West African Jelis/Griots Old and New

Aisha Al-Muid

W.D. Kelley Elementary

Content Objectives

Rationale

In cities across the United States, working–class communities of color find themselves struggling against inequities deepened by state disinvestment. As a teacher at the W.D. Kelley elementary school located in the Brewery town section of Philadelphia many of the students do not identify with anything African. The neighborhood is going through gentrification and lots of things are changing very quickly. As Brewery town's landscape changes, the neighborhood's residents, politicians, and business leaders confront these changes in a variety of ways and justify their actions by telling different kinds of narratives about what is happening in their neighborhood. Similar to colonialism, gentrification not only usurps local and economic power to newer and often wealthier residents, but there are also implied class and racial components attached to it as well, music has been the bridge to connect a history to peoples all over the globe. In choosing to introduce the students in grades 5-8 to West African Jelis/griots particularly from the countries of Mauritania, Mali, and Nigeria also known as the Great Empires of West Africa I have several goals to reach designing this unit to be taught over 4 weeks with 4-6 planned lessons and classroom activities.

First, I plan to begin by introducing students to the physical landscape of Africa as a continent by exploring the geography for each of the three countries of West Africa Mauritania, Mali, and Nigeria by planning map activities that will explore the countries natural resources from the days of the Great Kingdoms to present. Then the shift will transition from geography to more of a culture focus by using music as a primary bridge. My intention is to introduce students to the richness of West African culture by having them listen to its music and storytelling beginning with the Jelis/Griots of the great West African Empires. After learning about the importance of the Jelis/griot tradition and how it is inextricably intertwined to West African history. Students will be able to compare and contrast the ancient stories based on families' legacies, political unrest, and social issues to the contemporary music with Pan-African influences however with the same or similar contexts. Pan-Africanism is the idea that there is a brotherhood and sisterhood among all people of African descent whether they live inside or outside of Africa. In this unit, students understand that the people of West African descent have had, and continue to have, the same experiences worldwide when encountering Europeans who decide that they can benefit from the exploitation of the land, culture, and people.

Second, I have come to embrace a pedagogy rooted in the voices, cultures, and histories of traditionally marginalized youth, their families, schools, and neighborhoods. These authentic voices tell true accounts of daily life and the ongoings of the neighborhood. In these voices there are stories of conflict, social ills, family challenge, joy and happiness. By exposing students to hearing songs of West Africa's past traditions and cultural identities through digital media videos the students will be encouraged to also express their life experiences through songs, poems, artwork and or digital media document.

Thirdly, my goal is to inspire students to become neo–griots and to produce counter stories and songs that call into question dominant narratives about social injustices such as gentrification, targeted police violence, corrupt politicians, and discriminatory gender roles with people with African ancestry. Unfortunately, many textbooks and children's books (literary and informational) perpetuate myths and fictional misunderstandings surrounding the topic of the history of social injustice and gender roles from West Africa old and new. So, by giving students the opportunity to be exposed to music, non-fiction texts and song narratives that will provide insight into the rich oral history of African people's culture that many folktales and myths have evolved from. The students will understand the importance of having agency to tell their own narrative. Their stories will be the new alternative narrative and therefore documenting part of their own family's history in their narratives similar to the tradition of the jelis/griot.

Lastly, to increase student knowledge of the impact that Afrobeat and Pan Africanism has had on shaping the new jelis/griot music culture. I am using two focuses that come from cultural norms: oral narrative traditions/folklore and music/songs. This unit will primarily compare and contrast traditional and contemporary griots from West Africa by looking at the evolution of the ancient griot's song narratives into popular songs or Afrobeat. By analyzing the Great Empires of West African in comparison to modern day Mali, Nigeria, and Mauritania focusing on similarities and differences. "Africa's popular music of today; however, cannot be removed from its early historical context such as the African kinship, the kingdoms, slavery, political and socio-economic independence and similar modalities ubiquitous in post-colonial Africa. The Popular culture of Africa embraces these historical issues and reflects upon them through its popular music. Africa's pop music and culture in general raises provocative questions, such as differences of history and traditions, and ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social, and religious affiliations within traditional, neo-traditional and contemporary settings" (Diawara, Manthia)

This unit will use primary sources and oral narratives/song to inform student inquiry and thinking about the problem and solution, structuring the text in ways that many griots used to tell narratives and sing songs about social issues such as war, political corruption, and other cultural contexts. Lessons will include approaches to

analyzing and interpreting text and music in order to compare and contrast gender, events, and interactions by recognizing the narrative/song structure, and identify main ideas and themes. This multi-layered approach encourages students to explore and implore inquiry strategies that are not just about what is heard and read but it allows students to pose questions and make connections to the narrative's lyrics and rhythms.

I want to teach this unit to inspire students who may not have ever thought about songs as a narrative, a way of telling their own stories. Also, to provide a deeper understanding about who and what jelis/griots are and how important their role is and continues to be in West Africa and around the world. Additionally, I want to teach this unit to students who require modifications and accommodations in order to access the general education curriculum. Incorporating culturally responsive literary children's books and pairing these alternative narratives with primary sources, songs and music videos allows students to learn through visual elements and by listening. By aligning common core standard skills and strategies with relevant content composed of traditional and contemporary narrative songs. In turn, students will also be able to make connections to fiction and myth from what mainstream considers to be an authoritative document.

Students will use graphic organizers, google slides, and visual collages to record their prior knowledge, new findings, and sequence of events. The specific skills and tasks that will be included within this unit: compare and contrast, timelines, paired-events, identification of problem and solution text structure, and determining main idea by listening to traditional and contemporary narrative songs, features of primary sources, realistic-historical fiction and 1-2-3 summary.

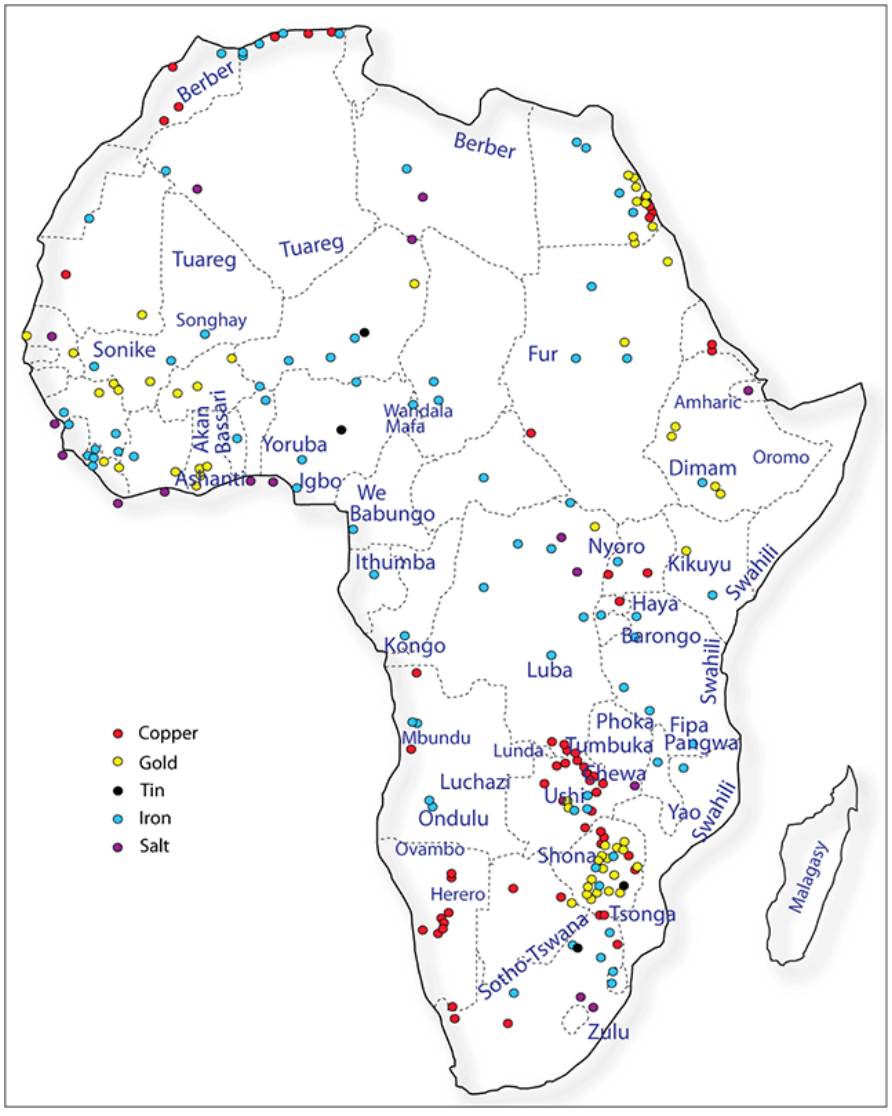
The graphic organizers, google slides, and visual collages will then be used to help students develop writing skills or express themselves alternatively by citing evidence from the text/songs that may be interpreted in the form of a visual or graphic image expression. Additionally, the graphic organizers, google slides, and visual collages become a representation or narrative for what students have learned about the topic.

The Griot in African Society

In African society, the griot is a historian, storyteller, chronicler, musician, and so on. She/He is above all else the keeper of the art of speaking well and of speaking truth. This observation, rather than being twofold, expresses in reality a single and unique entity: the language singularity of the griot in his function as master of the word. Griot's mastery of the word makes him/her an adept of the times who seeks the affirmation of the identity consciousness of Africans and African Americans, in order to accompany him/her toward a better understanding of the social system and the impact that it has on gender roles. (Hale) The importance of the relevance of the jelis/griot in our modern society is not a fad or trend. The concept of the jelis/griot is to educate and teach Africans about their history.

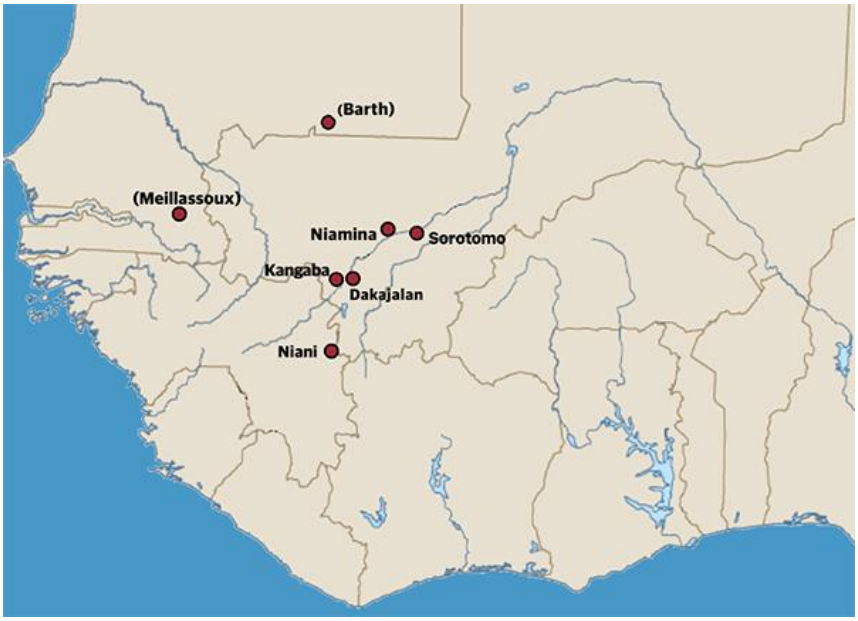
This curriculum unit will address two content strands: oral narrative traditions/folklore and music/songs. Indigenous people groups will also be included within the presented concepts. As students develop competencies around analytical, critical, strategic, and chronological thinking, the unit will integrate multi-media platforms that include music videos, podcasts, and audio content from West African culture ultimately, the West African griot restores the past, guarantees the present, and predicts the future of West African people with men and women who have been the histories. This unit will encompass virtual experiences to both West African jelis/ griots of the past and West African jelis/ griots of present day to give students a better understanding of what is oral history. Also provide more understanding of authentic experiences when listening to the music and narratives coming from West Africa. This unit will also explain to students the value of narratives and storytelling especially through the use of song and music. The song of the jelis/griot is especially important in West African culture there is a popular belief that "No matter what you did or gave away, you were nobody unless there was a griot to set you apart with a song." (Diawara) "The concept of the griot in traditional African society, sends us back to two important dimensions which, while different in form, are very close in substance-those of history and education." (Ouattara) "Indeed, the knowledge and recognition of the existence, as well as the organization and future, of the traditional society in Africa is the work of the griot, considered to be the repository of the tradition of people he/she represents." The griots mission as a historian is to give understanding of the present as it connects to the past; and understanding the past as it connects to the present conditioning the possibilities of the future. Through the art of the griot, through his manipulation of different forms of symbolic organization of the world, affiliations, and relationships within a community or between communities are reflected and expressed. In doing so, the griot is able to reunite the distant and near past with the immediate present with the imminent future" (Ouattara)

History of The Great Empires of West Africa



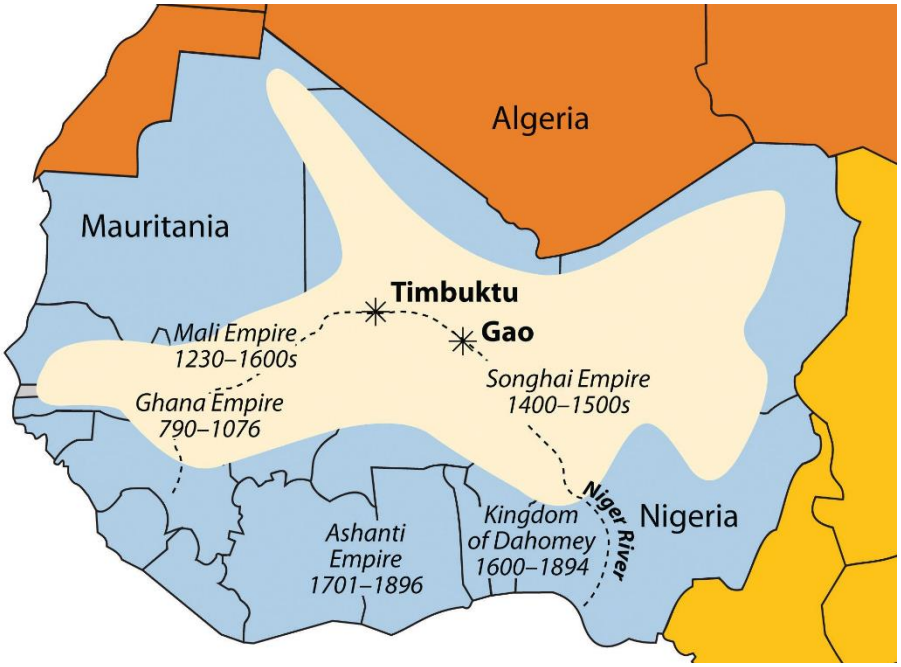
"In the western part of the savannah belt the Ghana Empire (the present nation has merely adopted the name of the ancient empire) goes back to about 800 AD.; the capital of Koumbi Saleh was on the present-day border between Mauretania and Mali northwest of Jenné. The empire is known to have exported gold and salt, among other goods. Al-Bakri (1014-94) gives a report of 1067 at a time when drought gave increasing problems and the Almoravid Dynasty (which even ruled Moslem Spain) made itself felt. The Ghana Empire collapses in the 12th Century." (Selwyn, Eldridge.) Map of Africa showing various countries and the distribution of some of the resources that were traded and exchanged in antiquity. Map created by the author. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.68 Retrieved May31, 2021

"The subsequent Mali Empire ruled a huge area from the Atlantic coast in the west to Timbuktu and Gao in the east from 1230 onwards. It may have sent out two large naval expeditions in the early 14th Century. The capital was Niani on the border between present-day Mali and Guinea. Emperor Mansa Musa (died 1337), a devout Moslem, annexed scholarly Timbuktu and went on a fabled pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 carrying so much gold that the price fell when he



on gold markedly passed." (Selwyn, Eldridge.)
https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.266

"Musa built mosques in Timbuktu and Gao along with palaces in Timbuktu, visited by Ibn Battuta (1304-77) in the 1352. Certainly, Musa brought Mali and Timbuktu to the attention of Europeans, which placed him holding a gold nugget on a map of Europe and Africa in 1375; at about the same time a giraffe was dispatched as a gift to maintain links with Morocco. The Mali Empire declined in the 15th Century; Timbuktu was conquered by the rising Songhay Empire in 1468. But trading routes with the south were maintained. To judge from dates on the iron production, the trading center of Begho in Ghana, situated on the border between forest and savannah, was founded around 1300 AD (it sees Moslem imports d 1500), while the important center of Tado in southern



Togo, based on the same type of evidence, may already have started around 1000 AD." (Selwyn, Eldridge.) Flatworld.com Retrieved May 31, 2021

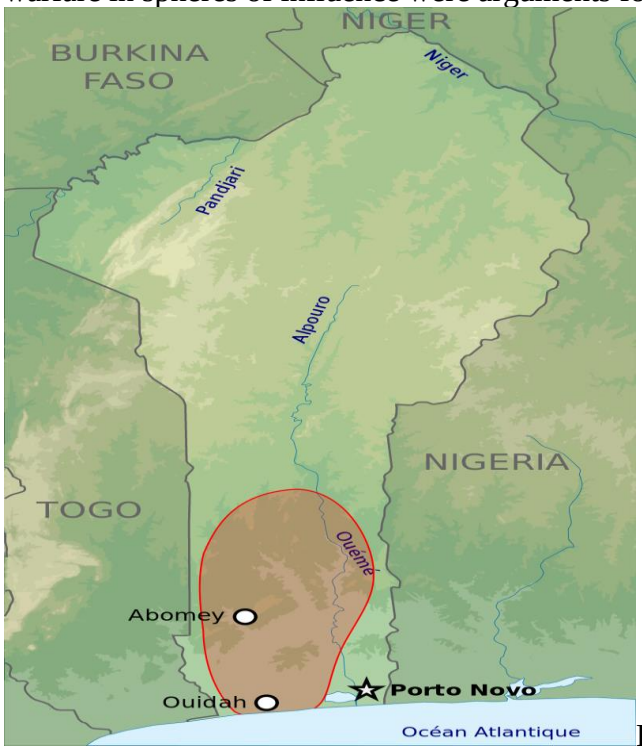
"The Songhay Empire (of 1340, but in effect only from the mid-15th Century) had Gao as its capital. It ruled more or less the same regions as the Mali Empire plus provinces further to the east, and northwest. The empire collapsed already in 1591, when Moroccan forces, armed with firearms, took Timbuktu. It was followed by the less powerful Dendi Kingdom. By that time the world had already turned on its head due to Portuguese and Spaniard seaward expansions. Portugal founded El Mina Fortress in Ghana (Gold Coast) in 1482 and visited the city of Bénin in southwestern Nigeria in 1485. From now on, the development of West Africa would be determined by relations with European traders based on the coast and not by continental links across the Sahara which was the exclusive commercial base of the Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhay Empires. The Moroccan Dynasties had seen the all-powerful Almoravids, which expanded into present-day Mauritania and the less powerful Almohads, which came under heavy Christian pressure. Cordova and Sevilla fell to Christian princes in the early 13th Century, incidentally in tandem with the rise of the Mali Empire. Portugal took Ceuta in 1415, its first African possession. Other Medieval trade routes to northern Africa went from Kano in northern Nigeria to Ghadames (Roman Cydamus) in western present-day Libya. The Kanem Bornu Empire, established on the fertile lands around Lake Chad, was founded around 700 AD. , according to its royal chronicle discovered in 1851 by German traveler H. Barth. In the 13th Century this empire even expanded into southernmost Libya, and certainly was connected with Egypt." (Selwyn, Eldridge.)

The Empire of Songhai

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

"By 1900 European powers, in the main Great Britain and France, but also Germany (Togo), had moved beyond coastal engagements and started a colonial cycle of conquests, which would lead to territorial dominance only relinquished after World War II with the creation of the modern West African states. Dahomey for instance was conquered by France in 1892-94, the Ashanti Kingdom by Great Britain in 1902. Christian missions and school in southern West Africa are heritage of this cycle of development; Christian abhorrence of slavery and European distaste for small-scale

warfare in spheres of influence were arguments for the expansion." (Selwyn, Eldridge.)



Kingdom of Dahomey around 1894

In my opinion the griots have evolved in terms the twenty first century as true entertainers of the world. Through their music the world is informed and educated about the social ills, struggles, and history of African people who live all around the world. With the invention of the internet and a globalized economy the platform for spreading narratives through song has expanded 100 times over. Nowadays anybody who has access to a computer and the internet can log onto YouTube and type in a genre or music or country in Africa to bring up music and artist or what I like to call neo griots to the screen. "Once relegated to the unfashionable world music section of record stores, hot new African sounds are dominating the mainstream, attracting the attention of major international labels and finding their way into movies, TV shows, adverts and listeners' headphones." (ProQuest. Web. 4 May 2021)

The examples that I will use for the purpose of this unit are two Nigerian artists Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage. These two have made a big jump from just performing their narrative song to African audiences: their music has made it across the Atlantic Ocean into America's mainstream and to African people all over the world. Streaming music is a new technology that will allow the masses to hear the narratives of the neo griots, combining their tales of social success, political strife, and life challenges with Afro fusion/Afrobeat's as an accompaniment. "Wooed by Africa's huge and growing young population, the uptake of internet and smartphones, and the breakthrough popularity of homegrown genres, international record labels are increasingly scouring the continent for

talent. Young, tech-savvy Africans are driving the popularity of music streaming services, and in 2018, UMG licensed its catalogue to Boomplay, Africa's largest local streaming platform, which claims 75m users." (ProQuest. Web. 4 May 2021) The traditional Griot delivered news about what was going and the histories of the peoples or families that they represented. Yes, it was by birth right to have the honor to be a griot. In today times bring a griot is still considered a gift. The gift song/narrative may come intentionally through a family legacy or not. The most important attribute is to be able to influence people with the gift of music. Through the song lyrics, and musical sounds people are able to make connections to familiar narratives about relevant and important happenings and goings on between a people and its history.

"African Giant is Afro-Fusion at its most late-night and atmospheric--Burna Boy also says it's his most personal album yet. But even so, being from Nigeria, "things that have been going on there since the 1960s"--from political corruption to violence--"are still happening now, so I have to be cautious; I have to be careful how I say things." He's least careful on "Killin Dem," which sounds like a polemic about Nigerian politics. But Burna Boy refuses to say for certain. "It's funny," he says. "Most Americans don't even understand what I'm saying in my records, but they pick up on the vibe, the vibration." One reason he believes Afrobeat, the contemporary version of Afrobeat, is having a moment is because "everything started from Africa, and so music started from Africa. It's all going to come back to its roots eventually. When you hear our music, it resonates in the soul." (Selwyn, Eldridge.)

"Burna Boy — the Nigerian songwriter, singer and rapper who was born Damini Ebunoluwa Ogulu — once thought he'd be content writing the sleek, self-assured party tunes that first drew fans to his mixtapes in the early 2010s. But as his popularity spread worldwide, the spirits who guide his songwriting had other plans for him. Soon, he was taking up broader, more consequential ideas. "Music is a spiritual thing," he said in an interview via video call from his studio in Lagos." "I've never picked up a pen and paper and written down a song in my life," he said. "It all just comes, like someone is standing there and telling me what to say. It's all according to the spirits. Some of us are put on this earth to do what we do." On "African Giant," Burna Boy pointedly addressed Nigeria's colonial history and lingering corruption alongside more hedonistic songs. And with "Twice as Tall" he sought to make music as, he said, "a citizen of the world." (Pareles, Jon.)

"In past interviews, Burna Boy regularly raises the idea of pan-Africanism: that unity on the continent is the way for it to thrive. The movement grew up at the end of the colonial era and saw a collective push to oppose apartheid and resist imperialism. It's hardly a new concept, but it's rare to hear it discussed by a pop star." (Selwyn, Eldridge) So, by Burna Boy making these statements we can see the influence of the societal struggles as a result of colonialism. We hear Burna Boy carrying that torch passed down by the Griots of the past and he is carrying the torch with passion and purpose. On

“African Giant,” Burna Boy pointedly addressed Nigeria’s colonial history and lingering corruption alongside more hedonistic songs. For the most part, Burna Boy hasn’t diluted his African heritage to reach his global audience. Instead, he has placed an unmistakably African stamp on music drawn from all around Africa and from across the African diaspora. He has a calm, husky, resolute voice that exemplifies the West African cultural virtue of coolness: poise and control transcending any commotion. His melodic sense is rooted in pentatonic African modes but unconstrained by them. “We’re not what they teach in schools out here,” he said. “They don’t teach the right history, the history of strength and power that we originally had and that they should be teaching now. They don’t really teach the truth about how we ended up in the situation we’re in. They don’t teach the truth about what’s going on now and how to overcome it. And I believe that knowledge is power.” (Pareles, Jon.)

“FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN CALLED the "Queen of Naija pop" crowning it with the Best Female Artist award at the 2014 MAMAs (one of the world’s top music events) not to mention being nominated for Best International Female at the 2014 Black Entertainment Television (BET) awards and garnering over 674,000 Twitter followers - Tiwa Savages lack of ego is disarming. (Jennings. Retrieved May 4, 2021.)

“Born Tiwatope Savage in Lagos in 1980, she spent her formative years in London and studied Business Administration at the University of Kent. A career in banking beckoned but having kept her passion for music alive by lending backing vocals to artists including George Michael, Mary J Blige, Chaka Kahn and Emma Bunton.” (Jennings Retrieved May 4, 2021.)

“In 2010 it was time to step into the limelight herself with a move back to Lagos and the release of her debut single 'Ke/e Kele on her own imprint 323 Entertainment. A slice of pure afro pop with attitude-fueled vocals, the track became an instant anthem. However, it was not easy breaking into the male dominated Nigerian music scene. At the Lagos MAMAs, she remembers only too well how Sacha and Mo'cheddah were the only female award winners, with the likes of D'banj, 2Face, Banky W and P-Square ruling the local music scene. Though discouraged, she persevered. "Females have to go the extra mile in every way in life, don't we?" she reflects. "In any profession, we have to work 10 times as hard as the men. It's an unfair world but if that's what it takes, that's what it takes." (Jennings Retrieved May 4, 2021.)

By comparing and contrasting Traditional West African griots to the neo griots such as Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage we can see that there is representation of the past, present and future of the legacy of griots. Traditionally we still have representation of the patriarchal structure being demonstrated in the prominence of the male gender as a commonly viewed griot but there have always been women in the role as well. As women continue to advocate for more representation in the culture that is another curriculum unit focus. For the purpose of this unit, my goal was to bring forth a contrast to the male

dominated genre by including some representation of women's roles in traditional music and storytelling.

Objectives

1. SWBAT engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
2. SWBAT follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
3. SWBAT pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
4. SWBAT review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussion.
5. SWBAT include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Teaching Strategies

Whole class discussions are, a great way to increased perspective-taking, understanding, empathy, and higher-order thinking skills. The discussion is important to learning in all disciplines because it helps students process information rather than simply receive it. The goal of my class discussion is to get students to practice thinking about the content material particularly the music that we will listen to and base our classroom discussion around.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

An oldie but a goodie, think-pair-share can be used any time you want to plug interactivity into a lesson: Simply have students think about their response to a question, form a pair with another person, discuss their response, then share it with the larger group. Because I feel this strategy has so many uses and can be way more powerful than we give it credit for, I devoted a whole post to think-pair-share; everything you need to know about it is right there.

SNOWBALL DISCUSSION

a.k.a. Pyramid Discussion

Basic Structure: Students begin in pairs, responding to a discussion question only with a single partner. After each person has had a chance to share their ideas, the pair joins another pair, creating a group of four. Pairs share their ideas with the pair they just joined. Next, groups of four join together to form groups of eight, and so on, until the whole class is joined up in one large discussion.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Graphic organizers help students construct meaning. The following learning tools can be used with any activity and across all grade levels and content. I will use them check for understandings to assess what and how they are reading and listening to. Also, I will use to observe their thinking process on our various activities.

Classroom Activities

Lesson 1 Summary

This lesson introduces students to the region of ancient regions of the Great Empires of West Africa. In this lesson students will examine the culture of the city of Timbuktu, and its surrounding geographic regions by reading a non-fiction text about the "Great Empires of West Africa" and also by watching a short documentary about the ancient city of Jenné while watching the documentary students will use a graphic organizer to capture noticing and wonderings. Through mapping activities, students will gain an understanding of the culture and geography of Timbuktu as well as other important cities, past and present.

Materials:

West African Griots Playlist

Youtube video: https://youtu.be/Rq6evguYy_g

Non-fiction text
https://www.mcpsmt.org/cms/lib/MT01001940/Centricity/Domain/2034/Ch.%2012%20Text.pdf

Computers with Internet Access

Blank map of Africa with countries names that are not there.

Objectives:

SWBAT identify the primary source of our knowledge about the ancient Mali Empire.

SWBAT examine the geography of West Africa through map activities.

Key Understandings: Determine the importance of geography to assigned topics of study.

Driving Questions: Why is geography importance to a people's culture?

Procedure:

Introduce the West African Griots Playlist presentation and the click the link which will open the Google earth to present day Mauritania formerly known as "The Mali Empire" in Africa (13th-16th Centuries). Distribute copies of the Blank Map of Africa ask students to locate the area that is present day Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, and Guinea Bissau.

Then Initiate a large group class discussion by having students examine a map of Africa and by asking them what assumptions can be made about the continent's basic geography? For example, students might note that there seems to be a lot of desert, or that in southern regions there is more grassland. Because of geographic location the weather is probably warm. Being surrounded by water could mean lots of trade, etc. Then students will read a non-fiction text article "Early Societies of West Africa".

Assessment:

Have students break into smaller groups and ask each group to read a section of the article and identify the main idea of the section that they read. Students will share out from each group summarize what they have learned.

Lesson 2 Summary

Students use the think, pair, share strategy to explore rhythms and beat patterns of traditional Malian music and translate the music through word association, graphic image, or color palette in order to create a new narrative from the music. This lesson uses the musical sounds of traditional Mali. Allowing students to think about the rhythms that follow a pattern lets them become more engaged in the lesson. It also results in an alternative way for the students to communicate ideas and thoughts. Students will either

use computers to create a google slide presentation or Students will use pictures that they can draw themselves or cutout from a magazine and cut and paste physically onto a graphic organizer for simple narrative with beginning, middle, and end.

Materials

Graphic organizer (Simple Narrative)

Google slide template for simple narrative

colored pencils

chrome books- Wi-Fi connection

Objectives

SWBAT engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SWBAT analyze and create a simple narrative using graphic images and music as an inspiration as they listen to traditional griots from West Africa playing traditional songs.

Key Understandings How to use rhythms, beat patterns, and graphic/drawn images to create a simple narrative.

Driving Questions: How does music enhance a narrative?

Procedure: Begin with the West African Jelis/Griots PowerPoint playlist attached in the Appendix**.** Introduce the playlist starting with slide 1 building background knowledge on traditional Malian music. Then play the first three music videos on slide 4 explaining that you will view and listen to the music from three different regions of what was known as the "Great Malian Empire" but is now modern-day Mauritania using the music rhythms, beats, and patterns to inspire creating a visual story that has a beginning, middle and end. **Demonstration**: Teacher will model how to create a collage using google slides while listening to each music video. The teacher will select one of the three music videos to use as an inspiration. The teacher will create a google slide template in the demonstration for students to use in order to organize the narrative. Slide 1, In the beginning, slide 2 then, slide 3 after, and slide 5 lastly. Using graphic images from the internet cutting and pasting into the template to provide the details that will tell a short simple story. The teacher will then give students an opportunity to turn and talk to a neighbor to discuss what the teacher has created and presented as an example. Students will be asked to each develop one question each relative to the collage. Students will be asked to discuss what is the story that the teacher has created with the images.

Assessment: Students will be asked to work with a partner and create a google slide of their own or as a team. They will be given an opportunity to choose one of the three music videos to use as their inspirational rhythm and beat backdrop. Then students will be asked to repeat to the teacher what the expectation is in order to complete the group activity. Students will be separated in digital break out rooms with a partner to complete task. The teacher will give student 25 minutes to work and then ask for students to share their work with the teacher and classmates at the end of 25 minutes. One student from each group will display their google slide and as another student if they can interpret the narrative based on the images selected and positioned in each frame.

Lesson 3 Summary

SWBAT interpret multimedia components (sound) and visual displays in music presentation about West African Griots.

SWBAT pose and respond to questions generated from a call and response West African musical activity in order to gain a better understanding of West African Griots.

Key Understandings: Role of music in West Africa.

Driving Questions:

1. What is a Griot

2.What kind of stories does a Griot tell?

3. Can anyone become a griot?

4. How so griots play their instruments?

5. How does someone know when different occasions are being celebrated?

6. How are Samba drums used in the celebrations in the griot community?

7. And do you play different rhythms for different occasions?

Procedure:

Teacher: I will do a full beat rhythm that I would like you to repeat. One two three four one two three four one two three four one two three four one two three four one two three four one two three four. As we move through today's lesson, let us be thinking about why we have used call and response and how we have learned all of our rhythm so far in this unit as it might be a clue to some of the questions, I ask in this lesson. A jeli/ griot is

someone usually standing up and addressing people in a circle around them. A jeli/griot is a West African historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet, or musician. The jeli/griot shares knowledge orally from one generation to the next. This is known as oral tradition and is often seen as a leader due to his or her position as an advisor to the royals. Apart from playing the djembe, what skills have you learnt which did not involve having to write something down?

Teacher: I put one example here on screen, cooking, recipes can be passed on to through family and friends. What I would like you to do is pause the video here and turn and talk to your neighbor and take turns sharing at least four different skills of your own which you have learnt which did not involve having to write something down.

Teacher: Being a jeli/griot. You are going to watch a noticeably short video from Mohamed. Mohamed is going to explain what it is like to be a griot. Then there are four questions for you to answer after watching the video. You can work with your neighbor to answer these questions.

Teacher: Sambas use the instruments we have as sambas to celebrate the happy moments in our community for example if there is a wedding, if there is a baptism, if the full moon come or if we have a visitor coming to visit us so we are welcoming them with our instruments by singing, dancing, and showing the positive energy that we have in West Africa. I have written down three that you could play. Or you can create your own. As a reminder, the start signal is, play the djembe and here we go. The ostinato is, let us play djembe, let us play djembe. And repeats as it is an ostinato. And the stop signal is, play the djembe and say Africa. You will need to memorize these rhythms and become the griot by teaching this to someone else through speaking and demonstrating only. You cannot write anything down. Pause the video to complete your task and click resume you are ready to continue. Reflection on being a griot. As musicians, its super important that we are reflective, so we know how to improve and get better next time. Write down two things you found difficult when teaching your rhythms. Write down two things you found easy when teaching as a griot.

Teacher: Showing the Google slide deck. Take a moment and study the picture on the right-hand side of the screen. This image shows a griot. Paintings of a griot often depict.

Demonstration

Example if I want to if I want to let people know that there is someone who get married, in the morning, early in the morning, I can let them know from the phrase that I am playing with my instruments I play the language of what that celebration is for. So, this is how also we do it. So, the Saba drum can talk to people? Yeah, we use the Samba to transmit the message from a village to another. So is an old instrument also so we using to transmit the message, languages from where I come from, we can play it in this

instrument. Task, being a griot. Practice performing two west African instruments that you have learnt in this unit and then teach someone in your household these rhythms.

Assessment: Quiz and Reflection Questions:

Is there anything you would do differently next time? Spend some time to reflect, pause the video, write your answers neatly on a piece of paper and click resume when you are ready to continue. Use your knowledge of West African music and the griot to list three things that you have learnt so far about the role that music plays in West African society. Try and be as specific as possible so if you are thinking to put some kind of occasion, be specific in that occasion. Now let us take some time to reflect on how we use music in our own life. I put down some examples for myself: 1.I use music as a soundtrack to my every day. It Could be when I am working, I'm doing the housework or when I'm exercising. I do not know but lots of people including myself use music to evoke certain emotions. Could be when I want to feel in a particularly happy mood, so I put on my favorite happy songs. Could be that I want to be motivated to do some exercise or to do the housework, so I put on some upbeat tunes. And also using music to dance too.

Take some time now to reflect on how music is used in your life, write them down on a piece of paper and turn and talk to your neighbor about what you wrote down. So that brings us to the end of today's lesson, well done for all of your hard work and I hope you enjoyed it.

4-5 Lesson Summary

This lesson idea is about storytelling and the African Jelis/ Griots who have done so since ancient times. Students watch four videos showing Jelis/ Griots of the past and Neo Griots Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage. The students will be asked to compare all four videos by using a graphic organizer organized similarities and differences. Students will be asked to share out the comparisons and contrast that they noticed or wondered about when watching each music video. The students will be asked what story they saw unfolding in each video. Then the students are challenged to create their own Griot-style story based on the own experiences. Students incorporate writing and oral speaking skills with History and Social Sciences, and practice Creativity (5Cs). Students will also incorporate a choice of three different styles of West African music to incorporate as the score for their personal narrative.

Objectives:

SWBAT create personal narratives in order to become Jelis/Griots for their own community.

Key Understandings: As students to think about the history of their community, school, or family. What could they tell a story about? For students who are struggling to develop their own story, they may be allowed to a traditional story they enjoy. Have students working a small group of three-five writing their stories down using a graphic organizer and getting feedback from other students. Students will have 25-30 minutes to work together independently as the teacher circulates and offer support where needed. They should keep stories short, at one to two-three minutes. Students may record their stories with video if they feel comfortable doing so. Teacher will provide music from the West African Playlist slide and give students an opportunity to select that style of music they want as an accompaniment. Over a period of two-three days groups of students will share their stories with the rest of the students.

Driving Question: How does history get remembered and how is news shared?

Procedure: Explain to students that in ancient West Africa, none of these things existed, but history and news were still important to the people. To help keep history and to share news, Griots (gree-oh) were local storytellers who not only told traditional stories but would also remember all the previous happenings in the village, as well as share new events of interest. They would often accompany themselves using musical instruments.

Assessment:

Students will share out stories created as well as music choice and explain why the decided on that particular music to accompany their personal narrative.

Resources

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El Cajon CA 92020 David Akombo

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https://worldview.unc.edu/news-article/music-and-storytelling-in-west-africa/

Reading Lists for Students

These articles provide current and relevant information about Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage. These can be used for students to read and develop understanding about the new griot and what Burna Boy's music has been able to influence people of African descent worldwide.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/arts/music/burna-boy-twice-as-tall.html Retrieved 4/27/21

This attachment can be used to provide additional background knowledge of the coast of West Africa. It contains a map and short non-fiction text about griots and storytelling. This attachment also has discussion question that can used after reading.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53cfd0e5e4b057663ea1bc61/t/57b1e0b746c3c406dd172afd/1471275383444/Oral+Traditions+of+West+Africa.pdf

Appendix

The Common core standards listed are aligned to all the lesson summaries outlined in the classroom activities section of this unit. Each learning object is aligned to one of the CCSS listed. Fifth grade speaking listening standard were primarily used as a guide for all learning objectives and tasks.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1. B

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1. D

Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2

Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.3

Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Materials:

West Griots Play List created by Aisha Al-Muid

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Jt8yCEYK3UlGICIkLe2RarRI8jrW2pqX80B3pSo4W2s/edit#slide=id.gcc13ef6dad_0_19

Visual example of a storytelling griot from West Africa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIk7ppDMKRg

Visual example of a storytelling griot from West Africa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Mgd43Zp8wY