

BalletX Dance eXchange

2020 - 2021 Curriculum Guide: Strength





2020 - 2021 CURRICULUM GUIDE

“STRENGTH: we are stronger together”

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to Dance eXchange! We are so excited to partner with you on another year of fun, creativity, and growth through dance.

This year we study Strength: we are stronger together through the lens of learning and creating at home. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our dancers have been working from home isolating from one another, similar to how we all must learn at home together. We may be physically distant from each other, but we are continuing to create together! This guide offers direction on how to integrate our program theme, Strength, into the current Pennsylvania Common Core Curriculum in relevant and accessible ways, such as lesson plans, video and musical suggestions, and literary resources.

As dance artists and educators, we understand that the deepest impact occurs when our students are able to visualize connections between subjects. When math concepts align with dance choreography or when core benchmarks are met through music theory and visual arts, our children gain a deeper understanding of what is being presented in the classroom and on the stage. We hope this guide is helpful as you integrate the arts into your classroom!

As always, we are here to answer any questions you may have about Dance eXchange, whether regarding the program, the technology, or this guide. Please don't hesitate to reach out to Anne White, Education and Community Relations Specialist, awhite@balletx.org, with your thoughts!

We can't wait to share this year's journey with you!



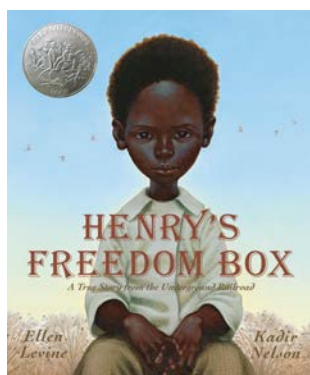
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Cox".

Christine Cox
Artistic & Executive Director, BalletX

ABOUT THE THEME

Strength is essentially the capacity to withstand force or great pressure. Whether this strength be physical, mental, or emotional, it takes a lot of strength to experience life. We become stronger together by uplifting and supporting one another each and every day. Community plays a large role in understanding how we can be strong together. Community allows for support, a sense of belonging, a strong sense of self and a sense of connection. This sense of community is especially important in child development. By creating a community, children will feel emotionally and physically safe and valued; they develop social abilities and have a sense of sharing and caring for each other. The National Dance Institute says to give students real-world reasons for working hard. This will give them the ability to see the concepts in real time and know how they can become stronger together, while simultaneously being empowered.



This year, we will learn how to become stronger together through these shifts in the world. Choreographer, Rena Butler's world premiere ballet will have an emphasis on the Underground Railroad and how working with others creates an undeniable strength and community. Ellen Levine's children's book, *Henry's Freedom Box*, is stirring and dramatic book that is based on a true story from the Underground Railroad. Illustrated by Kadir Nelson, the book follows the difficult journey of a young boy who decides to mail himself to freedom. Henry encounter's many obstacles, but through his own strength he makes it to freedom and is able to celebrate his first birthday as a free slave.

In Dance eXchange, we will use the concept of strength and how we can become stronger together to inform our weekly virtual classes and check ins. We will explore famous figures in history and how their strength and sense of community helped change the world through our class resources, games, and improvisations. Our strength to encourage and support each other virtually, will ultimately build a sense of community despite not being in the same space.

We will be examining the ways in which we can be strong for ourselves and with others. Strength is not just a physical practice, rather it is simultaneously vulnerable, emotional, and mental. We will also be exploring the components that create strength together!

A: all together

B: brave

C: compassion

D: drive

E: emotions

F: friendship

G: gratitude

H: happy

ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE WITH

When students who incorporate what they are learning in Dance eXchange into a classroom project, they are able to dive deeper into the curriculum we provide and create connections. Combined with the PA Common Core Standards, classroom projects offer an excellent opportunity to incorporate these aspects of Dance eXchange into school curriculum. Listed below are a few examples of projects that will integrate different forms of strength and how we are stronger together.

WRITING A LETTER:

Showing strength may look like asking for help when you need it! Have your students think of a time where they could use help when completing a task. Have them then write out a letter asking that person for help. The simple idea of asking for help requires one to be vulnerable, which in itself promotes strength!

THE STRENGTH CHAIN:

We become stronger when we all come together. To help your students thrive, they should recognize their own strengths, which is just as important as working on their challenges. Have your students write a strength they believe they possess on a piece of paper. Have the students hold their signs up to the camera after reading it out loud, which becomes an affirmation. Together the students will see all the strengths in the class and see how strong they are all together.

THE STRENGTH TREE:

Similar to the strength chain, this will allow students to see the strengths in the class in one space. Draw a tree so the visual shows the students how their strengths are always growing and changing.

DRAWING:

Have your students draw a self portrait of themselves, using any material they desire. After they draw themselves, have them write “I am” statements surrounding their picture. Allow them to also include people in their lives who

support them and make them feel strong. These affirmations will allow them to recognize how much strength they already possess.

CREATE KINDNESS POSTCARDS:

Create a postcard to give to a family member, neighbor, or friend encouraging and supporting them. Words of affirmation and encouragement build strength in others, as well as promote a sense of community.

PA Common Core for English Language Arts

Grade 3 benchmarks addressed

1.4 Writing Standards PreK-5

✓ Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content (p. 17-26).

1. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
2. Identify and introduce the topic.
3. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, and illustrations, as appropriate.
4. Create an organizational structure that includes information grouped and connected logically with a concluding statement or section.
5. Choose words and phrases for effect.
6. Demonstrate a grade appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling
7. Introduce the topic and state an opinion on the topic.
8. Create an organizational structure that includes reasons linked in a logical order with a concluding statement or section.
9. Use a variety of words and sentence types to appeal to the audience.
10. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
11. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
12. Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally, using temporal words and phrases to signal event order; provide a sense of closure.
13. Choose words and phrases for effect.

PEOPLE TO FOCUS ON



Jackie Robinson: American baseball player

Jackie is the first baseball player to break Major League Baseball's color barrier that segregated the sport for more than 50 years.



Dolores Huerta: activist & labor leader

Dolores experienced the racism many Mexican Americans suffered from, especially those who were farm workers. She worked to improve social and economic conditions for farm workers and to fight discrimination against lives of workers, immigrants, and women, and eventually founded the Agricultural Workers Association (AWA).



Barack Obama: 44th president of the United States of America

President Barack Obama, faced much adversity due to his multiracial heritage. He attended Harvard Law School, became the first Black editor of the Harvard Law Review, and later became the first Black president of the United States.



Marian Anderson: opera singer

Marian, a native to Philadelphia, faced many challenges growing up. Her family was unable to afford vocal lessons, so she taught herself how to sing. Ms. Anderson later became the first Black woman to perform with the New York Metropolitan Opera.



May Ying Chen: labor organizer & advocate for immigrant workers

May led one of the largest Asian American worker strikes demanding work contracts for garment factory workers. Her leadership and strength paved the way for better working conditions, better wages, as well as hiring bilingual staff to interpret for workers.



John Lewis: leader in The Civil Rights Movement

Mr. Lewis grew up in an era of racial segregation. He was the youngest speaker at the March on Washington in 1963, at the age of 23. He led the demonstration that later became known as "Bloody Sunday".



Misty Copeland: American Ballet Dancer

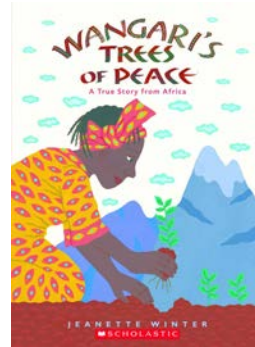
Misty began her ballet training at the age of 13 in California. She joined the American Ballet Theatre as a member of the corps de ballet in 2001. In 2015, she became the first Black female soloist in the company's 75-year history.

RESOURCES

Below are some additional resources Dance eXchange recommends:

BOOKS:

- *Wangari's Trees of Peace* by Jeanette Winter
- *Mango Moon* by Diane De Anda
- *I am Gandhi* by Brad Meltzer
- *Not One Damsel* in Distress by Jane Yolen
- *It's Okay To Be Different* by Todd Parr
- *My Friend Maggie* by Hannah E. Harrison
- *Henry's Freedom Box* by Kadir Nelson
- *All Kinds of Families!* by Mary Ann Hoberman
- *City Shapes* by Diana Murray
- *The Undeclared* by Kwame Alexander



VIDEOS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4Wxhm46RbU>

- Stephen Jon Thompson's Ted Talk, "Creating a Community and Finding Purpose", focuses on how he had to use his own strength and the community and strength of others in order to find success.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6_pLkwaCeY

- Even though our classrooms are virtual, it's still important to create community within the class. Simply setting aside time to check in with your students is allowing them to recognize their own emotional strength.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z7gDsSKUmU>

- Kid President, age 9, explores the different ways we can change the world together. No one is ever too young to start making a change!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsn-03bQbPo>

- Read aloud version of *Henry's Freedom Box*

QUOTES TO ENCOURAGE AND EXPLORE:

- "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." - **African Proverb**
- "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships." - **Michael Jordan**

- “Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” - **Harriet Tubman**
- “Compassion and tolerance are not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength.” - **Dalai Lama**
- “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” - **Martin Luther King, Jr**
- “It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.” - **E.E. Cummings**
- “The world will not know peace until we learn to understand each other's emotions” - **Bangambiki Habyarimana**

PA Common Core Standards for English Language Arts
Grade 3 benchmarks addressed

1. Foundational Reading Standards PreK-5 (6-7)

- ✓ Students gain a working knowledge of concepts of print, alphabetic principle, and other conventions.
- 1. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes. Decode words with common Latin suffixes. Decode multi syllable words. Read grade appropriate irregularly spelled words
- 2. Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding. Read on-level text orally with accuracy and appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

Core Standards English Language Arts
Grade 3 benchmarks addressed

3. Reading Literature PreK-5 (13-16)

- ✓ Students read and respond to works of literature—with emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.
- 1. Explain the point of view of the author.
- 2. Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- 3. Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.
- 4. Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).
- 5. Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters.
- 6. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.
- 7. Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.
- 8. Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

MURAL ARTS IN PHILADELPHIA

Mural Arts' is a platform for the voices of everyday citizens. They collaborate with community members to imagine and lead projects that build social capital, develop a sense of communal ownership over space, represent diversity, and empower people to make change in their city.

Community Mural projects often will highlight important figures and themes from Philadelphia's history. This process provides community members with the tools and creative space to envision and then express what their stories look like in a public space. The resulting artworks bring together neighbors and new friends, lifting up our leaders and heroes—visual reminders of who we are, who we have been, and where we are going.



Soul of the Black Bottom



Latinx Heroes



Spring Arts District: Charles Burwell



Legacy



Dreams, Diaspora, and Destiny (2018)



Imagining Justice



Spring Arts District: Temporary Projects



Sembrando Sueños, Cosechando Esperanzas



Your Own Channel

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

By demonstrating a loving acceptance of all children's backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, you create an environment that says, "All are welcome here." At the same time you are modeling just how you want children to be with one another. The goal is to celebrate individuals while creating a sense of community.

Studies also tell us that some of the most important skills children need for school readiness and success are the "people skills" of social interaction, communication, collaboration, and problem solving.

Team or group work teaches students the fundamental skills associated with working as a collective unit toward a common goal. Working together teaches time management, resource allocation and communication skills, which ultimately build and utilizes one another's strengths.

Building Community Through...

Identity

Familiarity

Warmth

Trust

Predictability

Family Involvement

INTRODUCING GROWTH MINDSET TO CHILDREN

Developing the right mindset early on is crucial for a successful, happy life. When kids learn that putting forth effort and using the right strategies can help them get better at things, they feel empowered, and try harder. When they know their brains are capable of growing, they are more confident, resilient, and are not afraid to fail!

Growth mindset occurs when we believe our intelligence and abilities can be improved upon with effort and the right strategies. Those with a fixed mindset believe their intelligence and abilities cannot be altered in a meaningful way. Essentially this will naturally start to develop into the idea of persistence to achieve a certain goal. This can be a personal goal or a communal goal.

1. Introduce it

- a. What does it mean to grow?
- b. What is mindset?
- c. What are growth and fixed mindsets?
- d. Share examples from your life
- e. Discuss the power of the brain

2. Notice it

- a. Reflect on definition of growth and growth mindset
- b. Recognize the difference between a growth and fixed mindset
- c. Display visuals as everyday reminders
- d. Discuss how growth mindset looks, feels, and sounds like
- e. Use books and movie characters

3. Model it

- a. Share your experience
- b. Discuss emotions
- c. Set a goal
- d. Use the power of “yet” EX.) “I can’t do this...yet.”

4. Practice it

- a. Praise for healthy growth mindset
- b. Make it a game by using positive reinforcement
- c. Encourage productive healthy struggle
- d. Reframe mistakes and failures
- e. Hit pause

FLIPGRID

What is Flipgrid?

Flipgrid is a free platform that allows Dance eXchange staff to post discussion prompts and allows students to respond with fun short videos.

How will we use Flipgrid?

For each classroom, we will direct you and your students to a private group of discussion topics. Upon opening the link we share, you may choose to join by Google or Microsoft using your school district email addresses, which have been added to the private group.



In each private group, you will see all the topics we have posted. For each of the topics, students can see a video about the discussion prompt and record a video response. After recording themselves, they can add a selfie, a filter, text, or more!

Where are the videos going?

The videos uploaded will only be seen by our program staff. In December (and June if schools remain closed), we will compile celebratory videos, which may include outstanding video responses on Flipgrid.

We ask that you introduce this to your students and put the link of your classroom group on the calendar every other week. If you would like to review or provide feedback to the videos, you will need to create a Flipgrid account, and then we can add you as a “CoPilot.”

T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

Dance eXchange's t-shirt design contest provides students with an additional project to explore the curricular theme through visual arts. Students will create designs in black and white based on the theme of Strength, and one design will be selected and printed on a t-shirt. The expertise of the visual arts teachers may provide a valuable resource to deepen this work. The following outlines steps for integrating this project with the visual arts teacher's work:

- The Dance eXchange team works with the classroom teacher and assign the t-shirt design to Dance eXchange students as a collaborative project. The team sets dates for introduction and completion of the contest.
- The Dance eXchange team will choose the winning design.
- BalletX graphic designer will clean up the image in Photoshop and submit the final design for screen-printing.

