

Percussive Footwork in East Indian and Philippine Dance Forms

Topic, or Concept, and Goal (if the lesson is part of a learning experience or a unit plan)

Students will be introduced to a different dance form, historically and culturally, and how to use footwork rhythmic patterns.

Grade

Grades: 6-8, 9-12

Class/Lesson Numbers

A minimum of three to nine lessons

State Dance and/or Physical Education (Dance Arts) Standards 2020

Virginia:

History, Culture, and Citizenship

6.6 The student will explore historical and cultural influences of dance.

- a) Identify similarities and differences in dance styles from various historical periods.
- b) Compare and contrast observable elements (e.g., body, action, space, time, energy) that characterize the dance arts of various cultures.

6.7 The student will identify and explore the functions of dance, including the use of dance as a form of expression, communication, ceremony, and entertainment.

National Dance Society *National Dance Education Standards Framework*

Strand(s) 5

Standard(s)

5.1 Historical dance knowledge and performance

Performance Indicator (9-12) research, critique, and report finding about a historical dance in the context of the period's arts and society

5.2 Cultural dance knowledge and performance

Performance Indicator (9-12) research, critique, and report findings about two multipart diverse cultural dances from different regions; examine their origins; describe the dancer's posture, movements, gestures, qualities, and rhythms; connect them to cultural traditions, social, cultural, and political influences of the times

Learner Objectives or Outcomes: (must include one "real world" objective or outcome for assessment)

Psychomotor: The student will be able to create rhythmic patterns with the feet, utilizing the different parts of the foot for different sounds.

Cognitive: The student will be able to create a rhythmic movement sequence with the feet and tell a story with the hands (Mudras), gesture, and facial expressions.

Affective: The student will be able to perform the completed project to in both solo and group movement

Rubric	Exceptional (4)	Accomplished (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Psychomotor	Student will perform the percussive footwork patterns in 1 count, 2 counts, 3 counts, 4 counts, 5 Counts, 6 counts and 7 counts. Student can add basic Mudras to the movement.	Students will perform the percussive footwork patterns in 1 count, 2 counts, 3 counts, and 4 counts. Student can add basic Mudras to the movement	Students will perform the percussive footwork patterns in 1 count, 2 counts, 3 counts. Student will keep their fists on their hips.	Students can only perform the single stamp and keeps fists on their hips.
Notes: Mudras are the hand positions.				
Cognitive	The student can recognize at least five Mudras and know their meaning.	The student can recognize four Mudras and know their meaning.	The student can recognize three Mudras but is unsure of their meaning.	The student can recognize two Mudras but is unsure of their meaning.
Affective or social and emotional learning	The students will choreograph their own story using both the footwork and Mudras. The movement and storyline are well thought out and developed into a complete story. Storyline is complete with facial expressions.	The students will choreograph their own story using both the footwork and Mudras. The work is complete, but more thought could have been taken in the development of the storyline. Storyline is complete with facial expressions.	The students are able to create a movement phrase, but there is little to no storyline. Use of Mudras and footwork is minimal. Storyline is accompanied with some facial expressions.	The students are able to perform some of the footwork but have not developed a storyline with the footwork or Mudras. Some facial expressions are used.

Materials, Resources, Space Requirements, and Suggested Music

Materials:

Rhythm sticks

Bamboo poles

Umbrellas

East Indian *tabla* music or traditional Philippine music

Handout book on mudras in which the students can choose to create their own storyline

Media:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_vUCoufnws (single hand gestures)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8nWUeJBObg> (double hand gestures)

Helpful website with pictures of hand gestures and facial expressions:

<http://shakti.e-monsite.com/en/pages/useful-links/face-expressions.html>

Music Suggestions:

Crème de la Crème of Indian Music: Glimpses of the Great Masters on Amazon
Music of the Philippines: Fiesta Filipina on Amazon

YouTube viewing:

Bharatnatyam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWhA3ldZcyY>

Leyte Dance Theatre

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFSWZYS2t_o

Vocabulary terms (with definitions)

Mudras – hand gestures that have specific meanings to help tell the story that is being told through dance

Rhythmic foot patterns – footwork accompanied by sounds made when the foot strikes the ground to rhythmic patters or time signatures generally in basic patterns of 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 7s, and 9s and build in complexity

Dance Lesson Instruction

The **dance lesson instruction sequence** includes **Introduction or Warm-up** (time), **Exploratory Experiences** (time), **New Material** (time), **Recap of Learning** (summary) and **Cool Down** (time), **Closure** (time), and **Assessment** (time). Timing for each dance lesson section may be determined by the teacher.

Each of these instructional topics may require **management** (diagrams), **transition** (between each lesson component place and content), **teaching process** (the how), and **teaching points or cues** (technique or music).

Teacher’s pre-assessment of the students in class is ongoing observation and assessment throughout the dance instruction sequence.

Introduction/Warm-up (time) (approximately 20 minutes)

Management: *Seated on the floor.* Mudras: Either with the video or printed material, review the Mudras. They are for a single hand, or both hands. The videos will take you through all of them or you could print the ones that you select.

Eyes: The eyes are very expressive in classical Indian dance: Without moving the head, shift both eyes to the right then left several times; up and down, upper right corner to lower left corner, reverse.

Nine Expressions in Classical Indian dance:

Love	Humorous
Tragic	Fierce
Heroic	Fearful
Disgusted	Amazed
Peaceful	

Have students practice what they think these expressions might look like.

Standing

Head: In turned-out first position in demi-plié with the fists on the side of the hips, slide the head side to side without letting the head tilt.

Ribs: slide side to side several times, forward and back; then circle right, then reverse.

Walk: Starting in parallel first position with the fists on the hips, take a step forward on the right foot stepping with a straight leg. Simultaneously, kick the left buttock with the left heel, flexed foot. Continue to alternate right and left. You can have the hands in Anjali, Namaste in Yoga (prayer position, hands at chest or for girls, one hand on hip, the other arm swaying forward and back in opposition to the front leg).

Transition: This will depend on the space and type of program you are in.

Teaching Process: There are as many or more stances in classical Indian dance as in Ballet. Many stances are the same as in Ballet such as parallel first position, turned-out first position in demi-plié, grand- plié, second position plié, parallel and turned-out coupé, passé, attitude, forced arch relevé in plié, jumps and pas de chat. It also incorporates turns and lunges. The feet can be pointed or flexed.

Teaching Points or Cues: Classical East Indian dance dates back as early as 800 BCE. It is an extremely organized and diverse dance form. The movement that I am drawing from is found in both Bharatnatyam and Odissi classical dance forms.

Many of the classical dances originate from cultural legends and historic religious texts. But for this teaching purpose, and without expertise in classical Indian dance, I think it is important to let the students tell their own stories.

Indian dance is generally performed in bare feet. However, based upon your classroom and teaching situation, you might need to adjust accordingly.

Exploratory Experience (time) (10 minutes)

Management: Give the students time to play with the Mudras (gestures) and facial expressions. They can work in small group by “like” interest to start to form a storyline. You can encourage fantasy. Many of the stories in classical Indian dance includes mischievous Krishna playing pranks, and magical animals.

New Material (time) (20-30 minutes)

Management: Footwork: first performed at a slow tempo, then moderate, then fast. Try to make each foot movement make sound.

In turned-out first position in demi-plié with the fists on the side of the hips.

Ones: slap the whole foot flat on the floor by slightly lifting the foot and stamping it down on 1 count alternating right and left foot

Twos: strike the right ball first on count 1, then thump the right heel on count 2 alternating right and left foot

Threes: slap right foot flat (stamp) on count 1, strike ball of left foot on count 2, thump down left heel on count 3; this does not alternate sides; but you can try it on both sides

Fours: stamp right foot on count 1, right heel drop on count 2, left ball on count 3, left heel on count 4

Five: combine twos and threes

Sixes: combine two and fours

Sevens: combine threes and fours

Add arms: start with the arms in classical Ballet second, turn the palms down so that they face the floor (*Pataka*, flag - fingers together, blade hands), pull the scapula together in the back press down on the air with the palms (like Graham “Eagle” arms).

Simple steps:

Change positions taking the right heel to the side and back to turned-out first alternating right and left. Use the *Tripataka* (three-striped flag) Mudra. As the right heel strikes to the right side, the right arm extends straight to the side and the palm turns upward to the sky. The arm returns when the foot returns

2. Try traveling the threes side to side. Add arms - hands in *Hamsasya* (Swan face, pointer to thumb) gesture as if plucking a cherry

3. Left hand in *Alapadma* (Lotus flower, fingers splayed open), right hand in *Bhramara* (bumblebee, pointer folded, thumb and middle together), gestures as if the bumblebee is flying to the center of the flower; add a parallel or turned-out pas de chat.

Philippine Dance: For the Philippine dance forms, you can find music that you like with the steady rhythm and have the students create both percussive footwork and possibly work to incorporate the bamboo and umbrella into the movement. Philippine dance tends to include Tinikling, traditional stomping to the rhythm, Ballet, and the bamboo and umbrellas as props. It is not as structured as the classical Indian dance and seems to be more open to interpretation. Like the classical Indian dance, Ballet is created around cultural legends.

Teaching Points or Cues: As in Tap dancing, percussive classical Indian dance uses all the parts of the foot: toe, ball, heel, and flat foot. The flat slaps the floor loudly, either taking the weight (stamp), or not taking the weight and rebounding off the floor (stomp).

Recap of Learning and Cool Down (time)

Management: You can make any combinations of Mudras, gestures, rhythmic footwork, and positions because you are telling a story.

Closure and Assessment (time)

Management: Classical Indian dance classes always end with an obeisance thanks the Mother Earth for allowing us to dance on her.

Assessment (must include one “real world” assessment) See rubric and review for informal assessment or use the rubric for formal formative assessment.

Management: Students will be given informal assessments as the teacher provides instruction and feedback during each class. Students will give informal feedback after viewing other students dance study. Students will be filmed while performing, students will identify the various hand gestures and rhythmic foot patterns.

Extension (Interdisciplinary topics, special populations such as Gifted and Talented, Inclusion of individuals with disabilities)

Students can draw and decorate their Mudras.

They can chart out their footwork patterns.

They can create their own Obeisance.

They can choreograph a Bollywood dance, now that they know the Mudras.

Lesson Reflection and Next Teaching Steps

It is very difficult to authentically teach another cultural dance form with thousands of years of philosophy behind it. It would take years of study to gain a thorough understanding of the art form. As in training in classical Ballet, it takes many years to attain technical proficiency. The same is true in classical Indian dance forms. We can still state that we want to acknowledge it, but that we are not experts. This material is difficult and will take several sessions for the students to feel comfortable. I also find that Indian dance meets the social/emotional needs of the students as it explores various feelings and emotions.

Instructor's name: Mary Ann Laverty
© 2022 by National Dance Society