Name/Title: **Celebrating Native American Heritage Month with Dance (November 2009)**

Purpose of Event: Students will learn a dance based on a Navaho dance, basic historical facts about some Native American tribes and words from the Cherokee language.

Suggested Grade Level: 3-8

Materials Needed: Shakers, wrist bands or some type of musical instrument for each student to hold and use during the movements. Drum for the teacher to use to create a steady rhythm.

Beginning dance formation: This dance can be done in a large circle.

Description of Idea

Introduction: Each child should have shakers in his/her hands or bells around each wrist. The class should be in a circle. Teacher should provide a steady rhythm with a drum, approximately 100 beats per minute. All runs are with HIGH knees. This dance is based on a dance done by Navajo dancers as performed in Williams, Arizona.

1-8 Bowing at the waist and bending the knees bring both hands down to the knees and back up to the waist (1-6). Shake the hands in front 2x (7-8).

1-8 Scoop hands down and up to the L side (1-2). Scoop hands down and up to the center (3-4). Scoop hands to the R side 2x (5-8). Bend knees slightly with each scoop.

1-24 Place the R shoulder towards the center of the circle and beginning with the R foot run with high knees for 24 counts. Each step is a count that should go with the drum beat.

1-8 Run 4 more counts and on count 5 lower the hands down to knees and bring them back up to the waist (5-8 counts).

1-8 Run 8 more counts (beginning with the R) and on the last 2 counts face into the center of the circle.

1-16 Beginning R, walk forward 4 counts scooping shakers to the knees and up to the waist and on the 4th count make a ¼ turn to the right. Facing a new wall, walk forward 4 counts again scooping shakers and making a ¼ turn R on the 4th count. Facing the back wall, walk forward 4 counts again scooping shakers and making a ¼ turn R on the 4th count. Facing the last wall, walk forward 4 counts, scooping shakers and making a ¼ turn R on the 4th count. Students are now back to their original positions.

1-16 Extend R arm out to the side and run in place (again with high knees and beginning R) making a full circle to the R (8 counts). Students will extend L arm out with elbow flexed to the side and repeat the high knees run in place making a full circle to the L.

1-8 Hop in place 4x on the R foot. Run (LRLR) in place 4x. These hops could also be done in a circle.

1-8 Hop in place 4x on the L foot. Run in place (RLRL) 4x. These hops could also be done in a circle.

1-16 Repeat the first 16 counts of the dance.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyQjiFgKdzk&feature=related

Variations:

Allow a group of students to be the "music makers." Provide drums, shakers, etc., and ask these students to provide the rhythm for the dance.

Assessment Ideas:

Members of the class can be asked to research names of Native American tribes and tell how these names have influenced our language today. They could also be asked to pick one tribe's name listed in the anticipatory set and find out an interesting fact about the tribe. Allow students to work in groups and compose 16 counts to add to the end of the dance. Let each group demonstrate. Assessment can be based on creativity, rhythm and memory.

Teaching Suggestions:

Anticipatory Set: The month of November is dedicated to paying tribute to the rich ancestry and traditions of Native Americans.

Examples of tribes of Native Americans who live throughout the US include: from the Midwest, the Kickapoo, Cahokia, Missouri, Potawatomi, Winnebago, Sioux; from the southwest the Apache, Alabama, Navajo, Pueblo, Waco; from the south the Cherokee, Choctaw, Natchez, Shawnee, and from the northwest the Shoshone, Crow, Osage, and Pawnee.

Interesting Facts about Native Americans: There were many famous Indian Chiefs and leaders. Below are listed some names and the meanings of these names:
* Cochise (Hardwood)– Apache Chief. Cochise was never photographed and is buried in a secret location in his homeland. Cochise lived from 1812-1874.
* Geronimo (Goyathlay, "one who yawns") – Apache medicine man and spiritual leader. Geronimo died in 1909, a prisoner of war, unable to return to his homeland in the southwest. He is buried in an Apache cemetery in Fort Sill, OK.

The Trail of Tears was the Cherokee name for what Americans called Indian Removal. During the 1800's, the US government created an "Indian Territory" in Oklahoma, and sent all the eastern Native American Tribes to live there. The Cherokee tribe did not want to leave their homeland, but President Andrew Jackson ordered the army to march them to Oklahoma. They were unprepared for the journey and thousands of Cherokee Indians died. It was a terrible time in history.

The Cherokee language uses one character to represent each syllable of a word. Here are some Cherokee words:
* One is Sagwu, Two is Ta'li, Three is Tso'I, Four is Nvgi, Five is Hisgi, Dog is Gihli, Sun is nvda, Water is Ama. A friendly greeting is osiyo (oh-see-yoh) and wado (wah-doh) means thank you.

Cherokee children had dolls, played stickball (a lacrosse like game) and went hunting and fishing with their fathers. When they were babies their mothers carried them on their backs in cradleboards similar to what some parents use now.

http://www.bigorrin.org/cherokee_kids.htm

Native American Dance is often performed in circles, with the dancers moving either clockwise or counterclockwise, as determined by their views of the world and nature. Other dance orientations involved line dancers moving forward or backward in unison, or dancing in place, and dancers moving in a processional into and out of larger dance areas. They often sang during their dances, most often in their native language, but sometimes the words were more of a chant. Drums and bells provided instrumentation to the movement. Some of the dances were the Ghost Dance, Sun Dance, Stomp Dance, Harvest Dance and Hoop Dance.

http://americanindian.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=shop&second=books&third=NativeDance

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Submitted by **Brenda Goodwin** who teaches at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 11/2/2009**.

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