

**WISDOM OF THE ELDERS RADIO: SERIES 3, PROGRAM 5  
HONORING THE UMATILLA NATIONS  
HIGH SCHOOL \* MUSICAL ARTS**

*Lesson plan written by Dr. Don Addison, Ph.D.*

**SUBJECT AREAS**

Music  
Dance  
Animals in musical culture

Literature  
Cultural transmission

**SKILLS**

Research  
Analysis  
Interpretation

Writing  
Oral skills  
Creativity

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the activities and lessons, students will:

- Understand basic forms of traditional and contemporary Umatilla music
- Umatilla concepts of veterans and elders who teach the people
- Umatilla values, past and present, regarding respect for the oral tradition
- Be able to distinguish stereotypes and how to overcome them
- Be able to help others overcome stereotypes
- Learn to sing and dance from a students' own cultural background and interest
- Understand why creative and musical arts traditions are valuable, why they should be preserved, how they can be preserved, and how they tell us important messages about virtues and character traits that are important

**INTRODUCTION**

**Overview**

Lesson 1: Becoming Familiar with Musical Arts  
Lesson 2: Discussion of Fred Hill Songs  
Lesson 3: Further Explorations  
Lesson 4: Final Exercise

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- Why are songs sung?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: For a variety of purposes, songs are sometimes prayers, singing accompanies dance, songs are used to honor elders or visitors, and songs function to draw the community together to demonstrate their survival as a community and to find emotional support to handle the stress of life and living in a non-Indian world in the society at large.*

- Why do the Umatilla dance?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: Umatilla peoples dance for several reasons including dancing is sometimes prayer, dancing helps participants feel a sense of fellowship with the whole group, dancing also is a way of allowing the elders who no longer can physically dance, to watch activities that they miss increasingly as they age. Dancing helps elders, therefore, “feel young again.” And dancing can demonstrate a secure line of culture and communication over several generations, grandparents, parents, and children of a whole family or groups of families.*

- Why are historical Umatilla recordings important?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: They are rare since so few Native American recordings were even produced and preserved. These recordings are an authentic example of the cultural activities (such as speaking, singing and drumming) all of which have evolved over the time since earlier recordings were made. They are also a historical treasure which is deeply valued for its historic, spiritual and cultural value to all the members of the Umatilla and their friends and associates outside the tribe.*

- What arts were most prominent before the coming of the Europeans?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: Singing, dancing, drumming, games, story telling, beading, leather work, and sometimes carving, basket work and painting.*

- Which arts remain and are being preserved?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: Beadwork, other art work, oral traditions and stories of the past, and a wide variety of music with singing in Native languages, some in vocables and more contemporary songs using English as an adaptation.*

- Why is preservation of music and dance important to Native people?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: They are tangible proof that we have been here a long time, and we have survived against many odds. Preserving music and dance translates into preserving family and community solidarity. Those who are more artistically inclined can use their arts to serve the community, but anyone who wants can drum, or sing, whether they are experts or not. So competition is lessened although some games using music and dance can make all the families happy, especially the children.*

- Why is it important that students pass this knowledge on to their younger siblings and friends?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER: Young people learn from older folks at an early age when the brain is eager to learn much new information. Younger siblings will look up to a good role model and later in life, look back and treasure songs and stories, for example, taught this person by an older sibling. When the older sibling passes, these songs and stories are a huge legacy for families in which individual as well as community identity is solidified and people are in*

*touch with their roots and community spirit. When these strategies are successful, and cultures are passed down in tact, then the young don't get diverted into gangs, drugs, and other dysfunctional problematic behaviors. A secure body of redistributed and handed-down cultural known ensures healthy self-esteem so that today's young will become good parents for the community's future generations.*

## **PREPARING TO TEACH THIS LESSON**

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

#### **Lesson 1: Becoming Familiar with Musical Arts**

#### **Standards**

##### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

- EL.CM.RE.02—Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of informational and narrative text.
- EL.CM.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.
- EL.CM.SL.05—Analyze the occasion and the interests of the audience, and choose effective verbal techniques and language.
- EL.CM.WR.04—Choose the form of writing that best suits the intended purpose.
- EL.CM.WR.21—Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories.

#### **CD Segments to Play**

#### **Background**

The Wallowa Mountains are a mountain range located in the Columbia (River) Plateau of northeastern Oregon in the United States. Extending across 40 some miles (or 64 km) the range stretches northwest to southeast in southwestern Wallowa County between the Blue Mountains to the west and the Snake River to the east. Some consider this range as an eastern spur of the Blue Mountains. Much of the range is the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The highest point in the range is Sacajawea Peak, with an elevation of 9,838 feet (2,999 m). Sacajawea is the 6<sup>th</sup> tallest mountain in Oregon and the tallest mountain in Oregon outside the Cascade Range.

For further information online, see the following:

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Wallowa\\_mts\\_lake.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Wallowa_mts_lake.jpg) Wallowa Mountains

- and Wallowa Lake in early summer
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Sixmilemeadow.jpg>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Sixmilemeadow.jpg> Six mile meadow, located on the trail to Fraser Lake in the Wallowa Mountains

*People historically were highly motivated to gather inspiration from the animals in the environment.*

When the people, for example, would see the bear fishing, they admired her or his agility and the bear's ability to gather so much salmon that it was astounding. The people admired these hunting successes. Peoples would then portray that bear or salmon in a wood carving to decorate their homes or in paint to decorate their animal hide containers. A powwow dancer today may use a bear skin to cover the top of his head, down the back to cover the back of his neck, hanging down the back of the dancer. This magnificent one-piece bear skin provides an impressive outfit for the dancer that looks good, but it also, more importantly, inspires the dancer to "celebrate" the abilities and the agilities of the dancer when dancing in the powwow. (Cultural note: Always call the powwow item of clothing, such as this bear skin with the fur in tact, "outfit," "regalia," "clothing," or "covering," or even "garb"—and never "costume.")

*Learning from our tribal teachers can be relevant to our contemporary lives.*

Our tribal leaders and elders have many years of experience behind them. They often are eager to share their wisdom and understanding of their tribal ways with younger people who treat this knowledge with respect. When students gain from these elders by learning songs, stories, and how to make their powwow outfits, it gives students healthy self-esteem, it inspires them to stay drug and alcohol free because the use of these substances are forbidden at powwows, now, all across the US. In modern times, people seem to be searching, and many non-Indians are curious about Native wisdom. If students will share appropriate things with friends and visitors, it will help you feel good that you are helping to build invisible but valuable bridges between peoples of a variety of world cultures. This helps to prevent racism and encourages friendships between peoples of all backgrounds. Our contemporary world is so fragmented with so much contention between members of many cultures, these attempts towards multicultural friendships will make a positive contribution to everyone's family and community. And you'll feel good about yourself doing it.

*Most importantly, the music of the past and the music of the present all have an important place to play in the peoples lives if we keep an open mind.*

Native American music of the past is linked to today's Native communities because it forms the backdrop of a continuous living culture. Although many forces tried to interrupt and stop these musical cultures of American Indians, Native elders have kept them alive for the young to learn and enjoy. Rather than

saying that the older Native music traditions are “outdated”—we can reframe our appraisal to be proud of what songs were used in the past and the purposes for which they were sung. Many of the reasons American Indians sing and dance and use music today mirror those traditional examples of the past to assure the people that we still survive. Sometimes, some of the song texts and some of the styles of songs of former times show both similar and different characteristics of our contemporary modern Native music. In order to appreciate Native American peoples and communities today, we must understand and appreciate the Native American musics of the past. The past and the present are intimately joined together. When this is deeply understood, nothing but admiration can surface for those elders and old time singers and drummers who struggled so hard and under such difficult conditions to insure our ways of life don't die.

### **Suggested Strategies**

- Students are 20 Native high school students (ages 15-18). They will create and perform the skit.
- Mentors will be selected from the apprenticeships in the project. Mentors will assist in choosing roles for each of the students or student groups who perform them. One mentor can play the role of the town announcer or herald and direct the skit.
- Archival materials used: photos of the Umatilla tribal history.
- Contemporary information brochures and maps of the Umatilla reservation and their museum entitled “Tamástslikt” should be gathered in advance to be reviewed by the students.
- This lesson teaches students to listen carefully to Native stories and relate them to their own contemporary lives. Students create a skit to illustrate the magic which happens when one generation inspires a young generation to get an education—as the man was inspired to learn to fly like the swans in the story from long ago. This historical Umatilla story and the contemporary student music skit will strengthen the links from any older generation to a young generation of any culture in the world which one wants to consider.
- Students will discuss ways the story tells us that the people historically were highly motivated to gather inspiration from the animals in the environment, and learning from our tribal teachers can be relevant to our contemporary lives. Most importantly, the music of the past and the music of the present all have an important place to play in the peoples lives if we keep an open mind.

### **Activities**

#### 1. Read

Students will read the Umatilla story of “The Umatilla Birdman” (Jarold Ramsey, *Coyote Was Going There*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987.)

*“The first man to fly over the Wallowa and Blue Mountains was E-tsa-wis-no. It was long, long ago. He had studied the swans in their flights overhead in the fall and the spring, and finally he felt sure that he could do the same thing. So he tried. Being of a persevering type, he bumped his nose and skinned his shins thousands of times in his efforts to imitate the swans.*

*“‘I can fly, if I try hard enough,’ was what he always said. He swung his arms and went through awkward motions for five years before he made any headway. Then he caught the knack of the thing, and finally one morning he could fly! So it came about that when the Spring migration of swans began the next year, E-tsa-wis-no went aloft to join the flight—without a word of farewell to his family!*

*The next fall he was seen flying North. Regularly, twice annually, for three years, he was seen overhead in company with the swans in their seasonal migrations, but after that he was seen no more. This is a true story. . . .”*

(Ramsey, pg. 24)

## 2. Discuss

- Where are the Wallowa and Blue Mountains on a map of the Northwest?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* See Background.
- What is the desire of the story’s main character (called E-tsa-wis-no in a Native language in this version of the story)?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* He wanted to learn to fly like the swans. He studied and practiced for five years before he could fly successfully.
- Why did the main character study the swans?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* He studied the swans so he could learn to fly like they did.
- What drew him to their world, away from his family?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* When he could fly successfully like the swans, he must have felt it natural that he would leave his family and join the swans in their flights thrice annually for three years.
- What characteristic of the main character stands out the most? (Is he lazy? Is he sad? Is he deeply motivated to achieve some goal?)  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* He was eager to learn, and didn’t get discouraged easily. Even when he initially failed to learn successfully how to fly, he never gave up. He seemed happy to be successful at something which previously seemed impossible to achieve.
- In spite of the man failing at first to fly like the swans, how does his perseverance pay off?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* He discovered that practice and patience was the key so that he could eventually fly and his flying with the other swans was a payoff for all his devoted efforts and pure heart.

- How do you think his family felt when he didn't say goodbye to them?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* They might have been sad, but then when they saw him successfully flying like a swan, they were probably very thrilled and happy for him. Their happiness might have been one of his rewards for successfully learning a difficult which he eventually succeeded in.
- Do you think his "returning" with the swans over the three- year period might be a metaphor (or symbol) for the way culture seems to "return" in each succeeding generation among the Umatilla peoples, and many other tribal groups?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Yes. Cultures never stay static or unchanged or totally intact indefinitely, anywhere in the world. And as the seasons naturally move from one to another so did the returning of the swans seem dependable and something for which the people could look forward. Perhaps the end of his return flying was a symbol that everything in life changes, and maybe he had passed away, or moved elsewhere. We aren't told the reason, but his eventual permanent loss of visiting his home area draws some closure for the story for the listeners. These bare facts to the story leaves much for the listener to add to it, as the listener may like and in this way, the "audience" participates in the actual story telling performance.
- Is there a special inner significance to the "Spring" returning of the swans?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Cross culturally among most peoples of the world, Spring is a symbol for a new beginning, or a new day. For some people it is also the start of their new year, for example, among the Baha'is throughout the world, including many Native American Baha'is, their "New Year" or first day of their calendar, is always March 21, the first day of spring.

### 3. Put on a play

Create a short skit that students can ad lib. Pick one person to act as an admirer of some older students in a college in today's world. These older students will prepare to go to class—while the younger admirer begins to imitate how the older students gather their books, prepare their lunch, and chose their favorite tunes to which they will listen on their CD players as they walk to class. First, each student will say what their current favorite modern CD is and second, what song they like best. Third, the student group arrives at the classroom, with their friend, and they begin to take notes as the lecturer speaks. Each student will report what musical style they like best—which could be powwow music, country and western, classical, religious, or any other contemporary style popular among the students, taping on their knowledge of their own contemporary world. At the conclusion, the main character states what he "learned" about the music and the college "experience" of her or his friends. The goal has been to inspire a future generation of students as the swans inspired the man to learn to fly in the Umatilla story.

#### 4. Writing exercise

Describe how a certain animal has positively inspired you in your own life. What happened and why do you remember it today? What important messages does this perhaps have for you?

### **Lesson 2: Discussion of Fred Hill Songs**

#### **Standards**

##### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.CM.RE.02—Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of informational and narrative text.
- EL.CM.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

##### THE ARTS

- AR.CM.HC.03—Explain how works of art reflect the artist’s personal experience, environment, society and culture and apply this knowledge to one’s own work.

#### **CD Segments to Play**

#### **Background**

#### **Suggested Strategies**

- **This lesson is designed to take more than one class period.**
- Obtain a copy of Dr. Don Addison’s published article on the Sneak Up Dance Song, photocopy it and give it to the students for extra reading. It appears in “Proceedings [of the] Society of Dance History Scholars” collection of articles, from the Twenty-First Annual Conference held at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon 18-21 June 1998. It is published by the University of California, Riverside, 1998, and appears on pages 215-225 and is entitled “The Native American Sneak-Up Dance Song.”

#### **Activities**

##### 1. Listen

Students listen to a copy of the Umatilla Program CD at the beginning of the *Tribal Rhythms* segment (Track 8, 1:01-1:22). Fred Hill says:

*“We always sat at the table to eat. And that’s where we learned of our language, the foods, and the different utensils. And today I am very grateful to my Grandmother, who is my kuth-lu and my uncle for teaching me the language.”*

## 2. Discuss

The kitchen table was an important place where Native American cultural information was discussed and passed on to younger generations.

- Ask the students: to whom does Fred Hill refer as his main teacher of Umatilla cultural information?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill said he is grateful to his Grandmother, whom he called “*kuth-lu*” and his uncle for teaching him Umatilla cultural information.
- Ask the students: Do any of you students recollect times in your family when important discussions happened at the dinner table around meals? Did any of those experiences involve music? (Such as having background music on an electronic device audible during the meal, or actual singing by one or more members of the family at the dinner table?)  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* This discussion might be prompted or facilitated along by the instructor choosing from the following to inspire student participation (without the instructor outright giving these answers to the students in a list. Help the students find their answers.)
  - a. In addition to what students are able to recall from their own personal family meal times with some type of music involvement, can you think of other important activities (other than at meal times at the dinner table) when your family used or still has music going on?
  - b. What about singing in the shower?
  - c. What about singing while watering the lawn or the garden?
  - d. What about hearing music driving to work or school?
  - e. Perhaps you “joined in the singing” with the CD or car radio driving to school?
  - f. Have any of you taken a music class of some type, any kind, in any of your school classes, and had a tune stick in your memory even after the band or orchestra class had ended for the day?
  - g. Have any of you planned a class project of 4 or 5 students for a chemistry, math or English literature class, and used music in the presentation of that school performance for your fellow students?
  - h. Have you been shopping at the grocery store, or stopped at the bank recently, or a used car lot, and noticed “piped-in” music?
  - i. How many have been to a city shopping mall and heard continuous music throughout all the halls in all the buildings and shops?

Therefore, we find music is much more a part of all of our lives, whether any of us sing or drum or not. When we stop to think about it, and total up the number of places and times throughout our day when music is directly or indirectly a participant (in whatever activity we are engaged in), aren't you surprised that more times than not, music surrounds us literally throughout all our day, every day of the week? This is true whether we are conscious of it or not. Isn't this very similar to exactly what Fred Hill has just said regarding his home experiences at the dinner table during meals learning his culture?

### 3. Listen

Students listen to a later portion of the Umatilla Program CD *Tribal Rhythms* segment (Track 8, 1:48-3:05). Nico Wind introduces Fred's discussion of his elders who taught him how to sing. Fred Hill says:

*"His name was Isaac Tom. And he was in a wheel chair in his latter days in life but he sure loved to sing. That's one thing that we don't see anymore, is real elderly men that still sing. But that is what I hope to achieve in my lifetime, is to continue to sing where they literally have to kick me off the drum. (he laughs) I remember hearing this song as a young boy from some of the elder singers from Yakima. The style of hitting that they used is something like a bygone era. At one time when they would hit, when they would come to the middle part of the song, they would all hit the drum hard together, it was automatic for them and that is how you were able to distinguish circle dance songs. Kapihit, what we call."*

### 4. Discuss

Fred Hill's eagerness to carry on what he learned as a young boy is similar to the man in the story who wanted to learn to fly like a swan. Obviously, people today can't learn to fly like a swan but we can learn the songs of our Native elders if we seek them out.

- Ask the students: What does Fred Hill say that he had hoped to achieve in his lifetime?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill said: "But that is what I hope to achieve in my lifetime, is to continue to sing where they literally have to kick me off the drum."
- Ask again: When did Fred Hill learn the song he discusses here?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill said: "I remember hearing this song as a young boy from some of the elder singers from Yakima."
- Remind students: Fred points out an important "change" in the song. When was this?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* "The *style of hitting* that they used is *something like a bygone era*. At one time when they would hit, when they would

- come to the middle part of the song, they would all hit the drum hard together, it was automatic for them and that is how you were able to distinguish circle dance songs. *Kapipit*, what we call.”
- What does Fred tell us to listen for?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill pointed out, we could listen for a special place, when “they would all hit the drum hard together.” We call this an “accent” and among Indians, we call this “a hard beat” or “an honor beat” (depending on what part of the country you live.)
  - Explain to the students: The circle dance is an old Native dance of many tribal peoples which is actually danced in a circle. Fred continues saying that in the old days, women were the only people in his tribe that did the circle dance. However, today, everyone joins in. They dance at Umatilla around the drum and the drummers in a circle. Ask the students: What is the significance of the “hard beats”?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* That “hard beat” or special accent on the drum signals what kind of step to do now.
  - Does it act as a signal by which listeners can distinguish a circle dance song, from some other type of dance song?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Yes. This style of drumming also tells the listeners what type of song it is and what type of dance is done to that song. In this case, listeners can tell it is a circle dance song, based upon hearing this special drum beating accents, as Fred Hill described it.

## 5. Listen

Students listen to Umatilla Program CD, *Tribal Rhythms* segment (Track 8, 3:17-3:41). Fred Hill explains:

*“This is a Ko’pipit song I created. I do dedicate this to the Wisdom of the Elders. Eh!” Nico Wind adds: “Today the owl dance is one of the most popular intertribal powwow dances for couples. The partners hold each other arm in arm, stepping around the circle. Then, on a cue from the drum, they make a slow, graceful turn.”*

## 6. Discuss

Here we notice that Fred Hill is a composer. He said he “created” this particular song (he calls a *Ko’pipit* song). When he says he “created” the song, he means he composed the song. Instructor might ask students at this point: Have any of you composed a song or several songs? Might you share one with us?

- Ask the students: To whom does Fred Hill dedicate this song?  
(Instructor may repeat recorded selection if the students missed the answers.)
- Why are the elders important?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Elders are the living “encyclopedias” of American Indian cultural knowledge, which includes music.

- What term does Fred use to refer to the collective body of knowledge Native elders pass down from generation to generation?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill calls it the Wisdom of the Elders.

- Explain: So far, Fred has talked about two types or genres of dance songs. Can you name them?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill has mentioned the (1) circle dance and (2) the owl dance.

- The circle dance songs were discussed first, and now the owl dance is mentioned. Which one is the couple dance?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The owl dance is always a couple dance in powwows all across the North West.

- How do the couples step around the circle?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* “The partners hold each other arm in arm, stepping around the circle.”

- What happens differently when a cue from the drum is performed?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* “Then, on a cue from the drum, they make a slow, graceful turn.”

- What does Nico Wind say about powwows today?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* “Today the owl dance is one of the most popular intertribal powwow dances for couples.”

## 7. Listen

Students listen to Umatilla Program CD, *Tribal Rhythms* segment (Track 8, 3:58-5:03). Fred Hill explains:

*“We used to go to war with other tribes around here that were always tormenting our people. There are some areas here where the stories go where they would really fight and kill them all off except one and they would send that one back. You tell your people that this is what is going to happen if you keep doing this, keep coming here trying to steal our women and our children. But as time went on and the fighting ceased, when the railroad came through, that these people wanted to come back and have a truce. And as they did come back they also shared their dancing and singing. And so from just a little bit I heard the Shoshone people are the ones that showed us the dance. The wars have ceased, the tribal wars, but yet the war still remains in the dance arena.”*

## 8. Discuss

Here we notice that Fred Hill recounts how tribal wars used to take place back in the history of the Northwestern tribes. He said wars took place so the Umatilla had to prevent the other tribes from tormenting their people.

- Why was one person always spared so he could go home?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill explained that they would tell that one person allowed to go home with his life: “You tell your people that this is what is going to happen if you keep doing this.”
- What message does Fred indicate that person should reiterate back at his home place?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill said that person set free should explain to his people the reason for this maneuver: Don’t “keep coming here trying to steal our women and our children.”
- Who were kidnapped by the neighboring peoples, bothering the Umatilla peoples in their history?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The Umatilla women and children were kidnapped by neighboring peoples in these old days.
- What difference did the building of the railroad make?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill explained: “But as time went on and the fighting ceased, when the railroad came through, that these people wanted to come back and have a truce.”
- When a truce was declared, why do you think singing and dancing was shared between the tribes seeking reconciliation?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill explained: “these people wanted to come back and have a truce. And as they did come back they also shared their dancing and singing.” Therefore the singing and dancing helped to bring the two groups together in friendship, when formerly they were warring with each other. Music and dance universally around the globe often is used for, for functions as, a celebration of the peace agreement.
- Can you think of any contemporary reconciliation songs or peace songs from your own growing up years?
- What did Fred say came from the Shoshone?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill recounted: “And so from just a little bit I heard the Shoshone people are the ones that showed us the dance.”
- Where does the war still continue, in a figurative or symbolic way?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill concluded: “The wars have ceased, the tribal wars [have ended], but yet the war still remains in the dance arena.” In other words, the “war” that remains is the simply the enactment of the dance, on friendly terms now, on the dance floor.
- Have you seen any dancing at a powwow or other activity where war and peace was described in some fashion?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The traditional men’s “Sneak Up Dance” during the powwows in the North West is an excellent example of powwow dancing which is inspired by the old days of warfare when (a) the men would sneak up on the enemy, while dancing crouched way down, and (b) they would charge, while dancing in an upright position. Throughout the Sneak Up Dance, the men would alternate each section, with the appropriate dancing positions, which are all signaled by the two types of drumming beat, while the song accompanies the performance of the Sneak Up Dance.

- Have any of you seen or heard of “War Dancing”?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* While some parts of the US have what are still called “War Dancing”, it is really a historical performance, no longer used to actually prepare soldiers for war (as in the days long ago.) The day of warfare, our elders say, is over. In other parts of the country, the formerly designated “War Dancing” is now called “Intertribal Dancing” or some other designation in selected powwows.
- Would it be accurate to say that war-dances sometimes remind the people that peace is always better than war?

## 9. Listen

Students listen to Umatilla Program CD, *Tribal Rhythms* segment (Track 8, 5:03-5:52). Singing begins with this segment. Fred adds further information on the owl dance.

*“That’s an owl dance that I had created. It is Nez Perce language ‘TATS-ka-LA-wit’ is ‘good evening.’ ‘EE-neem-him YU-ma’ is ‘my people.’ ‘Ta-LAU-tee-la-ma’ ‘and my friends’ (um) ‘WAT’-AITS-tsa,’ ‘WAT’-AITS-tsa’ is ‘speaking of.’ Are you having a good time? Are you having a good time? And the beat was faster and the reason I sing it that ways is because when you set a tempo for a song, such as a song like that, you want the people to dance peppy.”*

## 10. Discuss

Here we have learned more about the owl dance—the important couple dance of today’s modern powwow. Fred also added that he had composed this song. He gives examples from the song text in Nez Perce and translates them into English. This is not surprising since the Umatilla and the Nez Perce are related culturally and linguistically.

- Why does the song text ask the listeners specifically “Are you having a good time?”  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* It is very common for the announcer or master of ceremonies at a powwow to ask the audience from the microphone, the same question, “Are you having a good time?” Grandparents will ask their grandchildren at a powwow, “Are you having a good time?” Native American community gathering for the purpose of singing and dancing, whether a powwow or not, is for the purpose of having a good time.
- Why does the drumbeat remain fast?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill explained that “the reason I sing it that ways is because when you set a tempo for a song, such as a song like that, you want the people to dance peppy.”
- If the drumming slowed down, how do you think the dancers would respond? In other words, would they be happy (since they are expecting

an exciting tempo that is faster paced)?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* One can assume, on occasion, the people would not like it. However, sometimes a drummer slows down or speeds up, if he and the dancers are in close “communication” (eye contact and emotional non-verbal communication, sometimes with body gestures) during the performance of the drumming, singing and dancing. Tempo changes, in the hands of good performances, can be humorous also, or they can help everyone relax and enjoy themselves and not take themselves so seriously. Sometimes just the friendly gesture of one group pulling “a fast one on the other” like the drummer speeding up, unexpectedly, will create and laugh or two, all in good fun.

- How many types of dance songs has Fred discussed over all?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The owl dance and the circle dance.

- Is a “dance peppy” as Fred Hill described it, another dance category? Or do you think this were just a descriptive term Fred Hill used?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The term “dance peppy” is only descriptive; It is not another dance category.

- Do you think Fred Hill enjoys talking about his songs and his song texts?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Yes! Fred Hill even goes into so much detail in the Native language translating words of the song text, you can be certain that Fred Hill enjoys his being asked to share his experience with Umatilla music a great deal.

- Have any of you composed a song with words and shared it with others? If you haven't composed the song, have you sang portions of a song for someone and discussed the song text in some way?

*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Without realizing it, many people will say a few words about a song text, not to make an academic evaluation of it, but when we discuss a song text from one of our favorite songs, doesn't that mean we're sharing something of interest to us, with someone else? Isn't the act of sharing music and song texts enjoyable, regardless of what culture or group you come from?

## 11. Listen

Students listen to Umatilla Program CD, *Tribal Rhythms* segment (Track 8, 5:52-6:59). Nico Wind explains: “Something magical happens at the intersection of the music, the dancing, and the words. It all comes together like a beaded belt with an intricate design and a colorful story.” Fred Hill closes with: “As long as we dance, we shall live. As long as we sing we shall live too. When you get ‘hit’ by a song, when you get ‘hit’ by the vibration of that drum that makes you move, that’s when it gives life. That’s when as I as a singer, when I see the dancers really dancing, that’s when I know that I am really giving life, you know, the good Indian way.” [Nico Wind and Arlie Neskahi close out the segment.]

## 12. Discuss

In our concluding segment of the CD, everything seems to come together—the music, the dancing, and the song texts. These things are interdependent—they don't exist in a separate vacuum.

- Why is that intersection of the arts important?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* He explains that “that’s when it gives life.” All the Native American cultural paths of music, dance, story-telling, art, and language are interwoven. That’s a universal American Indian cultural trait. Indians don’t separate one thing from another—with music in one box, religion in another box, language in yet another box.
- Why do you think the metaphor or symbol of the beaded belt and the colorful design is an appropriate cultural reference?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The beaded belt buckle and colorful design is an expression of what anthropologists call “holism” meaning the various parts all contribute to a perfect composite or whole. Beaded belts, buckles, bags and earrings are universal Native American cultural artifacts and creations for many centuries and they continue till today.
- What does Fred say about the things that are necessary for him and his people to feel alive?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Fred Hill explains the dance and song makes the people feel alive. When one gets “inspired” or “hit” with a song, or the vibration of the drum, you want to move for a dance and “that’s when it gives life. That’s when as I as a singer, when I see the dancers really dancing, that’s when I know that I am really giving life, you know, the good Indian way.”
- What musical instrument inspires the dancers to move?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* The most commonly found Native American musical instrument, the drum. However, Indians use more than just drums, but the “vibration of the drum” makes “you want to move for a dance.”
- According to this discussion, what are some of the important elements of the good Indian way?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* First, we have the coming together of music, dancing and the words of the songs. All combined they are like a beaded belt which, when you look closer, contains an intricate design and behind that design, “a colorful story.” Native peoples dance, and sing, and are moved by the drum. Fred Hill concludes saying “that’s when it gives life. That’s when as I as a singer, when I see the dancers really dancing, that’s when I know that I am really giving life, you know, the good Indian way.”

### 13. Review

#### Quiz

1. What did the Umatilla story tell us about the dedication of the man who wanted to learn to fly like a swan?

1. Why do you think he was successful?
2. How does Fred Hill exhibit similar elements of dedication to passing on what he learned as a boy?
3. Who were Fred's teachers?
4. What types of songs and dances did he discuss?
5. Why are Nez Perce words in some Umatilla songs?

#### Quiz—*INSTRUCTOR ANSWERS*

1. If you work hard enough, you can accomplish anything.
2. Because he worked at it for as long as it took, five years in this case, and he let nothing discourage him.
3. He kept the teachings from his early years at the family dinner table, and his grandparents, and he enjoyed watching the elders express themselves. He shares what he learned in earlier years with those he meets today. He has continuity in his life, and his tribal community maintains continuity in their modern lives as Umatilla peoples who have survived.
4. First Fred points out eating together at the table “where we learned of our language, the foods, the different utensils. And today I am very grateful to my Grandmother, who is my *kuth-lu* and my uncle for teaching me the language.” Subsequently Fred credits an elder named Isaac Tom and how “he was in a wheel chair in his latter days in life but *he sure loved to sing*.” He admires and credits those older singers and drummers now as among his most important teachers. And yet for some songs, he does not name a particular teacher but credits, in one instance, “some of the elder singers from Yakima” for also being his teachers.
5. Mostly he focuses on circle dances and owl dances.
6. He gives examples from the song text in Nez Perce and translates them into English. This is not surprising since the Umatilla and the Nez Perce are related culturally and linguistically. In one sense, the Umatilla, Nez Perce and Yakima languages are cousins, from a similar language family.

### **Lesson 3: Further Explorations**

#### **Standards**

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.CM.RE.02—Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of informational and narrative text.
- EL.CM.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

- EL.CM.WR.02—Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers, and develop drafts alone and collaboratively.
- EL.CM.WR.04—Choose the form of writing that best suits the intended purpose.
- EL.CM.WR.21—Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories.

## CD Segments to Play

### Background

*“Fred Hill, Sr., is a singer, dancer, and drum maker who lives in the little community of Georgeville, south of the Status Pass summit. (Near Yakima, Washington) Among his teachers Fred has been especially influenced by Leroy Selam and Charles McKay. Now a respected lead drummer and singer of traditional songs himself, he has been teaching Yakama songs and drum making to tribal youth for many years.*

*“Our roots are tied to the Columbia River or as we call it Nch’i-wana ‘The Big River,’ he says. ‘Our customs revolve around the drum and this is the way of life for our people. There are wedding songs, laughing songs, war dance songs, owl and rabbit dance songs, and many countless more. I have been asked to teach because there are only 5 percent who speak Yakama on our reservation. Many of our elders are too old to hike the mountains and have consented for me to properly teach our young since I have the health to do so.’*

*“His first song is a Round Dance song which he learned from Bill Johnson, Sr. For it, he plays a drum especially made for Round Dance songs. Fred emphasizes the importance of learning to drum before trying to sing dance songs with drum accompaniment. By doing so, the rhythm of the song and drumbeat are tightly merged. This song has vocables.”*

Pages 144-5 of Smyth and Ryan

### Suggested Strategies

#### Activities

##### 1. Read

Introduce selections from Fred Hill in the text and CD entitled Spirit of the First People: Native American Music Traditions of Washington State edited by Willie Smyth and Esmé Ryan. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999). Show students color photograph of Fred Hill Sr. on page facing page 143. He is holding two deerskin drums that he made.

## 2. Listen

Play selection number 19 from the CD Spirit of the First People (“Round Dance Song”).

Fred Hill Sr. comes from three interrelated tribal heritages, Yakama, Umatilla and Nez Perce.

## 3. Discuss

- What did we learn earlier about the circle dance or round dance that helps us better appreciate this song today?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* What did we learn earlier about the circle dance or round dance that helps us better appreciate this song today? There is a distinctive beating pattern sometimes called long-short, long-short, long-short rhythm or the “heart beat” or “slide-step slide-step slide-step” pattern. For those able to read music, this same rhythmic pattern is called a “dotted rhythm” such as, for example, a dotted quarter and an eighth note. Also we learn that it is best to become comfortable drumming before we learn the songs.
- What part does the Columbia River play in the lives of the people? Have you ever visited the Columbia River? What two states does it border?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* This environment and the fishing resource for sacred food is the back bone of these cultures. Washington and Oregon.
- How is the Native term “Nch’i-wana” translated into English?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* “Big River” or the “Columbia River.”
- When he lists “wedding songs, laughing songs, war dance songs, owl and rabbit dance songs” and others, these song and dance types would be best termed “categories.” Can you think of any other dance song categories about which you might compose yourself?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Answers might include an “intertribal” dance, or the Sneak Up Dance Song.
- Why do you think Fred emphasizes learning to drum before you learn to sing songs with the drum accompaniment?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* So that the student takes one step at a time, rather than tries to do everything all at once.
- A vocable is a word that is not a typical word one would use in everyday speaking. Here, vocables might be words such as “hey ya, hey ha ho” or others. However, these are the words in the song. Can you think of any other songs with which you are familiar that use vocables?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Examples may include the “fa-la-la-la-la” in the Christmas carol, “Deck the Halls.”

## 4. Writing exercise

Write a short but concise essay on what you have learned about the relationship between the animals, the land, and the history of the Umatilla peoples.

#### 5. Listen

Play selection 20 from the CD ("The Hungry Song") for the students.

Page 145 of Smyth and Ryan tells us: "This song comes from Fred Hill's Nez Perce relatives and elders. They called it 'The Hungry Song.'" A translation of the song text in English is listed in the source (book), as "Where can I be? Where can I be? I want bread."

#### 6. Discuss

- Why do you think this might be called the Hungry Song?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Because the singer actually sings in the song text that he or she wants bread. In the sense that Native music is also considered a form of prayer, "praying" for "food" would be another way of looking at a title "Hungry Song" which might be difficult for members of other cultural experiences to quite understand.
- Do you think that people in less affluent regions might sing about being hungry as well?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Singing about wanting food is just as natural as others singing for a mate, or for a good hunt, or for other things upon which the people focus their attention. In former times without any modern social security programs as today, this was possibly a way of letting people know that a need for food was urgent among the people at a time when food was scarce. Asking the Creator for food and sustenance is probably one of the most common aspects of religions throughout the whole globe. Why would someone consider it any different in the North West?
- What could society do to protect people today from hunger?
- How have you or your family, or even your community been doing to help the poor in our midst?

#### 7. Listen

Play selection 21 from the CD ("The Eagle Song") for the students.

Page 145 of Smyth and Ryan tells us: "Fred's next song is about (the) Eagle. It is a song that came to him after much prayer and contemplation. It is in the Yakama dialect of the Sahaptin language." Several languages are related to one another and called Sahaptin by Native peoples are linguists who study languages around the world.

## 8. Discuss

The song text is translated into English as follows: "The Eagle is helping us. With these feathers, we are dancing. Now you, my people, dance!" Discuss the central role of the Eagle in the spiritual beliefs of many Native American peoples.

- Ask the students if the eagle in this song "inspires" the people to dance? What characteristic of the eagle "inspires" you?  
*INSTRUCTOR ANSWER:* Certainly the eagle is the most unique bird of the skies which flies the highest of all. Indians admire this and the eagles' markings, success at hunting, etc. very much.

## 9. Writing exercise

The eagle is most loved and venerated, and it can fly the highest. Both the eagle and the swan story highlight the value of courage and the admiration of sticking to your quest. The eagle is the most sacred of all animals for many Native American tribes, historically as well as today.

- Why is the eagle venerated by Indians? Or the swan story?
- Why does the eagle inspire Native dancers?
- Ask students what in their lives today inspire them?
- Do any particular animal inspire them? At home? In their individual lives?
- Ask students if they have pets at home?
- Do the students have any favorite songs about animals?

Answers to the above questions might include topics in school, certain teachers they have, some times after-school sports or activities such as band or other artistic programs. For Native students, it could be a growing sense of being proud to be Indian, learning to drum and sing, and learning to live among other races and cultures without fear or distrust. When barriers between different groups with different experiences come down, all profit. When no one section of a group is hurting, the entire group feels better together. Such a community can only move from strength to strength, rather than from set-back to set-back. If no animal songs immediately surface from the students, start with just which animals seem to be of interest to the students, and then ask the students: "How would a song about an eagle or a bear possibly sound if we were to make up one, right here and now, for fun, on the spot?"

## **Lesson 4: Final Exercise**

### **Standards**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.CM.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.
- EL.CM.RE.35—Extend ideas presented in primary or secondary sources through original analysis, evaluation, and elaboration.
- EL.CM.WR.23—Write analytical essays and research reports.
- EL.CM.WR.30—Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium.

## **CD Segments to Play**

### **Background**

*What are the basic forms of traditional and contemporary Umatilla music?*

Drumming, singing and dancing. Some forms include owl dance or couple dance, and the circle dance or friendship dance. Others include the war dance, intertribal dance, and the sneak up dance.

*What roles do Umatilla elders play in the transmission and inspiration of Umatilla music?*

They are the most important teachers of the Umatilla music. They are the ones who have kept the songs alive and therefore when transmitting these songs to latter generations, this insures these cultural pursuits will survive. These elders inspire the young.

*What Umatilla values, past and present, regarding respect for the oral tradition did you discover from the story of the man learning to fly like a swan?*

Perseverance, courage and eagerness to learn no matter what was the price.

*From Fred Hill's songs?*

He learned respect for his elders, and respect for that knowledge which elders gave him. Now he tries to pass that on to younger peoples.

*How do these values help people overcome stereotypes and prejudices?*

These values of learning, humility, respect, and honoring of the elders creates a healthy view of a Native community, rather than empty and inaccurate stereotypes that fuel unfounded prejudices. When people act on assumptions and prejudices, the discriminate against someone for their race, religion, or tribal origin. These are not values that Native people hold dear.

*List contributions of Fred Hill to the preservation of Umatilla culture, music and dance?*

He is a musician, who teaches his music, and he shares it with others. He shares a respect for community, culture and their preservation for others to emulate. Fred also is a role model to the younger generations. By admiring Fred and trying to pattern one's life in accordance to what Fred and other elders teach, the young as less likely to go into gangs, do drugs, and end up in street violence or prisons.

*What categories or types of Umatilla dance songs can you distinguish?*

The owl dance is a couple dance with a dotted rhythm. The circle dance is a large circle of people who dance what is also called the friendship dance, also with a dotted rhythm or "slide-step slide-step slide-step" rhythmic pattern. The owl dance, however, has a distinctive special accent or honor beat or "hard beat" which signals an alternating change of steps for the couple. Therefore two sections, alternating back and forth, distinguish the owl or couple dances---but not the circle dance.

*Why are creative and musical arts traditions valuable?*

These teach people how to be human. The creative and musical arts help people open up and become who they are supposed to be. When people express themselves in their tribal creative or musical traditions, they find enjoyment in identifying with others of the community doing similar things, but sometimes in unique ways. Therefore we'd say that the healthiest creative or musical arts traditions are those that follow traditional cultural guidelines, but with some unique expressive personality from one elder to another, from one story teller to another. Unity in diversity expresses this nicely.

*Why should they be preserved?*

Because when they are, future generations can enjoy them and direct the proper ways in which these cultural artifacts can and should be used. That is the prerogative of a people who own their own musical and dance traditions, and maintain them within their communities.

*What important messages about virtues and character traits are accessed studying Umatilla music?*

Respect for elders, respect for the animals and the land, honoring of the traditions that many have worked hard to preserve, and courage to work hard to transmit these arts and cultures accurately and with the proper protocol.

### **Suggested Strategies**

## Activities

### 1. Report

Ask students to write their own answers to the following questions:

- What are the basic forms of traditional and contemporary Umatilla music?
- What roles do Umatilla elders play in the transmission and inspiration of Umatilla music?
- What Umatilla values, past and present, regarding respect for the oral tradition did you discover from the story of the man learning to fly like a swan? From Fred Hill's songs? How do these values help people overcome stereotypes and prejudices?
- List contributions of Fred Hill to the preservation of Umatilla culture, music and dance
- What categories or types of Umatilla dance songs can you distinguish?
- Why are creative and musical arts traditions valuable?
- Why should they be preserved?
- What important messages about virtues and character traits are accessed studying Umatilla music?
- What would you like to learn more about the Umatilla peoples, traditions, and music?

## EXTENDING THE LESSON/REFERENCES

### Websites

Compiled by Pat Pointer: [bakercowboy1158@msn.com](mailto:bakercowboy1158@msn.com)/503-540-5503 (h)/503-269-7463 (cell)

Umatilla and Warm Springs' songs and storytelling

<http://tamastslit.com/nstore/index.asp?id=10>

Tribal government links

<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us/main.html> and  
<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us/gov.html>

Volume 9 is Umatilla Confederated Tribe's portion of Lewis and Clark. Music and Sahaptin language and translation

<http://www.cartours.org/lewisandclark/listen.htm> -

Ron Pond, Umatilla from Pendleton, Oregon, teaches native music at Washington State University where he is also enrolled in a Ph.D. program. Both his work and his family life are centered on preserving the traditional ways of his people.

<http://www.oyate.com/zartistscroll/artistscroll.htm>

[Read More](#) [Hear Sample MP3](#)

Links to Tribal government links

[http://www.ndnnews.com/federally\\_recognized\\_tribes.htm](http://www.ndnnews.com/federally_recognized_tribes.htm)