

HANNA

DANCING TO LEARN

ROWMAN &
LITTLEFIELD

DANCING TO LEARN



The Brain's Cognition,
Emotion, and Movement

JUDITH LYNNE HANNA

Dancing to Learn: The Brain's Cognition, Emotion and Movement is groundbreaking. Interdisciplinary 21st century neuroscience suggests that the brain “choreographs” dance-maker, dancer, and spectator. The book synthesizes new research in neuroscience with knowledge in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and education to offer illuminating insights about dance as a compelling medium of education for everyone.

Key premises are (1) dance is nonverbal language affecting similar places and learning processes in the brain as verbal language, thus a powerful means of communication; (2) dance is physical exercise that sparks new brain cells (neurogenesis and neural plasticity, the brain's amazing ability to change throughout life); and (3) dance is a means to help us cope with stress that can motivate or interfere with learning.

The book explores venues for learning dance and other subjects, dance as an art, liberal art, and applied art, as well as a vehicle to find self, cultural, regional, and national identities. The goal is to enlighten educators, dancers, and the general public, as well as to encourage scientists to explore the underpinnings of dance.

Endorsements

Dancing is a powerful human act—perhaps no other human endeavor so thoroughly integrates our capacities for movement, artistic expression, social communication, meaning-making and emotional feeling. *Dancing to Learn* explains why this is so, and in the process teaches readers how to utilize dance to promote human development and social change... A great read for anyone interested in embodiment, culture and learning, whether or not they dance.

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang. PhD. Associate Professor of Psychology at the Brain and Creativity Institute and Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California

Judith Lynne Hanna is a tireless champion of the body, dance and its ability to touch our pleasure spots and panic buttons. She has given us this new treatise, an elegant and magisterial synthesis ...that should finally put to rest any doubt that dance is essential to a cultivated, emotionally and spiritually balanced and brave contemporary society - the one we are always seeking to become!

Bill T. Jones. Artistic Director/Co-Founder/Choreographer New York Life Arts and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, writer, educator, awards winner, and honorary doctorates

...The potential of dance to foster deep thinking and learning is especially potent.... providing nonverbal language mechanisms as important to learning as verbal language. Judith Lynne Hanna takes the idea of dance to promote learning to new levels with *Dancing to Learn: The Brain's Cognition, Emotion, and Movement*. Recent findings from the brain sciences suggest that dance promotes...the growth of new brain cells and vital skills for learning including attention, memory, and cognitive flexibility. Hanna provides numerous examples of how dance education programs and dance-integrated strategies in non-dance subjects can enrich students' educational experiences in formal and informal settings. ...

Mariale M. Hardiman. EdD Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Education;
Author of *Brain-Targeted Teaching for 21st Century Schools*

Dancing to Learn is pioneering, situating us in current neuroscience and other disciplinary research related to dance, demonstrating the orienting and mobilizing power of dance, and suggesting several possible pathways forward for the benefit of every learner and society as a whole. Dr. Hanna's work is a challenging and thoughtful examination of the educational importance of one of humankind's oldest and most unifying practices, and should be read by parents, educators, policy-makers, dance-skeptics, and dancers alike.

Blake Martin, PhD, teacher in York University's Dance Department; scientist at Accelerated Learning and Retention Project, DRDC

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About the Author JUDITH LYNNE HANNA earned a PhD in anthropology from Columbia University, degrees from Michigan State University and UCLA, and teacher certification from the State of California. She is an Affiliate Research Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Maryland, an educator, author of numerous books and articles, long-time dance student, and dance critic. She has taught dancing and about dance to non-dancers, dancers and academics in addition to other subjects. Hanna's books include *To Dance Is Human*, *Partnering Dance and Education*, and *Dancing for Health*. Her hundreds of articles appear in, e.g., *Educational Researcher*, *Dance Research Journal*, and *Current Anthropology*. See www.judithanna.com