

## Dance and the Common Core Standards in Language and Math

by Lynn Monson, published in the *Arizona Dance e-Star*, Sept 1, 2013

For educators in the K-12 system, it is the time of the Common Core standards. These new standards in Language Arts (ELA) and Math have permeated the landscape of K-12 education. Whatever subject you teach, *even Dance*, you can't run and hide from them. And we shouldn't. We need to embrace them.

And, as Lynn Tuttle advised in a blog that appeared on ARTSblog September 10, 2012 (*full link and reference below*), "Don't Panic." And I would add, this new development is not necessarily a bad thing. The ELA and Math Common Core standards have moved

to addressing *higher order thinking* and the big concepts. *That's nothing new to Dance. We have been doing that forever!*

In her blog, Lynn highlighted some of the connections between the Common Core ELA standards and Dance. Dance is a form of literacy and communication. The Common Core ELA standards reference literacy across the curriculum. Lynn advised, "*Focus on the text in order to answer questions in class.... all arts areas include texts within the critique and evaluation parts of our disciplines.*" We certainly want our dance students to comprehend Dance writings. She added,

*Many links were found between ELA and Math Common Core standards and the new National Core Arts Standards. Not surprising.*

*"If you use a very broad definition of text to include primary source material, then you can practice the tools of the ELA Common Core standards by closely 'reading' or analyzing a painting, a dance, a musical performance."* Requiring students to critique and analyze Dance is a common practice for dance educators. Another connection that Lynn cited is, "*Use your content vocabulary.... This reinforces development of rich, domain specific vocabulary for our students-part of the Common Core ELA standards.*" Dance is certainly not lacking in this area. The last example Lynn cites is, "*Reinforce the development of academic vocabulary... words such as **compare, contrast, synthesize, analyze**..."* What a concept—higher order thinking. Every good dance educator I know uses these consistently.

I urge you to read the full blog by Tuttle.

I think it will put your mind at ease. Her article originally appeared on ARTSblog as part of a salon on the topic of Common Core State Standards. To read the full blog and more, visit: <http://blog.artsusa.org/tag/sept-2012-blog-salon/>.

Another great resource to help us all find those connections to ELA and Math, while still staying true to our discipline is the "**The Arts and the Common Core: A Review of Connections Between the Common Core State Standards and the National Core Arts Standards Conceptual Framework,**" prepared by the College Board. This report looked at the links between the ELA and Math Common Core standards and the new National Core Arts Standards. Not surprising, many were found. Since ELA was addressed above, let's look at Math.

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## Dance and the Common Core Standards in Language and Math *continued*

The National Core Arts standards identify four creative practices inherent to all arts forms—***imagine, investigate, construct, and reflect***. The College Board report found that the Common Core Math standards have links to all four creative practices. The new Math standards require students to investigate a problem and its solutions, construct the solution and then reflect upon it. At the risk of repeating, we do this all the time in Dance. We imagine and investigate an idea, a theme, a problem, then construct the dance to reflect that idea, theme or problem, and finally reflect upon

our creation and revise. Other practices in the Math standards sound exactly like the same practices we emphasize in Dance. “Use appropriate tools strategically.” “Attend to precision.” “Look for and make use of structure.”

So, this new way of teaching and learning is a positive step forward. It seems to me that ELA and Math have caught up to how we teach in Dance and the Arts. *Maybe they are finally getting it.* It is about thinking and creating and understanding. Concepts dance educators know well. The plus for Dance and all the Arts is that we have an

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opportunity to be leaders here. Guide the other teachers in how they can address these new standards.

To use an important Dance practice, take a breath, maybe two or three and then continue doing what you have always done. Teach good Dance.

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ARTSblog, September 10, 2012 as part of a salon on the topic of Common Core State Standards. To read the full and more, visit: <http://blog.artsusa.org/tag/sept-2012-blog-salon/>.

“The Arts and the Common Core: A Review of Connections Between the Common Core State Standards and the National Core Arts Standards Conceptual Framework,” prepared by the College Board. December 2012. <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/Common+Core+Alignment>.

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