

**Curricular Area:** Art, Multicultural

**Lesson:** Look UP



# Classroom Lesson— “Look UP – Wankatakiya” (Encouragement Song)

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Shadow Puppet Art: Produced by Annette S. Lee in collaboration with Eúŋkičhetupi (We are restored/come back to life), July 2021, <https://player.vimeo.com/video/573472400>

Acknowledgement, References and Inspiration: [Tavia La Follette](#), [Katherine Fahey](#), and the [Crankie Factory](#)

## **Materials:**

- Black construction paper
- A shoebox
- Scissors and/or [X-acto](#) for older students
- [Shish kebob Sticks](#) (wooden)
- Tape
- Flashlight or other movable light source
- [Tracing paper](#) on a roll (or white paper)
- Black marker

**Learner Goals:** The students will gain an understanding of theatre arts, visual arts, storytelling, music, history, D(L)akota Indigenous Knowledge related to the stars and language. Students will gain hands-on experience in: theatre arts, visual arts, storytelling, music.

**Learner Outcomes:** The students will be able to 1) Research the history of a drum song 2) Research the D(L)akota Indigenous astronomy teachings of Summer Constellations and the Racetrack Story 3) Create a scroll with six scenes and a shadow puppets based on constellations and characters in the story 4) Perform and record the moving art story

## **Teacher Background Information**

- Drum:
  - <http://aktalakota.stjo.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8913>
  - [http://www.minnesotahistory.net/wptest/?page\\_id=882](http://www.minnesotahistory.net/wptest/?page_id=882)
  - <https://teachingsofourelders.org/lessons-from-the-drum/>

□ *Native Skywatchers* related videos by D(L)akota elders/Knowledge holders

- Arvol Looking Horse - <https://vimeo.com/573544083/190b71b957>
- James Spotted Thunder & Annette S. Lee – The Racetrack Story - <https://vimeo.com/573477901/b7593ad036>
- Ramona Kitto Stately - <https://vimeo.com/479405864/9e45093b2e>
- Annette S. Lee, D(L)akota Summer Night Sky - <https://vimeo.com/584717340/c165a916ae>

**Activity Steps:**

1. Make a stage out of a shoebox. Cut the opening.
2. Make a shadow puppet or two. Cut out a simple figure on black construction paper. Tape it to the shish kebob skewer.
3. Layout the tracing paper. Cut to fit the opening in the stage. Decide six images/scenes are needed to tell this story. Use black marker or black construction paper to place the images on the tracing paper.
4. Think of what it means to ‘LOOK UP’ at the sky, at the stars? What does it mean at the beginning of the drum song ‘to look up at the sky and humble yourselves’? What part of the lyrics to the drum song speak to you personally? Can you identify the D(L)akota constellations of summer (salamander, thunderbird)? When is the Sundance in the Stars? Who saved the Two-legged in the Racetrack Story?
5. Practice and Play. How can the lighting (especially colored light) be used to create mood? Think of light and darks like colors on a painting palette. How can motion be used to create a flow and layers? How do images flow into one another?
6. Record. This might take a few tries.
7. Edit. Try to keep the editing simple so that the live performance is preserved.

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Send your work or your students’ work to [nativeskywatchers@gmail.com](mailto:nativeskywatchers@gmail.com) and we will add your work to the gallery on the project website!

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Ozuha – A Dakota word for a vessel that holds something. Instructions on how to make a simple Ozuha with no sewing involved.

Begin with a 6" x 2" strip of leather and a 15" long leather lace.

Fold the bottom up leaving 1" of leather exposed. This will be your flap used to close the Ozuha.



Holding the folded edges together, make 5 holes. Tip: Begin with the top and bottom hole, then the center, then center the top and middle hole and the bottom and middle hole. There is no need to measure them.

Tip: Do not make holes too close to top or bottom. Tip: Use a leather punch, awl or small scissors to make the holes. They won't show when you are done.



Fold Top flap over and make holes through all three layers of Ojuza at one time so they match.

Place leather lace inside the bottom of the Ojuza making sure the lace is even on both sides.



Begin lacing the leather lace on the right side beginning by going through the top of the bottom hole. Go through the top of the next hole and continue to the top.



Using the same lace, put it through the back hole,  
And inside through the two pieces of the Ojuha, and  
finally through the top flap from inside.

Tip: Keep the lace loose



It should look like this.

Repeat for the other side.



You are doing great!



Now you can pull the laces tight to close the flap.



Either tie together to close or use a bead to close. If your beads are too small for both laces, you can use one on each side.



You are all done! Congratulations!

He' waste! Well done!



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**“MITAKUYE-OWASIN” I AM RELATED TO ALL THAT IS LIVING**  
**Ramona Kitto Stately and Priscilla Buffalohead**

“Mitakuye owasin” is a phrase often used by speakers of the Dakota language. Translated into English it means, “all my relatives”. To English speaking Euro-Americans, the phrase, “all my relatives” would mean those people related to one another through the connecting link of mothers and fathers. To a Dakota speaker, “all my relatives” is a much more encompassing phrase. It includes all human life and all forms of plant and animal life. The Dakota see all life as closely connected.

The idea of the close relationship between life forms is a part of the spiritual philosophy of all Native nations. This philosophy is reflected in the Native habit of addressing animals as brothers and sisters, acknowledging the natural world, the sky and earth; All life forms are considered sacred because each has a spirit and each fulfills a special purpose in an orderly world. Each life form is also seen as having an equal place in the scheme of things. Humans are not superior to other animals, and in fact humans are often seen as the last and lowest of creation. This is why Native hunters apologized to the spirit of the animal they hunted and honored the animal by using every single part of it. Plant life is also sacred. When birchbark was needed to make a canoe or abasket, the gatherer would say “Your leaves must feed me now, but someday my body will return to the soil to feed your roots.”

When making tools, bags or clothing, the Dakota would decorate items with information that important such as designs of medicines, which helps everyone know and remember what they looked like and what they were for. “There is no word for art in our language” says Ramona Kitto Stately of the Isanti Dakota Nation. “We made things beautiful to mirror the way the Creator made the beautiful landscape and to transmit knowledge to future generations.”

Modern scientists have just begun to appreciate what Native people have been saying for centuries. It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Western scientists like Charles Darwin, proposed the idea of biological evolution. Like Native spiritual philosophy, the theory of evolution also proposes that all life is related, and that each evolves out of a common parent form. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ecologists began to take a closer look at the relationships between life forms. They have learned that plants, animals, and people are not only related, but depend on one another in very special ways. One example of this relationship can be seen in the behavior of bees. Bees gathering honey fertilize flowers so they can bear fruit and seeds. The fruit and seeds are eaten by birds and other animals.

Through their excrement the seeds return to the earth to grow again.

While there is no term “ecology” in Native languages, Native spiritual philosophy expresses the same teachings. Native people tried to live in harmony with nature so that the delicate balance which exists between life forms would not be upset. Their efforts must have paid off. When European explorers reached the American continents they found vast lands with clean air and water, lush forests and grasslands and an abundant variety of plant and animal life.