

Title: Capoiera

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Course: Social Studies, Language Arts, Music, and Physical Education

Grade level: 6th

Standards met: Adaptable to use across a number of different grade levels from kindergarten to 8th grade

Objective: To trace and view culture as it moves from one place to the next. Taking what is commonly viewed as less of an instructional day (when the teacher is absent) and using it to read, study, and theorize about events that come from their past and have a connection to the present day. Thereby not losing any educational momentum maintained by the absent teacher.

Keyword: Capoiera, Martial Arts, Salvador Bahia, Brazil, Angola

This unit plan was put together for a particular type of situation. If you find yourself as I do regularly having to teach the same group of middle school children for several different classes over a period of consecutive days or closely spaced days or you are in an elementary setting. The objective is to study Capoiera as it migrated from Africa to Brazil into America. This study can take you through a number of subjects including Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Music and Physical

Education culminating in what is called a roda (pronounced hoda) where the children get a chance to display all that they have learned. Now I have given five lessons, but each one of those can be expanded if you wanted this to be a grand production put on by your elementary class or if you wanted to get your middle school team together to put on a big production, if you were to do that you could assess the culminating activity more stringently because they would have more time to learn the history, movement, and music

Capoiera is shrouded in mystery, the origins of which can only be guessed. We are pretty sure it came out of a West African fighting style that originally included weapons, different animal styles and some grappling. A large number of members of these West African tribes were brought over during slavery due to that they unlike the Indians could survive in captivity and the workload and wouldn't so readily escape because this was new terrain for them. Unlike America except the South Carolina lowlands slavery in South America was different in the fact there were many more slaves per overseer which extended them a few more freedoms than in America. All this to say, these conditions led to a higher retention of Africanisms, one of these being the fighting style from the Bantu of Angola and Mozambique. The Bantu people depended on movement of the body, mind and soul and oral traditions to keep their culture. The Portuguese were in control at this time but soon

the Dutch started to move in and as they fought their way in, the control on slavery was weakened until groups of slaves escaped and formed their own village of free blacks called quilombos.

These quilombos were vital to the survival of Capoiera bringing up the question was this where Capoiera was formalized or had it been on the plantation hidden in a dance like some have suggested. This makes sense until you introduce the point that when the slavemasters would not let you practice fighting they also would not let you dance. Capoiera survived a lengthy stretch of suppression from the Portuguese, once they were freed from slavery, Capoiera was suppressed again this time by the Brazilian government on both the local and national levels. This was due to gangs of men would terrorize local communities and police forces with their Capoiera. In Bahia (a state) Capoiera continued in its ritual-fight-dance origins and continued to thrive hidden away from prying eyes by secret Capoiera clubs(there was a nationwide ban on Capoiera) Slowly but surely the violence got out of control to the point where it was all but stomped out everywhere but Bahia. Then as the art survived, it produced two central, legendary figures instrumental to the history of Capoiera. Capoiera's very existence today is due in large part to the influence of Mestre Bimba and Mestre Pastinha. Mestre Bimba opened the first school in Brazil in which he taught "the regional fight from Bahia" or Capoiera regional(faster more aggressive than traditional

Capoiera Angola). Then a few years later Mestre Pastinha opened his Capoiera Angola school, then Capoiera began to be practiced out in the open. Once that happened Capoiera spread like wildfire over Brazil where it became the national sport. Interestingly enough rumors of a fighting style very similar appeared in the French Quarter in New Orleans and areas in southern Florida, but Capoiera did not make it's official debut in the states until the late 70's coincidentally at that same time breakdancing shows up in New York and if you look at the two they are very similar following some of the same rituals and movements.

Capoiera is controlled by the berimbau a non-percussive instrument consisting of one wire pulled across two ends of a bowed stick with a hollowed out gourd attached to project and change the sound. The wire is struck by a stick and the pitch is changed by holding a flat rock against the wire changing the vibration thusly changing the pitch. Added to this is a set of different drums and other percussive instruments. The group sits in a circle and two players enter the circle and depending on the pace of the music the game is either more aggressive or less aggressive. The two players execute a variety of moves, the fundamental move being the ginga, a rhythmic motion of right leg in front of you bent and left leg extended back to left leg in front of you bent and right leg extended back. From this you may execute, bencao-a front stomping kick, martelo- a roundhouse kick,

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chapa-a side kick, meia-lua- a low turning kick, armada- a high turning kick, and queixada- a outside-inside crescent kick. As you get more advanced you learn more difficult move. Put all of these things together and you have Capoiera a link back to Africa

Daily Lesson Plans	
Course <u>Language Arts</u> Day <u>1</u>	
Goals	To read an article, summarize it and try to determine a logical choice based on things found in reading.
Learning Activities	Read one of several articles on the internet regarding capoiera and its history, give one to two page summary and theorize on the origin(there are several different possibilities based on the conditions of the time)
Teaching Strategies Methods	Print out articles for everyone, give them time to read and assist with any grammar issues.

Materials	Pencil and paper
Focusing Questions	After everyone is complete discuss different options i.e. maybe it really was a martial art disguised in a dance or maybe it was truly a secret fighting style from the Bantu tribe.

Daily Lesson Plans Course <u> Social Studies </u> Day <u> 2 </u>

Goals	Tracing and discovering the art of Capoiera as it has evolved from Africa to Brazil to here.
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Learning Activities	Study Africana Encarta or African or Brazilian history sites to find fighting styles that may have evolved into capoiera. Search also for similar rituals that may have evolved from Africa to Brazil.
Teaching Strategies Methods	Suggest rather than looking all over the African continent Tracing down what area did most of the slaves entering Brazil come from and search that part of Africa.
Materials	Africana Encarta and various web sites that will be turned up if you search on the keywords I already gave.
Focusing Questions	Discuss possible connection to break dancing.
Daily Lesson Plans Course <u>Science</u> Day <u>3</u>	

Goals	To learn how force is multiplied by rotational movement. To learn about the properties of momentum.
Learning Activities	Show how the speed of an object moving at its center is slower than at its circumference, therefore the force created is not as great at the center of your body compare to your foot rotating around the center of your body. Show how constant motion (maintaining momentum) increases the power of any strike and makes it easier to evade other strikes.
Teaching Strategies Methods	Teacher demonstration with objects and people
Materials	Demonstrations on Africana Encarta, and various capoiera related web sites.
Focusing Questions	Discuss static(non motion based) martial arts versus kinetic(constant motion) martial arts.

Daily Lesson Plans	
Course	Day
Music	4
Goals	To study ritual and different types of music for Capoiera roda
Learning Activities	Study the different rituals that go into a traditional roda. Play and learn the different rhythms and tempos and how they affect the capoeiristas and how they play the game.
Teaching Strategies Methods	Show how music can set the mood for any activity
Materials	Africana Encarta and various capoiera related web sites

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Focusing Questions	Discuss whether or not you think music drove the evolution from Capoiera Angola to Regional or the change from Angola to Regional changed the music.
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Daily Lesson Plans Course <u>Physical Education</u> Day <u>5</u>

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Goals	To learn basic movements of capoiera.
Learning Activities	Go over basic movements, ginga, meia-lua, martelo, quiexada and bencao.
Teaching Strategies Methods	Teacher demonstration and video clips found on web.
Materials	Demonstrations on Africana Encarta, and various capoiera related web sites.
Focusing Questions	Discuss static(non motion based) martial arts versus kinetic(constant motion) martial arts.

Culmination

Put all that you have learned together and have a traditional roda. Everybody is assigned a role and then you bring the art of capoiera alive. Watch to see if the individual steps are executed properly. The level of detail in a true roda would make it difficult for students to pull off flawlessly unless you have studied and practiced the rituals and the art for some years. So your assessment should come over the individual assignments leading up to the culmination. Everyone should be required to participate and enjoy.