Jumping Rabbit - Book to Ballet
Grades CD–3

Objectives:

1. Students will move their bodies in different ways.
2. Students will create a dance that communicates an idea through the use of literal and abstract gestures.
3. Students will create a movement sequence using literal gestures.
4. Students will create a movement sequence that has a beginning, middle, and end.
5. Students will identify and demonstrate choreographic structures to create a dance.
6. Students will evaluate and critique key literary elements that enhance and deepen meaning within and across texts.

Materials:

- *The Velveteen Rabbit* board book by Margery Williams Bianco (read aloud here)
- Open space (gym, classroom, or dance room)
- Music player and speakers
- Video of a ballerina performing jumps (here)
- Floor markers, paper circles, or hula hoops for jumping pathways
- Classical music
- Choreography Music

Directions:

- Tell students: "When you come to the Gaillard Center, you will see *Velveteen*, a performance inspired by the story *The Velveteen Rabbit.* In this show, performers use movement to tell a story about a toy rabbit who becomes real."
- Read *The Velveteen Rabbit* board book by Margery Williams Bianco (read aloud here).
- Ask:
    - How does a rabbit typically move?
    - Can you mimic (copy) that movement?
- Explain: "Stories can be told in many ways. Today, we will turn the story of *The Velveteen Rabbit* into a ballet, which is a type of dance that tells stories through movement."

Mini Lesson: What is ballet?

- Share briefly: “Ballet is a form of dance that began many years ago in Europe. Dancers use specific positions and graceful movements to tell stories.”
- Show a short video of a ballerina performing jumps here.
- Ask: “What did you notice about the dancer’s movements?”

Warm-Up: Ballet Basics

- Teach and practice:
  - First Position - heels together, toes apart
  - Second Position - feet apart
  - Fourth Position - one foot in front of the other
  - Fifth Position - feet close together, one in front
  - Plié - bending the knees
  - Tendu - stretching and pointing the foot
  - Encourage tall posture and gentle arm placement.

Activity directions:

- **Jumping rabbit practice:**
  - Place circles, markers, or hula hoops on the floor.
  - Explain: “We are going to jump like the Velveteen Rabbit!”
  - Students:
    - Jump from one circle to another
    - Practice landing softly
  - Add:
    - Bunny hands (hands near chest)
    - Pointed feet when jumping
- **Introduce ballet jumps:**
  - Teach:
    - Sauté (jump in place)
      - First position
      - Second position
    - Changement (jump and switch feet)
    - Jeté (small leap from one foot to another)
  - Practice each slowly, then with music.
- **Dance options by age:**
  - CD & Kindergarten
    - Teach a short ballet combination inspired by the story with music:

        - Example:
            - Plié (getting ready)
            - Tendu (reaching out)
            - Sauté (rabbit jumping)
            - Turn (exploring)
            - Final pose (rabbit becoming "real")
        - Repeat sequence together with music.
    - Grades 1–3
        - Divide students into groups of 3–4.
        - Each group creates a short rabbit ballet dance to music that includes:
            - At least four ballet steps learned
            - Jumping or traveling movement
            - A clear ending pose
        - Encourage:
            - Beginning (rabbit exploring)
            - Middle (playing or jumping)
            - Ending (becoming real)
        - Groups perform for the class.
        - If there is extra time, encourage compliments or questions from the students for each group.

Conclusion:
Share with students, "Today, we turned a story into a dance, just like in *Velveteen*. When you come into the Gaillard Center to watch the performance of *Velveteen,* notice how the performers use movement to tell a story."

SC College and Career Ready Standards:

- **D.CR NL.1.1** - I can move my body in different ways.
- **D.CR NH.2** - I can create a dance that communicates an idea through the use of literal and abstract gestures.
- **D.CR NL.2** - I can create a movement sequence using literal gestures.
- **D.CR NM.2.1** - I can create a movement sequence that has a beginning, middle, and end.
- **D.CR IL.2.1** - I can identify and demonstrate choreographic structures to create a dance.
- **ELA.AOR.1** - Evaluate and critique key literary elements that enhance and deepen meaning within and across texts.