LESSON 6 – NUŁAMAŁ

FOOL MASK / NUŁAMAŁ SECRET SOCIETY

1. Grade Level: Grade 4/5 (can be modified for Primary and Intermediate)

2. Activity: Students will learn about the role of the Nułamał in the potlatch and create their own Nułamał mask for display at a pole–raising feast.

3. Estimated Time: 5 periods

4. Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

- Creative Processes
  - A3 Create images that show the use of the following visual elements and principles of design, alone and in combination, to produce a variety of effects
- Context
  - C1 Describe a variety of reasons people make and use visual arts

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Section of Website containing relevant information, photographs and film clips:

- Potlatch
- Virtual Tour

Blackline Masters:

- BLM 6A – Nułamał "Fool Dancer"
- BLM 6B – Fact Sheet
- BLM 6C – Journal Topic
- BLM 6D – Nułamał Drawings

Film Clips:

- Potlatch Means to Give

Other Materials:

- Plaster of Paris Strips
- Pie Plates
- Water
- Petroleum Jelly
- Newspaper
- Old Clothes
- Pencil Crayons
- Acrylic Paints
- Brushes
- Elmer's Glue
- Cotton Balls
- Garbage Bags
- Old Scissors
- Hair Elastics
- Pins

Kwak'wala Language Component:

- Facial Vocabulary

NEW WORDS

Nułamał – fool dancer. Used to help with discipline and protocol of the potlatch.

Discipline – train (someone) to obey rules, using punishment to correct disobedience.

Protocol – the official procedure or system of rules governing potlatches.

PERIOD I – INTRODUCTION TO NUŁAMAŁ

1. Start lesson by asking the students about the word maya'xala. What does this word mean? This lesson has to do with what could happen during potlatches if Maya'xala is not shown. Before community members go to a potlatch, important instructions were given by the Chief, "Don't do anything that will disgrace or shame your family and village while we are there." This is still often shared by elders today. It is still important that, "we remember our responsibility not to act in any way which shames our family". This lesson teaches us how guests (or witnesses) at a potlatch were expected to behave during ceremonies and what would happen if they didn't.
2. Introduce students to the Nułamał using BLM 6A–B and Virtual Tour, also once students have seen what the mask looks like show video clip *Potlatch Means to Give* and ask students to look for the masked Nułamał dancer (Note for teacher – Nułamał appears when all the masked dancers are shown together in a big group behind the singers. He is in the center and you can see him putting his hand to his nose and throwing his mucus.) Ask students what he is doing with his hands.
3. In earlier times the role of the Nułamał in the potlatch had very much to do with discipline and protocol. Define *discipline* and *protocol* with the students and record on the chalkboard. Pose the following questions: *"Why do you think discipline and protocol are important in everyday life?"* and *"Why do you think discipline and protocol are important in ceremonial life?"* Record their responses.
4. Have students complete this discussion by completing BLM 6C.
5. Introduce students to the unique characteristics of Nułamał using BLM 6A and Nułamał masks on the Virtual Tour. Have students draw the characteristics of Nułamał using the template BLM 6D.

PERIODS 3/4 – MASK MAKING

1. Choose a spacious area and lay newspaper or garbage bags down.
2. Cut bandage plaster strips about 2–3 inches wide by 3 inches long – cut strips shorter, wider or thinner as needed.
3. Place strips in a dry bowl. Have a second bowl filled with warm water to dip plaster strips.
4. Partner should wear an old shirt that they do not mind getting plaster on.
5. Have a discussion with your partner about their comfort level and how much of their face they are willing to cover.
6. If you cover entire face make sure there is an opening to breathe safely.
7. Subject lies on the floor with hair tied and bangs pinned back.
8. Rub petroleum jelly all over the subject's face, hairline, eyebrows and around the sides of the nose.
9. Dip plaster strips one at a time in the warm water and run your fingers over the strips to remove any excess water.
10. Create an even base layers and avoid any spaces or gaps between strips.
11. To create a strong mask you should have at least three layers.
    - Layer one is to cover entire face (let set a few minutes)
    - Layer two is to strengthen any weak spots (let set a few minutes)
    - Layer three is to add character and soften the edges of the mask by folding plaster strips down around the edges.
12. Let mask set for 20 minutes then remove slowly from subject's face. Have subject help you by moving their nose, eyebrows and mouth.
13. While mask is still pliable use a hole punch about an inch back from the eyes to run string through.
14. Place mask on a rack to dry for at least 24 hours.
15. Add additional elements with more strips and newspaper – scrunch up newspaper for nose, and cover completely with plaster strips.
16. Eyebrows, cheeks and mouth can be defined with clay build up on the mask and then cover completely with plaster strips. Allow to dry overnight.
17. Use sandpaper to smooth mask and then glue with white Elmer's glue to strengthen.
18. Paint the mask using your sample and photos in BLM 6A.
19. Display Masks.