Strand:	Dance
Level:	Grade 4
Content:	45 minute broadcast + hands-on activity

Grade 4 LIVE Arts with Terrance Littletent: Aboriginal Dance

Terrance Littletent, Grass Dancer and world renowned Hoop Dancer, will lead students through Grass Dance steps and movements. Terrance will engage students through storytelling, demonstrations, and student practice. Students will learn about the evolution of Grass Dancing from historical to contemporary, and gain skill and knowledge in basic traditional and contemporary Grass Dance steps and movements. Both girls and boys will be encouraged to personalize their movements as every Pow Wow Dancer does. The main objectives are to learn timing and rhythm, how to move with the beat of the drum, and how to showcase space and symmetry with the body. Students with previous experience in Aboriginal Dance may choose to focus on their style of choice, such as jingle dress style or fancy dance style. Terrance's Hoop Dancing will also be showcased with a performance! As a dancer from Saskatchewan, Terrance will share how his dances are specific to the First Nations people of our province.
This program is suited not only for Arts Education but Physical Education as well.

Please see page 2 for a **Pre-Broadcast Activity**, and pages 6-18 for a selection of **Teacher Guided Post-Broadcast Activities.** These activities will give students the opportunity to apply what they have learned during the broadcast and to further their learning.

About the Artist

Terrance Littletent is a member of the Kawacatoose Cree Nation and was born and raised in Regina. Terrance comes from a traditional singing and dancing family. At the age of 6, he was taught the way of the grass dancer, and the age of 8 was given the gift of Hoop dancing by his late uncle Kirby Littletent. Terrance is now an accomplished grass dancer and world champion Hoop dancer. He has traveled across Canada, the United States and overseas sharing his gift.

Teacher Guide Contents

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Teacher-Guided Post-Broadcast Activities…….pages 6-18

Curriculum Aims & Goals

Creative/Productive:
Students will apply the elements of dance by exploring basic traditional and contemporary grass dance steps and movements.

Critical/Responsive:
Students will learn to distinguish between contemporary and traditional forms of Grass Dance.

Cultural/Historical:
Terrance will engage students through storytelling, demonstrations, and student practice to learn about the history and cultural significance of Pow Wow Dancing.

Pre-Broadcast Activities (recommended)

View one of the two videos below as a pre-learning experience for your students. You may decide to use only clips of the video with your students. The grade levels are identified beside the title. These videos will help students to prepare for learning about Grass Dance with Terrance. The video will give students a sense of what powwow is and exposure to different dances.

POW WOW Grades 4-9

This intimate look at the Big River Cree powwow in northern Saskatchewan features behind-the-scenes visits with performers and Elders, as well as mesmerizing footage of many different types of dances, drumming and singing. Alvin Manitopyes explains the powwow's evolution from the age of the buffalo hunt and warrior societies to the more social event it is today. Thomas Christian discusses the discipline dancers must bring to the art form and the storytelling that goes along with it. Sheldon "Laughing Horse" Sutherland points out the subtle and countless ways performers express their personal style. Linda Standing, Cecile Nepoose and Charles Rabbitskin explain the spiritual significance of the exquisite handcrafted regalia. Intercut with the powwow's hypnotic whir of movement, colour and sound, these individuals and others share their personal reasons for taking part in this ancient tradition and its enormous impact on their identity.

Running Time in minutes 26:09
Content Saskatchewan
ID Number N522
Expiry date on ROVER July 1, 2015

Link: http://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/resources/524

WISDOM KEEPERS (Grades 6-9)

Series: DANCE ALIVE

Wes Fine Day, a well known story teller in Saskatchewan, acts as guide and interpreter at a traditional Aboriginal celebration of dance, commonly referred to as a Pow-wow. As the various dance categories are presented, the program explores the meaning and content of the movement, the regalia, and the music. The video also explains where the form of the Pow-wow originated, how it has changed, and what it has come to mean in the context of contemporary Aboriginal culture.

Running Time in minutes 23:56
Content Saskatchewan
ID Number V8736
Rights in perpetuity

Link: http://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/resources/8

Broadcast Program (45 min)

Demo 1 (5 minutes) ***CH4.1**
Introduction and Grass Dance Performance

Presentation 1 (5 minutes)
Artist Bio and history of the drum ***CH4.2**

Activity 1 (3 minutes)
Warm-ups

Materials and resources for broadcast:

Students will need enough space to practice dance steps during the broadcast.

Presentation/ Demo/ Activity 2 (22 minutes) ***CP4.2, *CR4.1**
This section will include a discussion of the history of Grass Dance and demonstration of basic steps. These lessons will be interspersed with four short activities related to footwork, body movements, and transitions.

Presentation 3 (3 minutes)
Introduction of Hoop dance and its relationship to Grass Dance ***CR4.1**

Demo 3 (6 minutes) ***CH4.1**
Hoop Dance Performance

Curriculum Outcomes: www.curriculum. gov.sk.ca

Outcome: CP4.2
Express ideas using the elements of dance including: actions (identify basic dance steps)

- body (body parts leading movements)
- dynamics (duration, speed, and force continuum)
- relationships (alone, partner, small groups)
- space (asymmetrical and symmetrical shapes, creating and recalling pathways).

a. Identify and use the elements of dance (actions, body, dynamics, relationships, and space) to express ideas.
b. Demonstrate various ways that body parts may initiate (lead) a movement.
c. Explore and identify basic dance steps.
d. Copy movement phrases as demonstrated, and create own movement phrases.
e. Move with varying speeds (fast to slow), duration (short to long), and force (strong to light).

Terrance will lead students through Grass Dance steps and movements. Students will apply the elements of dance by exploring basic traditional and contemporary grass dance steps and movements.

Outcome: CR4.1
Analyze how dance, drama, music, and visual art works represent unique ideas and perspectives.

a. Discuss a variety of arts expressions comparing similarities (e.g., similar styles from specific movements or eras) and unique characteristics (e.g., individual artist's style or perspective).
b. Analyze and describe how various arts elements and techniques are applied in own and others' arts expressions.
c. Evaluate how arts expressions reflect and affect the daily lives of people (e.g., graphic designs, cultural events, popular music, music videos, drama and films, architecture) and apply this understanding in own work.

Students will learn to distinguish between contemporary and traditional forms of Grass Dance.

Outcome: CH4.1
Investigate and share discoveries about the arts in Saskatchewan through collaborative inquiry.

a. Ask questions about Saskatchewan arts expressions to initiate, develop, and document inquiry learning.
b. Research, using the Internet and other methods, and report on the careers and contributions of Saskatchewan artists.
c. Practise and perform music and dances of various styles and cultural groups represented in Saskatchewan, and discuss what the work tells about the cultural heritages of Saskatchewan people.
d. Describe how the arts tell something about the society in which they are created.
e. Research and discuss why people become involved with artistic production in own community.

Curriculum Outcomes continued….

Outcome: CH4.2
Analyze and respond to arts expressions of various Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis artists.

- Demonstrate awareness that arts expressions (e.g., drum groups, birchbark biting, beadwork, powwow dances, quilts, storytelling) from different First Nations often have strong foundations in traditional lifestyles and worldviews.
- Investigate, analyze, and describe features (e.g., media, techniques, use of symbols and imagery) of traditional and evolving First Nations and Métis arts expressions.
- Discuss the effects that unfulfilled treaty promises had, and continue to have, upon arts expressions and daily lives of First Nations people (e.g., respond to work of First Nations artists whose arts expressions reflect these issues).

Outcome: CP4.2
Express ideas using the elements of dance including: actions (identify basic dance steps)

- body (body parts leading movements)
- dynamics (duration, speed, and force continuum)
- relationships (alone, partner, small groups)
- space (asymmetrical and symmetrical shapes, creating and recalling pathways).

f. Identify and use the elements of dance (actions, body, dynamics, relationships, and space) to express ideas.
g. Demonstrate various ways that body parts may initiate (lead) a movement.
h. Explore and identify basic dance steps.
i. Copy movement phrases as demonstrated, and create own movement phrases.
j. Move with varying speeds (fast to slow), duration (short to long), and force (strong to light).

Terrance will lead students through Grass Dance steps and movements. Students will apply the elements of dance by exploring basic traditional and contemporary grass dance steps and movements.

Teacher Guided Post-Broadcast Activities

As a follow up to the broadcast, select one or more of the following activities to continue your students' learning.

1. *Discuss, Respond and Represent*

Materials/ Resources: 2d or 3d Art Materials
Outcomes: CR4.1

- Terrance shared how dancing has become a part of who he is (his identity). What is your identity built from and how are you influenced? (e.g., dancing, contemporary or traditional arts, cultural heritage, peer groups, personal and family interests, gender…). Create a representation that depicts what has built your identity.

2. *Basic Dance Steps*

Materials/Resources: Space for students to dance individually and together. Grass Dance song available at http://liveartsaskatchewan.com/resources/dance-resources/.

Outcomes: CP4.2
***Note that you may review the broadcast with your students. It is available in the "On-Demand" section of the e-cast website, http://ecast.edonline.sk.ca/main_view.aspx. Please see the "Registration Letter to Teachers" you received after registering for detailed instructions.**

- Recall and demonstrate the 3 basic grass dance steps learned from Terrance. Practice each of the basic steps separately in order to encourage students to become familiar with each step.
    - Play with the following dynamics:
        - fast/slow
        - soft/hard
        - big/small
        - symmetry – what you do on one foot/side, you also repeat on the other foot/side
        - repetition

- Once, all basic steps have been practiced, students practice switching between two or more steps/movements with grass dance music.

- Incorporate all three basic steps/movements into the dance and play with the following dynamics:
        - soft/hard
        - big/small
        - symmetry – what you do on one foot/side, you also repeat on the other foot/side
        - repetition

- Develop a Unique Step/Style/Movement. Each dancer has their own individual style. Students can either add one of the additional movements Terrance demonstrated or students can create and add their own unique fourth movement.
    - It is important to note that grass dance is an individual dance style and should not be a choreographed as a large group.

- Full Dance – students incorporate all of their dance steps and movements by dancing to an entire grass dance song.

3. Grass Dance Regalia

Materials/ Resources: Ability to show the class the images on pages 8-17 of this document. We have also copied the images and text below into a Powerpoint Presentation available at http://liveartsaskatchewan.com/resources/dance-resources/. Use "presenter mode" in Powerpoint to view the text.

Outcomes: CR4.1

- Students identify a grass dance outfit from the assortment of pictures and explain why it is a grass dance outfit. (See Picture Set 1 on page 7)

- Review all of the pictures and explain what makes each outfit unique (See: Picture Set 2). For teacher information, each picture comes with an explanation of the outfit. The information was taken from the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC) website located at: www.sicc.sk.ca

4. Video

Have students view the following video to experience a cultural exchange between two powwow dancers and a ballet and ballroom dancer.

DANCES OF THE FIRST PEOPLE

Series: Tribal Treks: Canada's Aboriginal Experience
A ballet dancer and a ballroom dancer pair up with two powwow dancers at the Kamloops Powwow. Through the visitors' experiences, viewers learn about the steps, songs, and regalia, as well as the family atmosphere and friendliness of the First Nations Peoples.

Running Time in minutes 24:04
Content Canada | First Nations, Métis, or Inuit
ID Number N842
Expiry date on ROVER July 1, 2016

Link: http://rover.edonline.sk.ca/en/rover/resources/994

What is a Powwow?
Outcomes:

- View the video, Dances of the First People, and discuss, "what is a Powwow?" A teacher information sheet from SICC called Overview of Pow wow Tradition is below.

Picture Set 1

Picture Set 2

Overview of Pow Wow Tradition

http://d1jrw5jterzxwu.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/article_media/6.teens_lead_grand_entry.jpg

For many First Nations people across North America, the Pow Wow has become an expression of First Nations identity. For First Nations people in Saskatchewan, it is also a statement of our ability to survive as a people. The Pow Wow in Saskatchewan is an ancient tradition. Pow Wow dancing conveys important traditional teachings. One teaching is that dancers dance not only for themselves but also for all First Nations people. They dance for the sick, the Elderly and those who cannot dance.

In the early years, many First Nations people continued to attend these ceremonial dances despite threats from government. Prior to World War 1, First Nations people were only allowed to dress up in their traditional outfits for exhibitions and parades. Special permission had to be granted by the federal government to allow these demonstrations. But these events did play a role in retaining the Pow Wow tradition in the prairies. It wasn't until 1951, with further changes to the Indian Act, that the Pow Wow could be held without interference. The Pow Wow tradition in Saskatchewan had a tremendous resurgence since the 1960's. The Plains Cree refer to the Pow Wow as pwatsimowin or "the Dakota Dance". Saskatchewan First Nations people have adopted the modern Pow Wow into their way of life. Important influences for Saskatchewan Pow Wows were the growth of major celebrations hosted by Native American reservations in the United States.

Contemporary Pow Wows are either traditional or competition Pow Wows. Traditional Pow Wows are often held in local communities and lack the dancing and drum group competitions. In the past, communities would pick their best dancers or singers to compete for desired objects such as blankets, horses or dance regalia. Today, dancers and singers compete for cash prizes. Some dancers earn their living from these competitions and from the making of Pow Wow regalia. Some competition dancers stay in shape through exercise regimens and diligent practice.

One important aspect of Pow Wows is the honoring of our First Nations Veterans. Veterans are asked to carry flags in the Grand Entry, to retrieve dropped Eagle feathers and to provide prayers throughout the event. The honoring of our Veterans is a reflection of the First Nations place of their service. The Veterans' willingness to give their lives in the service of others merits our highest respect. This honoring of the Veterans is also reflective of the warrior tradition of First Nations.

(Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies pp. 25-6).
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/overview-of-pow-wow-tradition.html

Men's Grass Dance

http://centerofthewest.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Men_Grass.jpg

The Grass Dance was originally a sacred ritual that was part of a long and complex ceremony performed by warrior societies among various tribes of the plains. There is more than one version of the origin of the Grass Dance. Versions of its origin differ throughout various locations in Canada and the United States.

In some regions, First Nations people believe that the Grass Dance is a healing dance. In this interpretation, a grass dancer was called upon to perform his dance in a ceremonial healing a long time ago. The healing was intended to doctor a sick child who was too weak to move. It was the ability and strong belief of his dance that enabled the grass dancer to render such a healing.

Another version of the origin of the Grass Dance is that the grass dancers were called out to the place where feasts and special events were to take place. The dancers blessed the ground while they danced in time with the beat of the drum. While the grass dancers danced, they flattened the grass with their feet in preparation for the ceremonies to take place. The general agreement in bother version of the origins is that the Grass Dance is a ceremonial dance.

Long ago, the dancers wore outfits that were made solely with the materials that were naturally available such as grass, porcupine quills and hair. Contemporary grass dancers still incorporate some of these items. But now, dancers have added brightly colored fringe made of ribbons or yarn, elaborate beadwork and bells to their outfits.

The outfits of grass dancers today consist of a belt, cuffs, headband and harness with a porcupine roach, which adorns two eagle feathers or a set of plumes.

Each outfit is designed to move with and enhance the motions of the dancer. The dancer moves his hips, arms, head and shoulders in harmony with the movement of his legs and dance steps. Dancers attempt to imitate nature, resembling the gentle swaying of grass on a windy day. Grass dancers must display balance, endurance, coordination and gracefulness. All movements are done both on the left and right sides.

Pow Wows today classify the Grass Dance into two categories: old style and free style. The old style of Grass Dance is further divided into the American old style and Canadian old style. However, many grass dancers maintain that the dance is the same and varies only by individual interpretation.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian, June 1997 Special Powwow Issue v27 n02 p17.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/grassdance.html

Men's Traditional

http://traditionalnativehealing.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/powwow-picture.jpg

The Men's Northern Traditional style of dance is one of pride and confidence amongst First Nations men. Traditional dancers demonstrate a style of dance that evolved from the old form of war dance. The dance depicts the telling of a war story or hunting expedition. Other dancers also imitate wildlife such as horses, birds or buffalo while performing.

The outfits of Men's Northern Traditional dancers consist of beaded vests, war shields and porcupine roaches. A single, circular bustle made of eagle feathers is worn on the back. Most dancers carry some sort of staff or dancing stick. The colors and designs used in each individual's outfit can symbolize their clan or family or represent their Indian name.

While the dancers are dancing, they appear to be strong, bold warriors. They tell a complete story that can be seen in their dance steps as they bend low to the ground and peer cautiously about. The process is repeated as an on-going hunt. The completion of the successful hunt is demonstrated as they move in for the kill.

Traditional dancers never dance backwards as they perform, as this would be perceived as retreat. Also, they never turn in a full circle while dancing.

The Men's Northern Contemporary Traditional Dance has the same origin and similar styles to that of the Northern Traditional. The main difference is that dancers of the contemporary style have brighter, flashier outfits and move more wildly.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian June 1997 Special Powwow Issue v27 n02.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/traditional.html

Men's Chicken Dance pihewisimowin or The Prairie Chicken Dance Ceremony

https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/8a/71/3a/8a713a96066310ddd7fdb70217d977de.jpg

This is a very old dance still practiced by our people who live in the Battleford area. The ceremony is held in a long lodge, and begins with a special form of prayer known as the Pipe Ceremony. Following the ceremony, the man who pledges the dance, begins by singing his songs to the accompaniment of a rattle, while the others follow his lead. The dance is considered to have a strong spiritual meaning. The sponsor of the ceremony may have received instructions to do so in a dream, or he may have vowed to hold the dance, in exchange for the long life of a sick child.

Dancers take their place in a circle formed around two fires. They move slowly around the circle, while mimicking the actions of a prairie chicken. Throughout the night, other men serve each guest. The men, who have never taken part before, are required to give gifts. This is practiced in all social dances to obtain the right to participate, but this is the only vowed ceremony where gifts are given in such a manner. These gifts are given to Elders, who in turn, give prayers for the dancers. An offering to the spirits is also given, and is tied to the poles of the lodge.

The dancers observed at Frog Lake in 1928, danced stationary and danced at night. They had a dog feast afterwards. The Cree from Hobbema, Alberta also practiced this dance. The ceremony varies only slightly from the Battleford dance, but their regalia are unique. David Mandelbaum reported the Hobbema people wearing a fringed leather shirt and an eagle cap, which was passed to each dancer, as his turn to dance came up. A hand drum, beaten in a lively rhythm, accompanied the singers. Our people wear their common ceremonial dance attire, and a bustle of prairie chicken feathers.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian Powwow Issue 1999, v29 n02 p14 – Pat Deiter from, Dancer of the Northern Plains, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, 1987
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/chicken.html

Men's Fancy Dance

http://www.native-american-beadwork.net/pics/09_what_is_a_pow_wow/benmarra_fancy1.jpg

The Men's Fancy Dance originated in the southern United States. The origination of this dance was for the purpose of entertainment. It is still the main feature of the dance today.

The bright colors of the outfits and the fast moves of the dancers provide an entertaining sight for onlookers. Men's Fancy dancers wear two brightly colored bustles on their backs. Some dancers choose to make their bustles out of man-made feathers while others choose eagle feathers.

The dancers also wear a cape made of cloth, ribbon or are fully beaded. They also wear matching front and back aprons. In addition to their regalia, the dancers wear porcupine head roaches, fur-leggings and bells.

The Men's Fancy Dance is, in many respects, a test of a dancer's endurance. A dancer must be physically fit and well coordinated because the dance requires a great deal of muscle control. It also permits the dancers to display highly complex dance steps and body movements.

The dance steps are all done to incredibly fast beats of a drum. While the steps vary according to the individual dancer, dancers commonly bring their knees up high with their bodies moving in time with the drum. It is common for a dancer to drop to the ground and leap back up to his feet without missing a beat.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian June 1997 Special Powwow Issue v27 n02 p27.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/fancy.html

Women's Traditional

https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/e6/63/ed/e663edaace38b36d98317862ae5beac4.jpg

The Women's Northern Traditional Dance is a very dignified, graceful and modest dance that shows the strength, pride, respect and honor the women carry for their family, relatives and friends. There are usually three basic styles of Women's Northern Traditional Dance.

The first style is the stationary dance. This style originated with the Dakota/Nakota people in their small gatherings of long ago. The women would stand and bounce gently to the drum in honor of their family or relatives for whom the song was sung.

In these gatherings, the women would adorn themselves with their most elaborate quilled, beaded and decorated dresses and accessories. The outfit was personal and was created through dreams or traditional family designs. These dresses symbolized the industry, patience and steadfastness a woman must possess to complete such an enormous project.

The second style is the in the Grass Dance Society, the women danced in what is known as the circle dance, round dance or side step dance. This dance is still performed as part of competitions of today.

The third style, the women gracefully dance in a zigzag pattern around the edge of the arena. Their dance is in time with the drumbeat.

Most women dancers today carry a fan usually made of eagle feathers. On the down beats or honor beats of the song, the women may raise their fan gracefully to show respect and honor as they dance.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian June 1997 Special Powwow Issue v27 n02 p28.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/womens_traditional.html

Women's Jingle Dress Dance

http://news.stanford.edu/news/gifsarch2/powwow2250-517.jpg

The jingle dress dance originated with the Anishinabe people of the Lake of the Woods area in Ontario and part of the American state Minnesota. Based on tradition and teachings, the jingle dress is believed to come from a man from the Lake of the Woods area whose daughter was ill. In this man's vision, the jingle dress was made of shells. The meaning of his vision was for the dress to be given those who believed in a traditional way of life. The dress was to be given for the purpose of healing.

The jingle dress is a medicine dress. If a woman chooses to take on this dress, she must be ready for the responsibility that it entails. The jingle dress should be honored with fasting and feasting.

Today, the jingle dress is made up of cones. These cones are usually made from soup lids or Copenhagen snuff lids. However, there are still some people who use shells.

There are two types of dances that accommodate this style: straight dance and the side step. The dancing style of the individual is one of low steps, not high steps. Dancers do not perform complete spins like the fancy shawl dancers.

In the Pow Wow world of today, we are witnessing another classification of dance within the jingle dress dance. The jingle dress dance can now be classified in the traditional or contemporary style.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian June 1997 Special Powwow Issue v27 n02 p29.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/jingle.html

Women's Fancy Shawl Dance

http://photos.state.gov/libraries/usinfo-photo/39/week_3_0807/081507_Northern_Plains3_500.jpg

The Women's Fancy Shawl Dance is one of the newest dances of Pow Wow. This dance originated in the southern-central United States. This dance symbolizes the life of a butterfly.

A butterfly lives a quiet life before it encloses itself in a cocoon. Once the butterfly is ready to emerge, it breaks free from the cocoon and blooms into a beautiful, fragile creature. The butterfly lives freely. Flying delicately around its habitat, it displays beauty and grace.

Women's Fancy Shawl dancers have beautifully intricate outfits. The dancer will wear a cape, which is usually fully beaded. Also, they have matching leggings and moccasins, hairpieces and jewelry. Distinctive to the women's Fancy Shawl dance is the way in which they use their shawl as adornment, delicately draping it over their bodies.

It is in the movement of her body while she dances and the lightness of her dance steps that makes the butterfly come to life. A fancy shawl dancer dances to a fast drumbeat as do the men's fancy dancers. A dancer shows gracefulness, endurance and agility as she moves in perfect beat with the drum. While she dances, her shawl sways and swirls in perfect harmony with her body; a butterfly flitting ever so delicately about the dance arena.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian June 1997 Special Pow Wow Issue v27 n02 p28-29.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/womens_fancy.html

Pow Wow Singing

http://www.chrishind.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Catawba-PowWow-April-14-2012-033.jpg

First Nations people had songs for grieving, for birth, for joy, for prayer and for so many other significant ceremonies and events. No ceremony, feast or event could function without the prayers, dances and songs of the First Nations people. The singers, drummers and ceremonial people are treated with respect and honor for their gift of song.

(Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies p. 25).
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/pow-wow.html

Round Dance Singing piciciwin, The Moving Slowly or Round Dance

http://www.cityweekly.net/imager/native-american-round-dance-protest-hits-t/b/original/2300760/37c7/rndance8.jpg

The Plains Cree received this dance from the Assiniboine, who called it the Moving Slowly Dance. A Cree gave this explanation of the dance to David Mandelbaum, an anthropologist.

The Moving Slowly Dance came from the south. A woman of the Mud House People, (one of the village tribes of the Missouri, probably the Mandans) had four adopted children. She made feather bonnets for them and showed them how to dance. A different woman would wear the bonnet for each song. That is what I heard when I visited the Rocky Boy Reserve in Montana. The Moving Slowly Dance, as we do it now, (without a bonneted leader), was first danced by the Stoney people. This was at the time of the Rebellion (1885). They captured one of our men. That is how we got it.

The dance was held during times of sickness; however, it was also deemed as a social dance, and began with a Pipe Ceremony. The music followed a, "One-two", beat of the drum. Dancers formed a circle, and stepped in a clockwise shuffle.

Messengers were sent out to invite dancers to take part. If a dancer refused the invitation, the messenger could take some part of his regalia, usually a belt, or roach. If the dancer still did not go the dance, a special song was sung for him, and someone would be chosen to take his

place. At the next dance, the dancer was expected to tell why he did not go to the last dance. He also gave tobacco to the person who took his place. His regalia would then be returned. Today, the dance is known as the Friendship, or Round Dance. It is performed during our modern Indian celebrations or Pow Wows.

The Grass Dance and Round Dance were part of all celebrations put on by different societies. There were a series of officers in this Society, the Chief of Dancers, the Drum Keeper, the Servers, the Pipe Keeper, the Gate Keeper, the Whip Keeper, the Belt Keeper, the Singers, the Grass Dancers, the Belt Dancers, the Feather Society, Cowboy Society, and the Macanesk Society. All were intact until the 1950's, with the exception of the Blackfoot.

kiskipocikek (means "wedge in", it is an idiom, means to dance with a women who is not a relative or a cross-cousin), this is choosing a dancing partner for the Round Dance, which was a custom borrowed from the southern tribes.

During the Round Dance, a man would break into the circle and dance to the right of the woman he fancied. Tradition dictated that certain kinship relationships had to be observed in the dance. For example, a man could not dance with his sister. When the dance was over, the man would give the announcer a gift for the woman. This act would show his respect and gratitude for dancing with her. The woman was then obliged to dance with him and was to return a gift.

If a man cut in between the couple, he offered a gift to both the man and the woman. Indian people were great givers and this is another excuse to give a gift to a visitor or special person. It was considered a kind act of respect and love for another. It was not considered wrong to dance with the opposite sex, but you could not hold hands. Courting was very discreet and very private.

Source: Saskatchewan Indian Pow Wow Issue 1999 v29 n02 p07 - Pat Deiter, from Dancer of the Northern Plains, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, 1987.
http://www.sicc.sk.ca/round-dance.html