

# Using Dance as Text

## to Improve Literacy

Common ELA and Dance processes include:

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*Determine  
Compare*

*Analyze  
Explain*

*Interpret  
Critique*

*Cite  
Assess*

*These processes exist on the same cognitive demand level, which offers the opportunity to have them work in tandem in the classroom since they are aligned.*

Why should I use dance as a strategy to improve literacy?

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*It gives multiple opportunities for students to understand themes and concepts found in class texts.*

*You can relate the dances students analyze to the themes and messages found in ELA texts.*

*It provides an alternate modality to access text, as dance is a universal language.*

*This is a differentiation tool to provide multiple access points to launch into text material.*

*By providing frequent access to artistic activities, you foster a more open, creative classroom environment.*

*This further encourages students to explore and take risk in their work.*

# What can this look like in my classroom?

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## Take a look at this sample activity:

1. Have students watch a video clip of a dance work. The dance work should relate to themes and concepts found in your current class text.
2. While students are watching, they will have to answer questions, using evidence from the movement and surrounding elements to support each answer. Sample questions include:
  - What is the mood of the dance?
  - What emotions is the dancer conveying?
  - What is the point of view of the dancer in the story they are telling?
  - What do you think this dance may be about?
3. After students write their answers, they can share their responses in groups, as a whole class, or in individual writing pieces.

# How can this strategy be extended?

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Activities that use dance to improve literacy can extend towards other aspects of ELA.

Use movement, such as gestures and poses, to create alternate endings to stories, compose these endings through writing, and use text to support movement choices and how it extends from original plot.

Use movement to create a short dance of pivotal moments in the text which support the theme, which students can articulate using evidence from text.

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### In Social Studies...

Examining and articulating how dances portray certain key points in history.

### In Science...

Writing hypotheses to how movement utilizes different aspects from physics.

### In Math...

Defending how movement choices can express solutions to geometric and algebraic word problems.