



FOLK DANCE / LOS VIEJOS

Level: middle school / 6-8 grade
Course: social studies, PE, Spanish

Rationale

To introduce students to Mexican culture through dance. To present students with an example of how older citizens are represented and respected in Mexico. To have students practice their computer/research skills by looking up Mexican folk dances on the Internet.

Objective

Students will demonstrate their computer/research skills by looking up Mexican folk dances on the Internet. Students will then demonstrate their interpretation of the Mexican dance Los Viejos by choreographing and performing it.

Time Needed

two-three 55 minute sessions

Materials

paper mache mask of a viejo (a smiling wrinkled face with white hair and beard and mustach), long sleeve white shirt and white pants, colorful sash, cane, straw hat with colorful tassels hanging off the back for color, sandals or huaraches, music --traditional Mexican zapateado

by
Raanel Steel
Pojoaque High School
Rt. 11, Box 207
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505-455-2234

Procedures

Note: Los Viejitos is traditionally done by men or boys yet there is no reason why girls could not participate but they need to understand that in Mexico a boy would be chosen first.

Once dressed in costume (see materials list), students need to take on the appearance of an older person. They should bend their knees and lean on their canes with one hand and keep their other hand on their hip. The dance can then be performed using the traditional three step Mexican “zapateado” of a stomp with the right foot, step with the left, step with the right, stomp with the left, step with the right, followed by a step with the left.

	Stomp right
step left	
	step right
Stomp left	
	step right
step left	

Other than the steps mentioned, there is no set way to choreograph this dance so have the students be creative and use their own judgement in choreographing how they think older people might dance using canes. These steps are usually choreographed into two lines with a group entering onto the stage in one long line and then splitting into two shorter lines but its really up to you and the students as to how you want to put the dance together.

Some suggestions for dancing:

1. Students form two lines facing each other or form one in front of the other with their backs to the back of the stage.
2. Students then circle around their canes in one direction and then reverse their direction.
3. Students hook arms and circle or attempt to swing the other around.
4. Students form bridges using their canes and then send others down the middle.

To close, traditionally one or two of the dancers faints and has to be carried off the stage with the help of the others but this too can be left up to the chorographers.

Possible follow up activities

1. Students research other types of Mexican dances using this same web site.
2. Students learn and perform other Mexican dances.

3. Students compare Mexican folk dances with folk dances of the U.S..
4. Students compare, discuss, and then make charts or posters of the traditional costumes from both countries.
5. Students research and make comparisons of the various types of music used with the various dances.
6. Students learn to play some of the songs and then accompany the dancers.
7. Students choreograph the dance in new ways then write down the directions and teach others.

Bibliography

<http://gnn.com/cgi-bin/gnn/>

(follow to Travel Resource, to Region, County, State, and City Guides, to Latin American and Caribbean, to Mexico not "Welcome to Mexico," to Historia, to Geografia, to Arte, to Economia, to Ciencia, to Deporte, to Turism, to Folklore, then under Folklore one can go on to other subtitles such as: Fiestas y Tradiciones, to Religion, to Musica, to Danza, to Tianguis y Mercados, to Charrería, to Picardía Mexicana, or to Cocina).

Judith Kane, Mexican folkdance teacher for the Espanola Public Schools