

## IRA grant # 1004. Post activity report

This past semester was a great development from our previous work with Yeko. We added new pieces to our repertoire as well as refining our past songs. We had a very successful concert which was attended by over 50 people in Malibu 120. We were able to get additional costumes to support our performance. We are very thankful to the IRA committee for assisting us. I have included a picture of the group and some personal statements from the students. There will be a video posted soon from the performance. Thank you again, Ray McNamara



Dear IRA Committee,

Hope all is well. This past semester was the second semester that I enrolled myself into PAMU 204 Intro into African Drumming. Both semesters have been engaging and insightful. This semester we had the honor of having Yeko help facilitate our class. Yeko truly embodies the African culture. Due to this we were able to learn the different meanings behind different African songs, dances and pieces of clothing. Her knowledge and expertise were a valuable part of this semesters learning experience for me. It is for this reason that I hope she is able to continue to

come to California State University, so that the knowledge that I have gained from her does not stop with our class, but continues to be passed on to future students ahead.

Sincerely,  
Karen Castaneda-Cortes

Hey Ray,

I thought the concert was wonderful. Lots of fun getting to dress up, and I think it felt super authentic and welcoming for our guests, with the food and participation at the end and all that. My mom loved it.

The class was also a really great experience for me. I even got a djembe for my birthday this week to keep working on my beats. □ I think it was really important for me how you made it a known judgment-free zone from the first day, because sometimes it feels kind of vulnerable to express yourself in front of a bunch of folks.

Having Yeko come in was absolutely crucial to the experience for me. She exuded such confidence and elegance in the way she demonstrated her craft, it was contagious. She had a uniquely natural way of explaining the drum beats, and had such extensive knowledge about Ghanaian drumming. With her Ewe background, she was able to share with us her own videos, reading material, Ghanaian seamstress hook-ups, and speak about her culture in a way that felt invaluablely special. She was also very warm and inclusive, creating a really inviting space for us to open up and really get into it. I'd recommend learning from Yeko to anyone and everyone.

P.S. I think I had 3 absences or maybe even 4. :Z Let me know if there's any way I can earn some extra credit!

Thanks so much,

Andie

Hi Ray,

I really enjoyed learning drumming from Yeko and you. I'm glad that I was able to learn African drumming and Ghanaian culture.

I would like a A for this course if possible with the extra credit.

Sincerely,  
Hikari Kuroda

Having Yeko as a teacher was awesome! Learning how to play African music by someone who embodies the culture was an amazing experience. I have never attempted to play an instrument before taking this class but over the course of the semester I grew a different appreciation and knowledge for music. Taking this course was very memorable and I am thankful for having Ray as a professor because he took his time teaching us the basics so that we could excel with harder pieces we performed at our show.

Hi Ray,

Thanks for great experience this semester! I really liked the African drum class.  
Can I take part in the class without registration next semester?  
I can take only 4 classes and I don't have room for extra class any longer.  
I would be grateful if you would allow that.

And I've attached the video of steal drum band.

Have a great summer,

Kohei  
Here is my paragraph for Yeko.

**Having Yeko come to our classes was very fun! I got to learn about the culture and how to play traditional African pieces. Yeko was great to have as a guest in class and the opportunity was exciting and a great experience! I really enjoyed having her come into class and teach us what she knows!**

Thanks,  
Hannah Rachel Strohmman

Daniel Gomez-Reynaga

Experience with end of the year concert

My experience with the Steel Drumming and African Drumming courses was fantastic. I learned a lot about the cultural significance and history of the music and had the privilege to get to play it as well. Ray did a great job instructing the course. He is very knowledgeable about both the culture and music from all of the regions we covered. It was an eye opening experience that everyone should get the opportunity to participate in.

The concert at the end was great as well. I was enrolled in both the Steel Drumming and African Drumming course, therefore, I was able to play for both parts of the concert. This concert gave us students the chance to show what we learned throughout the semester and perform it in front of a crowd, which felt really good. The class and I received a lot of positive feedback from the many guests who came to watch the performance.

I had such a great time that if I had another semester left at University, I would definitely take both of these courses again.

Daniel Gomez-Reynaga

Experience with Yeko – African Drumming

My experience learning how to play traditional West African music pieces with Yeko throughout the semester and performing them at the end was wonderful. Yeko brought a lot of insight and cultural knowledge to the other students and I. She was very good at explaining the history behind the instruments used, the music played, and the costumes which we all took part in. I definitely think this significantly contributed to the African Drumming class, as the rest of the students and I learned from someone who has lived through the experience. I think more student should participate in these kind of courses because it helps them be more culturally aware.

Moreover, the experience is also a lot of fun.

I thank Yeko for her contributions and Ray for putting together this kind of class at CSU Channel Islands. This was a college experience that I will remember for the rest of my life.