Discover the art of storytelling without words in a very artistic way.

Understand the relationship between their thoughts and the variety of ways it can be expressed.

Experience creative expression and exploration.

Use dance movements to express ideas and develop motor skills.

Communication comes in many forms beyond words: a movement, a glance, or a rhythm. Movement is probably the oldest form of communication. It is probable that humans connected with each other through movement, gesture and possibly dance. Dance is one of the greatest and special forms of nonverbal communication. In dance, the human body is used as a medium or instrument which transforms itself from the realm of movement to the realm of meaning. Bharathanatyam is an ancient (4000 B.C.) Indian classical dance form and uniquely employs this technique to communicate what is inside by using postures, gestures and facial expressions. It is fascinating to see how the connection between the physical, mental and emotional is established to tell a story and bring about a message. Students can examine the importance of gestures, facial expressions, and body movements to portray characters. It is interesting to witness the transformation of words and ideas into a visually beautiful expression.

About the Program

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Objectives

1. Discover the art of storytelling without words in a very artistic way.
2. Understand the relationship between their thoughts and the variety of ways it can be expressed.
3. Experience creative expression and exploration.
4. Use dance movements to express ideas and develop motor skills.
Discuss how to think about wordless communication and understand the power of movement and gesture.

Have students bring in an appropriate poem or a short story to be enacted.

Place India historically, geographically and culturally with a small discussion.

Watch a YouTube video of the recommended dance form to enhance comprehension.

Compare how other dance forms from different parts of the world communicate in their dance.

Encourage students to think about wordless communication and understand the power of movement and gesture.

Vocabulary

Choreographer: A person who creates dance compositions and plans and arranges dance movements and patterns for dances

Mudras: Positions of the body that have some kind of influence on the energies of the body, or your mood. Mostly the hands and fingers are held in some position, but the whole body may be part of the mudra as well. The Indian greeting gesture “Namaste” -puts one into a mood of respect.

Bharathnatyam: (Acronym) Bha- Bhava- Expression; Ra – Raga- Melody ; Tha- Thala- Rhythm

About Sujatha Srinivasan

With over 30 years of performing experience, Sujatha Srinivasan specializes in the highly stylized and vigorous classical Indian dance form called Bharathanatyam. One of the most popular and well established classical dance forms of India, Bharathanatyam consists of dance movements, mime, melodic music, rhythm, colorful costumes and jewelry. Sujatha’s skills as a choreographer, performer and teacher allow her to make this unique art form accessible, entertaining and enlightening to students while educating them about the Indian culture.

Resources

Indian Classical Dance by Kapila Vatsyayan
Indian Classical Dance: Tradition in Transition by Leela Venkataraman and Avinash Pasricha
Narthaki: Your Gateway to the World of Indian Dance, www.narthaki.com
Parata Nattiyam = Bharata Natyam by Sunil Kothari
Sujatha Srinivasan in Performance www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6sglYJD75M

About the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning

Through a balance of demonstration and audience participation, the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning teaching artist performances and workshops introduce students to an art form, support various curricular areas, and inject excitement and wonder into the school day.