ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EWW 137B Do The Crane Dance

By Jorge Cham

Elinor's Question: Why do cranes dance?

Logline: When Mr. Lion encourages the kids to make up dances to express themselves, Elinor gets some inspiration from some cranes she sees dancing nearby.

Curriculum Goals:

LS 3a. Observe ways that animals and plants get what they need to live and grow. [Elinor and her friends observe the ways that cranes use dance to communicate.]

ND2. (RTL Crosscutting concept 'Systems'): Begin to understand that systems developed in our world often work in similar ways to systems found in the natural world. [Elinor and her friends discover that birds use dance to communicate, just like we do]

Arts. (From the Arts Framework): Dance is a way to explore and express behaviors, feelings, ideas/concepts, and stories using movement. [Elinor and her friends use dance to communicate something they've learned]

FIRST DRAFT: May 08, 2020

SECOND DRAFT: May 21, 2020

POLISH DRAFT: June, 04, 2020

RECORD DRAFT: June 12, 2020

1. EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

It's a wonderful Spring day in Animal Town, and MR. LION (the town art teacher) is outdoors again with the kids, this time teaching them about Dancing. We open on his face as he strikes a dramatic pose, and then launches into an abstract and sometimes funny and expressive dance routine that communicates different emotions and actions.

The kids, including ELINOR, ARI and OLIVE, THE GOAT TWINS (MARY and LIZZIE), SALLY and TITO, smile as they look on. Mr. Lion finishes in a flourish and hangs there for a moment before opening his eyes.

1 MR. LION 1
And that, is the joy of dancing!

The kids <SFX: OOH, AAH AND CLAP>.

2 ELINOR 2
Wow, Mr. Lion, that was amazing.

3 ARI 3
Yeah, we could tell you were really sad at first...

4 OLIVE 4
But then you found a flower.

5 MARY/LIZZIE 5
And that made you really happy.

Mr. Lion beams.

6 MR. LION 6
That's right! That was a dance about how sometimes I'm sad, but then flowers cheer me up.

The kids <SFX OOOHH...>.

7 MR. LION (CONT'D) 7
You see, kids, dancing isn't just a great way to move our bodies and get healthy exercise. It's also a way to *communicate*! To show your ideas and tell others how you feel.

Mr. Lion does an extra little fun dance move.

8 MR. LION (CONT'D) 8
It's also... a lot of fun!

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

9 MR. LION (CONT'D) 9
And now, it's YOUR turn. For class today, I want you to work with others and come up with your own dance that *communicates* something you all think is special.

The kids pair up and look at each other with excitement, except Elinor who looks a bit thoughtful.

10 MR. LION (CONT'D) 10
And at the end, we'll have a little show where everyone can share their dance. How does that sound?

The kids <SFX: YEAH!/AWESOME/YOU BET! WALLA> and the group starts to break up. Elinor, still looking pensive, hangs back and talks to Mr. Lion.

11 ELINOR 11
Mr. Lion, what if we don't know what to make our dance about?

12 MR. LION 12
Don't worry, Elinor, I'm sure you'll come up with something great.

Elinor looks a bit more encouraged.

13 MR. LION (CONT'D) 13
When you find something that you want to dance about, you'll *feel* it. And then you'll want to share it with the whole world!

Elinor reflects on this as she joins Ari and Olive, who have moved to a spot in the clearing near the tree line. Ari looks like he's warming up to dance.

14 OLIVE 14
Ok, what should our dance be about?

15 ELINOR 15
Well, Mr. Lion said it should be something we all think is special.

16 ARI 16
Ooh, I know! We should do a cha-cha dance about my favorite snack: peanut butter and pickles!

Ari demonstrates by doing a fun shimmy and groove with gusto where he mimes eating peanut butter and pickles and rubs his tummy.

While doing the final flourish, though, he trips on himself <SFX: WH-WHOA!> and falls in front of Olive, who catches him in a dance dip move. Ari, still hanging from Olive, strikes a pose:

17 ARI (CONT'D) 17
Ta da!

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

18 OLIVE 18
Um, I'm not sure I like peanut butter and pickles as much as you do, Ari.

Olive has an idea.

19 OLIVE (CONT'D) 19
I know! We should do a beautiful ballet about my favorite thing: books!

Olive demonstrates a few kid-graceful moves and pirouettes while holding and miming reading her nature book, finishing in a plié.

20 ELINOR 20
Wow, Olive, you're so good at ballet.

21 ARI 21
Yeah, I'm not sure I can dance ballet like that.

22 OLIVE 22
What about you, Elinor, what do you think we should dance about?

Elinor thinks for a moment.

23 ELINOR 23
Hmm, I don't know. Mr. Lion said it should be something we *all* think is special, but I'm not sure what.

24 ARI 24
I don't know either, but look at Mary and Lizzie. Their dance does look pretty special.

The kids look over to where the goat twins are practicing their dance, and it's pretty good. The goat twins do a perfectly synchronized mirror-image series of hip kid dance moves while a few other kids look on. They finish with flair.

25 MARY 25
And that's our dance about...

26 LIZZIE 26
How much fun it is to be...

27 MARY/LIZZIE 27
Twins!

The gathered kids <SFX: CLAP and CHEER>.

28 OLIVE 28
Wow, their dance is so good.

Elinor looks lost in thought in their problem <SFX HMMM...>, and as the three of them ponder <SFX: HMMM...>, something catches Elinor's attention. Next to her is a small sandhill crane chick, looking up at her (https://images.app.goo.gl/a8Wnwv2EcwmE2Knc8).

29 ELINOR 29
Oh, hello little bird.

The bird makes some funny moves, which include an awkward jump and a spin with a one wing out (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQthhI6ukTE). Elinor thinks it's cute.

30 ELINOR (CONT'D) 30
(giggling)
Aww...

She turns to call her friends.

31 ELINOR (CONT'D) 31
Olive! Ari! Come look.

32 OLIVE 32
What is it, Elinor?

Ari and Olive come over, but when Elinor turns around, the bird has meandered over to the edge of the clearing.

33 ELINOR 33
You have to meet this bird. C'mon,
let's go observe it.

Ari turns to Mr. Lion.

34 ARI 34
We'll be right back, Mr. Lion!

Mr. Lion waves back.

35 MR. LION 35
Ok, don't go too far!

2. EXT. SHALLOW POND - DAY

After a few beats of following, still just a few steps away from the clearing, the kids emerge and discover a nearby shallow pond, where a whole flock of crane birds are hanging out.

36 ELINOR 36
Whoa, look at all these birds.

37 OLIVE 37
I don't think I've ever seen this kind of bird before.

38 ARI 38
Their legs are so long. And look at the cool red feathers on their heads.

39 ELINOR 39
There's the little chick bird.

The kids spot the crane chick. Suddenly, they see something even more amazing: some of the birds start to move in interesting ways!

40 ARI 40
(gasp!) What are the birds doing?

The cranes do dips and jumps and twirls and spins, by themselves and with other cranes (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9ZjZqR4mt8).

41 ELINOR 41
Wow! Look how they're moving.

42 OLIVE 42
It looks like... they're dancing?

They see other crane birds stretch their wings, pump their heads, bow, and leap into the air in graceful and energetic ways (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WLHZ2RIiNY).

43 ELINOR 43
It does look like they're dancing.
That is SO interesting.

44 ARI 44
I didn't know birds could dance!

The kids are amazed <SFX: WOOOOW...>. Elinor thinks for a moment.

45 ELINOR 45
I wonder... why are these birds dancing?

46 OLIVE 46
Maybe they're in a dance class, too.

47 ELINOR 47
Mmm, I don't think birds have classes.

48 ARI 48
I know! Maybe they're trying to do the cha-cha!

Ari does a little cha-cha dance, and Elinor and Olive <SFX: GIGGLE>.

49 OLIVE 49
I'm not sure birds know what the cha-cha is, Ari.

50 ARI 50
Yeah, maybe it's not a bird thing.

51 ELINOR 51
Let's take a closer look and see if we can figure out why they're dancing. We need more observations.

The kids stealthily move a little closer to watch the birds and observe them dancing. They scan the flock.

First, they see one bird doing moves in front of another bird.

52 OLIVE 52
Look, that bird is dancing in front of that other bird.

53 ELINOR 53
It flapped and jumped, and now it's running around the other one.

Both birds then start to jump one after the other, and then they alternate head bobs.

54 ARI 54
Now it looks like they're dancing together.

55 OLIVE 55
Aww... I think they like each other.

(NOTE: dances come from these references:
https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1450&context=tnas
http://christyyuncker.com/Craneattackdisplays.html)

Elinor looks over at another group of cranes.

56 ELINOR 56
Look, over there.

The kids see another bird chase a few other birds away with an angry looking dance. First, the crane lowers its head and walks back and forth repeatedly, then stands tall and runs forward towards the other birds with wings flapping.

57 OLIVE 57
Uh-oh, that doesn't look like a very happy dance.

58 ARI 58
Yeah, all the other birds are walking away.

Something jogs Elinor's memory (happy dance?) <SFX: HMMMM...> and we see a thought bubble form above her with a flashback of Mr. Lion dancing from earlier in the episode.

59 ELINOR 59
That's it! I think I figured it out.

60 OLIVE 60
What is it, Elinor?

61 ELINOR 61
I think the way the birds danced helped us figure out how they were feeling and what they were telling the other birds.

62 OLIVE 62
Ohhhh.

63 ELINOR 63
Maybe these birds are dancing to communicate, like Mr. Lion said!

64 ARI 64
You mean they're dancing to talk to each other?

Olive nods, and looks back at the first dancing bird they observed.

65 OLIVE 65
Uh-huh. I think you're right, Elinor. That bird danced to tell the other bird that it likes it.

Ari also catches on, and looks at the second bird they observed.

66 ARI 66
Ohhhh, and *that* bird danced to tell the other birds to stay away.

67 ELINOR 67
Yes! You can use dance to communicate. Even birds do it! They also use dance to talk to each other.

68 OLIVE 68
We figured it out!

Smiles and <SFX: YAY!/AWESOME WALLA> and high fives. At that moment, Mr. Lion walks over.

69 MR. LION 69
Ah, there you are, kids. What are you looking at?

70 ELINOR 70
Mr. Lion, we found these birds that dance!

71 OLIVE 71
Yes, and we think they dance to communicate, just like you said.

72 ARI 72
And they even do the cha-cha! (does a little dance, then pauses) Ok, not really.

Elinor and Olive smile and <SFX: GIGGLE> as Mr. Lion looks at the crane birds.

73 MR. LION 73
Ah yes, these are Sandhill Cranes. They're one of many birds that like to dance. Isn't it amazing?

We pull out to see the kids and the cranes dancing in the foreground.

74 MR. LION (CONT'D) 74
And you're right, scientists think these birds dance to communicate. They dance to tell each other when they're mad, and when they like each other.

Just then, they see the crane bird chick they saw earlier. The chick seems to be trying to imitate the older birds, and is just dancing by itself.

75 ELINOR 75
There's the little crane chick we saw before. It looks like it's trying to dance, too.

76 MR. LION 76
Wonderful! Some scientists think that sandhill cranes sometimes also just dance for fun, to communicate how happy they are.

They watch the little bird spin and jump and bob its head.

77 OLIVE 77
Go little chick bird!

78 ARI 78
Yeah, woo hoo!

Elinor looks at all the birds.

79 ELINOR 79
I think it's so special that these birds dance.

80 OLIVE 80
Yeah...

Suddenly, Elinor has an idea.

81 ELINOR 81
(gasp!) Ari! Olive! That gives me an idea for what our dance should be about.

Ari and Olive look excited.

82 OLIVE 82
I think we know what you mean, Elinor.

83 ELINOR 83
C'mon!

The kids dash off back towards the clearing. Mr. Lion stays for a beat and watches them rush off, then follows them.

84 MR. LION 84
Ah, inspiration! I love it!

3. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

It's a short time later, and the class is in the middle of the dance show. We catch the show as Sally and Tito are doing their dance.

Sally and Tito dance a fun happy dance where they point up at the sky and embrace the warm sunlight a few times before plopping down on the ground.

85 MR. LION 85
Bravo! Bravo! (clapping) Sally, Tito, that was wonderful! I could tell that you were trying to communicate how happy you are, and how much you like being out in the sun.

Sally and Tito nod vigorously.

86 MR. LION (CONT'D) 86
Ok, who would like to go next?

Elinor, Ari and Olive raise their hands.

87 MR. LION (CONT'D) 87
Elinor, Ari, Olive, you're up!

The kids walk up to the middle of the clearing and they explain their dance.

88 ELINOR 88
Ahem. Like Mr. Lion said, dancing is a way to communicate.

89 OLIVE 89
Yeah, it's a way to share your feelings and show others something you think or something that you've learned.

90 ARI 90
So, our dance is about something that we learned today. It's called... The Crane Dance!

We hear a few musical beats and as the kids get ready to dance, they sing one verse:

91 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 91
You can use dance
To communicate
Just move your body
It's really great!

The music continues, and the kids do their dance.

First, Ari dances in place in the center. Then, Olive and Elinor come running in, flapping their arms while doing circles around Ari. As the other kids watch, some of them yell out what they think is happening.

92 MARY 92
Look, it's birds!

Next, Ari joins Elinor and Olive on a loop around as he looks like he's following them. Elinor and Olive circle to the middle as Ari looks on, and they take turns jumping and moving like the birds we saw earlier. The audience kids yell out:

93 LIZZIE 93
They're dancing!

94 SALLY 94
Birds can dance? I didn't know that.

Tito and the kids <SFX: WHOA COOL! AWESOME! WALLA>. Elinor and Olive are expressive in their dance, taking turns and then dancing together in a way that says, "I like you!" and "I like you too!"

95 SALLY (CONT'D) 95
It looks like they're communicating!

The kids do a few more fly around moves and dance together to express their excitement at learning something new, and they end their dance by repeating the song verse.

96 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 96
You can use dance
To communicate
Birds can do it
They're really great!

Mr. Lion and the other kids <SFX: CHEER>.

97 MR. LION 97
Bravo! Bravo! That was amazing!
Elinor, Ari, Olive, you danced
about something you learned and how
that made you feel.

98 ELINOR 98
Yeah, we learned that some birds
also dance to communicate.

99 OLIVE 99
And that you can use dance to
communicate all kinds of things,
like how you feel and what you
learn.

100 ARI 100
And how you feel WHEN you learn,
which is... happy!

He does a few cha-cha moves, and all the kids <SFX: GIGGLE/LAUGH>.

Mr. Lion beams.

101 MR. LION 101
And that makes ME feel happy too!
(flash of inspiration)
I have an idea, let's ALL dance
like the crane birds to show how
happy we are!

All the kids <SFX: CHEER/YEAH WALLA> and join in a happy dance of flapping and jumping and bobbing their heads. As the camera pulls out, we catch crane birds dancing nearby and we...

FADE OUT. *