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Greetings everyone. I'm Dr. DeBelle Williams, professional development director for Engage in Creative Minds. And welcome to Session two of dance matters where we have with us again Mario Richardson, who on today will be teaching us all about the Charleston. Stay tuned as we hear from Mario. Hi. My name is Mario Richardson. And today I'm going to be talking to you about the Charleston.

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Now, I assume most of you are from South Carolina. So I'm sure a lot of you are familiar with our very own Charleston, South Carolina. This dance form was born, bred, originated right here in South Carolina in our very own Charleston. Isn't that cool to have a dance form that was from where you're from. Now, dance as a whole, just like many things in our country, has grown and evolved over time.

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It was originally influenced and inspired by traditions that were brought over by pioneers, immigrants and slaves. Now, when African slaves were brought over through the slave trade from Africa to the U.S., they brought along with them their dancing and drumming traditions. Now, I'm sure a lot of you are used to celebrating big events in your life, like birthdays, weddings, graduations, any other big events that you have.

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You're used to celebrating those things with music, dance and food. And it's a big, big event, right? African traditions are very similar. They are used to having a lot of music, a lot of dancing. Everything is very vibrant and energetic, and they use those as ways to celebrate momentous occasions in a person's life. Now, dance is very communicative.

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It brings people together, but it's very important to see how dance over time has evolved. So as much as we've seen social dance change and blossom over the years, we should probably take a second to take a step back and see where some of our dance skills have transformed from. So let's take a closer look at the Charleston specifically.

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Steps for the Charleston can be traced back to West African culture. The rhythm and steps were invented in Charleston, South Carolina. The Charleston became famous nationally during the 1920s. The Charleston

and other African-American social dances were made popular at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, New York. Unlike other ballrooms, the Savoy always had a no discrimination policy. The clientele was 85% black and 15% white.

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Although sometimes there was a very even split. People didn't care about the color of your skin. They only cared if you could dance. Now, let's take a little closer look at what was going on in South Carolina during the time that the Charleston became popular. When the Charleston was popular, South Carolina was still a segregated state in Plessy versus Ferguson.

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The US Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal was constitutional. Jim Crow laws mandated racial segregation and blacks and whites could not attend school together, marry or sit together in public spaces. But black Americans mobilized in 1946. The South Carolina state court decision, Elmore versus Rice, allowed black Americans to vote in the all white primary. Over 30,000 African-Americans registered to vote in 1954, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, Brown versus Board of Education ruled that racial segregation of public schools was unconstitutional and that separate was, in fact, not equal.

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This important decision was later followed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This ended segregation in public places and banned discrimination. So that's a little bit about the history of what was going on in South Carolina during the time that the Charleston came about. So let's take a look at the dance steps themselves and see what we can do with them.

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So the Charleston we've got a couple steps in here that are a little wild and crazy. So feel free to go ahead and use that to your advantage. We're going to do a lot of twisting and rotating of our feet as well as our hips. So our first step, our feet are going to cross in front. They're going to step back.

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My left foot is going to cross back and it's going to come front. So see how my feet are doing a back and forth motion as I travel forward and I travel back. As I do that, I'm going to let my toes twist along the ground and I'm going to let my heels turn out or my heels turn in and my knees turn out.

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So as I cross forward, twist, step back, twist, step, front. Right. So as I do it quickly, you'll notice that I keep that twisting action the entire time. So in our choreography that we're going to be learning right now, we're going to go front, step back, then take that left foot back, bring it front. Now you're going to do four twists moving forward, alternating feet.

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So I've got my right foot comes forward. Left foot comes forward, right foot, left foot. Okay. So putting those together, right foot forward, step back, left back, step forward. Moving. One, two, three, four. Okay, on that fourth one, as we come forward, I do my third one with my right foot. I do my left one. I'm actually going to go ahead and jump out and put my hands on my knees just like this.

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Okay. So as I'm going forward, I'm going to go one, two, three, drop. Once I get to this dropped position, I'm going to hop on my left foot and I'm going to stick my right foot out. And then I'm going to switch. So I jump on that left foot, stick my right foot out, stick my left foot out from here.

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I'm going to hop on my right foot and bring that leg in. So I jump on my left foot out, out in right bend that me bring that leg all the way behind your calf and then I'm going to do the same thing on the other foot. Bring it in. So together I jump out left, right in, out in.

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From here I'm balancing on my left foot. I hop and kick my right foot out and then I slap it down on the ground just like that. So that whole section, after I bring my hands to my knees, I hop on my left foot. Hop. Hop in. Out, in, out, down. I smack the floor just like I'm squishing a bug on the ground.

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So I bring that foot down from there. When you press my hands down in front of me, I'm going to glue my knees together. And I'm going to swing my foot around behind me. Two times. Twist. Twist. Okay, so let's try adding that on from the very beginning. So I have my front and back twist two times right before the left back.

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I do my three full twists coming forward. I drop my hands down to my knees. I do my hop, hop in, out and out, down. And then I spend my knee around. Okay, so let's do that together. Ready? Our tempo. We're going to start off a little slower. We'll build our speed as we get more comfortable with the movement.

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We've got five, six, seven, eight. Front back, front. Two, three, jump. Hop, hop. In. Out and out. Down. Twist. Twist. As I do that, I'm just bringing my foot down slightly just to brush the floor a little bit. So it's just too fast spins around. After I do that last spin of my knee. So I do one, two.

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I'm going to twist and cross twist and cross twist and drop. That should look a little familiar because we did it just a few movements ago. So I've got my twist. I cross it front. Cross it front and drop. Here we're going to do what's called bee's knees. So my knees are going to go out like this. My hands are going to switch.

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They're going to be open. Then they're going to cross. Then they're going to open. Then they're going to cross. We do it again. Cross. Open. Cross. Okay. So after my twist. Twist. Twist. Front. Front. Drop out. Cross. Three, four. Again. Five, six, seven, eight. After that, we're going to hop on our left foot and we're going to kick our right foot out and throw our left hand out.

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So we've got opposition going on here. Right foot, left arm. So hop and kick. I do the same thing. The other side. Same thing. The other side. Same thing. The other side. So four times total. I'm going to do it in a circle around myself. So I did my last bee's knees. I hop and kick. Two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

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So let's do eight of those total. So we add that on after our bee's knees, we do eight counts. Worth of our twists are our opening. Closing of our knees. Eight counts of those eight counts. Hopping. Throwing those hands and feet out. Making a circle around yourself. And if you're in the class and you're able to have free roam of your space, you can move to a different spot in the room as well.

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So everybody is dancing together instead of everybody just dancing on their own. Okay. So once you guys get comfortable with the movement, feel free to go ahead and move about the space. Okay. So after we do our kicks, we are going to step and we're going to kick to the left. I step on my left foot. I do a big kick.

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I'm going to slide away from where I was just standing. And I'm going to bring my knees together and put my arms up just like that. So I do a step, I kick, I slide hit. I do the same thing going the other way. Step, kick, slide. But this time, my arms are going to go up. So first time my arms are like this.

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Kind of like a scarecrow. And the next time my arms are like this. Like, if I was mocking the way a bird would look. Yeah, I've got my wings out here, but I'm bringing them up, and I'm making it look really funky. Okay, so we've got our slide, kick, slide, hit step, kick, slide, hit. Yes. Pull those up nice and high.

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Bring those knees in nice and tight. So we've learned a lot of movement so far. So let's go ahead and go from the beginning up until there. After that, we're going to repeat some movement and I'll show you that when we get there. Okay. So starting with our twist, going front and back right front, front drop. That's where we're going.

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And ready, set. Here we go. Front, back and front. Two, three. Drop. We hop, hop, hop, cross, hop, cross. Kick it down. Swing swinging. Front to drop bee's knees. Two, three, four, five, six, seven. Hop and kick. Throw the arm. Two, three, four, five, six, seven. Now we cross. Kick, step. Cross, slide, drop. Step, kick, slide, drop. From here, we hop and kick again.

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Kick. Move to a different spot in the room. Or stay in place. Whichever you prefer. But you're going to circle around yourself again. So we do those throws. Last part of our dance. We're going to do some crazy kicks. So I'm sure you saw in the video clip that I showed you guys earlier, the dancers, their legs are throwing out.

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They're wild. They're moving. Their torsos are moving. They have got not a care in the world. So that's what this movement is right here. So we're going to step it's very similar to our twist that we just did, except instead of keeping our feet along the floor, we're going to kick them above. So we have. Step, kick. Step, step, step, kick.

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Step, tap, step, kick and tap. Kick and tap. So it's got that same front and back action, except we're using that front one to give a big kick and the back one can tap. Or if you're feeling like you'd like a challenge, you can kick that one as well. Totally up to you. Okay. Little bit of freestyle in there for you.

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So you've got your eight of those going front and back, right back, all the way to eight ankle. Geographically, that's as much as we're going to learn today. So let's go from top to bottom. We're going to do it to some music and then we're going to do it to some music that's from today. So that you're a little familiar with how to connect dance forms from an older time into today.

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Okay, so we've got our twist going front and back, keeping our feet on the floor ready? Five, six. Here we go. Front and back. And five, six, seven, drop. Hop, hop and hop in. Ah ha. I messed up and that's okay. Ready? Six, seven, eight. And front and back. And five, six, seven, eight. Hup! Hup! Hup! Hup! Down!

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Twist, twist. Six, seven, eight. Bee's knees and two and three and four. Hop and kick. Go. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. And step, kick, slide, drop, step, kick, slide, drop, hop and kick again around five, six, big kicks. Here you go. And step. Up, down, up, down. Five, six, seven, eight. Yes. And that can just be wild and crazy and whatever feels good.

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Okay, so let's try that to some music that's a Charleston was originally danced to and see how that goes. 1056 Ready and breath back. Five, six, seven, eight hup! Hup. And twist. Good hopping kick. Go and kick, fly, jump and slide, bird, kick. Big kicks, step up, back up, back in.

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Very nice. Good. All right. So now let's give that a try to music from today, something you might be familiar with that you've heard on the radio, Spotify, whatever. You've got to listen to music. So here we go. Let's start to get to be five, six. Ready? Go.

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Five, six, seven. Stop. I hop. Feel the fist breath good bee's knees one day. Got to kick around in these shoes Looks good Good. Now kick where I hit where I slide Hit, kick. It's been too long. Move around the room. Good. Get back to kick back where I am now. Good and dry. Nice. And about you. I'm struggling, but I hope you guys did great.

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I hope you had fun learning a little bit about the Charleston. Now go ahead and look up some more dances about the Charleston. If you're interested in seeing how it's progressed over the years. And I hope you have a great rest of your day. Bye. That was an amazing demonstration of the Charleston. We learn so much about the history of the dance and to know that we have a dance name right after one of our wonderful cities right here in South Carolina.

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Please stay tuned as we continue our series on dance matters with Mario Richardson in Session three.