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Educational Materials

Title

Clapper Stick Lesson

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KIN Clapper Stick Station

EEl Principles and Concepts

Principle I

People Depend on Natural Systems

The continuation and health of individual human lives and of human communities and societies depend on the health of the natural systems that provide essential goods and ecosystem services.

Concept A. Students need to know that the goods produced by natural systems are essential to human life and to the functioning of our economies and cultures.

Lesson Plan: Clapper Sticks

Aim: To teach students how to make clapper sticks (just like some of the first settlers) out of elderberry.

Objectives

- Students will learn about the different local materials available for making clapper sticks.
- They will learn how to select and prepare the elderberry ready for use.
- Students will decorate a pre-made clapper stick

Materials

Elderberry wood or *Arundo donax* stems if Elderberry is hard to come by

Pieces of leather

Hemp

Natural beads, rocks, and shells

Glue

Scissors

Pens

Preparation

Collect the elderberry or arundo well ahead of time. The stems need to be cut into sections of 14-15" in length and dried in the oven at a low temperature (150 degrees) for about 3 days. The benefit of using arundo is that it is not necessary to remove the pith. The sticks need to be cut along the length leaving a 5" section intact for the handle. A small thin piece of wood is inserted into the gap and wedges the 2 halves of the clapper stick open a little, this gap allows the clapping to take place. Any rough bits should be sanded off the sticks and then leather can be glued onto the handle.

Introduction

The clapper stick was traditionally used as a musical instrument, to accompany song and dance. The Chumash name for the clapper stick is *wansak*. The *wansak* was used instead of a drum to keep rhythm. Other instruments included deer bone flutes, bird bone whistles, and rattles.

Procedure

Talk to the students about the various ways the Chumash used plants, such as making homes, boats, rope and food. The students will each choose one of the clapper sticks and immediately write their name on it. The students can then decorate the stick with beads, shells, feathers, hemp and leather.

Conclusion

Students will have a better understanding of how certain local plant materials were used by the Chumash in the past and some that are still used today. Students may also realize that a great deal of time was spent collecting and processing food, collecting and processing materials for rope, nets, housing and boats. They should make the connection that all those items we take for granted today had to be made or prepared well in advance in order to survive.