

00;00;15;01 – 00;00;44;55

Unknown

Greetings everyone. I'm Dr. Debelle Williams, professional development director for Engage in Creative Minds, and I want to welcome you to our third session of Dancing Matters. I want to introduce you to Aaron Lee, who is going to be sharing with you all today a form of dance that's called efforts and how it's utilized by choreographers. So I want to go ahead and direct your attention over to Aaron Lee as we go forward to learn about this particular segment of dance and choreography.

00;00;46;04 – 00;01;20;49

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Hi, I'm Aaron Lee, and I'm a dancer and choreographer. Today, I'd like to use a warm up focusing on the dance element effort. Let's begin. We're going to begin by lightly rubbing our hands together as if like making the sound of a soft breathe. And then we're going to lightly tap our skull, our torso, our arms, all of our upper body, all the way down our body to our lower legs and our feet.

00;01;21;37 – 00;01;55;24

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Let's warm up our hands again lightly rubbing, and then let's use a little bit more strength. And we're going to swipe our body, swiping all along our arms, our torso, so our backs down one leg and the other leg and will lightly rub our hands. And let's use a little bit more strength by pressing our skull, our jaw, our shoulders and arms.

00;01;56;03 – 00;02;26;18

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Fingers don't press too much on the belly down our leg. Bones squeeze, zing and pressing all the way our ankles and our toes. And lastly, lightly rubbing our hands. Let's imagine that there's a big, beautiful ball right in front of us or in the center of our body. And when we breathe in, that ball expands. And when we exhale it contracts.

00;02;27;08 – 00;02;54;07

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We can even imagine that it's different colors. I think mine will be kind of a blue with a little bit of purple, so we'll take a breath in and exhale. And as we continue breathing, we can start to let the breath expand into our limbs right to the edges of our fingertips and our toes. And you don't have to do the same movements I'm doing.

00;02;54;07 – 00;03;22;16

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You can do whatever movements you'd like to do. We're just opening and expanding and then folding and closing and the exhale. Let's go on. Let's come to the very edge of our chair, but not too much that will fall forward or that we're slumping back. We'll put our hands on our

thighs and now we're going to work our spine or our backbone.

00;03;22;32 - 00;03;52;05

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We're going to pretend like we're a snake and wiggle it side to side and front to back. And let's change our effort or our energy. Let's do it quick or sustained, which is a little bit lingering, taking our time with it. Let's go on. We're going to ground our lower body and we're going to move our upper body using our focus.

00;03;52;05 - 00;04;19;49

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So we'll move in directly as if we're touching all of the space all around us, and then we'll move directly as if we're going to a certain place with a body part, and we can freeze our upper body and do the same thing with our lower body moving as if we're touching all the space indirectly. And then we'll go directly to a particular place.

00;04;21;49 - 00;04;48;04

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Let's ground our lower body and we're going to move our upper body indirectly, as if we're touching all of the space around us with our head, our torso and our arms and our all of our upper body. And then we can move it directly going to a particular spot in the space and we can repeat with our lower body.

00;04;48;04 - 00;05;19;29

Unknown

So we'll kind of quiet or freeze or ground our upper body and we'll use our lower body exploring all the space around us and then taking a body part really specifically to particular place in the space. Let's continue. I'm going to go to the side of my chair and this is the left side of my chair. And so and my right arm is closest to the chair.

00;05;20;16 - 00;05;50;07

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And we're going to start by moving one side of our body and we're going to ground the other side of our body. So the right side of my body will stay nice and quiet while the left side loop moves loosely, like limbs spaghetti or cuts spaghetti. Then I'm going to start binding my muscles a little tighter and a little tighter and I'll come to a pause and I'm going to warm up the other side of my body.

00;05;50;23 - 00;06;22;15

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So my left side is close to the chair. I'm moving my right side loosely, not too much muscle tension, and then I'll make my muscles a little tighter, a little tighter and a little tighter. Cool. The last thing we're going to do is some cross lateral. So what that means is we're going to cross our midline. We do any kinds of movements that go

across the middle of our body.

00;06;22;42 - 00;06;57;06

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And I think for this one, what I'll do is I'll travel around my chair as I'm doing it. So cross lateral movement just crossing across my body, I might add some skipping and I can use lightness or strong movements. I can use movements that go everywhere or that go directly. I can use free movements or I can make them really bound.

00;06;57;06 - 00;07;28;12

Unknown

So that's how we use our efforts to warm up. Let's review what the four efforts are and so our efforts are on a scale from one opposite to the other. And so the first one is strong to light, and then the next one is quick to sustained and indirect, which means to see everywhere and direct and then free to bound.

00;07;28;22 - 00;07;59;13

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And all of the movements in the middle of the spectrum. Let's ground our lower body and we're going to move our upper body indirectly, as if we're touching all of the space around us with our head, our torso and our arms and our all of our upper body, and then we can move it directly going to a particular spot in the space and we can repeat with our lower body.

00;07;59;13 - 00;08;30;38

Unknown

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00;08;31;24 - 00;09;01;19

Unknown

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00;09;01;36 - 00;09;33;23

Unknown

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00;09;33;50 - 00;10;08;15

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00;10;08;15 - 00;10;43;17

Unknown

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00;10;45;07 - 00;11;05;49

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So let's do those efforts with some movement. The first one is strong to light. I'd like you to press your hands against each other, press them as hard as you can, with as much strength as you have. Try pressing with just your hands and then activate your core or your center and get your core into it. Then get your legs into it.

00;11;05;49 - 00;11;32;03

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Your whole body is pressing those palms against each other as much strength as you can, and then release into lightness. So we use our strength all of the time. We use strength when we need to move something heavy across the floor. But then we also use lightness when we're taking care of an injured animal maybe, and we're really carefully picking it up.

00;11;32;48 - 00;12;01;06

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So yeah, strength from strong to light. Another effort is time quick to sustained and so sustained is lingering. Let's let's try a quick improvization. Let's imagine it's a warm day outside and we're just walking. We have nowhere to be. Maybe talking with our friends. We're sustained, we're lingering, but then all of a sudden the bell rings. We've got to go.

00;12;01;06 - 00;12;33;01

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We're going to be late for class and we start moving quickly to get back to where we need to be. Yep. We're using that energy quick,

sustained. And choreographers use that to help communicate ideas. Indirect to direct indirect means. When you see everything in direct means, when you're looking at something specifically. So if I were to say to you right now, Oh my goodness, I've lost my contact, you would help me find it by looking all over.

00;12;33;01 – 00;13;03;34

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Where could that contact be? Looking everywhere. And then if you saw something glistening on the floor, maybe you would go really specifically to that spot you're using indirect to direct. So lastly, is free to bound free is loose muscles and bound is tighter muscles. So let's try playing with that for a second. Let's bind our shoulders tightly and then let them go and have them be loose.

00;13;03;34 – 00;13;29;20

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Let's try binding our arms and our fists. Really just squeeze your muscles and let them go and be loose. Let's try binding our torso. So kind of squeezing the inside of us like we were. If we could squeeze our belly or our hearts or our lungs and then letting the torso go, let's try squeezing our legs, binding the muscles up inside or clenching or squeezing.

00;13;29;49 – 00;14;06;45

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You might not even make that big of a movement and then let them go. And lastly, we're going to clench those toes and ankles and feet and then let them go very neutrally and free versus bound. So let's take a look at an example of choreography and let's look very specific, likely for the energy or the effort. So I would love for you to watch the video once on your own so you can pay attention to the costuming in the music and the movement and the way it makes you feel.

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And then maybe this is the second time you watch the video, and this time we're going to look very specific for the efforts, the energies we see the dancer using to communicate her ideas. The dance that we're going to be watching is called Journey, and it's choreographed by Joyce Tesler from the Alvin Ailey Company. If you want to know more about Alvin Ailey, there's going to be a link in the lesson.

00;14;33;39 – 00;15;09;27

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But for us, I want us to think about the idea. When we hear the word journey, how is a journey different than a trip? I could pack all of my bags and go on a trip to, say, Disneyworld and come home. But that's not exactly a journey. When I go on a journey, something changes inside of me. You can go on a journey by actually traveling to

a new place, but really you've probably been on a journey or two already when you started school, as, you know, a kid in your garden or a small child.

00;15;09;27 - 00;16;28;38

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And as you got older, you change, you went on a journey. And so let's take a look at Mrs. Williams choreography and see what she thinks about the idea of a journey. Oh, that's an interesting moment of quickness and focus and then seeing everything more quickness and sustained, interesting moments of lightness and strength. Lightness as she's reaching, floating to the floor, more of those opposites in strength and lightness with quick focus, seeing everywhere.

00;16;28;38 - 00;17;04;53

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And that takes a lot of strength to get up off the floor and then be doing this lovely, big, rich backbend and pressing through this space. All right. So you can see the different ways in which the choreographer uses her efforts to communicate ideas. So I'm curious how does Joyce Tesla's view of a journey reflect experiences you may or may not have had in your life?

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I was thinking, and I was very inspired by this solo about a journey, and I thought, I'm going to make my own solo about a journey. In order to do so, I'm going to need a beginning position. Let's see, maybe I'll start right here. Yeah. And then I'm going to need an ending position. So maybe I'll go over there around my chair to hear, and then I'm going to need to figure out what movements am I going to do from there to here that give the indication of the journey.

00;17;54;12 - 00;18;35;52

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Let me try improvising some things. I think maybe I'll start my journey with my back to you because I feel like my journey is personal. Here I go. Maybe doing some looking around, just like Joyce the Joyce Tesla, maybe doing some free and some bound movements. Sometimes I'm happy and free and light in my journey and sometimes I just feel heavy.

00;18;37;22 - 00;19;06;21

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Oh, look, I might actually want to end my journey here. I kind of liked that pathway going around my chair. I think I'll keep it. So now I'm wondering how can I use my efforts or my energies to make my journey and communicate the idea of how I feel about my journey? And I think I'm going to use some music.

00;19;07;37 – 00;20;32;44

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Let me show you my finished journey dance. All right. Well, I was definitely inspired by Joyce Tesla's choreography. I loved how she used her focus to maybe indicate how she felt about her journey. And I loved how she used her sense of freedom and strength. I felt like I was getting a sense of confidence and struggle from her journey, and I tried to put some of that in my dance as well.

00;20;33;32 – 00;21;03;18

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I wonder if you've noticed how my dance was different than Joyce Tesla's and I'd love to see your dance, to see how your journey is different and the way that you use your efforts to communicate your feelings about your journey. And I would recommend maybe showing a friend so you can do the same thing. You can learn from each other about this thing called Journey and this thing called the efforts are the dance energies.

00;21;03;18 – 00;21;32;08

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And then you'll be thinking like a choreographer. That was such an amazing lesson. One of the things that I think was important that Aaron pointed out is that dance is not just about the movement or the music, but it's about understanding. The movement is about understanding how to move. I love how she emphasizes the movement and shows us exactly what we should be feeling each time we made a move again.

00;21;32;14 – 00;22;04;29

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Today, we've had an amazing lesson on how you can use dance and choreography in your classroom. And remember, you can utilize this lesson not only to teach in dance, class or physical education, but you can use this lesson to teach mathematics. You can use this lesson in poetry, you can use this lesson in any aspect of content. So I encourage you to go back, look at these lessons, and include them in your classrooms and show your students how fun and engaging dancing can truly be.

00;22;04;52 – 00;22;07;07

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Thank you so much and we'll see you next time.