steps are done in the center and drum breaks are used consistently.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Ask students to think back through their process of creating their combination steps. What aspects of the movement did they need to take into account? Did they think about the movement's rhythm, which parts of the body they moved, whether the movement was a jump or a stand-in-place step, or how it flowed? What else did they have to think about? Review the meaning of Lamban and the characteristics of African dance.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 7: Other Physical Characteristics of West African Dance Shared with Lamban

Goals:

Students will:

- **Know:** The characteristics of West African dance: orientation toward the earth; improvisation; circle and line formations; importance of community; polyrhythm and polycentric; percussion; pantomime; use of props; competitive dance
- **Understand:** How the characteristics of African dance are manifested
- **Do:** Lamban movements of various difficulty in center of and across the floor

Assessments: Measure student learning by informally observing their ability to articulate the movement, self-correct, and dance to the rhythm. During the discussion make sure each student contributes to verify their understanding.

Materials/Music: African rhythms for warm-up / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITY

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What are other characteristics of African dance?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review learned steps center floor.
- Teach one more single step and another combination step.
- Focus on cleaning and execution of footwork and use of arms.
- Take the steps across the floor

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Review the characteristics of West African dance (see Attachment 3). Have students point out examples of each characteristic from all the class activities thus far, including: videos, learning and performing movements. They can also pull from other facts they know about Lamban and West African dance.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 8: How Improvisation Is Used in West African Dance

Goals:

Students will:

- **Know:** The definition of improvisation: unplanned movement
- **Understand:** How to improvise using West African–based movement and/or concepts
- **Do:** The Lamban steps already learned (review). Improvise West African dance steps.

Assessments: Measure student learning by having them do the steps without teacher, to test their ability to remember the sequence. Observe throughout the lesson their level of comfort in improvisation.

Materials/Music: Heritage for warm-up and across the floor / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How do we improvise in African dance?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban dance movements taught in center floor and across the floor.
- Define improvisation: unplanned movement.
- Use different African music to have students improvise as a class (see resource list).

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Divide the class into two groups. Have one group watch as the other improvises. Ask for observations of what they saw only, no opinions. Have the groups switch roles and have the other group respond. Afterwards ask students how they felt improvising.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 9: A Bantaba

Goals:

Students will:

- **Know:** The definition of bantaba: A circle of sharing where dancers dance by themselves in the middle.
- **Understand:** How improvisation and competitive dance is used in the bantaba.
- **Do:** Review the steps from Lamban center floor and across the floor. Hold a short bantaba.

Assessments: Measure student learning by having them do the steps without teacher, to see their ability to remember and articulate steps.

Materials/Music: Heritage for warm-up and across the floor / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITY

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What is a bantaba?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review steps of traditional Lamban dance center floor and across the floor.
- The performance focus will be in use of energy and feeling rather than exact position.
- Emphasize attention to overall position of hands and feet.
- Define a bantaba. Explain how dancers may dance alone or with one or two others in the center and show off their best moves.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Form a semicircle or full circle for a bantaba. Choose individual students to go into the middle and dance. Or the teacher may invite a student to dance with him/herself to begin the bantaba.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 10: Creating a Bantaba

Goals:

Students will:

- **Know:** The format of a typical West African bantaba for the stage.
- **Understand:** How to create a solo, duet, or trio for a bantaba.
- **Do:** Lamban steps (review), and add solos, duets, or trios in a bantaba in the end.

Assessments: Measure student learning by informal observations to see if students picked the movement they do the best for the bantaba.

Materials/Music: African rhythms for warm-up and across the floor / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: When do bantabas occur?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban steps center floor.
- Explain that in a village, individuals do solos in the bantaba. On stage, however, dancers can prepare duets and trios as well. Have students choose to work by themselves or in pairs or trios. Through discussion, help students identify what steps of Lamban they do the best.
- Students will create short solos, duets, or trios of two to four steps for the bantaba in five minutes. The first should bring them into the circle, the second and third are done in the center, and the last should take them back to the group.
- Give students an order for sharing their steps in the bantaba.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Students perform eight original steps and then form a semicircle for the bantaba. Before starting, assign groups and solos an order.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 11: Introduction to Spatial Designs

Goals:

Students will:

Know: The definition of a spatial design: the arrangement of bodies in relationship to others.

Understand: How spatial design can be used in West African dance.

Do: Lamban steps (review); perform two steps in a spatial design.

Assessments: Measure student learning by informal observation of their ability to articulate the steps and form the spatial design.

Materials/Music: African/ music/ Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What is a spatial design?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban steps.
- Review the differences between African dance done in the village and on stage.
- Define a spatial design (see above). Verbally brainstorm different spatial design such as horizontal lines, vertical lines, circles, diagonals, etc.
- Stage two of the Lamban steps into one spatial design. One step should be done as a transition and the other in the design.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Students perform as a class the eight Lamban steps without the teacher. The first two steps will be done with their spatial design, and the remainder will be performed without spatial design.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 12: Spatial Design and Personal Space

Goals:

Students will:

Know: The difference between personal space and spatial design.

Understand: How personal space influences a spatial design's clarity.

Do: The next four steps arranged in a spatial design.

Assessments: Measure student learning by observing if their use of personal space is correct.

Materials/Music: African/ Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How does personal space influence spatial design?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban steps.
- Arrange the next four steps of Lamban into spatial designs.
- Discuss the influence of personal space on spatial design.
- Have a few students do the staging with no personal space, with too much personal space, and lastly with the correct amount of personal space.
- Discuss how the appearance of spatial design to the audience and the dancer's ability to execute movement changed as the amount of personal space changed.
- Do all six steps with spatial designs.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Divide students into two groups to perform for each other. Have students look for instances when the amount of personal space is correct and the spatial designs are clear.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 13: Marking vs. Dancing Full-Out

Goals:

Students will:

Know: The definition of marking in dance: doing movement halfway with low amounts of energy.

Understand: The difference between marking and dancing full-out.

Do: The original eight Lamban steps with spatial design.

Assessments: Measure student learning by observing if they put full energy into all of the movements.

Materials/Music: African/ Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What is the difference between marking and dancing full-out?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss the difference between marking and dancing full-out. Have students demonstrate the meaning of each using the same step.
- Review the steps of the Lamban choreography, making sure students are performing full-out.
- Place the last two steps of Lamban into spatial designs. Include an entrance and exit staging.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Divide students into two groups to perform for each other. Have students find examples of movements done full-out and not done full-out.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 14: Staging

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Definition of staging: To rearrange movement into different spatial designs.

Understand: Traditional dance movement is often restaged by various choreographers to make a new work.

Do: The teacher-staged version of the Lamban. They will also draw the spatial designs on paper.

Assessments: Measure student learning by observing their spatial maps to see if they drew them correctly.

Materials/Music: African / Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm, paper and markers and/or pens and pencils

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What is staging?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review the teacher-staged version of the Lamban.
- Discuss the definition of staged work. Talk about how in theatrical performances of West African dance often the traditional steps are not changed, but the staging is. The unique use of staging and spatial design by different choreographers creates new West African dance works for the stage, regardless of whether the choreographer is from that culture. The work is still considered traditional because the steps are the authentic steps. However, staged work is adapted to have maximum impact in a theater for performance purposes, instead of for ceremonial use in the village.
- Divide the students into cooperative learning groups to have each group draw the four spatial designs on paper.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Have one group share their drawings with the class. Collect everyone else's.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 15: How West African Dance Was Introduced to the U.S.

Goals:

Students will:

Know: How three different people help introduce West African dance to the U.S.

Understand: How information about dance is spread among dancers and society at large.

Do: Lamban choreography.

Assessments: Measure student learning by listening to each group's oral presentation to see if they understood the readings.

Materials/Music: Music by Heritage / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How has West African dance been spread in the United States?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban choreography.
- Divide the class into groups of four. Each group should designate a recorder (who takes notes), a presenter, a leader (who makes sure everyone is participating), and a reader. Distribute a biography of Chuck Davis, Asadata Dafora, or Pearl Primus (see Attachment 5) to each group. Give the groups about 10 minutes to read it and pick out important facts about their subject. The presenter should then review these findings with the rest of the class during sharing.
- Review the contributions of these dance pioneers. Have students take notes on their biographies.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Have each group share interesting facts learned about their pioneer. Display three big Post-its, each labeled with the name of one pioneer. Record the facts on these and put a check on those that are repeated.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 16: Finding Inspiration for Spatial Designs in Lamban

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Examples of different spatial designs.

Understand: Where to find inspiration for various spatial designs.

Do: Practice of Lamban movement.

Assessments: Measure student learning by observing each group's spatial designs and drawings to see if they accomplished the task.

Materials/Music: African / Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm / paper and markers and/or pens and pencils

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: Where do we find inspirations for spatial design?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban choreography.
- Discuss where to get ideas for spatial designs: geometric shapes, patterns, letters, etc.
- Divide students into co-operative learning groups of five or six.
- Each group brainstorms and draws four new spatial designs not already used in the Lamban choreography.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Each group should share at least one new spatial design by demonstrating its shape.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 17: Spatial Design and Audience Perspective

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Definition of perspective: the viewpoint of a specific person or from a particular location.

Understand: How spatial design affects the performance and watching of choreography.

Do: Lamban choreography.

Assessments: Measure student learning by gauging their solutions to the exploration of spatial design. Have they shifted their perspective to that of the audience?

Materials/Music: African /Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How does spatial design affect the performance and viewing of choreography?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban choreography for memory and clarity.
- Exploratory exercise: Choose one Lamban step to work with.
 - Ask each group to stage this step in one of its spatial designs that is different from those of the other groups.
 - Have the group perform the step in front of the class.
 - After each demonstration, have the class discuss how the spatial design changes how the audience sees the step.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Ask a few students to verbally summarize an observation from the exploratory exercise.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 18: Choosing Spatial Design Continued

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Examples of spatial designs.

Understand: Various methods to generate spatial designs.

Do: Lamban choreography and movement.

Assessments: Measure student learning by observing if they physically translated the shapes of their checkers into reality.

Materials/Music: African /Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm/ paper and markers and/or pens and pencils/ checkers or some type of place markers

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How else can we figure out spatial designs?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban choreography for memory and clarity.
- Have students break into cooperative learning groups.
 - Give each group markers, such as checkers (or other game pieces), equal to the number of people in their group.
 - Have students use the checkers to figure out new spatial designs and then try them out physically.
 - Have students record any new ideas on paper.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Have each group share at least one new spatial design by demonstrating its shape.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lessons 19 and 20: Restaging Lamban

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Different spatial designs.

Understand: How to make artistic choices in restaging work.

Do: Lamban choreography and restaging their own Lamban.

Assessments: Measure student learning by observing and questioning. By this point students should be able to choose spatial designs that make it easy to perform the steps and that the audience can see.

Materials/Music: African /Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How will you restage Lamban?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Review Lamban choreography for memory and clarity.
- Have students break into cooperative learning groups.
 - Each group restages the original eight Lamban steps into four different spatial designs not used in the teacher's staging.
 - Each group must also finish in a bantaba that can have solos, duets, and/or trios.
 - Each group must have an entrance, an exit, and clear spacing and execution.
 - Have them record their work on spatial design worksheet (Attachment #6).

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Teacher will work with each group and ask the group to share what it has accomplished that day.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 21: Practicing for a Performance

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Different spatial design patterns.

Understand: How to practice for a performance.

Do: Practice their student-restaged Lamban.

Assessments: Measure student learning by informal observations and questioning. Are they putting the elements gone over in the lesson into effect — such as articulating movement, working with the rhythm and drum breaks, keeping audience perspective in mind?

Materials/Music: African/Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm,

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME:

How do we practice for a performance?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss how to practice for performance, including but not limited to the following:
 - Review the “cleaning” points of each step to have clear execution.
 - Remembering without looking at others, giving verbal cues to others, or looking at chart.
 - Having a facial expression that is appropriate and interesting to watch.
- Briefly review with the class the performance rubric which will be used when they are tested.
- Give students time to practice their restaged Lamban.
- The teacher will work with each group and give feedback for further improvement.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Teacher informally critiques each group as they work based on the performance rubric (Attachment 7).

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 22: What Is an Effective Critique?

Goals:

Students will:

Know: The difference between helpful and unhelpful critiques.

Understand: To helpfully critique a choreographer, one must offer details and support opinions with examples.

Do: Restaged Lamban performance for another group for informal critique.

Assessments: Measure student learning by informal observations. During the critiquing process, make sure that students are giving specific examples.

Materials/Music: African/Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How do we give effective critiques?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss the rubric's performance-based categories in depth: enthusiasm, body, time, preparedness, and performance. Also discuss exaggeration of movement, strong start and finish for performance.
- Next discuss choreographic assessments — strong beginning and ending for group choreography, creativity, ensuring that all parts of the restaging are completed.
- Discuss how a critique needs to be specific and be backed up by specific examples to be effective and helpful.
- You as the teacher perform at least three of the Lamban choreographies that you taught for critique. Have students watch you and critique.
- Next have the students critique each other. Have each group perform for another group for a critique based on the discussion. Give each group a copy of the performance rubric (Attachment 7) to fill out as they critique the other group. Students should share their feedback with each other during the process.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Students will hand in their written critiques at the end of class.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lesson 23: Proper Audience and Performer Behavior

Goals:

Students will:

Know: What proper audience and performer behavior looks like.

Understand: Importance of proper audience and performer behavior.

Do: Practice restaged Lamban in groups.

Assessments: Measure student learning by listening to their feedback and asking them questions to defend their choices.

Materials/Music: African/Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm

ACTIVITY

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: What is the proper behavior of an audience and of dancers during a performance?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Discuss what appropriate behavior is for the audience: Being attentive, quiet, and appreciative (clapping at the end).
- Discuss appropriate behavior for dancers on stage: Focused, not responding to the audience, starting and ending in stillness, not talking on stage, and full energy in execution.
- Have groups model the proper and improper behaviors for audience and performer.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Discuss the impact of the improper behavior on both the audience's and the performer's experience. Ask: Why is it important for both the audience and performers to behave well?

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Lessons 24 & 25: Performance Assessment

Goals:

Students will:

Know: Dance and choreographic vocabulary.

Understand: How to give an effective critique for assessment.

Do: Perform restaged Lamban for formal critique.

Assessments: Teachers formally assess performances using the performance rubric (attachment 7). Students will also critique each other using the performance rubric and peer assessment sheet (attachment 8).

Materials/Music: African/Afro-centric music / Traditional Lamban rhythm, video camera, copies of the rubric / grading sheet

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF QUESTION, TOPIC, OR THEME: How do we *effectively* critique our own work and that of others?

WARM-UP: Set 7-minute routine focused on strength, coordination, and flexibility.

DEVELOPMENT / ELABORATION:

- Allow groups five minutes to prepare for formal testing.
- Review the peer assessment sheet and distribute a copy to each student.
- Each group performs for the rest of the class.
- Videotape the performances.
- Have each student in the audience grade the presenting groups using the performance rubric and peer assessment sheet.

CULMINATION / SHARING:

Collect peer-reviewed rubric sheets. After all the groups have been tested, make copies of the peer assessment sheets (with names cut off) and teacher-graded rubrics to pass back to groups.

COOL DOWN: Four stretches holding each for 10 counts and two breaths with arms.

Glossary

Definitions are from dictionary.com unless otherwise noted.

WEST AFRICAN CULTURE AND DANCE

Bantaba — In Mandinke language, the place of a community's highest tree, where people are invited to come together and dance, to play music, relax, and discuss. (www.last.fm/music/Bantaba)

Bouba/grand boubou/bubu — A flowing wide-sleeved robe worn by men in much of West Africa and, to a lesser extent, in North Africa (Wikipedia).

Folk/ethnic dance — 1) a dance that originated among, and has been transmitted through, the common people; 2) a piece of music for such a dance.

Geli/jali/djelis/griots — Oral historians who keep alive the tribal culture of the people of West Africa (Vieux Diop). A storyteller.

Lamban or Lamba — A song/dance/ceremony enacted at passages of life and for spiritual cleansings (Sule Greg Wilson). A group of dances from the Malinke people of West Africa used as court dances for kings, and dances of healing and rites of passage (Bomidele).

Mali — A landlocked country in Western Africa. Mali borders Algeria on the north, Niger on the east, Burkina Faso and the Côte d'Ivoire on the south, Guinea on the southwest, and Senegal, and Mauritania on the west.

Polyrhythmic — The use or an instance of simultaneous contrasting rhythms

Polycentric — Having more than one center

Ritual — An established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite.

SPATIAL DESIGN

Geometric formations — a pattern or shape made from straight lines, triangles, circles, or similar regular shapes

Horizontal line — line parallel to the horizon or baseline, e.g., a line that goes across the width of a piece of paper

Vertical Line — line at a right angle to the horizon or baseline, upright

Diagonal — slanted line that connects one corner of a geometric shape with the corner farthest away

Windows — staggered lines; behind the first row (of a line of dancers), dancers in a second row stand in the spaces between the dancers in the first line

Circle — a plane figure bounded by a single curved line, every point of which is equally distant from the point at the center of the figure

Semi-circle — half of a circle

Viewpoint — the perspective of an individual in relation to the stage action

Transition — passage from one form, state, style, or place to another

Personal space — physical area around an individual that cannot be intruded upon without that individual feeling uncomfortable or threatened

CHOREOGRAPHY

Isolation — the independent movement of any single muscle group or joint

Improvisation — to invent, compose, or perform with little or no preparation

Technique — the skills and basic physical forms that dancers learn, such as ballet, jazz, modern, and tap

Choreography — the creation and arrangement of dances; also the dance composition itself

Choreographer — someone who creates dance movement for performance

Dance critic — someone who writes reviews of dance performances

Phrase — the smallest unit of choreography that has a beginning, middle, and end

Stage areas — different parts of the stage, such as upstage, downstage, center stage. Stage areas are always identified from the performer's point of view.

Stage directions — instructions given to the performer about which areas of the stage to face or move toward

Space — where a dancer moves, encompassing level, direction, floor pattern, shape, and design

Axial movements — movements occurring around the body's axis

Locomotor movements — movements that travel across the floor

Dynamics — the amount of energy used in movement

Staging / restaging — the process of preparing a performance for an audience

GENERAL VOCABULARY

Continent — one of the principal land masses of the earth, that is, Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America

Country — a political entity; a nation or state, region, territory, or large tract of land distinguishable by features of topography, biology, or culture

Anthropology — a social science studying the origin, behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of a group of humans

Social justice — the promotion of a society based on equality and the dignity of every human being

Culture — the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group

Activism — the use of direct, often confrontational action, such as a demonstration or strike, to obstruct or support a cause

Time line — a representation of important events in chronological order

Innovative — the introduction of something new, a new idea, method, or device

Legacy — something handed down from one person or generation to the next

Unit Resources: Videos and Music

Videos to show students:

Wedding dance, Mali: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMvGFR2Is1Y>

Lamban: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCNXYOcles4>

Musical Recordings

West African Rhythms, vol. I, by various artists, label: Palms Down, ASIN: B000CA7KOM, audio CD. Includes the traditional Lamban rhythm.

Drums of Passion, by Babba Oluntunji, label: Sbme Special Mkts, ASIN: B0045DO8BU, audio CD.

The Rough Guide to the Music of Mali and Guinea: Kora Kings and Griot Minstrels, by various artists, label: World Music Network, ASIN: B00004TA69, audio CD.

The Rough Guide to West African Music, by various artists, label: World Music Network, ASIN: B00000B6SK, audio CD.

Putamayo Kids Presents African Playground, by various artists, label: Putumayo World Music, ASIN: B000087DRR, audio CD.

Explorer: West Africa — Drum Chant Music, by various artists, label: Nonesuch Explorer Series-Africa, original recording reissued, ASIN: B00006C75V, audio CD.

Jaliyaa Storytelling: Stories and Music of West Africa, by Storyteller Asha's Baba, label: WovenWeb Productions, ASIN: B00005NHU1, audio CD.

Greatest Songs Ever: West Africa, by various artists, label: Petrol, ASIN: B000UDGN2G, audio CD.

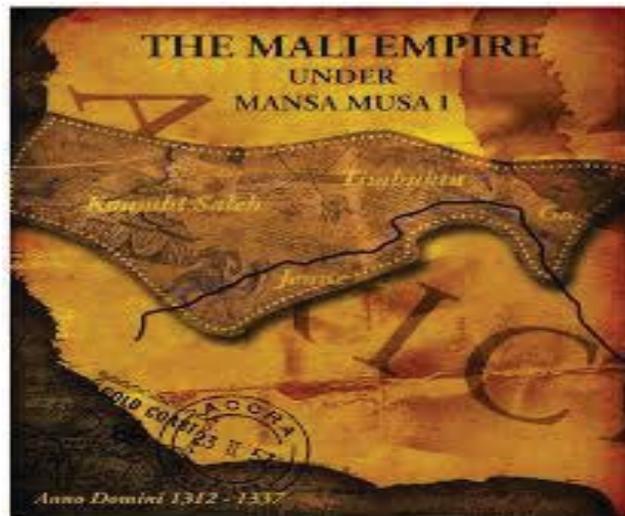
Compilation of West African Funk, by Booniay, Label: Tornado Records, ASIN: B00006310C, audio CD.

Attachment 1 cont.: Various Maps of Mali

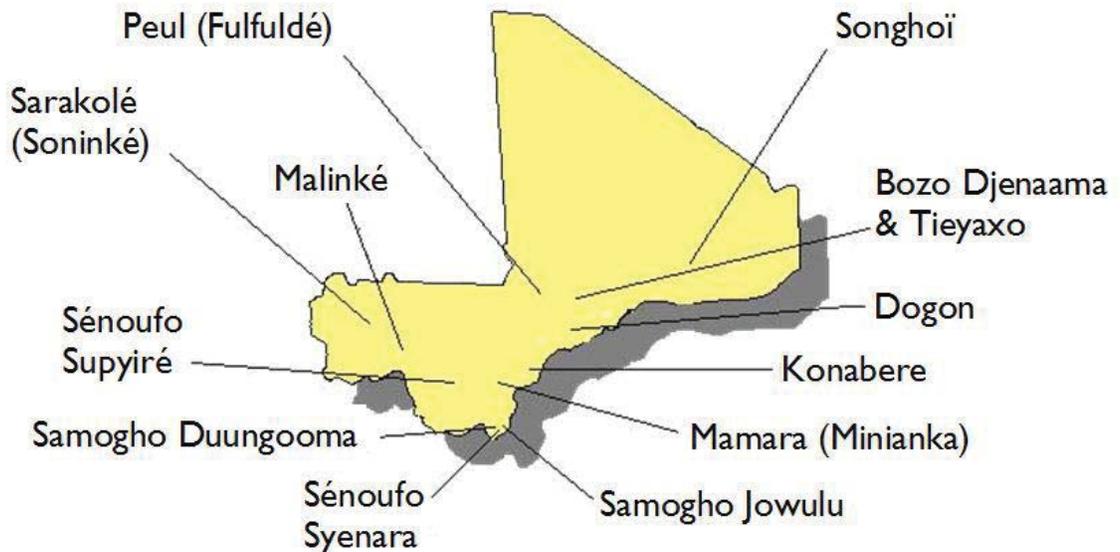
Map of Mali



Map of the Mali Empire Under Mansa Musa



Map of Mali by Ethnic groups



Attachment 2: Research Assignment

Guidelines: Write a one-to-two-page typed paper on the history of Mali and the West African dance called Lamban. Make sure you answer the following questions and include your bibliography. You will be judged by the rubric below.

1. Write about at least ten facts about current day Mali.
2. Who were two important leaders/rulers of Mali?
3. What was the Mali Empire? Why was it important?
4. What is the meaning behind Lamban?
5. What other dances or music do you find in Mali?
6. Name one thing you have learned or will take away from this assignment.

Rubric for Informative Paper on Mali/ Lamban

CATEGORY	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Average	1 Poor
Introduction (Organization)	The introduction is inviting, states the main topic, and previews the structure of the paper.	The introduction clearly states the main topic and previews the structure of the paper, but is not particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction states the main topic but does not adequately preview the structure of the paper, nor is it particularly inviting to the reader.	There is no clear introduction of the main topic, or structure of the paper.
Focus on Topic (Content)	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.	Main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is not clear. The paper appears to be a random collection of information.
Accuracy of Facts (Content)	All supportive facts are reported accurately.	Almost all supportive facts are reported accurately.	Most supportive facts are reported accurately.	No facts are reported, or most are inaccurately reported.
Sequencing (Organization)	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.
Spelling and Capitalization	Spelling and capitalization is correct. So few errors the reader barely notices.	Most spelling and capitalization is correct. Errors do not detract from the paper.	There are some spelling errors that detract from the meaning of the paper. Frequent capitalization errors.	Many errors. Paper is difficult to read.
Conclusion (Organization)	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that he/she understands what the writer is "getting at."	The conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	The conclusion is recognizable but does not tie up several loose ends.	There is no clear conclusion, the paper just ends.

Attachment 3: Characteristics of African Dance

<p>African Movement Vocabulary. African dance moves all parts of the body, in contrast to many European forms that rely mostly on arm and leg movement. Angular bending of arms, legs, and torso; shoulder and hip movement; scuffing, stamping, and hopping steps; asymmetrical use of the body; and fluid movement are all part of African dance.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Orientation toward the Earth. The African dancer often bends slightly toward the earth and flattens the feet against it in a wide, solid stance. Compare this to traditional European ballet's upright posture, with arms lifted upward and feet raised up onto the toes.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Improvisation. Within the patterns and traditions of age-old dance forms, an African feels free to be creative. A dancer could make an individual statement or give a new interpretation to a familiar gesture.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Circle and Line Formations. Many African dances are performed by lines or circles of dancers. Traditional European dance also incorporated lines and circles, and this commonality may have been important in dance exchange.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Importance of the Community. Africans danced mainly with and for the community. Solo performers were supported and affirmed by the group through singing, hand clapping, and shouted encouragement.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Polyrhythms. African music included several rhythms at the same time, and Africans often danced to more than one beat at once. Dancers could move their shoulders to one beat, hips to another, and knees to another. This rhythmic complexity, with basic ground beat and counter beats played against it, forms the basis for later music such as ragtime, jazz, and rock'n'roll.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Percussion. In much of Africa, percussion often dominates music, and in many cases the drum is the leading instrument. In America, enslaved Africans created a broad range of percussive instruments. Hand clapping, foot tapping, and body patting were also important percussive sounds.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Pantomime. Many African dances reflect the motions of life. Dance movement may imitate animal behavior like the flight of the egret, enact human tasks like pounding rice, or express the power of spirits in whirling and strong forward steps.</p>	<p>—</p>

<p>Something in the Hand. African ritual dance makes use of special objects, including masks and costumes. In this country, African Americans continued to use sticks or staffs, cloth, and other objects in dance. Handkerchiefs, canes, and top hats became part of the dance, as did other objects in stage routines.</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>Competitive Dance. Competing through dance is a widespread custom in West and Central Africa. In America, this tradition continued in “cutting” contests, challenge dances, cakewalk contests, break dance rivalries, jitterbug competitions, step dance shows, and other events.</p>	<p>—</p>

The list of characteristics and illustrations is reprinted with permission from Barbara Glass, “Introduction: The Africanization of American Movement,” in *When the Spirit Moves*, 1999, National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center. Thank you very much!

Attachment 4: Venn Diagram

Compare and contrast the two videos: How is the video of Lamban being done in the village similar to and different from the video of the staged performance?

Characteristics of Village West African Dance	Shared Characteristics	Characteristics of Staged West African Dance

Attachment 5: Assignment and Biographies

West African Dance Biographical Assignment

In groups of three, research one of the following dance pioneers:

- Asadata Dafora
- Pearl Primus
- Chuck Davis

Write down your findings, highlighting the information below:

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Where and when were they born, who were their parents, what type of life did they lead growing up, when did they pass?

2. MAJOR INFLUENCES TO DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Throughout their life, what situations or individuals influenced them to pursue dance?

3. COURSE OF STUDY

Did they study other fields besides dance, e.g., gymnastics, art, medicine, etc.?

4. THE SPREAD OF WEST AFRICAN DANCE AND/OR RELATED STYLES

How did they spread West African dance? What did they leave behind? When translating West African dance to American audiences, how did they approach and present their choreography, e.g., dance company, dance pieces, school, etc.?

5. VOCABULARY

Make a list of five words that you learned or which are important in your reading and research.

Attachment 5: Biographies

Asadata Dafora

During the 1930s, dance pioneers such as Hemsley Winfield and Adna Guy presented their interpretations of African dance to Americans. They had no training in West African dance, so their dances, *Ritual African Themes* and *Jungle Wedding*, gave more of their feelings about the dance style rather than actual African dance as seen in a traditional setting. However Asadata Dafora brought authentic African dance to America. He was the first native African artist in the thirties to strongly influence American concert dance and American culture.

Asadata was born to a wealthy family on August 4, 1900, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. Named after his great-grandfather, his name means one born on a great festival and bearer had vision. He received a Western education and traveled through Europe. Yet Asadata was always fascinated by African cultural traditions. He traveled throughout West Africa studying music, dance storytelling, and languages. After serving in the West African Frontier Force of the British Army, he continued to travel between Europe and Africa to study and perform West African dance. At that time he decided to devote himself to showing others the beauty of African art and culture.

Dafora started his career at age 39 in New York, but he wasn't discouraged. He worked with the Native African Union to train a group of singers, dancers, and drummers to perform locally. One of these productions was excerpts from an African opera that he wrote entitled *Zoonga*. His early shows were not well received and were considered "highbrow" since they didn't match the audience's expectations of West African dance. However, these critiques changed with the production of his full-length dance-opera *Kykunkor* in 1934. This work, based on folklore of the Mendi people of Sierra Leone, tells the story of a young man who chooses a bride from a nearby village. After the marriage, a jealous rival sends a Witch Woman to cast a spell on him. The village Witch Doctor saves him and his bride, and the village rejoices in dance. The work included several traditional dances intertwined with European performance skills. The traditional dances included dances for rites of passage, flirtation, wedding, celebration, prayer, possession, healing, challenge, and couple dances.

Kykunkor showcased traditional songs and dances formatted for Western theater and audiences and organized to tell a story. Normally these songs and dances would have occurred as the village community needed, not in a two hour time span. In addition, Dafora had to structure the songs and dances as a "dance-opera" for a proscenium stage and other non-religious settings. The audiences loved the dance-opera — the energetic dances, the skillful drumming, the colorful costumes, and entertaining narrative — and the critics gave it fantastic reviews.

After his big success with this piece, Dafora choreographed several more works. He choreographed a "voodoo" inspired *Macbeth*, followed by the work *Bassa Moona*, about a king who angers his subjects by selling the sap from the sacred rubber trees to white invaders. The king's son-in-law fights the king for control and restores everything back to normal. His next work, *Zunguru*, was different in several ways. It used English dialogue instead of an African dialect as he had done in all his previous works. Also, *Zunguru* wasn't based on a folktale but was more autobiographical, telling about a young man who returns to his village after being educated in Europe. The story shows the conflict between the traditional way of life and new modern ideas and how both can be accommodated. In 1946 and 1947, Dafora toured extensively across the United States. Asadata Dafora died in the U.S. in 1965.

Adapted from John O. Perpener III, "Asadata Dafora," in *African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), pp. 101–127.

Further Reading

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Southern, Eileen. *Biographical Dictionary of African-American and African Musicians*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Stearns, Marshall, and Jean Stearns. *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1994.

Thorpe, Edward. *Black Dance*. New York: Overlook TP, 1995.

Attachment 5: Biographies

Pearl Primus

Dancer, choreographer, educator

Personal Information

Born November 29, 1919, in Trinidad; immigrated to U.S., 1921; daughter of Edward and Emily (Jackson) Primus; married Percival Borde, 1954; children: Onwin (son).

Education: Hunter College, B.A., 1940; New York University (NYU), Ph.D., 1978.

Career

Worked for National Youth Administration (NYA); won working scholarship from NYA's New Dance Group, 1941; performed with their company, 1942; debuted with New York Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), 1943; appeared at YMHA as soloist, 1944; nightclub performer at New York's Cafe Society Downtown; performed at Carnegie Hall and at first Negro Freedom Rally, Madison Square Garden; performed with her own troupe on Broadway; appeared in the 1946 Broadway revival of *Showboat* and in the 1947 Chicago Civic Opera's revival of *The Emperor Jones*; toured with her own company, 1946–47; opened dance school in New York City; studied dance in Africa, beginning 1948; began co-directing dance company and presenting works with Percival Borde, 1959; developed U.S. educational pilot study in African dance; dance pieces performed by Alvin Ailey company, 1974 and 1990; presented new and revived works in New York and elsewhere; taught ethnic studies at the Five Colleges; adjunct professor of dance at NYU. Choreographed pieces include *Strange Fruit*, *Hard Times Blues*, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, *Shouters of Sobo*, and *Impinyuza*.

Life's Work

Pearl Primus is the grandmother of black dance as ethnic study and art. She has performed visually dramatic African and African-based dances, often accompanied by singing and drumming, and dances about the black experience in America. Her so-called "primitive" dances grew out of her anthropological research and travels in Africa and the Caribbean; her modern dances grew out of her reaction to racial prejudice. Primus was the first dancer to present the African American experience within a framework of social protest in dances such as *Strange Fruit*, *Hard Times Blues*, and *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*. Also known in educational circles, the award-winning performer holds a doctorate in anthropology and educational sociology and has taught dance in her own schools in New York and elsewhere. She also taught ethnic studies at the Five Colleges — a consortium consisting of Amherst, Smith, Hampshire, and Mount Holyoke colleges, as well as the University of Massachusetts — and dance education at New York University.

Since the 1940s, Primus has danced alone and with others, choreographed for her own company, and readapted her works for other dancers and companies, most notably for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She is known for her use of elevation and sense of weight. In 1943 she gave her first professional dance concert in New York City at the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) along with other accomplished artists, but it was she who stood out. *New York Times* critic John Martin gave her YMHA performance a rave review and later called her the outstanding new dancer of the season. He wrote, "Her body had superb control and range and she could outjump any man." In the *Borzoi Book of Modern Dance*, Margaret Lloyd wrote admiringly of Primus's "speed and elevation," "running jumps," "undulating rhythms," and "whirlwind spins" when she performed. In 1992 videographers were engaged to document her life's work.

Back in 1968, Primus told a *Dance Magazine* interviewer about the therapeutic effect dancing held for her: "Dance is my medicine. It's the scream which eases for awhile the terrible frustration common to all human beings who, because of race, creed or color, are 'invisible.' Dance is the fist with which I fight the sickening ignorance of prejudice.... Instead of

growing twisted like a gnarled tree ... I am able to dance out my anger and my frustrations." By 1992 her views had broadened. She told Sarah Kaufman in the *Washington Post*, "I think it was really a mandate from the ancestors. From early on, I wanted to speak in dance of the beauty, the strength and dignity in the heritage of peoples of African ancestry. But I also always felt strongly and still do that African dance is for everyone — the heritage of one people is the heritage of all."

Pearl Primus was born in Trinidad on November 29, 1919, to Edward and Emily Jackson Primus. When she was two years old her family moved to New York City. Though talent in the arts ran in her family, Primus did not initially feel these influences. Her first choice of a career wasn't dance at all. After attending Hunter High School, she graduated from Hunter College in 1940 with a B.A. in biology and pre-medical science, intending to work as a medical researcher. She was unable, however, to get a job in a laboratory because at that time no positions were open to blacks. Eventually she sought help from the National Youth Administration (NYA), and that organization hired her as an extra dancer for their segment of *America Dances*.

"She had had a little clog and folk dancing at Hunter High [School]," observed Lloyd in the *Borzoi Book of Modern Dance*. "But her feeling for movement had not been awakened. Suddenly she felt a change of heart. It happened overnight." In 1941 Primus won a working scholarship from the NYA program's New Dance Group, which sent her to study with modern dance masters like Martha Graham. "I was their only black student," she recalled to Michael Robertson in the *New York Times*. A year later, after performing with the New Dance Group's company, she decided to pursue a dance career.

During the 1940s Primus made inroads into the dance and entertainment world, formed her own company, and choreographed her own pieces. After giving a solo performance at the YMHA, she became a nightclub performer at New York's Cafe Society Downtown and attracted an enthusiastic following. In keeping with her cultural and political interests, Primus also performed with African dancer Asadata Dafora at Carnegie Hall and at the first Negro Freedom Rally in New York's Madison Square Garden. In 1944 she continued gaining recognition, appearing on Broadway at the Belasco Theater with her own dance troupe, as well as at the Roxy Theater. Two years later she danced in a revival of *Show Boat* and appeared as a witch doctor in a production of *The Emperor Jones* at the Chicago Civic Opera. In late 1946 through 1947 Primus toured with her own company, mostly in the South. She also performed in Massachusetts at the University of Dance at Jacob's Pillow. Later, she opened her own dance school in New York.

The dances she created and performed, such as *Strange Fruit*, *Hard Times Blues*, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, and *Shouters of Sobo*, presented themes of culture and social protest. The first three works are among her most famous. In *Strange Fruit*, Primus boldly played the role of a white woman at a lynching. Wrote Lloyd about this piece, "With no sound but the brush of her garment, the swish and thud of her bare feet and fists, the dancer hugs the earth, beating it, flinging herself upon it, groveling in it, twisting her sinuous body into fantastic shapes across it, now fleeing, now facing in timid fascination the invisible sacrificial tree which is the focus of the dance." Of *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* — based on a poem by Langston Hughes — Lloyd wrote, "[It] is one of Pearl's best ... beautiful with undulating rhythms over deep-flowing currents of movement that wind into whirlpool spins.... The whole body sings." Of her 1947 performance of *Shouters of Sobo*, danced to a Trinidadian chant, *Time* magazine commented, "With muscled shoulders hunched over bended knees, her powerful arms pounding, her whole body dynamically dramatic, everything about her was directed downward with terrible force."

Primus's interest in visiting Africa to study the continent's dances and derive inspiration from them began in the 1940s and has continued throughout her life. In 1948 she was awarded a \$4,000 fellowship from the Rosenwald Foundation and used it to study dance in Africa. She toured Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, Angola, Cameroon, Senegal, and Zaire, participating in court and social dances and observing native ritual. In 1949 in Liberia, where she later served as the first

director of the African Performing Arts Center in Monrovia, President William V. S. Tubman presented her with the Order of the Star of Africa medal.

During 1953, while researching folklore in her native country of Trinidad, Primus met Percival Borde, whom she married a year later. (Their son, Onwin, born in 1955, later became a dancer, musician, and stage manager for Primus's projects.) Impressed by Borde's raw talent, Primus invited him to her school in New York. There he made his first professional appearance, in 1958, to glowing reviews, and the following year Primus's dance troupe became known as Pearl Primus, Percival Borde, and Company. Until Borde's death in 1979, they shared their artistic lives in the United States and Africa as well as the running of her school for a time. Both spent two years in Liberia as guests of the Liberian government and in 1962 again visited that country under the sponsorship of the U.S. State Department and the Rebekah Harkness Foundation.

During the 1960s and 1970s Primus brought African dance to the United States, first to schoolchildren and later to other dance companies. In 1966 she developed "A Pilot Study in the Integration of Visual Form and Anthropological Content for Use in Teaching Children Ages Six to Eleven about Cultures and Peoples of the World," with funds from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the U.S. Office of Education. This study brought African dance into several schools and served to help complete the doctoral requirements for her doctorate, received from New York University's School of Education in 1978. Later, she created a dance language institute under her name in New Rochelle, New York, where she and Borde lived.

Under the direction of Alvin Ailey in 1974, the Ailey company (later named the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater) premiered at New York's City Center a ritual and psychological dance Primus had created in the early 1960s after conducting research in Zaire. The dance, now known as *The Wedding*, was favorably reviewed by Anna Kisselgoff in the *New York Times*, who wrote, "[This] is not a modern-dance stylization of an African ritual. It is the real thing. But it is the real thing as adapted and translated into theatrical terms. Miss Primus has understood this theatricality with the mastery of a first-class stage director."

From the late 1970s through the 1990s, Primus continued to present African and African American dances through performances in the United States, though she herself appeared onstage only occasionally. Primus and her husband, until his death, collaborated to produce a concert of African, Caribbean, and Afro-American dances, called *Earth Theater*, which was performed in theaters and churches in New York City. The pieces included a Liberian dance of welcome, a Nigerian fertility dance, a Haitian dance of sacrifice, and a suite about the black experience in America from the time of slavery to the civil rights era.

In 1988 the dances *Strange Fruit*, *Hard Times Blues*, and *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* were revived and performed at the American Dance Festival in a program called "The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance" at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. In 1990, her piece *Impinyuza* was presented at New York's City Center by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater under the direction of Judith Jamison. The dance, which premiered in the early 1950s, grew out of time Primus spent in the African republic of Rwanda with the Ishyaka (Watusi) dancers. Some reviewers of *Impinyuza* would have preferred a less ethnological representation. Other critics were impressed by the costumes and the intensity of the work. Julinda Lewis of *Dance Magazine* observed, "Drawing on the dance of the Ishyaka royal dancers of Rwanda, Primus has set the work on a dozen men, who are dressed in stunning red, white, and black cloth worn wrapped at the waist, beaded breastplates, ankle bells, and headdresses of long, silky animal hair.... Ever elegant and most intense in the execution of the simplest movement — as when all the men perform a low-placed turn at once — the dance is performed with reverence, not unlike the feeling Primus herself commands."

The following year Primus worked on a project sponsored by the arts divisions of Howard and American Universities, which culminated in a presentation of dances performed by students and professionals at Howard University and the

Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. They included revivals of *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* and *The Wedding*, as well as the new *Dance to Save Lives*, based on a war dance from Zaire.

For Primus it is essential that people learn about the cultural and universal roots of movement and to teach it to new generations. To the Alvin Ailey dancers rehearsing *Impinyuza*, she reportedly said, "What I pass on to you is the spirit of the people. I do not want you to let this go." Perhaps this more than anything else sums up Primus's mission.

Awards

Rosenwald Foundation fellowship, 1948; Liberian Star of Africa, 1949; National Council of Negro Women's Scroll of Honor; Association of American Anthropologists distinguished service award, Balasaraswati/Joy Ann Dewey Beinecke Chair for Distinguished Teaching, National Medal of the Arts, and National Black Theatre Festival Living Legend Award, all 1991.

* * *

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Attachment 5: Biographies

Chuck Davis

Born on January 1, 1937, in Raleigh, North Carolina; son of Tony and Ethel Davis; sponsor of 17 children in Africa. Education: Attended Howard University 1966–68, majoring in theater and dance.

Career

Danced with Babatunde Olatunji's Dance Company, Eleo Pomare's Dance Troupe, and the Bernice Johnson Dance Company. Formed his own company, the Chuck Davis Dance Company, in 1967. Started DanceAfrica, a festival of dance, in 1977. Joined the faculty of the American Dance Festival in 1974. Started a second dance company, the African-American Dance Ensemble, in 1983. Organized Cultural Arts Safari, an annual pilgrimage to Africa.

Life's Work

At the end of a DanceAfrica Festival, all of the dance troupes and musicians who have participated come together to perform on stage in an energetic finale. Chuck Davis, founder of the festival and himself a dancer, can be seen at the center of the swirling figures, a tall, joyous man. Founder of the DanceAfrica Festivals and the principal of the African-American Dance Ensemble, Davis has played a major role in introducing Americans to African and African-influenced dance.

Born on New Year's Day, 1937, to Tony and Ethel Davis in Raleigh, North Carolina, Davis attended Ligon High School before enrolling in a special high school program with the U.S. Navy which combined his last two years of high school with four years of active and reserve service. In the Navy he was trained as a medical assistant. When he completed the program in 1957, he went to work in the Washington D.C. area for a local hospital. His career goal was to get a nursing degree and eventually teach nursing.

In the evenings, after his shift had ended, he would go to the clubs in D.C. and dance to the music of performers such as Roland Kave and the Latin-American All-Stars, an Afro-Cuban group. Dancing became a passion. He began taking dance classes at a local dance studio, a small basement studio that barely contained his six-foot six-inch height. When Davis raised his hands in fifth position, they would touch the ceiling of the studio. Davis struggled to compensate for his height until he met Jeffrey Holder, a professional dancer who taught a master dance at a local studio. At six feet, eight inches, Holder was taller than Davis by two inches. Holder encouraged Davis not to shrink into himself when he danced, but to use his long arms and legs to his advantage.

Another encounter that influenced Davis took place at the 1964 World's Fair in New York, where he saw a performance of the Sierra Leone National Dance Company. He became interested in African dance and resolved to visit Africa one day. Also, around this time, Davis met Owen Dodson, director of the Theater Department at Howard University, who encouraged him to enroll in Howard's theater and dance program. Davis's career goals began to shift: he started to consider a career in dance as an alternate to a career in medicine. In his view, dancing was an affirmation of life, if not life itself. He told *Contemporary Black Biography* that he began to see the study of medicine as the study of healing and to see the study of dance as the study of health.

Trained in New York

While studying dance in Washington D.C., Davis formed a dance trio with two other dancers, and they performed at local clubs. On the day of the March on Washington, his trio was performing at the Crow's Toe, and Babatunde Olatunji, an African drummer who garnered an international reputation in the 1960s, saw Davis's trio perform and invited Davis to join his African dance troupe. Davis moved to New York to work with Olatunji. He delivered sandwiches during the

day in the garment district to earn money to live on, and spent the rest of his time performing and taking dance classes. Some of his friends were students at Julliard, and he would slip in to take dance classes with them.

Soon Davis began performing with Eleo Pomare's dance company. Pomare was a Panamanian known for his highly political choreography. By 1968 Davis was teaching dance classes at Bernice Johnson's dance studio and the South Bronx Community Center. A director at the South Bronx Community Center urged him to start his own dance company, and Davis gathered 25 dancers and musicians to form the Chuck Davis Dance Company in 1968. The troupe's focus was "dance from the Diaspora," including modern, jazz, tap, African, and African-American dance.

The troupe started slowly. At their first concerts, performers were paid \$1.25 apiece. But over the next 10 years, their repertoire expanded and their popularity grew, until in 1977 they were selected to represent the Eastern United States at FESTAC, an international dance festival in Africa. The tour dates conflicted with one of the troupe's workshop engagements, so Davis ended up leading a workshop in Texas while his dance troupe traveled to Africa without him. The troupe was well received at FESTAC; in fact, many of the African dancers at the festival couldn't believe that the troupe was American and not African.

Inaugurated DanceAfrica

The same year that the troupe traveled to FESTAC, 1977, the company was invited to perform at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Davis suggested that instead of featuring only his troupe, the musical directors consider hosting several troupes in a celebration of African-related dance. The festival, called DanceAfrica, included a concert featuring several dance troupes, dance classes, and an African marketplace. The festival became a tradition, and expanded. In the next two decades, in addition to its annual Brooklyn appearance, DanceAfrica festivals were held in major cities around the country, including Chicago, Washington, D.C., Hartford, Connecticut, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Miami. Troupes performing at DanceAfrica festivals have included traditional troupes from Africa, newly formed hip-hop troupes, and African-Brazilian troupes.

Each year, all the dance performances are woven together with a storyline. Davis, dressed in traditional African robes, often takes the role of griot, the storyteller who presents the story that weaves all the dances together. The finale is always a celebration of dance and culture, with all the troupes performing on stage together and involving the audience as well. DanceAfrica festivals have been a major vehicle for educating Americans about African and African-American dance, and the culture and traditions they embody. In 2002, the festival celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, having brought African and African-American dance to hundreds of thousands.

In the early 1980s Davis became involved with the American Dance Festival, associated at that time with Connecticut College. When the American Dance Festival relocated to North Carolina, Davis began a series of summer residencies with the festival in North Carolina. He developed what he called "community in-reach" programs, in which he would take dance into the community. He discovered some talented young dancers, and the American Dance Festival gave him support in working with them. To help further develop these young dancers, in 1983 he formed a new dance troupe called the African-American Dance Ensemble. Several principals Davis had worked with soon followed him to North Carolina, including the principal musician of the Chuck Davis Dance Troupe, Khalid Saleem.

Created the African American Dance Ensemble

Within a few years, the African American Dance Ensemble had performed several complete concerts and was becoming a showcase for Davis's choreography, including "Saturday Night, Sunday Morning" and "Drought," both of which premiered at the 1985 concert. Meanwhile, his first troupe, the Chuck Davis Dance Company, based in New York, was continuing as a separate entity under different leadership. It eventually disbanded, although company members continued to gather for reunions.

From its inception, the mission of the African American Dance Ensemble was to preserve and share the traditions of African and African-American dance. The dances in its repertoire include traditional African dance, contemporary African-American dance, and modern dance numbers. When it presents concerts and workshops, the troupe also educates the audience through commentaries on the history and culture that gave birth to the dances they perform. Inspired by the troupe's motto, "Peace, love, and respect for everybody," Davis has long viewed his ensemble as an agent for social change as well as a showcase for African and African-influenced dance. It is his belief that dance allows one to understand the human condition and encourages us to counteract the negatives and reinforce its positive aspects.

Starting in the 1980s, Davis began leading annual trips to Africa, bringing musicians, dancers, and others to study the traditional dance and music forms of the different countries of Africa. Davis's choreographic work has been heavily influenced by these cultural explorations. A prolific choreographer, Davis has created over 30 works, many of them traditional African dances. One piece, *N'Tore*, premiered in 1986, is a dance of Watutsi warriors which pays homage to the Tutsi tribe of Burundi. The idea for the piece began in 1963 when he met some Watutsi dancers at the World's Fair in New York. The dance is written for tall male dancers and has become a signature piece for Davis. Another Davis piece, inspired by the Nina Simone song "Four Women," is an example of his work in the jazz and blues mode.

When Davis creates a dance, he selects a style that he feels is best suited to the story he wants to tell or the message he wishes to convey. In his interview with *CBB* he stated, "I choreograph for the non-dancer. I want that person to look at it, understand it, and be motivated by it." Through his choreography and his leadership in DanceAfrica and the African-American Dance Ensemble, Davis has had a significant impact on the arts landscape in the United States.

Awards

North Carolina Artist Award, 1990; North Carolina Award in Fine Arts, 1992; NY Bessie Award for dance and performance; BAM Award for distinguished service to the arts; Kathryn H. Wallace Award for Artists in Community Service; and a Dance for the Planet award; honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, Medgar Evers College, New York; named one of the first 100 irreplaceable Dance Treasures in the United States, 2000.

From [Gale Contemporary Black Biographies](#) by Rory Donnelly on galenet.galegroup.com~

Attachment 6: Student Worksheet

Spatial Design Worksheet

Spatial Design #1	Spatial Design #2
Reason for choosing:	Reason for choosing:
Spatial Design #3	Spatial Design #4
Reason for choosing:	Reason for choosing:

Attachment 7: Dance Performance Rubric

CATEGORY	3-Outstanding	2-Satisfactory	1-Needs Improvement	0-Unsatisfactory
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language demonstrate strong interest in and enthusiasm for entertaining the audience.	Facial expressions and body language sometimes demonstrate strong interest and enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to demonstrate enthusiasm.	Very little use of facial expressions or body language. Did not demonstrate much interest in performance.
Time	Student has a rhythm (even or uneven) or tempo in the dance sequence that matches the music.	Student has a rhythm and tempo, but it doesn't always match the music.	Student has some rhythm, and it is sometimes inconsistent with the music.	Student has some rhythm and tempo, but it is often inconsistent with the music.
Body	Student uses a majority of whole-body actions, either gestures, patterns, or body shapes during the dance.	Student uses some whole-body actions, gestures, or body shapes during the dance.	Student uses only a few whole-body actions, gestures, or body shapes.	Student uses only body actions and gestures, or only body shapes, repetitively.
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student is somewhat prepared, but could have used a couple more rehearsals.	Student is not prepared and could have used many more rehearsals.	Student is not prepared, and it is clear that rehearsal was definitely lacking.
Performance	*The dancer is focused, concentrated, and committed to the performance of the movement.	*The dancer is often focused, concentrated, and committed to the performance of the movement.	*The dancer forgets movements and is easily distracted by others while performing.	*The dancer is not focused and committed to the performance.
Audience member	*Dancer is attentive while others perform.	*Dancer is attentive while others perform most of the time, but was occasionally distracted.	*Talking and playing around while others performed. Had to be constantly reminded to sit quietly and watch others perform.	*Did not watch others perform. Dancer was a distraction to the performers. *Always had to be reminded to sit quietly.

Attachment 8: Peer Assessment

DANCE PERFORMANCE SCORING TEMPLATE

CATEGORIES	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
Enthusiasm				
Timing				
Body				
Preparedness				
Performance				
Audience Member				
Comments: (1 positive and 1 challenge)				