



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR  
MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

## Statement on Common Core Standards:

The members of the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) believe that communication technologies are transforming society, influencing our understanding of ourselves, and our diverse cultures as well shaping our political processes, workplaces, family lives, and classrooms. To be a productive worker, engaged citizen, effective parent, and healthy person in this changing world, individuals need multifaceted skills of inquiry, reflection, and expression. Therefore, we applaud the Common Core ELA Standards for emphasizing higher order thinking skills and for including clear reading, writing, speaking, and listening strands.

We also applaud the Standard's recognition that *"The need to research and to consume and produce media is embedded into every element of today's curriculum"* and that *"non-print"* media are prevalent and important. Given this context, we are puzzled by the Standards' lack of a strand for viewing/visual representation.

The absence of specific viewing/visual representation standards is a serious omission. It undermines decades of work, not only of our members, but also of States like Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Carolina, whose standards already integrate this important facet of media literacy education. As currently written, the Common Core standards represent a setback for these States, and for thousands of educators across the country who are using visual media to teach core skills and improve performance.

We are not suggesting a competition between print and visual information. In a world that routinely integrates words and images (think of a newspaper or website), we are suggesting that students who can only communicate with and analyze words are not fully literate.

The decades of experience represented in our membership indicates that viewing and visual representation skills are not acquired automatically. If they are not explicitly included in the curriculum, students will not learn them. We would also note that nearly all major education and child advocacy groups, from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), have adopted policy statements recognizing that we need to expand our notion of traditional literacy to include visual media.

As the organization representing this nation's experts in media literacy education, NAMLE wants to be clear that media literacy education cannot happen without specifically addressing and using image-based media. It is possible to do this by integrating viewing and visual representation into the existing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills or by creating a fifth strand. Either way, we urge you to include viewing and visual representation in the Common Core ELA Standards.

We are happy to make our expertise available to help shape or review revised drafts. You can reach NAMLE's President, Sherri Hope Culver at [NAMLE@NAMLE.net](mailto:NAMLE@NAMLE.net). Thank you for your consideration.