

Handcrafted Didgeridoos & Lessons

Jimmy Gagnon -- Classroom Workshop on Australian Culture



Jimmy will use African drumming and the traditional instrument of the aboriginal tribal people of Australia to facilitate the building of bridges and creation of a broader understanding of incorporating the relevance of African and Australian cultural heritages into our homes and schools.

The didgeridoo is the traditional instrument of the aboriginal tribal people of Australia, tracing their history back at least 40,000 years. The didgeridoo is actually created by termites. They eat away the centers of eucalyptus trees, leaving them hollow. The natives learned long ago to tap on the branches and trunks to find a hollow section, and fashion an instrument from it. The sound is an odd vibration, a sort of drone that pulses. A special technique called circular breathing allows the player to play continuously without stopping to breathe. The didgeridoo can be used for everything from meditation to trance dance. It is also a powerful therapeutic tool, both by playing or just listening to it; through creating a relaxed state of being. It is actually easy to learn for most people, and can be an especially good confidence builder for people who've never played an instrument before.

"When i play the didgeridoo, my mind gets dissolved by the vibrations, and my spirit is free to explore the infinite universe."

Jim Gagnon.

Music Standards of Learning

- The music standards are to be used as guidelines and benchmarks for student achievement and to provide a variety of musical experiences throughout the different grade levels and grade clusters. Jimmy will address the Cultural Context and Music Theory strand by developing an understanding of music through experiences in singing, moving, listening, and playing instruments. He will assist students with understanding the relationship of music to history and culture by making connections between music and other fields of knowledge. This can be explored by having students observe, listen, respond, reflect, analyze, interpret, and evaluate his style of drumming, a lesson in the history of African drumming, the Australian didgeridoo and or connecting facets of their with European history.
- Examples of other Standards of Learning:
 - Civics
 - 1.12 The student will recognize that communities in Virginia include people who have diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, who make contributions to their communities, and who are united as Americans by common principles.
 - 2.12 The student will understand that the United States is a land of people who have diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, who make contributions to their communities, and who are united as Americans by common principles.

- 3.2 The student will study the early West African empire of Mali by describing its oral tradition (storytelling), government (kings), and economic development (trade).
- Virginia Studies
 - VS.1 The student will develop skills for historical and geographical analysis including the ability to:
 - identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents to understand events in history;
 - make connections between past and present;

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Characteristics

The Diversity Resource Teachers of the ACPS have adopted three characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching of which the second and third characteristics will be included in the drum call presentation.

- Communicating and practicing high expectations to empower all students.
- Acknowledging and incorporating the relevance of cultural heritage of students into instructional strategies.
- Building positive relationships with and among students in the context of culture.

Recommended Instructional Pre-Post Planning

An expectation is that staff members will consider the above standards and appropriate CRT characteristics as pre and post planning strategies to maximize the expertise of the Drum Call Artist in Residence.