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Beyond The Atom: Interpreting the Origin of the Elements

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Beyond the Atom: Interpreting the Origin of the Elements is an imaginative approach to teach students about the birth of matter. In technical terms, this approach combines the principles of Aesthetic Education, Science Education, Emotional Intelligence and Multicultural Education. Put simply, this method integrates the Performing Arts—specifically Drumming, Dance, and Drama—into the Chemistry curriculum. Beyond the Atom is an interdisciplinary unit with an emphasis on Reading Across the Curriculum. Consequently, students will read Charles A. Cerami's biography on Benjamin Banneker and interpret the impact of African Astronomy on contemporary American society through dance. In addition, Beyond the Atom addresses the issue of "Science Literacy" in the United States. My overall goal is to motivate urban minority youth, especially African American male adolescents (AAma), to develop creative problem-solving skills and enhance their intellectual, social and emotional abilities. The federal imperative to "Leave No Child Behind" combined with mandatory End-of-Course testing on the state level places AAma at a tremendous risk for poor academic and social performance. This unit recommends an African-centered pedagogy to address these disparities. Researchers have found that infusing Arts Education across the curriculum in an urban setting enhances the learning experience of all students.

(Developed for Chemistry, Atomic Structure and Periodic Table, grades 10-12; recommended for Chemistry, Atomic Structure and Periodic Table, grades 9-12)

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