Arts Assessment For Learning

DANCE —6TH, 7TH AND 8TH GRADES

HOW TO & TIPS: AFRICAN DANCE UNIT

This is a one month unit on the introduction to African Dance. Class meets three times a week. The specific learning experiences during the unit are as follows:

Week 1:

Students will learn an African dace choreographed by the teacher, incorporating various movements depicting work done in an African tribe. Students will discuss the qualities that are shown in African dance and learn new vocabulary: polyrhythmic, bent knees, isolation of body parts, percussion.

Week 2:

Students will form small groups and be given a performance task sheet (see Protocols). Students will choose an area of work such as *farming*, *hunting*, *housework*, or *fishing*. Within each area, students will have choices of actions they will depict in their dance. Students will be encouraged to count the beats of the music and focus on making clear and simple movements.

Week 3:

Students will share their dances with their classmates. The class will discuss criteria which will make their dances even better. The teacher will record the students' ideas and create a handout (see Checklist). Students will review the criteria in groups and choose areas they want to improve in their own dance. The teacher will videotape as the students verbalize their plan. Students will share ideas, and rehearse their changes. The teacher will circulate and provide feedback to the students. Students will be given the opportunity to share their dances with the class. The teacher will videotape student dances.

Week 4:

Students will discuss within their groups what worked well and what didn't work so well regarding the changes they made. They will have a chance to decide if they will keep their changes and how to improve them. Students will rehearse their final dances and perform once again. The teacher will videotape the dances. Students will write a written reflection in groups discussing the performance task and African dance unit (see Resources).