

WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, LANGUAGE,  
MULTICULTURALISM AND AT-RISK STUDENTS IN THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

BY

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## ABSTRACT

*Concerns regarding at-risk students led to research focusing on the potential benefits of West African drumming as a teaching tool for increasing general knowledge, sense of community, and engagement in learning. The purpose of the study was to assess specifically whether history, geography, and multi-cultural awareness could be introduced to the music classroom and engage at-risk students in learning. A three-week workshop at an elementary school was taught to test these concepts. Student knowledge of geography, history, and music of West Africa was measured utilizing a survey, while performance assessment measured how much enjoyment, engagement, and skill at drumming was exhibited by students. Students exhibited increased knowledge of geography, history, and multicultural awareness. Performance evaluation suggests that students had fun, felt engaged, and increased ability to play traditional West African percussion. The study presents an education module for duplicating and enhancing this research.*

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### *THESIS QUESTION*

Can an education module be created that will: promote self-esteem, listening skills, and group work skills; help to make learning fun and engage students in an authentic manner; teach students about West African music and culture; be accessible and useful for general music teachers, social studies teachers, geography teachers, and after school program facilitators and help these teachers meet national and state standards of education?

### *BACKGROUND*

Over the last 15 years I have researched the music and culture of West Africa. This scholarship has consisted of numerous personal interviews, study through journals and texts, and field research in Ghana and Senegal. During this time period I have taught these concepts to university students, professionals, public school students, at-risk youths, preschool children, and community members. I have seen at-risk students who were initially uninterested in being a part of any group, and turned off from learning become deeply involved in the group work of music, and visibly show their enjoyment of learning. The concept of utilizing traditional African culture in workshops to facilitate community for at-risk students seems to be promising as a method to engage youths in a unique way that can help create community, provide emotional release, promote multicultural awareness and connect people on a psychophysical level.

Several elements of African culture, including views of community and extended family, are commonly missing in many American homes. When Africans talk about their families, they often include extended members and not simply the family nucleus common to American culture. On two separate occasions, musicians I traveled with introduced me to several older women in their home towns as their mothers. When I asked why, they both said that the women had helped raise them—helped them learn right from wrong. In Okurasi, a village in the Eastern Region of Ghana, the people call their drumming and dancing rehearsal space “happiness place.” This place can help them process joy and also deal with despair. If at-risk youths in the U.S. had a place like this to retreat to when they needed to process emotion, could they be better prepared to deal with life’s challenges?

### *LITERATURE REVIEW*

Music and language break down boundaries, establish opportunities for communication, provide emotional outlets, and give the individual a voice in the group setting. Music allows people to express themselves in a way that brings them together authentically. When we play music together, we have to listen to each other, adapt our own playing, and be flexible. These skills not only apply to other areas of our life, but they also promote positive self-esteem and mitigate many of the risk factors of disenfranchised youths. Group music making has been shown to help students increase optimism, flexibility and self-esteem (Weinstein 1995). Group drumming has been shown to help

juvenile delinquents increase their sense of community membership (Bernstein 2004). Research has indicated that group drumming can increase co-workers feeling of positive mood and decrease burnout in the workplace (McCook 2003). Music education has been shown to be an integral element in successful at-risk education programs (Robinson 2004).

Integrating music into the geography classroom has been proven to help students gain a higher understanding of the material being taught and at the same time help students enjoy learning. Adding music into the geography classroom also helps students with different styles of learning and different intelligences gain access to the material being presented (Schubert 1997).

Integrating geography into the music classroom and music into the geography classroom has been the subject of multiple universities' curriculum development concepts (Black 2000; Scholl 2005). Gardner argues that people have multiple intelligences and finds that people can therefore learn more about subjects that they are not as skilled in through subjects that they are more skilled in (1985). Using music to help people understand geography could help people with higher musical intelligences achieve higher understanding in geography. West African music can be used to teach math, social studies, art, science and English (Morin 2003). Music has been proven to help students in reading and math (Standley 1996).

The need for multicultural awareness to be addressed in the classroom has been addressed for years and music is seen as a tool to help bring that to

students in an interesting and meaningful way (Anderson 1999). College professors are putting forward arguments for why and how they need to introduce more multiculturalism into the college curriculum (Klocko 1989; Lawson 1991). In the early 1990's there began a movement to teach multicultural awareness through music and the computer (D'Andrea 1995). Key concepts from African drumming can be applied to teaching at-risk students to help understanding of culture and anthropology (Foster, Lewis, and Onafowora 2003).

Because of the different learning styles of at-risk students, utilizing music in education of this population can help reach many students (Hansen, Silver, Strong 1991). Music can provide a means of self-expression and opportunities for enhanced feelings of self worth. Music can be used as a tool for cooperative behavior, as a listening agent to reduce stress and to facilitate group interaction (Duerkson and Darrow 1991). African-American young men have the highest rates of detention, suspensions, expulsions, and special education placements. Music education of African and African-American music is seen as one of four protective mechanisms or processes that can promote resilience among these at-risk youths (Harvey and Hill 2004).

Ethnic drumming styles have been brought into public schools with positive results in recent years (Hennessey 2005). Students had higher retention of information that they learned about cultures that they performed music from and many enjoyed learning it (Hennessey 2005). There is a lack of



curriculum designed to help music teachers teach across disciplines and a lack of curriculum to help geography teachers use music in lesson plans (Robinson 2004).

**CHAPTER II: *Traditional Music in Traditional and Modern West Africa: Drumming Styles of the Wolof of Senegal; Ga, Ewe, and Akan of Ghana; and Mande of Guinea***

*COMMONALITIES IN VARIOUS WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING STYLES*

The following drumming styles and methods are by no means found in every West African culture. However, they are spread throughout the area and could be considered common to the general geographic region.

*Polyrhythmic Basis for Drum Ensemble Music*

Polyrhythm is simply multiple rhythms played at the same time, which can be understood on a gradient scale from more simple and similar to more complex and dissimilar. One major element that helps to create the unique essence of West African percussion is the use of polyrhythmic components. Playing multiple rhythms at the same time forces the performer to be steady with his or her own part. And in this way, the parts, though they may seem very different, support each other through their diversity.

*Interchange of Rhythms and Instruments Between Cultures*

These traditional musical forms were not created in a vacuum. They intermingled with neighboring ethnic groups and were influenced by religion and nomadic peoples. One such example is of the sko or tamale. This

instrument was created in Jamaica by the slaves who worked building homes for the rich. They took the leftover wood and created a simple box drum. This drum is constructed of two concentric boxes. The first provides an outer shell and the second creates tension on the skin that is mounted to the outer shell with board and nails. This drum building style was then taken back to Africa when slaves were returned to Sierra Leone. Migrant workers then brought it to Cameroon, Ghana, and Guinea. Each ethnic group that adopted this instrument gave it its own name and created subtle changes in its design (Addy 2006). Ethnic groups have borrowed from each other in this way for centuries, creating unique but interconnected styles. Neighboring peoples have taken each other's music and transposed it to their traditional instrumentation, often naming the rhythm after the people it came from instead of its traditional name (Charry 2000).

### *Similarities of Instruments*

Cylindrical, dual-sided, rope-tensioned membranophones (dunun, dundun, djundjun, blekate, etc.) are usually played with one stick and open and closed tones are created. Often a bell will be played mounted to the side of the drum with another stick. These drums vary in size both in diameter and in length. Single-skinned frame membranophones (sko, tamale, gome ) are played using two sticks—with the exception of the gome, which is played with hands while the pitch is changed by pressing the head with a bare heel. Peg-tuned and rope-tuned single-skinned, goblet or conical shaped membranophones

(djembe, sabar, kagan, atsimevu) are played with two hands or one hand and one stick.

Dual-sided, adjustable pitch, rope-tensioned membranophones (kalangu, tama, odondon, odonno, lung) are played with a stick and hand. These drums are often referred to as “talking drums” in English. All are used to communicate language and sing people’s praises and are played in traditional ensembles of multiple “talking drums.” There are many drums used to transmit language in West Africa that are not very similar in construction to this category of instruments.

Calabash idiophones are played with hand or calabash mallet. Sometimes the calabash is placed inside another calabash and suspended on water, creating a much lower frequency. Tuned, gourd resonated idiophones (balafon, gire), iron idiophones (atoke, gankogu, gongo), hand clapping, and singing are also used.

### *Community*

In many societies in West Africa, music and specifically drumming, singing, and dancing held and in some places continue to hold important roles in daily life. Drums were and are played for harvest work, at naming ceremonies, to announce the chief or king, for religious ceremonies, for coming of age ceremonies, at funerals, for weddings and for celebrations. Many times the events where people played drums also included dance and masquerade (Charry 2000).

Women processing grain keep rhythm with mortar and pestle. This collective rhythm helps them work more efficiently and allows for the grain to be worked as the pounding takes place, with no one getting injured (Charry 2000). Language is spoken with the drum in Wolof, Peulh, Akan, Ga, and Dagomba. The drum can then be used to announce the presence of kings or chiefs, praise those whom the drums are being played for, tell historical stories, or even ask for a drink. Furthermore, drumming and dance are often only found together. Drummers and dancers communicate non-verbally. Drumming and dancing contain elements that help to create reciprocal energy transference—an important concept for community. Lastly, griots are found throughout the region—most being praise singers, oral historians, and musicians. These are generally hereditary positions and were often employed by kings or chiefs. It is not known exactly how or when these traditions began but they can be dated back to the ancient empires of Ghana and Mali. In these and many more ways, music has been used in West African to build community—allowing for grieving, celebration, functionality, and other things essential to community existence (Charry 2000).

## THE WOLOF OF SENEGAL

### *Sabar*

Historically the sabar is thought to have Mande and Susu origins, according to géwël oral history. The Mandinka play a drum called the sabaro

that has a remarkably similar construction. However, once the sabar was adopted by the Wolof people it became part of their culture (Charry 2000).

The Sabar drum family includes a set of seven drums that are all peg-tuned membranophones. Each drum has a skin on the top held on by lacing and seven pegs (which is a mystical number in the sufi traditions). These are all played with one hand and one stick and are only played by géwël (Tang 2007).

Traditionally these drums are played for ngente (naming ceremonies), weddings, korite, sabars (ngoon and tannibeer), wrestling matches, tur (women's association meetings), kasak (circumcision ceremonies), and laaban (virginity declarations). At ngente, tur and marriages, sabar rhythms are played in the order as listed below. However, fewer bakks are played as focus is more on traditional life. It is said that all Wolof people are brought into this world with the sabar and that that is one of the many important features that unites them and strengthens their community. The tur is a women's association meeting where women get together to discuss difficulties, enjoy each other's company and dance. This also serves as a community savings system. At each tur, all of the women bring a little money and give it to one person. That person then has a useful amount of money and can do something constructive with it (Tang 2007; Diop 2008).

### *Traditional Rhythms, Order and Meaning*

*Yu ñu moom*: Typically this rhythm is played at the beginning of every sabar event (Mbaye 2009-disc). *Yu ñu moom* literally means “we belong to you” and is referring to belonging to Amadou Bamba, the founder of the Mouride religious sect of Islam (Tang 2007).

*Tagumbar*: The second rhythm typically played at any sabar event is tagumar (Mbaye 2009-discs). It is believed to protect the sabar and comes from an ancient proverb, the words of which are now lost. This *bákk* is always played by the leaders of the group as a solo, showing that the *gëwël* is true (Tang 2007).

*Bakk*: Several *Bakks* created by the director are generally played at this time

*Ardin*: *Ardin* serves as a signal that the dance will now begin (Diop 1992-disc).

*Farwu Jar*: *Ardin* suddenly changes into *Farwu Jar*, and the sabar dance begins (Diop 1992-disc). *Farwu Jar* means “worthy boyfriend.” This rhythm used to be played for couples in a courtship dance. Today, as with all sabar rhythms, it is mostly by women.

*Ceebu Jën*: *Ceebu Jën* is named after the Senegalese dish of fish and rice (Mbaye 2009-disc). It is played at very fast tempos and is commonly played at many different events.

*Kaolack/Mbalax/Ndëc*: Each of these names is used interchangeably (Mbaye 2009-disc). This rhythm is commonly used under a *bákk* and is the foundation of Mbalax music (a popular Senegalese music style).

*Lëmbël*: Originating with the Lawbe (woodcarvers), the *Lëmbël* is typically played at the end of a Sabar (Mbaye 2009-disc). Women dance in a suggestive fashion pulling up their dresses and revealing their undergarments (Tang 2007; Mbaye 2008; Diop 2008).

### *Bakks and Rythmes*

According to Tang, there are two aspects of Sabar music that contain all other concepts. Those two are *bakks* (creative rhythmic compositions based historically in language) and *rythmes* (traditional rhythms and dance that are a part of popular Senegalese culture) (Tang 2007). Apparently some *bakks* were traditionally rooted in language (Tang 2007). However, today they are more commonly creative creations of the leader of the *sabar* group that show technical ability of the *sabar* ensemble. *Tagumbar* is one such *bakk*. It is thought to have originated in a proverb that has been lost. Although, according to Assame Djouck the meaning is still remembered by his family and he will pass on the meaning to his children, however, this is kept a family secret (Djouck 2008). *Tagumbar* is always played before every *sabar* event and is believed to protect the *sabar*. It is worth noting that *sabar* has multiple meanings: (1) a particular drum; (2) a particular group of traditional drums;



and (3) a dance and drum event. *Tagumbar* would protect all three (Tang 2007).

There are six *rythmes* that continue to be popular in modern society in Dakar. These six *rythmes* are intimately tied to dance, which may be part of their continued existence in society. Most women know how to dance to these *rythmes*. These six *rythmes* are *ardin*, *farwu jar*, *ceebu jën*, *baar mbaye*, *kaolack* and *lëmbël* (Tang 2007). At a *sabar*, *tannibeer*, *ngente* or marriage, these rhythms are usually played in the same order as listed above. Every *sabar* event begins with *ya ñu moom*, an invocation praising Cheikh Amadou Bamba. After *ya ñu moom* is performed the solo *tagumbar* is performed (Tang 2007).

*Ardin* is not danced but rather signals to the audience that the dancing will begin shortly. *Farwu jar* is played next and the dancing begins. *Farwu jar* was originally a courtship dance, but now it is only danced by women. Very few men participate in dance at *sabar* events today. *Ceebu jën* follows *farwu jar* and is named after Senegal's national dish of fish and rice. It is thought to be centuries old, according to oral historians. *Baar mbaye* (Mbaye 2009-disc) follows *ceebu jën*. *Baar mbaye* was originally used during naming ceremonies, or *ngente*. *Kaolack* then follows. *Kaolack* provides the rhythmic basis for the popular music style known as *mbalax* (popularized in the 1970s by Youssou N'Dour). Finally the highly sexual *lëmbël* *rythme* ends the *sabar* (Tang 2007).

Traditional music continues to play an important role in Senegalese society. Sabar is used in neighborhood dance events, women's association meetings, weddings, naming ceremonies, political campaigns, wrestling matches, and Islamic holidays (Panzacchi 1994; Tang 2007).

Naming ceremonies, known as *ngente* in Wolof, are an important place where traditional music continues to serve a traditional function in modern society. An *ngente* usually lasts all day. Drummers play traditional dance rhythms including *ardin*, *farwu jar*, *ceebu jën*, *baar mebaye*, and *Kaolack*. Sabar drummers also participate in *woyang*, praising the mother and her child and thusly receiving money for their praises. At many *ngente* ceremonies *bëkëtë* is performed providing protection from the evil eye for the newborn. The *rythme baar mbaye* is used for the *bëkëtë* procession (Tang 2007). In some areas the *tabala* of the Qadiriya is played instead of the Sabar (Djouck 2008). This tradition allows every Senegalese person to be brought into this world with the *sabar* or the *tabala*.

Traditional marriage ceremonies also include traditional drumming. In St. Louis the *gëwël* play certain rhythms for different aspects of the ceremony (Djouck 2008). *Gëwël* also serve an important role in politics; this is an interesting transformation from the praise singers of *geer* and *royalty* since today *gëwël* create *bákks* that serve as political slogans (Villaón 1994). Sabar also continues to play an important role in Senegalese wrestling known as *lâmb*. A *lâmb* event may only consist of thirty minutes of wrestling, while the

drumming can last over four hours. Wrestlers dance to the drums and many famous wrestlers have bakks created just for them, a sort of theme song (Djouck 2008). These serve as proof that traditional drumming is alive and well in Senegal and should be further studied and examined by ethnomusicologists.

### *Géwël*

Géwël (Wolof griots) are a caste of praise singers and oral historians who play sabar. The fact that they play drums is somewhat unusual compared to other griots in West Africa, most of whom play tuned instruments including kora and balafon. Traditionally, géwël have systems built into society that provided them with income. These géwël depended on geer (traditional caste of royalty) to provide them with income. Géwël/geer relationships were generally passed down hereditarily, with a specific geer family having ties with a specific géwël family that went back for many generations. There was even a system called géwël juddu, which literally means géwël of birth. In this system a young géwël was attached to a young geer and they would work together throughout their lives. The geer would pay for the géwël's needs and that géwël would honor the geer by knowing his family history and by singing his praises, either vocally or through the drum. People also made géwël/geer bonds through friendship, loyalty and generosity (Panzacchi 1994).

During the colonial period the geer lost much power and many géwël could no longer rely on them as a source of income. Many geer sent géwël

children to the prestigious French schools for chiefs. This was because the noble men did not want to send their sons to a white man's school. This even resulted in the word griot becoming synonymous with collaborator. Many griots had to find other types of work where their knowledge of social structures and keen ability for speech could work to gain them money. This is not to say that all geer/géwël relationships died during the colonial period. This is certainly not true; in fact the géwël/geer relationship still exists in modern society (Panzacchi 1994).

## GHANA

### *Ga*

The Ga people live in the greater Accra region of Ghana. In recent traditions the Ga have absorbed the traditions of neighboring regions. This is likely due to their geographical location. Many Ga musicians will play rhythms of Ewe, Dagomba, Fanti, and Asante origin.

Ga instruments include: gome (box drum with a single membrane), giri (tuned idiophone with gourd resonators), tamale (frame drum with single membrane), gonkogu (iron double bell), tweinshin (single-headed, peg-tuned membranophone played with two hands, thought to be the ancestor of the conga drum), obrenten (single-headed, peg-tuned, hour glass-shaped lead drum), kidi (single-headed, peg-tuned, conical membranophone played with one hand and one stick), brekete (dual-headed, rope-tuned, cylindrical membranophone played with one stick and one hand), kanganu (single-headed,

peg-tuned, conical membranophone played with two sticks) and the *atsimevu* (large single-headed, peg-tuned, conical membranophone played with one hand and one stick).

Today drumming is used for celebration, marriage, funerals, and traditional festivals. The most commonly played traditional Ga rhythm is called *Kpanlogo* (Mensah 2006-disc). This was traditionally a courtship dance used to help young people find mates under the watchful eye of the elders. The newly formed national government of Ghana saw it as too sexual and banned it. However, the Ga people did not stop dancing it, and it became more popular partially due to the ban. Finally the government was convinced to make it legal (Addy 2006).

A modern Ga funeral is a three day event. It begins at sunset on the first day; drums rotate with DJ music all night long. Burial takes place on the second day and drums and music play late into the second night. Drums, DJs, and modern bands perform again on the third afternoon and evening. It is said that a chief of long ago started this tradition to help people with their grieving process (Otoo 2006).

### *Akan*

*Fontomfrom* (a six-foot-tall, peg-tuned membranophone played with long curved sticks) and *atumpan* (a set of two peg-tuned, single-headed membranophones played with two curved sticks) ensembles were originally only used for the *Asantehene* (king). They would announce his presence before

the people and sing his praises during festivals while being carried on the heads of men. The rhythms of this ensemble are extremely complex since they are language based. The lead player plays the atumpan and makes long statements to which the numerous fontomfrom players respond. It would be extremely difficult to learn these rhythms without first knowing an Akan language. Akan refers to a language group and includes, among others, the Asante and Fante peoples. Drums are still played for the king and for traditional festivals (Addy 2006).

### *Ewe*

In *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* John Miller Chernoff states:

“the Ewes sometimes think of their drums as a family. The bell is like the heartbeat that keeps things steady. Kagan is the baby brother; Kiti is the mother; Sogo is the elder brother; Kroboto and Totogi, when they are played are the twin brothers; Atsimewu, the master drum, is the father, who, according to their tradition, is in charge of everything” (Chernoff 1979: 43).

According to oral history, the Ewe people fled to their present location in what is now the eastern most province of Ghana, the Volta region, in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. At this time their society was based on a three tier warring strategy. Over time peace came to the Ewe. However, aspects of their war-based community still remain today. The rhythm Agbekor shows this change. C.K. Ladzekpo states that the rhythm/song/dance of “Agbekor means ‘lives are safe’ and was dedicated to the pursuit of peace through a spirited remembrance of the horrors of warfare” (Ladzekpo 1995).

In Agbekor the drums each speak their thoughts through their rhythm. The baby Kagan says “stand up”; the mother Kiti says “turn back homeward”; and the father leads them onward. Ewe drums do not merely play rhythms—they speak words. Drums are also used for naming ceremonies one week after birth, and for coming of age ceremonies at puberty. Ladzekpo also states:

“Rhythm is an important instructional medium in the development and reinforcement of the basic Anlo-Ewe mental and moral consciousness in terms of what is real and important in life, and how life ought to be lived. In this view, rhythm is the animating and shaping force or principle that underlies the distinctive quality of being . . . In the cultural understanding, the technique of polyrhythm simply asserts the highly unpredictable occurrences of obstacles in human life. They occur without a warning. It reinforces the need for the development of a strong and productive purpose built on a foundation of adequate preparation for life” (Ladzekpo 1995).

This concept of cross-rhythmic or polyrhythmic understanding can be seen by merely looking at an individual bell part used in Agbekor. It contains 12 sub-pulses and those can be felt in a number of different ways simultaneously. The simplest of which are four threes or three fours. A pattern of x-x-xx-x-x-x can be grouped into four groups of three (x-x)(-xx)(-x)(x-x) or three groups of four (x-x-)(xx-x)(-x-x).

In the village of Dededo, Volta Region, Ghana, the people play bobobo drums. The people here work hard to support their lives and on Sundays they relax. They join together and play drums, clap, dance and sing. Music brings them together in a real and meaningful way, which can be seen in their faces when they sing, dance and play music.

*Carvers*

Carvers in Okurase, Eastern Region, Ghana, use hand tools to create drums that they sell to merchants in Accra, who then sell them to tourists or ship them to Europe and the United States. The wood chips are used as cooking fuel. Only the men carve here. They work every day that the weather is good. After they finish carving they rest on the shells and lie on a soft bed of wood chips under a thatch roof. This is physically demanding work. However, the carvers work at a nice slow rhythmic pace. Boys learn how to carve at an early age in Okurase. They begin by carving small drums intended for children or ornamental use. Many children in Ghana work after school and during vacations. In Okurase the carvers also play the drums they make. They call their space for dancing and drumming *Anejye Kurum*, which means “happiness place.” (Otoo 2006) They store their drums in a bark-shingled, open-walled shed on a table under a tarp. While these drums are carved with traditional hand tools in traditional ways, they are sold in a very modern way for use in Europe and the United States.

## GUINEA

### *Mande: Djembe and Dunun*

The Maninka instruments, the djembe and dunun, are traditionally used in a vast area of West Africa. These instruments were developed by the people of the ancient empire of Mali, and the current area of disbursement encompasses the same approximate area. Post-colonial boundaries have



divided this region into several parts and have affected the styles and rhythms that modern djembe and dunun players currently play. Today djembes are used from Dakar to Accra and have become the most popular African drum outside of Africa (Charry 2000).

### *Djembe*

The djembe originated in the ancient empire of Mali. The blacksmiths (numu) are credited with their creation. The numu were seen as skilled in manipulating the mysterious force called nyama. The numu also carved the Komo masks, which were important to the secret societies bearing the same name. The use of iron rings allowed the djembe to be tuned higher than earlier drums and helped to give it its characteristic timbre and range. The djembe is made from a carved wooden body, three iron rings, goat skin, and rope (Charry 2000).

The djembe is played with two bare hands and has three basic tones: slap, tone, and bass. It is played in groups as small as one djembe and one dunun and as large as three dununs, two accompanying djembes, and one lead djembe. In some areas the accompaniment patterns are referred to as “child” and the lead patterns are called “mother.” In the village setting, people form a circle and sing (solo and group), clap and dance. Often solo dancers will enter the circle and the energy increases as the tempos rise; this is referred to as “the heating up” or in french “echauffment.” The solo is then finished when the lead

drummer plays a break to signal the end. Communication between the dancer and drummers is very clear (Charry 2000).

### *Dunun*

Dununs, double-headed cylindrical drums, in Guinea are usually played in groups of twos or threes with bells attached. These drums accompany the djembe with static and improvisatory parts. The smallest is called kenkeni, the middle is called sangba, and the largest dununba. In Mali often only the sangba and dununba are played and usually without bells. Dunun is played with an open and closed tone.

Dununs are double-headed, barrel drums traditionally carved from a single tree and today commonly made from metal barrels. Cow skin is used for the heads. In Mali rope is used for the rings, while in Guinea iron rings are used. They are played horizontally with one stick and use an open tone and a press tone. A bell is hung from the side of the drum and played with a metal rod. Often in ballets all three will be played upright by one person and the bells will be omitted (Keita 1999).

In traditional Maninka society, drumming is an integral part of many events and rituals. Life cycle changes that include drumming are naming ceremonies (one week after birth), circumcision/excision (marking an individual's passage into adulthood), and marriage. Drumming is used for celebration at new year festivals, full moon festivals, at the end of Ramadan,

and at Tabaski. Drumming serves an important role in the secret society functions of Komo. Harvest and cultivation are also accompanied by drumming (Charry 2000).

In *Mande Music*, Eric Charry states:

“In the past, drum pieces and their dances may have been uniquely associated with specific occasions, each rhythm having a purpose, a time and a place. Nowadays some rhythms and dances have less specific associations and may be performed at a variety of events. Drummers play rhythms that give people strength and courage before or during a trial and honor them when they have passed through it. Drumming is above all a communal event that demands participation from all present in the form of dancing, hand clapping, and singing. By participation, one honors those being celebrated, whether a bride and groom or children about to go into, or returning from, the bush. . . . The continuity of old drumming traditions has been significantly affected in the twentieth century by several factors, including the impact of Islam and European colonialism, leading to the eradication of certain secret power societies; the mixing of diverse regional traditions in the hands of professional drummers in urban areas, especially the capital cities; and the vagaries of dance styles and drum rhythms” (Charry 2000: 198).

#### *Dununba (Dance of the Strong Men)*

Historically Dununba was an important ritual in Kouroussa. Men of a younger age group (15-20 years) challenged men of an older group (20-25 years), and a Dununba dance was called. The men formed concentric circles and whipped each other to prove their courage. If the younger men gained the older group's approval, they joined them. Today, there is no actual whipping involved in this ceremony. Today the family of Dununba rhythms is one of the most popular in Guinea (Keita 1999; Keita 1989-disc).

#### *Mendiani (Dance of the Virgins)*

Mendiani is a rhythm, dance, and song for young girls. In Upper Guinea each village chooses the best young female dancer to be the Mendiani. The dance is very acrobatic and young dancers go through serious mental and physical training to prepare for it. This young dancer will continue to be the Mendiani until she reaches puberty, at which time a new Mendiani is selected. The girls wear a wide boubou and a mask and are carried into the village center by young men. In *A Life for the Djembe*, Mamady Keita states, “the girls take off their masks and big boubous, the griots sing the Mendiani song and the percussionists change to the Mendiani rhythm. For several hours the girls perform their acrobatic dances, for which there are different traditional choreographies. This festivity is still practiced today in accordance with tradition” (Keita 1999: 74; Keita 1992-disc).

#### *Kassa (Agricultural Music)*

Kassa is a rhythm played for cultivation, planting, harvest and harvest celebration. The celebration is called Kassalodon. Kassa literally means granary (Keita 1987; Keita 1989-disc).

#### *Komo (Secret Society of the Numu)*

Komo is the secret society of the Numu. The Numu are the blacksmith class who invented the djembe. The Numu lead the Komo society, perform circumcision and excision, and deal with the power of nyama. The djembe accompanies all of these rituals. In recent years it seems that the power of this

society has declined a great deal among the Maninka. Today, there are several theatrical representations of Komo in the various ballets (Charry 2000; Keita 1989-disc).

### *The Ballet*

During colonization the French repressed traditional music and dance in Africa, and promoted a policy of assimilation. After independence came to West Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there came a renewed interest in pre-colonial traditions. Sekou Toure led the effort to rejuvenate traditional arts by supporting musicians and dancers throughout the state. Shortly thereafter Mali, Senegal, and Guinea created national ballets. Guinea was the first to do this by nationalizing Les Ballets Africains, a company created in France by Fodeba Keita in the late 1940s. The official text of the National Festivals (of Guinea) can give the outsider a more clear understanding of the purpose of the national ballet. It states,

“The ballet of Guinea is neither a simple repetition of the dances and rhythms, nor an esoteric image of plastic figures, but a work of art who finds its essence in the cultural heritage of the country. With a high degree of perfection in execution and a modern style production, the ballet reflects, in a vibrant way, African history and African life, in close coordination with the sociopolitical progress of the revolution in Guinea. In their effect on the outer world, they are emissaries of African culture” (Keita 1999: 42).

The artistic work of the musicians and dancers in the ballet consists of combining traditional songs and dances with newly choreographed and composed music and dance. Often songs and dances will be performed in a

long chain containing many traditional pieces, which will have been modified by the performers or artistic directors. Mamady Keita says, “In a manner of speaking, the ballet transforms tradition into a kind of folkloric presentation, and, in doing so, loses some depth and authenticity. . . . Today, the true traditional rhythms are only found in the villages” (Keita 1999: 42). It is often said that in the ballet the circle of the village tradition is broken and opened into the arc of the stage. This action changes the music and dance from one where all who are involved are participants into a presentation of art for a non-participating audience. In Guinea, they hold festivals in which young people compete to join the different national ballets, allowing them to choose the best musicians and dancers from each region (Charry 1996).

### *TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN MODERN MUSICAL STYLES*

#### *Modern Music in Senegal*

In the 1930s Afro-Cuban music began to become popular among the elite. By the 1960s rock, reggae, and soul were introduced to popular culture. James Brown was a household name. In 1970 Orchestra Baobab was the first group to incorporate Wolof into popular music, although they still performed afro-Cuban music. In 1977 Aziz Seck, a géwël and master sabar player, was the first to introduce the sabar drum into popular music with his group Super Diamono (Charry 2000).

In the late 70s early 80s Youssou N'Dour popularized the transposition of traditional drum parts to electric instruments. Youssou N'Dour sang mostly in

Wolof. Super Diamono and E'toile de Dakar became the first mbalax bands, which became the dominant popular style in Senegal. This occurred largely because this music was in the local language, dealt with traditional values and contemporary issues, and was fun to dance to (Duran 1989).

Taasu is an ancient form of spoken poetry over music. When hip hop was first heard in Senegal many people recognized it as taasu. Hip hop has become very popular in Senegal and has helped to bring the Wolof language to a new generation and increase its strength in the country (Mbaye 2008).

### *Modern Music in Ghana*

Highlife was first created in the late 1800s when British military music mixed with Ghanaian traditional music. At first these bands were comprised of European horns and Ghanaian drums. Highlife grew and adapted over time, and in the 1960s guitar band highlife was born. Electric guitars flowed with the sound of palm wine music and blended with the more traditional highlife music to create a new sound. These bands included electric guitar, electric bass, drum set, trumpet, saxophone, trombone, congas, tweinshin, axatse and singing. By the early 1990s a new form of music was invented that blended the sounds of American hip hop with guitar highlife. This upbeat style of music, called hiplife, is still popular today in Accra. Influence of military music and traditional music created Highlife. One can often hear kpanlogo and other traditional rhythms in hiplife. The drum parts have often been transposed to

bass, guitar and keyboard (Collins 1976). Musicians still speak their language through music with drums, bass, guitar and keyboards (Otoo 2006).

### *Modern Music in Guinea*

According to Charry, traditional music certainly is living and well in Mande society. Traditional roles have allowed for change over time. In part, traditional music lives on in modern music in Mande society through the guitar. The guitar was apparently adopted by jelis (Mande griots) as early as the 1930s. Perhaps the reason for this early integration is that jelis were able to incorporate the guitar easily into traditional roles due to a possible African ancestry of the guitar. There are photographs of a famous Malian family of jelis holding a balafon and a guitar in the late 1940s. It is remarkable that the guitar has been accepted by so many types of people. It and the drum set have become instruments of the world (Charry 2000).

Musicians in 1959 Guinea were charged with the “sacred obligation” to draw inspiration from the epic and folk traditions. Because the guitar had become part of traditional jeli society, it became the link between the old and the new. With its electrification it helped create modern traditional music. Amazingly, traditional music and culture lives on today in this way. Jelis now often use electric balas, koras, konis, and guitars for futoo sito (weddings), and den kun li (naming ceremonies). Drummers also play for these events. Unlike Wolof society where the drummer is the griot, in Mande society the griots, or jelis, play bala, kora, koni, and guitar. The issue of drumming in Mande society



and its interaction with jelis is significant and deserves further research (Charry 2000).

Modern music in Mali and Guinea is rooted in three separate musical categories: European military music, latin dance music, and the traditional music of Maninka regions as performed by jelis. After independence, these categories merged to form national orchestras, ballets, and ensembles. Big bands in Guinea in the 50s played waltzes, boleros, fox trots, swing, and congas. These bands ordered sheet music from Europe. At times, they mixed traditional songs into this format. It seems likely that groups like Orchestra Baobab would have been influenced by these styles. Even the act of calling themselves orchestra would seem to agree with Charry's assertion that the word orchestra meant a band that was based on foreign music styles and instruments, most commonly, latin and ballroom. The term ensemble has been commonly used to refer to groups with traditional instrumentation (Charry 2000).

In the 1990s musicians in Guinea and Mali, after seeing the international success of their fellow countrymen, started using more traditional music and instruments in newer music creations. This resulted in Euro/American dance music, electrified indigenous instruments used in guitar bands, and mixing of traditional instruments with European instruments. All of these use djembe and dunun instead of or in conjunction with drum set. At

this time there began a resurgence of traditional music and instruments in popular music forms (Charry 2000).

There are clear historic lines that designate traditional African music and traditional European music. However, it is interesting how these musics blend to create modern music. This is a global occurrence that has been facilitated by the advent of easily accessible recorded music. It is now possible for almost anyone to hear music of distant cultures. Of course, colonialism brought European military and court music to West Africa. And this in time blended with traditional African music styles. However, perhaps the most interesting music is the music that was influenced by musicians listening to other musicians. Musicians have been and are still being inspired by fellow artists who speak the same international language of music. Mamadou Konte put it this way when speaking about his tour to Europe: “The Europeans colonized us. . . . Now we’ve come to Europe. Not to colonize but to civilize” (Charry 2000: 307).

In the 1930s, a Venezuelan record company began printing LPs for African consumption, which were widely distributed in French West Africa by the 1940s. The orchestras were the ones playing this music. Ecole Ponty, a French secondary school outside of Dakar, is where the French sent the most talented African students. It dramatically changed the music in Guinea and Senegal. It served as a meeting ground for talented young artists. The founder of Les Ballets Africains even went there. This group brought the music of

Guinea to the world and influenced the creation of national ballets in Mali and Senegal (Charry 2000).

After Guinea gained its independence on October 2, 1958, its first president, Sekou Toure, started a network of regional and national performing groups. There were three common group styles: orchestra (modern versions of traditional music using European instruments); ensemble (traditional music on traditional instruments); and ballet (dance groups with djembe and dunun drumming). This format became the norm for other liberated French West African countries. During the 1940s Les Ballets Africains was based in Paris. After independence it became the National Ballet of Guinea. The Republic of Guinea hired musicians as civil servants and handed out instruments to the people. Clearly one of President Toure's goals was to bring new life to traditional music and culture after many years of French assimilation. This concept was also used in Senegal and Mali, helping to create the wonderful music scenes in these countries (Charry 2000).

The term "modern" has been widely embraced by musicians in Senegal, Guinea and Mali. Modernization of traditional music has primarily involved the inclusion of electric bass, electric guitar, and drum set. Often traditional rhythms and melodies are performed on these instruments. Younger jelis are playing in traditional groups as well as modern. People commonly refer to traditional and modern music throughout Mande society (Charry 2000).

Sekou Toure died in 1984 and thus the governmental patronage of music in Guinea died with him. Many musicians began international careers at this time. This emigration of musicians included an influential teacher named Mamady Keita. It is amazing to think that through Sekou Toure's life of supporting music he helped to bring life back to traditional music. And through his death Guinean music was brought to the rest of the world. These traveling artists and teachers have brought traditional djembe and dunun styles to the rest of the world. They have inspired many Europeans and Americans. Due to the emigration of djembefolas (master drummers), the djembe has received international status. Along with congas and drum set, djembes are the most commonly used percussion instruments in the world. What a blessing it is that Sekou Toure placed such importance on traditional music, despite his controversial status as a political figure (Charry 2000).

#### *WEST AFRICAN MUSIC ABROAD*

Members of the national ballets left their countries when their leaders stopped funding their art, and they traveled abroad to teach and to perform. They taught both the rhythms and their mindset. Traditional music is spread through universities and played on traditional instruments. These rhythms are taught with anecdotal stories evidencing the rhythm's history. These community traditions, however, are often not used or understood properly by the performers. This would seem to be an outgrowth of the concept that the

ballet popularized as a performance of a traditional rituals, rites of passage, naming ceremonies, and so on (Charry 2000).

### *PROMISE FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING*

It is worth considering whether aspects of these community building concepts could be transposed to different groups of people. Case studies for how drumming helped to build community connections in West Africa and perhaps elsewhere would prove extremely helpful in determining the viability of these cross-cultural community building techniques. Rich and diverse musical and cultural traditions certainly exist in the aforementioned West African communities. Is it possible that sharing knowledge of historical and communal aspects of these communities along with learning to perform music in those styles could help to instill a sense of community in the West through strengthening social bonds and interpersonal skill sets (Addy 2006)?

### *CONCLUSION*

The Wolof of Senegal; Ga, Ewe, and Akan of Ghana; and Mende of Guinea all have diverse systems of drumming that carry a set of regional similarities. Each culture has used and continues to use traditional drumming systems as an integral part of their culture. The presence of traditional drumming has changed over time. In places it is still strong and in others it has diminished significantly. However, these rhythms and musical sensibilities are still present in popular music styles. Even aspects of communal concepts are still voiced in popular music. The traditional lives on. It changes and

recreates itself as time passes while keeping its roots placed deeply in the soil. Hopefully, traditional music in modern West Africa will continue to grow and flourish into the future.

## CHAPTER III: UNIT PLANS

### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Increase knowledge of the music, geography, history, people, and languages of West Africa (*National Music Standards 8 & 9; Geography Standards 4 & 10*)
- Learn about traditional drums from West Africa and how to play them (*National Music Standard 6, 8 & 9; National Geography Standard 10*)
- Learn basic phrases in Wolof (*Geography Standards 4 & 10*)
- Discover stereotypes about Africa and increase multi-cultural awareness (*National Geography Standard 6*)
- Think about how playing music together can help people work together (*National Music Standards 7, 8 & 9; National Geography Standards 6, 9 & 10*)
- Be able to locate Senegal on a map of Africa (*National Geography Standard 2*)
- Learn how to play traditional rhythms on traditional instruments from West Africa and understand how those rhythms are traditionally used

- Improvise solos while the rest of the class performs traditional rhythms  
(*National Music Standard 3*)
- Learn how to play his or her own part while others play opposing parts  
and thereby creating a polyrhythmic structure (*National Music Standards  
2 & 5*)

### *MATERIALS*

- 9 Traditional Djembes; 9 Remo Djembes; 3 Dununba; 3 Sangba; 3  
Kenkeni; 9 Djabara
- Powerpoint presentations: Maps/History; US or Senegal Quiz;  
Photos/Culture (see appendix)
- Recordings of traditional versions of Moribayassa (Keita 1989); The  
Gambia (Mbaye 2009); Walo Walo (Djouck 2009)

### *PROCEDURES*

1. Discuss the 5 agreements. Ask: “Do you want to be good? Then we  
have to agree to these 5 things.” With a raise of hands have students agree to:  
1. Respect the instruments 2. Respect each other 3. Respect ourselves 4. Only  
play when we play together 5. Try/Focus “*Deembu jeex*”



2. Discuss good djembe, djabara and dunun technique; demonstrate the sound of a djembe by playing a short solo; discuss construction of traditional instruments.

3. “Tune Up”: Play one note together. Ask are we really together? Ask students to imagine their ears growing and focus on the sound that we make together. Play one note again until unison is achieved. Everyone will know when it happens, playing in unison is much like playing in tune, the sound becomes more strong. Now play 2 notes, then 3, 4, 5, etc. Create a game by yelling out how many notes and counting it off (“one, two, ready, go”) at varied tempos. In later classes use a traditional call instead of counting.

4. “Rumble”: Simply have everyone play fast and loud, signal the cut-off by raising your hands and playing one last note. Rehearse until everyone can end together with a unison sound.

5. “Copy Me” (a rhythmic assessment tool). It is important to ascertain the ability of each class to play rhythms. Begin by playing 4 pulses and have everyone copy you, increase difficulty levels by adding eighth note variations, as the class shows their ability to copy begin playing parts from the rhythms that you will teach (Moribayassa, Walo Walo, and the Gambia. Playing these parts will help students feel more comfortable later when you begin to “stack” the rhythms to create polyrhythm.

6. Teach Moribayassa (Keita 1998-disc). Begin by playing the basic sangba part on djembe. This is the heart of the rhythm and the best rhythm to help students hear the rhythm properly. Play the call to start the rhythm and to signal the end (explain how the call is used to communicate with the dancers, to change sections in a piece and to signal beginnings and endings. Today we are only going to use the call to signal beginnings and endings.) Teach the Kenkeni part next and then layer the two. At first, transpose these parts to djembe so that everyone can play unison and then a basic 2 part polyrhythm. Explain that there are two ways to play dunun, on the side with a bell “village style” and upright with two mallets “ballet style”. Today we are going to play “ballet style” (if you have more skilled players you can later teach the side style with the bell, however this is more difficult and requires more coordination) Choose more rhythmically advanced students to play djembe parts 1 and 2 and the dununba part. Select students who may like to dance to play djabara. At this point you should have a full version of Moribayassa. Now teach the song that accompanies and create your arrangement. First have students sing the song, then play the call and start the rhythm, if the students are able you can sing again while you play. Have students volunteer to solo. Play faster, louder, and more quietly. End the rhythm with the call and a big hand gesture.

# Moribayassa

Traditional Mande Rhythm

The musical score for Moribayassa is written for six parts: Call, Djembe I, Djembe II, Kenkeni, Sangba, and Dununba. All parts are in 4/4 time. The Call part is a vocal line. Djembe I and II are drum parts. Kenkeni, Sangba, and Dununba are percussion parts using 'x' marks to indicate hits.

7. Show Geography/History Powerpoint presentation. Discuss the size of the African continent. Discuss different areas of Senegal and how Senegalese people refer to it as the “lion”. Discuss the geographical region of West Africa, the number of languages spoken and number of countries on the African continent. Tell the story of the ancient empire of Mali and its founder Sundiata. Tell the story of Mansa Musa and his pilgrimage to Mecca. Show the Jolof Empire and discuss the Wolof people and their strong musical tradition. Again, show the map of Senegal and discuss the Walo Walo region and its inhabitants.

8. Teach Walo Walo (Diop 2009-disc; Djouck 2009-disc). Begin with main rhythm and follow the same teaching format as used with Moribayassa.

## Walo Walo

Traditional Senegalese Rhythm

The musical notation for 'Walo Walo' is presented in three staves, all in 4/4 time. The first staff, labeled 'Mbeung beung', shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The second staff, labeled 'Nder', shows a pattern of eighth notes with accents and rests. The third staff, labeled 'Voice', shows a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes and the lyrics 'Walo Walo' written below. The notation includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 4/4.

9. Teach phrases in Wolof: Na nga def? (Hello, how are you?); Ma ngi fii, rekk (I am fine); Jerejef (Thank you); Nokobok (You're welcome) Deembu jeex (do your best, focus, try); Amul Seral (never give up); Ba bennen yoon (goodbye); Kaay! (Let's go –musically)

10. Show Pictures and Culture Powerpoint. Discuss children of Senegal and how children play music and use found objects like water containers, tin cans, and soap bottles to play. Children in Senegal hold many different dance/drum events and even charge people to watch them, though not very much. Discuss the various ways that music is used in traditional Senegalese society (naming ceremonies, weddings, sabar festivals, wrestling matches). Talk about homes and schools in Senegal. Quiz students about the name of Senegal. Ask them to name some languages spoken in West Africa. Ask them

what language we are learning. Review vocabulary. Ask what ancient empire the djembe was invented in. Show pictures of drums and play audio examples of Walo Walo and The Gambia. Ask students if they would like to learn one of the rhythms that many Senegalese children play.

11. Teach The Gambia (Mbaye 2009-disc). Follow the same format used for Moribayassa and Walo Walo. Begin with “Senegalese clave” (x--xx-x-x-) and call and response sequence. Have a rhythmically talented student play the mbalax part. Teach the Lesson of Ten bakk and discuss what a bakk is. Add Lesson of Ten to the beginning of The Gambia.

## Lesson of Ten

Traditional Senegalese Bakk



# The Gambia

Traditional Senegalese Rhythm

1st Call and Response

4

2nd call and response

8

End Call End Response

Nder

Mbëng bëng I

Mbëng bëng II

Mbalax

12. Show United States or Senegal powerpoint. Show each picture and ask students to raise their hand to show if they think it is the United States for Senegal. After the quiz with the last two pictures ask, if it is fair to say that all people in the US live in a house like this, or that all people in Africa live in a house like this? Open a discussion about stereo-types and multi-cultural awareness.

13. Play all rhythms again and let students improvise solos. Let students try to play different instruments. Review concepts covered.

### *DAY BY DAY LESSON PLANS*

#### DRUM WORKSHOP DAY 1

- Students will:
  - Agree to work together as a group
  - Build group work skills
  - Learn about the drums and drumming traditions from West Africa (including language, history, geography, ethnomusicology)
  - Learn basic performance technique for djembes and dunun
  - Refine listening skills
  - Play traditional West African rhythms on traditional West African drums
  - Learn simple phrases in Wolof

- 5 Agreements to be agreed upon before lessons begin:

Ask: Do you want to be good? Then we have to agree to these things:

1 Respect the instruments

2 Respect each other

3 Respect ourselves

4 Only play our drums when we play together

5 Try/Focus (Deembu Jeex)

- Introduce the Djembe, Dunun & Djabara: Demonstrate Techniques; Describe construction; Tell a brief history; Demonstrate performance styles
- Warm up BBOO (this is a simple notation system where B = Bass tone O = Open Tone and - = rest; all rhythmic subdivisions are derived from the same sub-pulse. In this example students would play two bass tones and two open tones to an even pulse.)
- Tune Up: 1 Beat; 2 Beats; 3 Beats; 4 Beats; 5 beats
- Teach/Play Niabingay and end with a rumble
- Copy Me (rhythm assessment tool where the teacher plays a rhythm and the students repeat it): Introduce Parts for Rhythms that we will play later: Niabingay; Moribayassa; Senegalese Clave; Passport; Gambia; Walo Walo; calls; responses



- Show Geography/History Powerpoint
- Learn and Play:
  - Walo Walo
  - Moribayassa
  - The Gambia
- Teach some useful phrases in Wolof, the language of Senegal:
 

*Na nga def? Ma ngi fii. (Hello, how are you? I am fine.)*

*Jerejef. Nokobok. (Thank you. You are welcome.)*

*Deembu Jeex (Try as hard as you can, focus)*

*Amul Seral (Never give up)*

*Ba Bennen Yoon (Good Bye)*
- End class by saying thank you and goodbye in Wolof (Students say, “Jerejef”, teacher responds, “Nokobok”; Don’t forget to say goodbye “Ba Bennen Yoon”)

## CORDLEY WORKSHOPS DAY 2

- Introduce class in Wolof Q: Na nga def? A: Ma ngi fii
- Ask what Deembu Jeex (try as hard as you can) means
- Tune up: 1 12 123 1234, etc
- Copy Me exercise
- Play Niabingay and end with rumble
- Play Walo walo

- Play Moribayassa (add song, djabara, dununba and sangba)  
Add 2 djembe parts. You can substitute these simpler parts if your students' abilities call for it: B-BOB-BO and B-O-OB BB (the second part is actually the sangba part but can be helpful for students to play since it is the heart of the rhythm)
- Show US or Senegal Quiz Powerpoint
- Gambia: Teach/play all parts and call/response sequences; Review the region and people that it comes from.
- Teach the Lesson of Ten
- Review: Where is Senegal? What languages? What ancient empire did the djembe come from?
- Hand out "words in Wolof" handout
- Finish class: Have the students say, "*JEREJEF*" and the teacher responds, "*NOKOBOK*"
- Say goodbye: "*BA BENNEN YOON*"

### CORDLEY WORKSHOPS DAY 3

- *Introduce class in Wolof: Q: Na nga def? A: Ma ngi fii. Ask what Deembu Jeex means (try as hard as you can)*
- Have students name the instruments. Ask which ancient empire the djembe and dunun came from?

- Ask students what language are we learning? What country is it from?
- Tune up: 1 12 123 1234
- Copy Me:
- Play Niabingay/rumble
- Play Walo walo with all parts
- Play Moribayassa with all parts
- Powerpoint: Review and Culture of Senegal
- Play Gambia: parts and call/response. (add 2<sup>nd</sup> call/response; add mbalax)
- Play Lesson of Ten
- THE CHAIN (put all rhythms in one continuous chain and play them from beginning to end. Create your own arrangement.)
- Ask for people who would like to solo. Let them solo on their djembes or on a set of dunun set up in front of the class.
- Review concepts covered
- *Finish class: "JEREJEF" "NOKOBOK"*
- *Say goodbye, "BA BENNEN YOON"*

Student "Words In Wolof" Handout

Words in Wolof: (a language of Senegal)  
***Jerejef*** (Thank You)  
***Nokobok*** (You're Welcome)  
***Na nga def? Ma ngi fii.*** (How are you? I'm fine.)  
***Deembu Jeex*** (try as hard as you can)  
***Kaay!*** (Let's go!)



**The Djembe and Dunun are from  
the ancient empire of Mali**

*Drumming helps build community by helping us listen to each other and work together.*

## **CHAPTER IV: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH**

### *RESEARCH DESIGN*

This qualitative study attempts to measure increased multicultural awareness, increased knowledge of West Africa (both modern and historical), increased ability to play music from West Africa, interest in West Africa, and increased knowledge of tools necessary to work together as a community. Both Likert-type questions and short answer questions will be used in both pre and post tests. Teachers received 2 hours of training ahead of implementation of the program in order to increase their knowledge of West African drumming styles, program content and goals. Pre-tests were given one class prior to the beginning of the workshops and post-tests were given one class after the final workshop.

### *PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING*

Over a period of 4 weeks all 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> students at Cordley Elementary (USD 497, Lawrence, KS) participated in a series of workshops that focused on the music and culture of several West African societies. All workshops took place in the music classroom during scheduled music classes. All students took pre and post tests to measure changes in student knowledge and feelings of student understanding of Africa. Students were supplied with a permission form to participate in the study. Students who did not return a

permission form were not included in the data from the study, but were allowed to participate in class. Three 50 minute classes were taught to each group utilizing traditional instruments, rhythms and songs from West Africa, specifically from the ancient empire of Mali, and the modern countries of Ghana, Senegal and Guinea. These workshops also focused on the culture, history, geography and people of that area.

According to the Kansas State Department of Education's 2008-2009 report card Cordley Elementary is made up of: 61% non-economically disadvantaged and 39% economically disadvantaged (higher than the district average); 52% female and 48% male; 62% white, 12% Hispanic, 6% African American, and 19% other; 22% ELL students; 13% with disabilities. (KSDE 2009)

85% of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students took part in the survey (86% of 6<sup>th</sup>; 81% of 5<sup>th</sup>; 88% of 4<sup>th</sup>) and 2% were absent for one of the workshops (2% of 6<sup>th</sup>; 1% of 5<sup>th</sup>; 3% of 4<sup>th</sup>).

### *STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS*

The learning objectives for the drumming workshops tie in with National, State and District Standards for Music and Geography.

## Music Standards:

-Standard 2: *Students will perform on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.* This standard includes playing unpitched instruments with expression and following a conductor. These workshops will give students an opportunity to play drums, and respond to cues from the lead drummer.

-Standard 3: *Students will improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments.* Students will improvise solos on multiple pitched drums in traditional styles.

-Standard 6: *Students will listen to, analyze and describe music.* This includes music from other cultures. These workshops will help students hear and learn the separate rhythms that are combined to create the complex polyrhythmic nature of West African drumming.

-Standard 7: *Students will evaluate music and music performed.* At the end of the project students will have an opportunity to evaluate their own drumming skills and the ability of their class to perform as a drumming ensemble.

## Geography Standards:

-Standard 4: Students will learn about *The Physical and Human Characteristics of Places*. Students will learn about the people and geographic regions of West Africa.

-Standard 6: Students will learn *How Culture and Experience Influence People's Perceptions of Places and Regions*.

-Standard 10: Students will learn about *The Characteristics, Distribution, and Complexity of Earth's Cultural Mosaics*. Students will learn about cultures of West Africa and how those cultures have impacted the culture of the United States.

Student Achievement Goals not included in National Standards:

African drumming is polyrhythmic, thus requiring performers to work as an ensemble. To be successful, students will practice listening skills and cooperation skills.

## OVERVIEW

Groups participated in three lessons taught through a socio-cultural approach. These lessons were driven by objectives that lead students to think critically about social and cultural issues related to the music and its creators. This instruction is intended to develop knowledge construction and prejudice reduction (Banks, 2001a).

Objectives include: (a) Students will be able to describe how drumming is used in West Africa in both traditional and modern societies; (b) Students will discover and be able to describe how West African music helped to shape American music; (b) Students will be able to identify musical and non-musical stereotypes; and (c) Students will be able to explain how knowing how to play music together can help us work together in various communities (d) Students will be able to perform traditional West African rhythms and songs. Rhythms, songs and extension activities were chosen to optimize students' ability to learn, perform and enjoy them. Students will be informed about the historical and modern contexts of West African rhythms, ties between American music and West African music, and how community building aspects of West African music can be used in the U.S. Education will take place through in class discussions/presentations, group music making, through mp3 and video files available on CD and on the internet, and via power point presentations.

Students played rhythms on traditional West African instruments including kenkeni, sangba, dununba, djembe, djabara, and sabar. Rhythms taught included Moribayassa from Guinea, and Walo Walo and the Gambia from Senegal.

Powerpoint presentations were shown and accompanied with explanations, stories, and discussion. These powerpoint presentations are included in appendix A, B and C. These presentations covered history, culture, music, and a U.S. or Senegal quiz.



## *EVALUATION*

Students completed a pre-post questionnaire that assessed knowledge and attitudes about West African drumming; the role drumming plays in many West African cultures; West African history; West African geography; how community building aspects of West African drumming can be used to help students build community in their own lives; basic group work techniques; and multi-cultural awareness. The evaluation questionnaire included a combination of Likert-type response questions and short answer questions. Performance evaluation was used to determine student success in regard to music standards. Students' final performance was video and audio taped for evaluation and reflection purposes. However, permission to use the video/audio in the study was not given so they will not be included.

Following are pre and post questionnaires for students, directly involved teachers, indirectly involved teachers, rubrics and results:

## **Student Questionnaire**

### **West African Music/Culture Questionnaire**

**1. I know about Africa**

None                      A little                      Some                      A lot

**2. I know how to play African drums**

None                      A little                      Some                      A lot

**3. I know about West African culture**

None                      A little                      Some                      A lot

**4. I know about the people of West Africa**

None                      A little                      Some                      A lot

**5. Name some languages spoken in West Africa**

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**6. Name an ancient empire of West Africa**

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**7. Name an instrument from West Africa**

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**8. How can playing music together help people work together?**

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9. Write the name of the African countries that you know and draw a line to those countries.



### **Rubric for Cordley Study**

1.-4. None = 1 a little = 2 some = 3 a lot= 4

5. Name some languages spoken in West Africa

1 per language spoken

6. Name an ancient empire of West Africa

Point for each correct answer: 0 or 1

7. Name an instrument from West Africa

Point for each correct answer: 0, 1, 3, 4

8. How can playing music together help people work together?

No answer = 0

Basic answer = 2

Detailed answer = 4

9. Write the name of the African countries that you know and draw a line to those countries

1 point for each correct country

1 point for each correct location

10. Properly name and locate Senegal

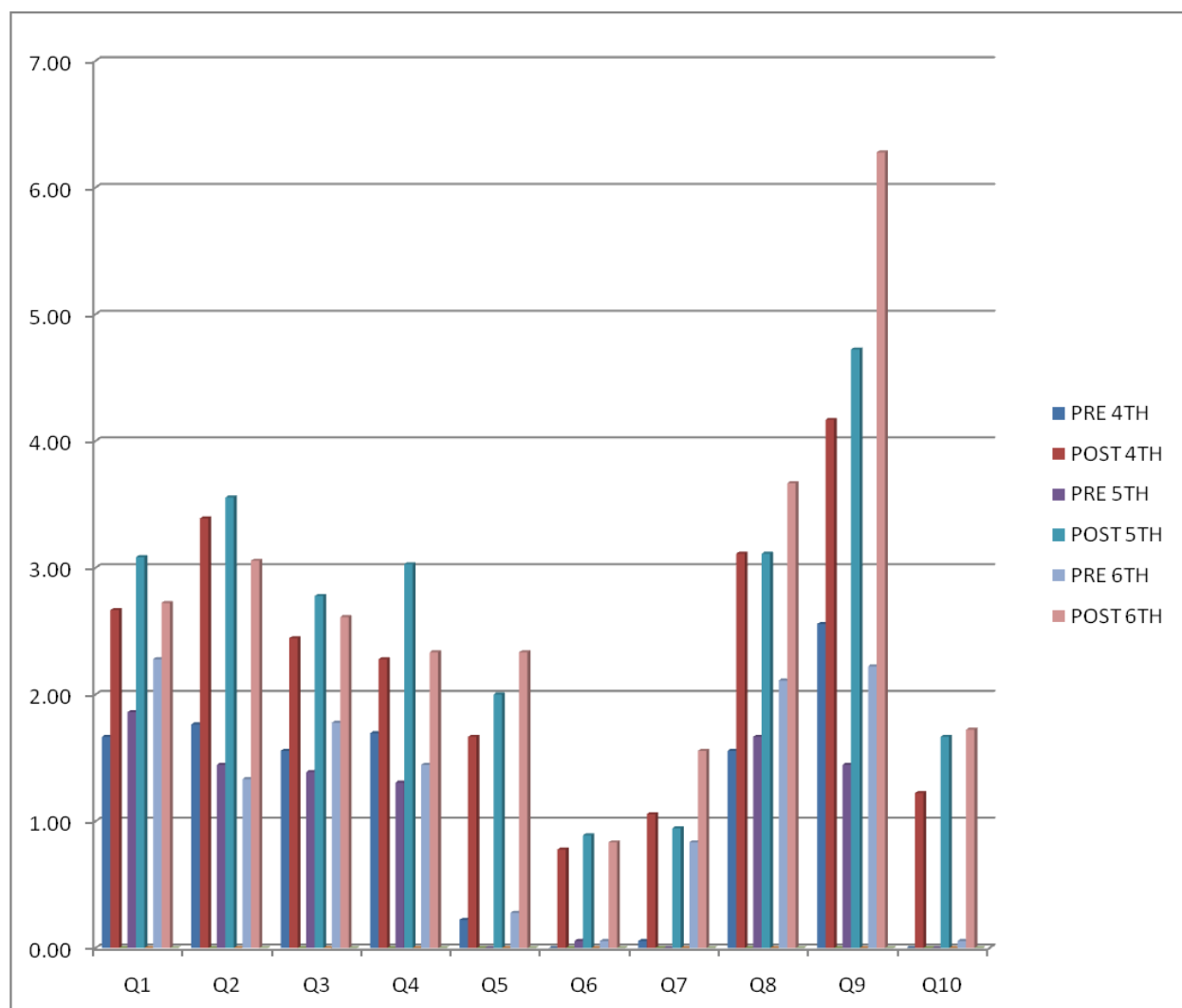
0 = incorrect or no answer

1= correct name

2= correct name and location

*No credit for correct/incorrect spelling; if meaning can be understood credit is given accordingly*

CORDLEY WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING/CULTURE/GEOGRAPHY/HISTORY  
WORKSHOP RESULTS



	PRE 4TH	POST 4TH	CHANGE 4TH	PRE 5TH	POST 5TH	CHANGE 5TH	PRE 6TH	POST 6TH	CHANGE 6TH
Q1	1.67	2.67	+1	1.86	3.08	+1.22	2.28	2.72	+0.45
Q2	1.76	3.39	+1.62	1.44	3.56	+2.11	1.33	3.06	+1.72
Q3	1.56	2.44	+0.89	1.39	2.78	+1.39	1.78	2.61	+0.83
Q4	1.69	2.28	+0.58	1.31	3.03	+1.72	1.44	2.33	+0.89
Q5	0.22	1.67	+1.44	0.00	2.00	+2	0.28	2.33	+2.06
Q6	0.00	0.78	+0.78	0.06	0.89	+0.83	0.06	0.83	+0.78
Q7	0.06	1.06	+1	0.00	0.94	+0.94	0.83	1.56	+0.72
Q8	1.56	3.11	+1.56	1.67	3.11	+1.44	2.11	3.67	+1.56
Q9	2.56	4.17	+1.61	1.44	4.72	+3.28	2.22	6.28	+4.06
Q10	0.00	1.22	+1.22	0.00	1.67	+1.67	0.06	1.72	+1.72

Students increased the number of countries in Africa that they can name and locate by:

1.61 countries in 4<sup>th</sup> grade; 3.28 countries in 5<sup>th</sup> grade; 4.06 countries in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Students increased their ability to name an ancient African empire by:

78% in 4<sup>th</sup> grade; 83% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade; 78% in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Students on average increased their sense of knowledge of West African culture by:

1 on a Likert scale of 4

Students increased their ability to name languages spoken in Africa from:

0.16 to 2 languages.

Students increased their ability to name and locate Senegal on a map of Africa from:

0% to 60% in 4<sup>th</sup> grade; 0% to 84% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade ; 0.03% to 84% in 6<sup>th</sup> grade

All numbers indicate increased knowledge of not only the music of West Africa but also of the history and geography of that area. Students displayed increased understanding of multi-cultural awareness after a verbal quiz

showing pictures of Senegal and pictures of the United States. Students were asked to guess whether the photograph was of Senegal or the U.S. and the majority of the answers were wrong. When asked, a majority of students agreed that their preconceptions of what “Africa” looked like were mistaken.

Students’ answers to question 8 “How can playing music together help people work together?” changed from 48% “don’t know”, “?” or blank to 86% legitimate answers (6<sup>th</sup> grade pre-test legitimate answers = 60%, post-test = 96%; 5<sup>th</sup> grade pre-test legitimate answers = 52%, post-test = 88%; 4<sup>th</sup> grade legitimate answers pre-test = 32%, post-test = 75%). Student answers included:

“Playing a drum with someone means a lot (notice I underlined it 5 times) of teamwork”  
“If they don’t know a part someone can help them”  
“With all of the different parts you have to work together”  
“They can become better friends”  
“You listen to each other”  
“You get to know each other”  
“Because they all come together as one community, and they all have fun”  
“They are a good community, they listen to each other”  
“It helps them work on cowerdination”  
“It helps bring people together to make a better community”  
“Many people come to ceremonies/parties where music is played and they all have fun”  
“You have to cooperate”  
“It can help them communicate and make people feel better”  
“Cause they will learn to trust each other! And make new friends”  
“The peace that is made when people come together”

## TEACHERS' SURVEY

Two separate questionnaires were developed and given out after the workshops. One was given to classroom teachers who received feedback from students but were largely not part of the workshops and another was given to teachers who were personally involved for some or all of the workshops.

Teachers Directly Involved:

### **West African Drumming/Culture Workshop Thesis Questionnaire for Teachers**

Please return this form to Lois Orth-Lopes or to Dylan Bassett, 2521 Maverick Ln Lawrence, KS 66046 or at [dylanbassett@yahoo.com](mailto:dylanbassett@yahoo.com). Please Sign and Date the consent form following the survey. Thank you.

*Please circle (or underline) the number that best fits your response to each question and comment briefly on why.*

**Did you find the African Drumming workshops to be engaging for students?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

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**Did you find the African Drumming workshops to be fun for students?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

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**Do you think that these workshops helped to break down stereotypes about the African continent?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree



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**Do you think that these workshops helped to increase students' musical ability?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

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---

**Do you think because of these workshops students will have increased knowledge of West African:**

**Culture?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**History?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

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---

**Music?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**Languages?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

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**Do you think these workshops helped students to identify community building techniques?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

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If you have any comments that you would like to share please write them below or attach another sheet to this survey. Thank you for your time.

Comments:

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***TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS***

On a Likert-type scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree teachers averaged the following on questions 1-9 about student achievement and workshop quality:

1. 5
2. 5
3. 4.75
4. 4.75
5. 4.75
6. 4.25
7. 5
8. 4.5
9. 4.5

Teacher comments included:

Question 1: “Absolutely! They really participated –even the few who tried to be indifferent couldn’t hold our very long.”

Question 3: “The PowerPoints were excellent! Contrasts between African nations and the U.S. were enlightening.”

Question 5: “[Students] learned about differences and similarities in West African and US culture through powerpoint; Saw how music is important in many daily events and special events in W. Africa; learned that children begin to learn drumming at an early age”

Question 6: “They learned about the ancient Mali Empire and how the djembe was developed/not time for much more.”

Question 7: “The drumming experience was wonderful; Students had to listen to each other and be precise/they experienced 4-7 different rhythms at one time.”

“Seeing & doing are both strong teaching methods – I know time was short, but I’d have liked to have heard more of the authentic African music as played there”

Question 8: “Great job incorporating terms into lessons.”

“There were opportunities to learn some words in Wolof and the students learned there are many languages in Africa, including English and French.”

Additional Comments:

“Excellent infusion of languages!”

“The projected presentations were a very concise and effective way to teach culture, history and provide significant connections for the students.”

“Wonderful job overall – a lot of memorable content in a short time!”

“I thought this was a success! Dylan did a great job keeping the kids engaged. It taught the kids how to listen and work together to create a musical result. He provided a unique learning experience they will remember.”

“Fabulous energy and interaction with students.”

“Working with Dylan was very comfortable. He has excellent teaching skills, management skills and ideas. He easily adjusted to the skill levels of each class. I feel that I learned more than my students! I think that next year I’d like to teach W. African drumming lessons (to the extent of my own abilities) and then move on to lessons about the influence of W. African drumming on music in the Americas.”

I will be able to do more with drumming in my music classes. I have already used ideas with Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. All the students are happy to have the opportunity to drum.”

Teachers Indirectly Involved:

**West African Drumming/Culture Workshop Thesis Questionnaire for Classroom Teachers**

Please return this form to Lois Orth-Lopes or to Dylan Bassett, 2521 Maverick Ln Lawrence, KS 66046 or at [dylanbassett@yahoo.com](mailto:dylanbassett@yahoo.com). Please Sign and Date the consent form following the survey. Thank you.

*Please circle (or underline) the number that best fits your response to each question and comment briefly on why, if you don't have enough information to answer any question simply write "don't know".*

**Based on their behavior and conversations before and after each African Drumming workshop, did it appear that your students were engaged in the activity?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

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**Based on their behavior and conversations before and after workshop, did it appear your students were having fun during the workshops?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

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**Do you think that these workshops could help breakdown stereotypes about the African continent?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

---

---

**Do you think that these workshops helped to increase students' musical ability?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**Do you think because of these workshops students will have increased knowledge of West African:**

**Culture?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**History?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**Music?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**Languages?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

---

---

**Do you think these workshops helped students to identify community building techniques?**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree			strongly agree	

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If you have any comments that you would like to share please write them below or attach another sheet to this survey. Thank you for your time.

Comments:

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## Results for Classroom Teacher Surveys:

1. 5
2. 5
3. 4
4. 5
5. 4
6. 3.5
7. 4.7
8. 4
9. 3

## Comments:

Question 1: "They seemed motivated to go to music each day and told about which instruments they played."

"They talked about the different drums and rhythms"

Question 2: "Whenever I picked up the students they had huge grins on their faces."

"They were excited to go again –once it began"

"Excitement in their voices, students drummed with you in art class."

Question 3:

"I'm not sure what was covered but students have made comments about how diverse Africa is."

"I would think it would help"

"Don't know – I heard a few facts about Senegal, but if there was more info – I wasn't there for it."

Question 4:

"These workshops help their rhythm"

"I think it would help"

"Better understanding of following a conductor, listening, and working together."

Question 5:

"Music is certainly a large part of culture"

"Absolutely"

"Being an ESL school – we have come to learn that culture is very intricate – very difficult to teach."

Question 6:

"Mansa Musa –Mali"

Question 8:

"They enjoyed teaching me the phrases they learned."

"French & Wolof (sp?)"

"hmmm, maybe"

Other comments:

"Great experience for the students!"

"Next door we were working on clay projects. We [were] rolling slabs to the rhythms. All of us couldn't help but move our head, feet or hands to the beat."

"I was glad my students had this experience. Many don't get the opportunity to travel, so it was especially good for them. Some are still under the impression that Africa is one big country. So this went beyond music."

## **V. CONCLUSION**

### **RESULTS**

Assessments indicate students' increased knowledge of West African history and culture. Students increased the number of countries in Africa that they can name and locate by an average of 3 countries. Students increased their ability to name an ancient African empire by 80%. Students on average increased their sense of knowledge of West African culture by 1 on a Likert scale of 4. Students increased their ability to name languages spoken in Africa from 0.16 to 2 languages. Students increased their ability to name and locate Senegal on a map of Africa by 76%. All numbers indicate increased knowledge of not only the music of West Africa but also of the history and geography of that area.

Results of the written assessment, performance evaluation, and observation all showed increased multicultural awareness in the student population. Students displayed increased understanding of multi-cultural awareness after a verbal quiz showing pictures of Senegal and pictures of the United States. Students were asked to guess whether the photograph was of Senegal or the U.S. and the majority of the answers were wrong. When asked, a majority of students agreed that their preconceptions of what "Africa" looked like were mistaken.



Students appear to have increased understanding of how music can help build community. 34% of students were more able to explain, in their own words, how music can help to build community. Students were engaged and worked together as a team.

Students increased their ability to play drums together. This not only means learning new rhythms, but on a deeper level of understanding they learned how to listen in a more engaged fashion. Students learned how to play various opposing polyrhythms and how to listen for how those differing parts created one resultant sound. Students were able to remember parts, and on the last day of the program, they were able to perform a piece that linked all of the rhythms taught in the unit. This required students to listen, follow musical cues, know their parts, and know how their parts fit into the whole of the music.

The four private lessons taught before the implementation of the program with the classroom music teacher were key to the success and longevity of the program. The pre-teaching helped the teacher understand the material being covered and therefore increased her ability to assist in the program. Due to the pre-teaching, the teacher felt more comfortable with the material and felt more able to continue to teach the unit in following years. All PowerPoint projections were left with the teacher for following years as well. The classroom teacher received a grant to purchase nine djembes to help continue this unit. In the survey, the classroom music teacher stated: "I feel that I learned more than my

students! I think that next year I'd like to teach W. African drumming lessons (to the extent of my own abilities) and then move on to lessons about the influence of W. African drumming on music in the Americas. I will be able to do more with drumming in my music classes. I have already used ideas with Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. All the students are happy to have the opportunity to drum."

The learning objectives for the drumming workshops met numerous national, state and district standards for music and geography. In regards to national music standards: students performed on instruments alone and with others (Standard 2); students improvised on multiple tones (Standard 3); students listened to and analyzed both the music that they played and recorded examples (Standard 6); students evaluated their performance upon request throughout the duration of the workshop (Standard 7); students learned how music is related to the history of West Africa and thought about how playing music together can help people work together (Standard 8 & 9). In regards to national geography standards, students learned about: the Walo Walo region; the Senegal river; the Mande and Wolof people; the continent of Africa and its languages and size (Standard 4); the location of Senegal on a map of Africa (Standard 2); how culture in the U.S. shapes our perception of "Africa" and the many misconceptions about size, diversity, and modernism therein (Standard 6); the cultures of West Africa and how music affects it (Standard 10).

Overall the results of this study show that the unit is capable of attaining most of its goals. Students' multi-cultural awareness was increased while national music and geography standards were met. Results of the study seem to show that students can learn about geography, history, and culture in music class. On average students increased their sense of knowledge about West Africa and increased their ability to play music from that region.

Students increased: the number of countries in Africa that they can name and locate; their ability to name an ancient African empire; their sense of having knowledge about West Africa; their ability to name languages spoken in Africa; and their ability to name and locate Senegal on a map of Africa. This was done while learning how to play polyrhythms, traditional rhythms and traditional instruments, as well as increasing rhythmic abilities and active listening skills and at the same time having fun.

All numbers indicate increased knowledge of not only the music of West Africa but also of the history and geography of that area. Students displayed increased multi-cultural awareness after a verbal quiz showing pictures of Senegal and pictures of the United States. Students were asked to guess whether the photograph was of Senegal or the U.S. and the majority of the answers were wrong. When asked, a majority of students agreed that their preconceptions of what "Africa" looked like were mistaken. In reference to this

exercise teachers said that “The PowerPoints were excellent! Contrasts between African nations and the U.S. were enlightening.”

The fact that students’ answers to question 8 “How can playing music together help people work together?” changed from 48% “don’t know”, “?” or blank to 86% legitimate answers shows that students feel more confident in their ability to answer that question. This increase in ability to answer shows that students’ awareness of how music can help create community also increased. Answers like: “with all of the different parts you have to work together”; “They are a good community, they listen to each other”; “It can help them communicate and make people feel better”; “Playing a drum with someone means a lot (notice I underlined it 5 times) of teamwork” show students understanding how music can help build community at a synthesized level. In general, students appeared to be engaged and seemed to be in better spirits after drumming than before. With the exception of a few students, all students seemed to attempt to focus and try. This observation is backed up by classroom teachers who did not take part in the workshops and only received feedback from the students. As part of the survey one classroom teacher stated, “Whenever I picked up the students they had huge grins on their faces....they were excited to go again –once it began.” Another stated, “They seemed motivated to go to music each day and told about which instruments they played.” The neighboring art teacher said that “next door we were working

on clay projects. We [were] rolling slabs to the rhythms. All of us couldn't help but move our head, feet or hands to the beat."

## PROBLEMS

There are several aspects of this study that could be improved. The study group is not as at-risk a community as could be sought. It would be interesting to conduct the same study with a group of at-risk students in Kansas City and compare the results. Another problem was that there was not enough time to cover all subjects as in depth as they need to be taught. Adding another class to the unit would improve the outcome of skills and knowledge of students. Generally, a good unit of music study in elementary is 3 to 5 sessions in length, so this increase would still be in that range. Only 86% of the student population was included in the study. It is unknown who did not participate and why. It is plausible that the non-participants were the most at-risk.

Longer workshops could have more ability to share information in an in-depth fashion and help to encourage better musicianship. More community development could be developed through ongoing bi-weekly workshops.

It is worth considering whether aspects of these community building concepts in one geographical area could be transposed to different groups of people. Case studies for how drumming helped to build community

connections in West Africa and perhaps elsewhere would prove extremely helpful in determining the viability of these cross-cultural community building techniques. Rich and diverse musical and cultural traditions certainly exist in the aforementioned West African communities. Is it possible that sharing knowledge of historical and communal aspects of these communities along with learning to perform music in those styles could help to instill a sense of community in the West through strengthening social bonds and interpersonal skill sets? And through taking part in a joined musical experience, where participants rely on each other to achieve a positive awareness.

#### FUTURE APPLICATIONS

This unit could be applied district-wide for 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. USD497 has expressed interest in bringing the unit to all 15 elementary schools. Applications to the Kansas Humanities Council, Robert Ward Johnson Foundation, and Kansas City Young Audiences could provide funding for continuation of the program and enable more young people to take part in the program. A multi-media publication that would include: history, geography and music lessons; mp3s of traditional music; pedagogy tips and guidance; podcasts; and PowerPoint presentations could be created and made available to teachers and young people in Kansas through the Kansas African Studies Center. The African Drum Ensemble at KU (ADEKU) could become involved in the workshop by creating an outreach program that could reach students and

teachers statewide. A book of notated rhythms that match the recordings could help teachers access this music and be better able to teach it.

## CONCLUSION

General music teachers and after school program facilitators may be able to incorporate this teaching module in their curriculum. Increasing students' multicultural awareness and development of group work techniques could be useful for other teachers to model in their classrooms. Since this study revealed positive outcomes, a statewide program similar to this pilot project could be adopted.

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