

# INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LESSON PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

## DANCE AS LIVING HERITAGE

GRADES: 6-8





# LESSON SNAPSHOT

In this lesson, students will explore the role of dance in culture and communities. They will learn about several different dances developed by groups throughout Southern Africa and the specific meaning and purpose each of these traditions have in their culture. They will then consider the similarities and differences between the different dances and compare them to their own experiences and culture. Students will have the opportunity to work in groups to create a dance based on a prompt and teach their dance to the group. Students will close the lesson by reflecting on the enduring meaning and appeal of dance in the present day and considering the importance of this form of cultural expression for themselves and others.

## Learning Goals: Students will...

- ✓ Explore several different dances from the broader Southern Africa region, including the Seperu folk dance and the Budima dance.
- ✓ Compare and contrast different dances, including their movements, purpose, history, and role in local traditions.
- ✓ Reflect on the meaning and role dance has in culture and their own lives, and how dance can contribute to overall health and well-being.



(A woman and man participating in the Seperu folk dance. Ishmael Ogaufi Otlaadisa and Veekuhane, 2019)

### Localization Note:

The first dance highlighted in this activity is of the Veekuhane community in Botswana, and the second of the Wee people of Zambia. Teachers are encouraged, where feasible, to add or substitute dances from the region or ethnic group(s) of their students.

**Interdisciplinary Use:** Physical Education, English Language, Social Studies, Arts

## LESSON PREP



### Materials Needed:

- Paper or notebooks (for students to take notes and write in)
- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Laptop and projector, or an internet-connected device (optional, but can be used to show video examples of the dances)



### Time:

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Exploring Traditional Dances (10 minutes)
- Compare and Contrast (5 minutes)
- Activity: Create a Dance! (20 minutes)
- Reflection: The Role of Dance (5 minutes)




### Before the Lesson:

1. Review the lesson plan in detail.
2. Write the learning goals and the question from the Introduction section on the board so students can view them.
3. If it is possible to show the videos, open each UNESCO link ahead of time.
  - a. [Seperu folk dance](#)
  - b. [Budima dance](#)
4. Write down the different dance prompts on small pieces of paper, fold them so the words cannot be seen, and place them in a cup or other container for students to select from.



# LESSON PLAN

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Exploring Traditional Dances (10 minutes)
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- Activity: Create a Dance! (20 minutes)
- Reflection: The Role of Dance (5 minutes)

## Introduction (5 minutes)

Welcome students to class and explain that today will center around dance, including the role it plays in culture and what it brings to our lives. Call on a student to read the learning goals from the board to the group.




### THEN, READ THE QUESTIONS TO THE GROUP:

- How many different dances can you think of? Make a list.
- Why do people dance?



### These questions should also be written on the board.

Instruct students to work with a partner and to take three minutes to write down as many answers to the questions that they can think of.  They do not have to write in complete sentences, but can instead make lists.



(A man playing a drum during the Budima dance. Yuyi, 2019)



When three minutes are up, call on students to share their answers. Write their answers on the board for the entire group to see.

### Then, explain...

- People dance for many reasons: to celebrate, to mourn, for fun, to commemorate a historic event, to mark the passage of time, at coming-of-age ceremonies, and sometimes just because they feel like it!
- There are many, many different types of dance.
- Some dances are created by a single person and become popular through social media. Other dances have a long history and are created over time by a group of people.
- Folk dance is a type of dance that reflects the life of the people from a certain country or region.
- There is also religious dance, or ritual dance, which are dances that are part of religious ceremonies.
- They will learn about two different dances from countries in Southern Africa that they may or may not have heard of.



(A group of men participate in the Budima dance. Yuyi, 2019)

## Exploring Traditional Dances

(10 minutes)

**\*IF VIDEOS ARE SHOWN, THE TIME WILL RUN TO 15 MINUTES.**

Tell students to take out their notebooks or paper to take notes. If there is not space to write more, clear the board of the previous writing to make room.

**Write “Seperu Folk Dance” on the board. Write the bolded words from below on the board while teaching. Then, explain...**

- The first dance they will learn about is from **Botswana**.
- This dance is from the **Veekuhane community**.
- It involves singing, dancing, and sacred rituals.
- It is a **celebratory dance** and is **performed during important ceremonies, such as weddings or the coronation of a new chief**.
- To perform this dance, **men and women participate**. Women form a horseshoe shape, and the men face them at the end.
- A lead male dancer uses a fly whisk to direct and choose the female dancer.
- Other members of the group imitate the sound of a male dove.
- The female dancer dances and reflects the image of a peacock tail with her **multilayered dress, or mushishi**.
- **The number of people who know how to perform this dance is falling.**
- There are only 194 active practitioners today, with 12 master ones. All of the masters are more than 70 years old.
- The dance has become **less popular because community members have moved to different regions, wedding ceremonies have changed, and other reasons.**



(Dancers assembled at the coronation of the Veekuhane Paramount Chief. Ishmael Ogaufi Otladisa and Veekuhane, 2019)



IF POSSIBLE AND IF TIME ALLOWS, SHOW STUDENTS PART OF THE VIDEO (4:09 - 6:19) FROM THE UNESCO SITE.

Write “Budima dance” on the board. Write the bolded words from below on the board while teaching. Then, explain...

- This dance is from **Zambia**.
- This dance is a tradition of the **Wee people**, who live in the southern part of the country.
- This dance is **performed all year long at special ceremonies**, such as weddings, funerals, traditional ceremonies, coronations of chiefs, harvest celebrations, and more.
- This is a **warrior dance**. Dancers **use a number of different weapons and instruments**, such as spears, whistles, walking sticks, knobkerries, flutes, ceremonial axes, shields, horns or trumpets, drums, and rattles
- The dance **includes men, women, and children**.
- **Men represent fighters** and carry spears while jumping and running in and out of an inner circle of dangers, while others blow flutes or trumpets, chant, or play drums
- **Women wear special jewelry**, such as beaded necklaces, bangles, and rattles on their feet. They **sing along and dance**.
- **Children learn the dance by watching and participating**.



(A group performing the Budima dance. Yuyi, 2019)



(Two musicians participating in the Budima dance. Yuyi, 2019)

**IF POSSIBLE AND TIME ALLOWS, SHOW PART OF THE VIDEO (1:48 - 3:03) FROM THE UNESCO SITE.** 




**Compare and Contrast** (5 minutes)

Ensure students have finished writing their notes, and then clear the board. Draw a Venn diagram on the board; write “Seperu folk dance” over one circle and “Budima dance” over the other. Quickly explain the concept to students if they are unfamiliar:

- In a Venn diagram, you can compare two different things.

For these two dances, anything they have in common will go in the overlapping center. Anything that is unique to either will go in their own respective circles.

Give students one minute to think and discuss with a partner, and then call on them to suggest ideas for filling in the diagram. Their ideas could include the following:

 <b>Seperu Folk Dance</b>	 <b>Center</b>	 <b>Budima Dance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Botswana</li> <li>• Special clothing is worn</li> <li>• Some dancers imitate the sound of a male dove</li> <li>• A fly whisk is used to choose a dancer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Southern Africa</li> <li>• Men and women participate in both</li> <li>• Both are performed at important events</li> <li>• They are important to their people</li> <li>• Each dance has a purpose</li> <li>• They are becoming less popular over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Zambia</li> <li>• A warrior dance</li> <li>• The dance is performed with spears, ceremonial axes, and other weapons</li> <li>• Trumpets and flutes are used</li> <li>• Children can participate</li> <li>• Women wear special jewelry and rattles on their feet</li> </ul>



## SUMMARIZE THE CHART BY EXPLAINING THAT...

- Sadly, as time goes on and society changes, knowledge of some of these dances is being lost. This is why they are part of the United Nations Intangible Cultural Heritage database.
- These dances are important parts of their cultures.
- The dances are used for specific purposes.

Explain that they will get a chance to try and create their own dances that have a purpose.

### Activity: Create a Dance! (20 minutes)

Place students into groups of four or five and have them sit together. Explain that they will be given a prompt, and they will need to create a short dance in response to that prompt. They can take their inspiration for their dances from what they have learned today, musicians they like, their own culture, and more – as long as it is school appropriate!

They will have 10 minutes to create their dance. Each group will explain their dance to the group and teach everyone how to do it!

Have one person from each group come up and select a prompt. The prompts are:

- A dance to celebrate the last day of the school year
- A dance to comfort a friend who is having a hard time
- A dance to celebrate your birthday
- A dance to honor and thank your parents
- A dance to celebrate your sibling's birthday
- A dance to energize a team right before a big game

- A dance to wake people up in the morning and get them ready for school
- A dance to celebrate a day with perfect weather

The instructor can add or remove prompts to suit the needs of their students.

Give groups 10 minutes to work together to come up with their dances. They may use classroom items as props if they would like. Move between the groups to ensure they are on-task. If a group finishes early, have them practice their dance together.

After 10 minutes is up, call a group up to the front of the room. Ask them to explain their prompt and explain the significance of the moves and different parts of their dance. They can demonstrate their dance and have the rest of the group get up and learn it from them.

**REPEAT THIS WITH EACH OF THE GROUPS. ASK EVERYONE TO RETURN TO THEIR SEATS.**



(A dancer speaks to the camera about the Seperu folk dance. Cowhorn Production and Veekuhane, 2018)

### Reflection: The Role of Dance (5 minutes)

Clear the board and write the following questions:

- What was the easiest part of creating a dance? What was the hardest?
- Were you inspired by the dances you learned about today? What about other dances you know?
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals include health and well-being. How can dance contribute to a healthier life? Think of as many ways as possible.

Give students one minute to think, then call on as many as possible to share their answers. For the third question, if students do not raise these points themselves, explain:

- Dance is a positive form of exercise, but it contributes to health in more significant ways.
- Health and well-being are more than just physical – they are mental. Being part of and belonging to a culture or community increases people's happiness and reduces their stress, which is of huge benefit to their health.
- Health is physical, mental, and spiritual, and dance helps us connect to all of those things.
- Dance is an integral part of culture and how many communities bring together people and different generations. Performing dances helps strengthen communities and keep traditions alive.

**THANK STUDENTS FOR PARTICIPATING BEFORE THEY LEAVE FOR THE DAY.**



## WORKS CITED

- Cowhorn Production and Veekuhane. (2018). Seperu folkdance and associated practices [Video]. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/seperu-folkdance-and-associated-practices-01502>
- Ishmael Ogaufi Otladisa and Veekuhane. (2019). Seperu folkdance and associated practices [Photograph]. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/seperu-folkdance-and-associated-practices-01502>  
(Ishmael Ogaufi Otladisa and Veekuhane, 2019)
- UNESCO. (2020). Budima dance. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/budima-dance-01567>.
- UNESCO. (2017). Seperu folkdance and associated practices. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/seperu-folkdance-and-associated-practices-01502>.
- Yuyi, M. (2019). Budima dance [Photograph]. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/budima-dance-01567>.

# ADDENDUM: CURRICULUM STANDARD ALIGNMENT

## REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS

### Grade 6:

**6.1.1.1:** Describe different activities.

**6.1.1.2:** Describe simple processes.

### Grade 7:

**7.1.4.1:** Identify and discuss the customs of a particular people.

