

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
DANCE

ARTIST:
MAKHENA RANKIN GUERIN

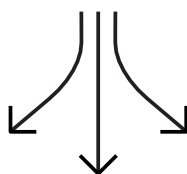


The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:



**Curriculum
Connections**



Suggested Classroom Extensions



**Assessment
Strategies**

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STUDY GUIDE: DANCE

DANCE AND MUSIC AS MEDICINE

Program Overview

Artist Name: Makhena Rankin Guerin

Artist Bio: Makhena Rankin Guerin, a Two-Spirit hoop dancer of Anishinaabe/Algonquin and French-Canadian heritage, is a proud member of the Abitibiwininni First Nation. With over seven years of experience, she practices traditional hoop dance—a storytelling, medicinal dance once performed with willow hoops and drums, now often incorporating modern materials and contemporary music to honor and preserve Indigenous culture.

Program Description: For Elementary Schools - Makhena uses hoop dancing to introduce the Indigenous concept of "good medicine," which means making choices that promote our health and well-being. She demonstrates different animal shapes that can be made with the hoops, inviting students to guess, raising awareness of different perceptions. A short hoop dance performance follows the workshop, and students are invited to try a few dance steps inspired by Indigenous peoples, concluding with a guided dance session. A question period follows, time permitting. Intermediate and Secondary Schools - Makhena adapts her approach by sharing the challenges she faced as a teenager,



emphasizing the importance of self-acceptance, accepting imperfections, and the power of perseverance. She uses hoop dancing to explain the complex history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Students are invited to participate in an interactive dance, followed by a question period, time permitting.

Artistic Discipline: Dance

Recommended Grade Levels: K - 12

Session Logistics: In person only

Cultural Context: Indigenous cultures

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



DANCE AND MUSIC AS MEDICINE

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
 - Exploring movement and music as tools for personal expression and storytelling.
 - Creating original dance or music pieces inspired by emotions, traditions, or healing themes.
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing
 - Recognizing how dance and music can influence mood and emotional well-being.
 - Analyzing how different cultural traditions use dance and music for healing or community connection.
- Strand C: Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
 - Understanding the role of dance and music in cultural healing practices around the world.
 - Examining the historical and contemporary uses of movement and music as medicine within Indigenous and other cultural communities.

DANCE AND MUSIC AS MEDICINE

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

GRADES K-3

Pre

- How does music make you feel?
- Can you show me with your body?

During

- How are the music and movements connected?
- What do they make you think of?

Post

- How did dancing or listening change your mood?

GRADES 4-6

Pre

- How can movement or music help people heal or feel stronger?

During

- What feelings or stories do you notice in the rhythms and movements?

Post

- How could you use music or dance to help someone in your community?

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- How have cultures used music and dance to bring people together or support healing?

During

- How do rhythm, repetition, and expression work together in this performance?

Post

- How could this kind of art be used in schools or community spaces to support well-being?

GRADES
9-12

Pre

- What role can the arts play in mental health and community healing?

During

- How are the performance's cultural elements and personal expression connected?

Post

- How could music and dance be used as a form of advocacy or activism for health and wellness?

DANCE OVERVIEW

Dance is a powerful form of cultural expression that celebrates diversity, fosters connection, and supports healing. By exploring various dance forms, students build empathy, challenge stereotypes, and gain global awareness. Dance promotes physical literacy and mental well-being through movement, creativity, and emotional release.

The creative and critical analysis process helps students generate, refine, interpret movement, encourage collaboration, resilience, and emotional intelligence. When used to complement artist-led sessions, these frameworks guide students to become thoughtful creators, reflective learners, and active participants in building a more just and connected world.

Dance also supports cross-curricular learning. It brings stories to life in language arts, explores cultural traditions in social studies, and connects to science through anatomy and body mechanics. These interdisciplinary links highlight the dynamic role of dance in education and deepen student engagement across subjects.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Choreography:** The planned sequence of dance steps and movements.
- **Improvisation:** Creating movement spontaneously without a set plan.
- **Rhythm:** A repeated pattern of beats, sounds, or movements.
- **Flow:** Smooth, continuous movement without interruption.
- **Tempo:** The speed of the music or beat.
- **Melody:** The main tune of a piece of music.
- **Percussion:** Instruments that produce sound when struck, shaken, or scraped.
- **Harmony:** Different musical notes played or sung together to create a pleasing sound.
- **Tradition:** Practices or customs passed down through generations.
- **Healing:** The process of restoring health or well-being.
- **Community:** A group of people connected by shared experiences, culture, or purpose.
- **Expression:** The way someone communicates feelings, ideas, or identity through movement or music.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning