**Years 7/8 Dance**

**Viewing and discussing performances of the Bangarra Dance Theatre**

**Suggested duration:** One lesson

## Summary

In this task, students will watch two dance performances by the Bangarra Dance Theatre, one of Australia’s premier Aboriginal dance companies. They will consider the elements of the performances and the ways in which these represent the transmission of cultures and histories. This is a viewing and discussion-based lesson with no pen and paper activities required.

*Dance is a vital expression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, both as part of ceremonies and as entertainment. Body painting and a variety of paraphernalia, including headdresses, are associated with dance* (The Little Red Yellow Black Book,p. 91).

**Learning outcomes**

1. Students will be able to identify and analyse the elements of the dances performed by the Banagarra Dance Theatre which communicate stories to their audience.

## General capabilities Cross-curriculum priority

Critical and creative thinking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Intercultural understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures organising ideas: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9.

Ethical understanding

**Australian Curriculum content descriptions**

**Years 7 and 8 Dance**

Analyse how choreographers use elements of dance and production elements to communicate intent (ACADAR018).

Identify and connect specific features and purposes of dance from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their dance-making, starting with dance in Australia and including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACADAR019).

## Provisions for differentiation

## Learning support

Students with learning difficulties will be able to participate in the group discussions.

## Extension

Students could consider conducting further research on some of the protocols attached to viewing and working with aspects of Indigenous Australian dance.

## Resources

* Computer and internet access and screening capabilities for whole-class viewing sessions
* The Bangarra Dance Theatre’s website at: http://www.bangarra.com.au/
* *The Little Red Yellow Black Book — an introduction to Indigenous Australia* (4th edition), ‘Our achievements’,

Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS, Canberra, 2018.

**Suggested online video clips for viewing:**

* Mutton Bird <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-PV98Oshkc>
* Brolga <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxnra4q1ElA>
* Terrain <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqqb7aIxNFw>
* Moth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvkUBfIq50I>
* Spirit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJtZZGXMN0Q>
* Mathinna <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgEw4cgcE7o>

## For teachers

Ensure that the guidance notes included in *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* teacher resource have been considered.

**Vocabulary**

Cultural appreciation

Cultural appropriation

Cultural assimilation

Preparation: Ensure that you have a means of accessing and screening the two videoed performances from an online source, such as The Bangarra Dance Theatre’s website at: <http://www.bangarra.com.au/>.

**Step 1** Organise students into small groups of four or five. Have the students sit together in their groups right away.

**Step 2** Designate a reader in each group to read aloud from *The Little Red Yellow Black Book*. They should read the content from the sub-chapter ‘Dance’ found in the chapter entitled ‘Our Achievements, p.91. Assign ten minutes for this task.

**Step 3** Set up the viewing equipment and screen the first of the dance videos. During the screening, write the **Teachers’ Notes** below on the Smartboard or whiteboard.

**Step 4** Instruct students to engage in small group discussions. Their aim is to come up with verbal answers to the first three questions (Q1-3) on the board. Ask them to nominate a spokesperson to deliver their answers to the class verbally. Assign them five minutes of discussion time.

**Step 5** Have each group’s spokesperson summarise their group’s answers to the first three questions.

**Step 6** Screen the second of the dance videos.

**Step 7** Instruct the students to return to their discussion groups and work on forming their responses to the final three questions (Q4-6) on the board. Give them five minutes of discussion time.

**Step 8** Ask the groups to nominate a different spokesperson and have them share their group’s answers to the final three questions.

**Step 9** If there is any lesson time remaining, screen some of the other videos in the suggested resource list.

**Assessment ideas**

Assessment based on individual and group contribution

**Teacher’s Notes**

Discuss with the class Indigenous cultural intellectual property rights and the difference between cultural appreciation, appropriation and assimilation and how they relate to this exercise. Refer to the guidance notes in *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* teacher resource.

1. Did you notice any aspects of dance that have been drawn from contemporary dance contexts?
2. How important or prominent was the use of body painting in costuming?
3. Why is it wrong for non-Indigenous people to perform or appropriate (‘borrow from’) dances drawn from Indigenous Australian cultures?
4. What are some similarities and differences between the two performances?
5. Why is it important that we offer protection of dances through copyright laws to Indigenous Australian cultural groups?
6. Is it possible for viewers from non-Indigenous cultures to reach an understanding of why these dances are so important to Aboriginal people?