

00;00;14;57 - 00;00;40;54

Unknown

Welcome to session two of Dancing Matters. I'm Dr. Debelle Williams, professional development director for Engaging Creative Minds. And we have with us again Miss Erin Lee, who will be teaching dance and choreography today for our students. Today is going to be amazing because you're going to have you're going to learn how to move and dance, mimicking the movements of animals.

00;00;41;16 - 00;01;14;21

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Animals right here in South Carolina. Stay tuned as you learn about the majestic movements of the Blue Heron. Hi, I'm Erin Lee, and I'm a dancer and a choreographer. One of my favorite things to do is to watch animals in their habitats and make up dances about their movements. We have lots of beautiful animals in South Carolina. I live in Charleston along the coast, so I see dolphins, snakes and lots of different types of birds.

00;01;15;03 - 00;01;44;39

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Small birds like sun birds and really big birds like the great blue heron, the great blue heron live the long marshes and ponds. It's not a swimming bird, but it feeds on small fishes, shell fishes, reptiles and insects. It can live up to 15 years in the wild, 15 years old, and its hunting behavior is that it will stalk its prey very patiently.

00;01;44;39 - 00;02;13;28

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And then it has this long dagger like Bill to pierce into rocks to get at its prey. It has this lovely S-curve and for its neck, and it has excellent vision and excellent flying skills. They live in families and nests up at the tops of trees, and they don't have very many predators. But the predators that they do have eaten their eggs.

00;02;13;59 - 00;02;45;51

Unknown

And, you know, if we don't have eggs, we don't have more herons. Let's take a look at some videos of the heron. So the first video we'll see the heron stalking. So this is the great blue heron. Notice it's long, skinny legs. It's long dagger like Bill. And that s of a neck. Notice how its patient and its gaze and how it pierces and stabs into the water and shakes.

00;02;46;22 - 00;02;53;25

Unknown

It doesn't look like it caught anything, but it's definitely hunting for its dinner.

00;02;57;38 - 00;03;31;47

Unknown

Notice also how it kind of lowers and lifts its body a little bit in order to be able to see the water. And now let's take a look at another video. And this one, I think will surprise you. So we're looking at a marsh. Wow. Look at those really long wings beating against the air. Even though the bird is light, I feel like those wings might be heavy in order to help get the bird into flight and all the way up to the tree.

00;03;32;05 - 00;03;57;55

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Look at its long dangling legs and the feathers along its back and the crust of its head and that steely gaze. I love how it shakes and kind of flicks the water off of its back. Again, the piercing motion. It's a very elegant bird, wouldn't you say?

00;04;03;12 - 00;04;31;55

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All right. So that's what I would like to do as a choreographer. I watch the bird in the habitat. I observe its movements, and then from there, I might make a dance in order to make that dance, I'm going to have to use abstraction. So what is abstraction? Well, abstraction is when we don't move. Exactly like the animal, but we try to move like the essence of the animal.

00;04;32;20 - 00;04;56;31

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Right. So if I was going to pretend I was a heron and just move like this, my dance wouldn't be very interesting. In addition, a heron can move very differently than a human right. I can do things the heron can't do and the heron can do things I can't do. So I have to use my imagination and abstraction to really think about the essence of the animal.

00;04;56;31 - 00;05;26;24

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And that's how I'm going to move. Once I've abstracted and I'm thinking about observation, then the next step is I have to do some improvizations. So what's improvization? Well, Improvization is when we explore the elements of dance and therefore elements of dance that we will be working with today. Are body action, space and effort. Some people call effort energy, so you can use those interchangeably.

00;05;27;20 - 00;05;57;22

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So when I was observing the Heron, I also took notes about what I was observing. So let's take a look at them. Notice that I have my dance elements listed at the top. I have body action, space and effort or energy. And I've listed the things that I observed. So I talk about the long, thin legs. And I wrote about the wide, heavy wings.

00;05;58;01 - 00;06;33;40

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That steely gaze and steely means. When you look at something for a long time, really carefully, sort of like when your teacher might be keeping an eye on you. I noticed that long dagger like beak and that s of a neck under the actions, the things that stood out to me were the stalking, the peering around in the rocks, the piercing and stabbing into the water, patiently waiting, soaring and beating wings for space.

00;06;33;42 - 00;07;01;14

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I noticed again that it lowers and it lifts its body. It also travels all over the marsh to look for prey. And its pathways were interesting when it came up to the tree, it was moving very directly and in a straight pathway. But I've also seen them in flocks where they might arc and efforts or energies. You might notice that some of my language or my words repeats.

00;07;01;14 - 00;07;37;20

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So my efforts, there's some strong beating wings and some lightly soaring. There's some quick piercing. Sustained. Sustained means lingering. So it's ongoing. There's some sustained, soaring and waiting. The bird sees everything, which is indirect and it looks directly at its prey. And then there's that loose flicking and shaking, mostly bound. So let's just review through our effort qualities one more time.

00;07;37;38 - 00;08;13;02

Unknown

So when we're talking about effort or energy, they're going to be on two opposites. Strong two light in all of the movements in the middle. Quick to sustain so quick, spontaneous and instant. And sustain. And is ongoing. Indirect means you see everything. And direct means you're looking directly at something. Free is loose like spaghetti that's been cooked and bound is where we use a little bit more of our muscles.

00;08;13;43 - 00;08;43;48

Unknown

Like the spaghetti before it's cooked there, the noodle. So that's why I've been writing these things about effort, like the strong beating wings and lately soaring. I need these words to help with my improvization. It's going to make my dance more interesting and more true to the heron. So here are the improvization ideas I've decided on. I'm going to use soaring with big heavy wings and level changes.

00;08;44;44 - 00;09;12;17

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That's going to be my first improvization. I'm going to begin my improvization in an opening position or shape, and I'm going to think about that heron for a minute. And I think since I want to improvise about my wings, I might just out stretch my wings and like an asking kind of shape and maybe take my feet out as if I'm balancing on one of those three branches way up in the air.

00;09;13;15 - 00;09;27;59

Unknown

So I'm going to pause here, and as soon as the music begins, I'll start improvising. And when the music ends, I will freeze. Or when I freeze, the music will end. Ready? Here we go. Music.

00;09;31;58 - 00;10;13;15

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So I'm going to think about using those beating wings and maybe those arching pathways just like a heron. Perhaps I might add a turn and a level change. I might even come to stillness and just peer. Maybe I use one wing and then the other, or add on some leaps or jumps.

00;10;16;02 - 00;10;25;55

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And then whenever I'm done with my improvization, I'll come to an end with the music.

00;10;30;56 - 00;10;58;55

Unknown

Oh, that was fun. Now I have to wait a minute and see if I can remember some things that I liked. Hmm. I really liked when I moved around in an arc. I loved when I changed my level. That kind of like using one arm, then the other. I think that's surprising and abstract. Let's go on. Let's look at one of our other improvised prompts and do another improvization.

00;11;00;34 - 00;11;27;40

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Let's try stalking in the thick mud, waiting patiently. Ah, so we're going to use we're going to focus a little bit more on those legs. I need a starting position. Maybe this time I'll just go ahead and bend one of my knees and I'll take my wings. Then I guess I could put them next to my body. But maybe I'll make it a little bit more abstract and twist them in.

00;11;27;40 - 00;12;38;51

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As soon as the music begins, I'll begin moving with the music. So I might slow down a little bit here because I'm stalking and peering and piercing with those layers, maybe even flicking the water off me or turning to try to use some arms with my legs. Maybe another level

change. And when I'm done with my improvization, I'll just come to a pause as I'm cool.

00;12;39;32 - 00;13;03;22

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Yeah, I like some of those movements. I liked how I slowed down. I liked how I was using my focus. I think I could do that a little bit more. I like that movement in the low space, even though I know a heron wouldn't really do that. I think it makes my dance more interesting. All right. Our last improvization piercing and stabbing for food.

00;13;03;22 - 00;13;32;27

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So I guess if I'm going to be a heron, if I wanted to, I could just pretend like I have a beak the whole time. But maybe I'll try something a little different. Maybe I'll try putting my arms in kind of a long, dagger like position and see where that takes me. Let's try with the music piercing and stabbing.

00;13;38;23 - 00;14;12;29

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I love this idea of stabbing. It's much stronger than what I was doing before. I like with that as maybe if I put my focus back for that heron being patient, I can get some of that quickness that I notice and maybe reading in the sand and I know a heron would really do that go up. But I like the abstraction of it.

00;14;12;29 - 00;14;40;52

Unknown

Yeah, I think that's enough piercing and stabbing. So my next job as a choreographer is that I want to make a dance out of my Improvizations. So in order to do so, I'm going to start in a beginning shape. Probably one of the shapes I practiced, and I'm going to make up an ending shape, and I might do some of the other shapes that I remember.

00;14;41;16 - 00;15;10;11

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And then I'm going to fill in the middle with some movements. And the thing that makes my choreography different than my improvization is I repeat my movements and try to remember them. So I'm going to think back to my favorite movements, select them, and put them together in a beginning, middle and end for a dance. So I did that already.

00;15;10;11 - 00;16;45;10

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Let me show you my heron dance and I'm going to start in my open position. Okay? So now I just need to practice that a couple of more times and really rehearse my heron dance. And maybe if I have a partner or a friend, I can show my heron dance to my friend and I can

see how different or similar our dancers are to each other.

00;16;45;32 - 00;17;14;13

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And I can start to notice and observe the dance elements of effort and how they incorporated them into their heron dance. And when I do that, when I use abstraction, observation and improvization, I'm thinking like a choreographer. Awesome job mislaid. That was amazing. I don't know about you, but I feel like I can go out and dance like the Blue Heron.

00;17;14;40 - 00;17;40;50

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It's amazing how we can utilize nature to teach in our classrooms. I love this lesson because it connects with science. It connects with dance, health and movement, and that's what we want to make sure that you all understand. And as you're teaching, you can actually utilize this information to create fun and arts integrated activities in your classroom. Thank you again for watching and stay tuned for Session three with Ms..

00;17;40;50 - 00;17;45;25

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Aaron Ley as she continues her series Dancing Matters.