

Caloric Expenditure in Powwow Dancing

by Peggy Mattson

Grade level 6

Time required

Two to three 45 minute class periods

Materials/Technology

Calculator
Stopwatch
Powwow dance song recordings
Native American dancers
Native American drummers

Summary

In this activity, students explore the significance of different types of Native American music and dancing. They will then approximate the number of calories expended in these traditional types of dance.

Objectives

The student will:

- 1) learn about traditional Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai music and dance and their significance to native people.
- 2) become aware of the contributions of indigenous dance and music to modern music and dance.
- 3) determine the average length of traditional native songs.
- 4) approximate the calorie expenditure in traditional native dancing.

Montana Math standards addressed

- 1) Students demonstrate understanding of and an ability to use numbers and operations.
- 2) Students will demonstrate understanding of and an ability to use data analysis, probability, and statistics.

Assessment

- 1) Evaluate students based on their paper-pencil documentation and chart of mathematical calculations.
- 2) Observe students' efforts to learn dance steps and to dance to a song.

Procedure

Day 1 – Introduction to local traditional music and dance

Invite tribal members to visit the class to discuss the significance and demonstrate various types of Native American music and dances. Check with the school district's Indian education committee or a culture committee for local drum groups and dancers who could come as guests. Or, ask students who dance or sing traditionally if they would demonstrate. Various types of traditional dances include Fancy, Jingle, Hoop, Grass, Traditional, Sneak-Up, Owl, Round, etc. Encourage students to try to learn the dance steps and to dance to a song.

Day 2 – Calorie calculations

Discuss the concept of the calorie with students. Provide a chart of or ask students to research how many calories are spent for various types of activities. Distribute stopwatches to pairs of students. Play powwow songs, have students time their length and calculate the average length. Then ask students to calculate the calorie expenditure for dancing to an average length song, and for competing all day in dance contests at a powwow. Students should then make a chart of their calculations.

Further information

For further information about this activity, contact Peggy Mattson via electronic mail at rmspmatt@ronan.net.