

De Lingua Latina Discenda

Five Recent Textbooks for Introductory Latin

Between the old-fashioned 'grammar-first' method and the older-fashioned and new fashioned 'reading-or-speaking-first' method lie endless possibilities; hence, the almost endless number of textbooks for beginners...

October 9, 1916. Carr, W. L. Review of *Introduction to Latin* by J. Kirtland and G. Rogers. *The Classical Weekly* 10.2: 15.

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ABSTRACT

This review article examines five recently published introductory Latin textbooks in light of the author's efforts to guide his elementary Latin students toward an engaging and effective experience with the language of the Romans. The pedagogical approach adopted by each text is considered alongside research into the psychology of learning and Second Language Acquisition.

KEYWORDS

introductory Latin, elementary Latin, textbook, pedagogy, grammar, reading, Second Language Acquisition, psychology of learning

TEXTS REVIEWED

Kitchell, Kenneth and Thomas Sienkewicz. *Disce! An Introductory Latin Course, Vols. 1-2*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-13158-531-7. \$55.20 each.

Maltby, Robert and Kenneth Belcher. *Wiley's Real Latin: Learning Latin from the Source*. Malden, MA; Oxford, UK; Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-470-65507-8. \$29.95

Mannetter, Drew A. *I Came, I Saw, I Translated: An Accelerated Method for Learning Classical Latin in the 21st Century*. Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-61233-511-7. \$46.95

McKeown, J. C. *Classical Latin: An Introductory Course*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-87220-851-3. \$40.00

Minkova, Milena and Terence Tunberg. *Latin for the New Millennium: Student Text, Levels 1-2*. Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2008. ISBN: 978-0-86516-560-1. \$75.00 each.

Each fall, I walk into my Elementary Latin classroom with great hopes of introducing the students to the voices of the Romans and of all who have expressed beautiful and powerful ideas in the Latin language. Each summer, I ponder how, next time, I will finally teach in such a way that I promote the genuine learning that seems to have largely slipped away with the academic year. Yes, my dreams are dashed on the complexity of Latin compressed into two semesters, eighty classes, fewer than one hundred hours. Yes, I am trying to woo students whose flat expressions indicate that, for most, my course is an annoying hoop on the path to a career credential. But I am determined for Vergil to have his day. I want to provoke the curiosity of the class and to meet that curiosity with a clear approach to developing a dawning comprehension of Latin.

Because a large majority of my students arrive motivated only by a curricular checklist, I want and need them to decide, and quickly, that Latin makes sense and that the sense it makes is worth their investment of time and energy. So I have been learning in general about how the human brain learns (*e.g.* Ambrose *et al.*) and in particular about how the human brain can acquire a second language (*e.g.* Lightbown and Spada; Burns and Richards), and I am working to implement practices grounded in the psychology of learning that promote comprehension by working with rather than against the brain's cognitive processes. I would like help accomplishing this from the textbook I ask students to buy, since creating sufficient teaching and learning materials *ex nihilo* looms as a Sisyphean labor. Thus, I am constantly trolling for useful materials from publishers of Latin textbooks. Their introductory works typically fall into one of the two camps that date back to at least the World War I-era epigraph for this article, into the division between grammar-first and reading-first approaches. This century-old conversation within Classics continues to inform our discussions of Latin pedagogy, but I need a textbook that also heeds the relevant findings of current research into learning and language acquisition.¹

Although a textbook cannot bear the blame for my own limitations, I do want more from the textbooks that I have used over the years. Evidence suggests that I am in good company, as textual frustration seems to be a conversational staple in our profession (Johnson 246; May 151; Verger). I cannot complain, however, about the lack of choice. Table 1 outlines twenty-three options.² Seven of these were first published in the twenty-first century—colleagues productively distilling their dissatisfaction with the available choices into a new addition to the corpus (*e.g.* Keller xvii; Manner 3). In this article, I will examine five recent offerings in light of my own efforts to resolve a nagging sense that I should be guiding students down a more engaging and more effective path to an encounter with Latin. I will first provide an overview of the works in question, then I will set out my pedagogical premises, and I will conclude by considering the textbooks in light of my initial encounters with the science of learning.

¹ Carlon provides a clear overview of some principles of Second Language Acquisition. Classics need more of this, both incorporating research on learning languages and generating empirical data within our own discipline. I confess my own limited awareness of the current state of affairs, and my initial explorations have found daunting the actual and virtual shelves filled with contributions to the field of language learning, much of it written in technical prose.

² My own search, which began at the now silent LATINTEACH blog, affirms the usefulness Judith Sebesta's annual textbook survey in *Classical World*.

Table 1. Elementary Latin Textbooks

- 2013 *Wiley's Real Latin: Learning Latin from the Source* (Maltby and Belcher, Wiley)
- 2011 *Disce! An Introductory Latin Course* (Kitchell and Sienkewicz, Pearson)
- 2011 *I Came, I Saw, I Translated* (Mannetter, BrownWalker)
- 2010 *Classical Latin: An Introductory Course* (McKeown, Hackett)
- 2008 *Latin for the New Millennium* (Tunberg and Minkova, Bolchazy-Carducci)
- 2013 *Introduction to Latin* 2nd ed. (Shelmerdine, Focus)
- 2003 *Learn to Read Latin* (Keller and Russell, Yale)
- 2012 *Oxford Latin College Edition* (Balme and Morwood, Oxford)
- 2011 *Wheelock's Latin* 7th Edition (LaFleur, HarperCollins)
- 2009 *Ecce Romani*, Fourth Edition (Prentice Hall/Pearson)
- 2007 *Latin For Americans* (Ullman et al., Glencoe/McGraw-Hill)
- 2007 *Latin Alive and Well* (Chambers, University of Oklahoma Press)
- 2011 *New First Steps in Latin* 2nd ed. (Klaasen et al., Focus/Pullins)
- 2002 *Lingua Latina* (Traupman, Amsco)
- 2001 *Cambridge Latin Course*, Fourth Edition (Pope et al., Cambridge)
- 1997 *Reading Classical Latin* (Ball, McGraw Hill)
- 1986 *Reading Latin* (Jones and Sidwell, Cambridge)
- 1986 *Latin for Reading* (Knudsvig et al., University of Michigan Press)
- 1982 *Latin Via Ovid* (Goldman and Nyenhuis, Wayne State Univ. Press)
- 1977 *Latin: An Intensive Course* (Moreland and Flesicher, University of California Press)
- 2011 *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* (Ørberg, Focus)
- 1990 *The Jenney Latin Program* (Pearson)
- 1995 *Latin Course for Schools* (Wilding, Bloomsbury)

TEXTBOOK OVERVIEW

In *Latin for the New Millennium*, Milena Minkova and Terence Tunberg have produced a lavishly published and comprehensive series for introductory Latin (Bolchazy-Carducci 2008). Two hardback texts, Level 1 and Level 2, introduce the grammar with readings, exercises, cultural information, and abundant images. Each volume is supported by a workbook, audio files, a massive teacher's manual, and two enrichment texts by Rose Williams, one on history and one on mythology. As proclaimed in the marketing material, this system aims to combine "the best practices of the reading method and the traditional grammar approach" into a "fusion approach to Latin."

Level 1 contains twenty-one chapters with seven review sections, while Level 2 has fifteen chapters and five review sections along with ten readings from the *Life of Atticus* by Cornelius Nepos. Each chapter opens on a beautiful full-color page with an image and a quotation (*Memorābile Dictū*) anticipating the subsequent reading passage (see Figure 1). That passage, adapted from a Latin author, contains several new but unmarked grammatical elements that will then be explained (*Language Facts*) and practiced in exercises. A list of *Vocabulary to Learn* follows the first point of grammar, and the chapter concludes with a dialogue among modern students which is designed to promote the “oral element of language learning” and to become “a bridge between the lives of modern students” and the ancient authors (TM viii). After each set of three chapters, a review section revisits the vocabulary, sets additional grammar exercises, and presents three essays exploring the cultural context of Latin literature and connecting it to contemporary concerns. The Level 2 text adds to each chapter an unadapted but annotated selection from the *Life of Atticus* by Cornelius Nepos.

Three elements set *Latin for the New Millenium* apart from a typical introduction to Latin. First, the course encompasses the whole of our Latin heritage. Level 1 uses the adapted readings to provide a chronological survey from Plautus and Terence up to Augustine and Boethius. Level 2 continues the adapted readings from the medieval writings of Bede and Einhard on to the neo-Latin of Copernicus and *The Underground Journey of Nicolaus Klum* by Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). The cultural essays maintain this broad perspective, exploring topics from Roman slavery to the scientific revolution.

Second, the series encourages conversation in Latin, starting with the modern dialogues that conclude each chapter. More significantly, the *Teacher's Manual* facilitates the practice of oral comprehension and production with multiple exercises constructed for each chapter. A script is provided, so teachers need not speak extemporaneously in Latin. These exchanges range from transformation (e.g. TM1.182 Change the plural form into the singular. Teacher: *aedificābāmus*. Expected response: *aedificābam*) to comprehension (e.g. TM1.257. Teacher: *Quis ad villam venit?* Expected response: *Seneca ad villam venit*). Also available for purchase are MP3 files of the adapted passages read by Anna Andresian and Professor E. Del Chrol.



Figure 1. *Latin for the New Millenium*, Chapter 7, p. 1.111

Third and last, the authors and publisher have created an extensive network of support. Each level has a thick, legal-sized, spiral-bound *Teacher's Manual* that reprints every page of the textbook alongside notes, tips, activity suggestions, exercise answers, passage translations, and oral exercises. An online *Teacher's Lounge* for registered instructors offers free downloads of reproducible worksheets, answer keys, test banks, maps, and more, and it also hosts a forum and blogs to encourage sharing instructional ideas and resources.

Jim McKeown breathes fresh air into the traditional Grammar-Translation approach in *Classical Latin: An Introductory Course* (Hackett Publishing 2010) with the addition of vocabulary reinforcement, brief reading passages with comprehension questions, some creative exercises, and a generous portion of whimsy in the *porcus* who consistently appears in examples of syntax (see Figure 2). Each chapter opens deductively with an introduction and explanation of grammatical concepts, accompanied by charts and illustrative sentences. Practice exercises and readings (*Prōlūsiōnēs*) centered on the new grammar and vocabulary follow, and the chapter concludes with some fun (*Lūsūs*) exploring derivatives (*Thēsauros Verbōrum*) and Roman culture

Compare these three sentences:

The pig is singing.

The farmer says, "The pig is singing."

The farmer says that the pig is singing.

The first two are both examples of **direct statements**. The first is the original direct statement. The second simply quotes that direct statement in its original form. The third, however, is an example of **indirect statement**, in which the original statement is not quoted but **reported**.

In Latin, as you might expect, the two direct statements would be expressed as *porcus canit* and *agricola "porcus canit" ait*. An **indirect statement, however, uses the infinitive in the appropriate tense, and puts the subject of the original statement in the accusative**:

agricola porcum canere dicit.

The farmer says that the pig is singing.

To translate an indirect statement involving the negative of "say" or an equivalent verb, *nōn* is rarely used; rather, you use the verb *negō*, literally, "I deny":

agricola porcum canere negat.

The farmer says that the pig is not singing.

What happens, though, if the verb in the indirect statement takes a direct object?

agricola porcum carmen canere dicit.

The farmer says that the pig is singing a song.

In this sentence, both the subject (*porcum*) and the object (*carmen*) of the infinitive are in the accusative case. You cannot use case here to determine which is the subject and which is the direct object, but common sense and context usually prevent confusion.

Figure 2. *Classical Latin, Chapter 21, p. 245*

(*Vita Rōmānōrum*). More exercises populate the separate Workbook, which includes a key for self-correction, and a [website](#) presents a potpourri of learning resources.

The clear repetition of these elements exhibits an attractive simplicity, as do the twenty-eight chapters, which permit an uncomplicated division of a chapter per week for a two-semester college sequence. That reasonable pace is supported by a text that is easy to read, with ample room on the 8½ x 11 inch pages. Page headers indicating chapter number and grammatical subject let you know where you are, while bold headings visibly divide the chapter sections.

Disce! by Ken Kitchell and Tom Sienkewicz (Prentice Hall/Pearson 2011) has been carefully constructed to fulfill the *Standards for Classical Language Learning* by building on the foundation of a continuous narrative newly written for the text. This element of the reading method, however, is married with a more traditional presentation of grammar because the authors find pedagogical value in both approaches (I.xix). *Disce!* has two relatively slim volumes incorporating reading, grammar, and culture, supported by two workbooks, audio files, a subscription website, and two PDF Instructor's Resources Manuals containing a wealth of teaching materials.

The twenty chapters in each volume present two 250-word reading passages (*Lectiō Prīma* and *Lectiō Secunda*), each preceded by pre-reading material and followed by the explanation of new morphology or syntax (*Grammatica A* and *B*). Each chapter concludes with sections considering salient cultural information (*Mōrēs Rōmānī*), the influence of Latin today (*Latīna Hodierna*), the geography of the Roman world (*Orbis Terrārum Rōmānus*), and a deeper look into the chapter's grammar (*Angulus Grammaticus*). The text, though using smaller type, is attractively printed with distinct headings and effective use of color and images.

Disce! distinguishes itself first by its three-pronged approach to grammar. New concepts are briefly previewed before a reading passage. After the reading (see Figure 5), the concept is fully explained. The chapter ends with additional grammatical explanation of aspects deemed useful but not essential to reading. The series also offers tremendous support for the classroom, including three suggested syllabi for utilizing the *Disce!* materials in two or three semesters with four or five meetings per week. A unique feature of *Disce!* is *MyLatinLab*, an online subscription to practice and review materials. This learning management software, parallel to a broader product like Blackboard or Moodle, presents a digital version of the exercises from the *Student Activity Manual*.

A bold approach informs *I Came, I Saw, I Translated: An Accelerated Method for Learning Classical Latin in the 21st Century* by Drew A. Mannetter (BrownWalker Press 2011), which squarely faces the dilemma of teaching the Latin language while introducing an authentic Roman voice within the constraints of a one-year language requirement. Students dive immediately into the first chapter of Caesar's *Gallic War*, and the unadapted text determines the introduction of morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. The whole of the first paragraph is presented to open *Pars Prima* and is then broken down into eight sentences, which are broken down into clauses, which are broken down into the constituent words. Students focus on the form, meaning and syntax of one word at a time and then work upward to translate the clause, the sentence and the paragraph (see Figure 3). This procedure continues in *Pars Secunda* (BG 2), while *Pars Tertia* (BG 4, 5, 24-28) presents sentence and clause, but not individual words. Caesar begins his work *Gallia est omnis dīvisā in partēs trēs*, so students first meet *Gallia*, which introduces them to the concepts of noun, inflection,

Before beginning Sentence X, read *The Gallic War*, 6.21-44: ethnography of the Germans; the campaign against Ambiorix and answer the questions provided in the appropriate study guide in Appendix E.

Translate the following sentence using the notes below.

X) Is, M. Messālā et M. Pisōne cōsulibus, rēgnī cupiditāte inductus coniūrātiōnem nōbilitātis fēcit, et cīvitatī persuāsit, ut dē finibus suis cum omnibus cōpiis exirent, perfacile esse, cum virtūte omnibus praestarent, tōtius Galliae imperiō potiri.

Be prepared to discuss the translation: choices for word meanings, word order, difficulties involved and the solutions to those difficulties. What aspects of this sentence are not able to be translated? What are the nuances involved in the Latin by which Caesar uses words to suggest connotation beside denotation?

Figure 3. *I Came, I Saw, I Translated*, Chapter 10, p. 186

declensions, case, number, gender, and then to the paradigm of the first declension. Worksheets residing in Appendix B are assigned to provide additional practice of the grammatical concepts.

Because Caesar's account of his campaign against the Helvetians organizes this introduction to the Latin language, the demonstrative pronoun *hic* occurs on Page 81 in Sentence 2 of Paragraph 1, while the demonstrative pronoun *ille* appears as the last grammatical item on Page 325 in Sentence 5 of Paragraph 28. The *Endnote* alerts the student preparing for further study that three major points of grammar have not appeared in the text: the imperative mood, the future tense, and the future perfect tense. These grammatical idiosyncrasies are the trade-off for immersing students in a meaningful text. Students also encounter the larger context with English-language reading assignments for the whole of the *Gallic War* (not included), supplemented by study questions in Appendix E. A single volume contains the text and grammatical explanations, along with glossary (Appendix A), reference grammar (Appendix C), and more. Thorough tables of contents, one for the whole book and one to begin each section, lay a clear map of the ground to be covered. I find, however, that the lack of a content header on each page impedes navigation, as do the densely printed, numbered but not titled, grammatical explanations. By contrast, a dark box with white numbers makes it easier to identify the sentence and word under consideration in the first two parts, though the third part abandons this device.

Wiley-Blackwell has entered the market with the Grammar-Translation approach of *Wiley's Real Latin* by Robert Maltby and Kenneth Belcher (2013). Its intensive approach relies for its readings exclusively on sentences and passages unchanged from their ancient Roman sources. Twenty-one chapters outline the morphological and syntactical patterns encountered in Latin texts, and the grammatical explanations are frequently accompanied by a "Try This" section providing morphological practice via parsing, constructing forms, and translating single words to and from Latin. All chapters after the first have nine Latin sentences for translation into English (see Figure 4) as well



TRANSLATION FROM LATIN

1. veni Athenas, inquit Democritus, neque me quisquam ibi agnovit. (Cicero *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.104)
2. in eo itinere persuadet Castico . . . Sequano, cuius pater regnum in Sequanis multos annos obtinuerat. (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 1.3.5)
3. magna est hominum opinio de te, magna commendatio liberalitatis, magna memoria consulatus tui. (Cicero *Epistulae ad Familiares* 1.7.9)
4. ego eo die casu apud Pompeium cenavi. (Cicero *Epistulae ad Familiares* 1.2.3)
5. de litterarum missione sine causa abs te accusor. (Cicero *Epistulae ad Atticum* 1.5.3) **HINT!** Abs is simply a variant spelling of the preposition ab.
6. hic locus aequum fere spatium a castris . . . Ariovisti et Caesaris aberat. (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 1.43.2)
7. omnia tela totius accusationis in Oppianicum coniciebantur, aperiebatur causa insidiarum, Fabriciorum familiaritas commemorabatur. (Cicero *Pro Cluentio* 50).
8. proximique <Belgae> sunt Germanis, qui trans Rhenum incolunt, quibuscum continenter bellum gerunt. qua de causa Helvetii quoque reliquos Gallos virtute praecedunt, quod fere cotidianis proeliis cum Germanis contendunt. (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 1.1.3–4)
9. nostri milites facile superabant . . . quod in conspectu Caesaris atque omnis exercitus res gerebatur . . . omnes enim colles ac loca superiora, unde erat propinquus despectus in mare, ab exercitu tenebantur. (Caesar *De Bello Gallico* 3.14.8–9)

Figure 4. Wiley's Real Latin, Chapter 10, p. 116

This document also contains a melange of pedagogical resources, including teaching tips, additional examples of complicated syntax, answer keys for the exercises, and further reading passages. The online component features a growing library of resources and directs students to www.quizlet.com for digital vocabulary flashcards.

Table 2. Textbook Features.

Textbook	workbook	web exercises	conversation	audio files
<i>Latin for the New Millennium</i>	yes	no	yes	yes
<i>Classical Latin</i>	yes	yes	no	yes
<i>Disce!</i>	yes	yes	yes	yes
<i>I Came, I Saw, I Translated</i>	included	no	no	no
<i>Wiley's Real Latin</i>	no	vocabulary	no	no

PEDAGOGICAL PREMISES

I preface my evaluation of these five recently published textbooks by echoing the consensus that the learning in a Latin classroom has as its central goal reading authentic literature (Distler 1, Mannetter 4, May 150)³ within the broader context of the *Standards for Classical Language Learning*.

³ Wooten (186) questions the feasibility of this goal in such a compressed timeframe, and I heard a similar sentiment expressed at the 2012 meeting of the Alabama Classical Association.

as nine English sentences for translation back into their original Latin. Beginning with Chapter 13, chapters conclude with longer, unadapted reading passages of ten to twenty lines. This shift at Chapter 12 reflects the authorial intention of a mid-year break, twelve chapters in the first semester followed by nine in the second. They explain their strategy in the introduction to an Instructor's Manual, available online for registered teachers.

I want my students to find the meaning that can be lost in translation, so all of the work teaching and learning the forms and functions of words in the Latin language should be means to the ultimate end of understanding ideas expressed in Latin. If my students do learn to read authentic Latin texts, their reading will not result from continuously, consciously applying rules of syntax (McCaffrey 116). Instead, as reading uncovers meaning mediated through a written text, students should experience Latin as an act of communication, not as a corpse for dissection. A painful moment in my Elementary Latin stand-up routine finds me saying, “Latin does not communicate one [pause] word [a second pause] at [more interminable pausing] a time.” Ideas, not individual words, occupy the attention of experienced Latin readers, so novices should likewise focus on ideas. Nor do I want my students to understand reading Latin as a treadmill of perpetual translation. I am also in the habit of asking a confident student with a good sense of humor, “What does this Latin passage say in English?” I make sure that this is an impossible task beyond the competence of the student, and when the student hesitates and then bravely stumbles forward, I step in with, “It doesn’t say anything in English. It says something in Latin.” I chuckle, my students groan.

My course and its textbook should offer students the potential for future fluency by promoting deep learning of how Latin communicates. That learning experience belongs to students and takes place through actual changes to the neural connections housed inside their crania. All of my teaching cannot ‘learn’ my students the morphological, syntactical and lexical awareness that can open a door to Vergil’s epic or Cicero’s oratory. Any learning that does occur will successfully harness cognitive processes operating in the brains of our students. As you may have heard,

a critical condition for the acquisition of new knowledge is the existence of prior knowledge, which can be built in a mental model or “schema.” Formation of “schemas” is a central event in student-centered active learning, by which mental models are constructed and reconstructed... Recently, evidence has been obtained that new information processed by the hippocampus can be consolidated into a stable, neocortical network more rapidly if this new information fits readily into a “schema.” (Ruiter, van Kesteren, and Fernandez 225)

Like you, I want Latin consolidated into a stable, neocortical network, the more rapidly the better. From which I deduce that I need students to construct mental models that employ prior knowledge to promote the acquisition of Latin. New morphological, syntactical, and lexical information about Latin needs to connect to what students already know. The research-based principles for teaching published in *How Learning Works* make practical this science of learning (Ambrose *et al.*). Students need to be able to organize what they learn into mental structures that are “well-matched with the way that knowledge needs to be accessed and used” (Ambrose *et al.* 49). Students will move toward mastery of reading Latin when they “acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned” (Ambrose *et al.* 95). At the heart of this enterprise lies “goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback” (Ambrose *et al.* 125). Mapping these tested truths about how the brain learns on to the process of communication with an emphasis on reading should drive the approach I and my textbook adopt for introducing students to comprehending ideas expressed in Latin. What are the component skills if we move beyond, “agricola, agricolae, agricolae...”, and what sort of activities will connect form, function, and meaning? Although much of this thinking will reveal that effective teaching practices have been handed

down because they are effective teaching practices, I cannot assume that the way I learned Latin is the way I need to teach Latin. And I need every trick in the book to inculcate real learning in students whose goals do not include a doctorate in classical philology.

READING

From day one, students should have confidence that words written in Latin can make sense. Meaningful comprehension stands as the central goal for accessing and using the knowledge learned about Latin, and plentiful reading offers the best opportunity to integrate those component skills. Since communication is the end to which the formal grammar is only the means, the morphological and syntactical elements of Latin are not enough—the pieces need to fit together, and ample reading demonstrates for students that the pieces can and do fit together. That requires an abundance of meaningful input. Isolated sentences can offer useful, targeted practice, but continuous passages deliver the abundance that encourages reading comprehension, reading from left to right, and efficient reading strategies.⁴ In Stephen Krashen's words, "Reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence, and the only way we become good spellers" (20). Although Krashen's insistence on the necessity and sufficiency of reading apart from direct instruction has not been sustained by empirical research (Carlon 107), the fundamental premise that readers need to read stands (Fernández 156-7).

My rough calculations indicate that *Disce!* presents students with 20,000 words of connected prose from a single narrative of created Latin about a patrician family and a plebeian family living in Rome in 9 BC; *Latin for the New Millennium* with 10,000 words from adapted passages in a chronological survey of our Latin inheritance with another 2,000 of unaltered Nepos; and *Classical Latin* with 4,000 words in passages selected independently of each other for their intrinsic interest and their grammatical suitability. I appreciate that all three establish the context for the passage, provide lexical support within view of the passage and pose questions that privilege comprehension over translation. *Wiley's Real Latin* waits until Chapter 13 and the second semester to introduce 1,500 words in connected readings of unadapted Latin poetry. *I Came, I Saw I Translated* uses about 1,200 words of Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* but proceeds by disconnecting that connected prose into its component pieces.

My own experience using the 1,750 words of Eutropius found in Beyer's *War With Hannibal* as a supplementary weekly reading in the second semester of Elementary Latin convinces me that more is more. With appropriate cultural and lexical support and without stopping to analyze every word, connected passages let students read for meaning (Gruber-Miller 1998: 171). This should encourage deep learning because it can help them structure what they have learned for its true purpose, comprehension, and because it provides plentiful practice in the necessary integration of component skills.

VOCABULARY

The acquisition of sufficient vocabulary stands as a fundamental skill for Latin students because lexical awareness remains a key component in language acquisition (Richards and Rogers

⁴ Teaching fluent reading rather than piecemeal decoding has entered the recent classical conversation with the work of Hoyos and later Gruber-Miller, McCaffrey and Lister. Kitchell has alerted us to the inescapable importance of cultural context. Outside of our discipline, the nature of learning to read a second language has generated its own extensive bibliography, e.g. Bernhardt, Hudson, and Koda.

138).⁵ Morphological and syntactical competence can help a Latin student analyze the potential functions of a Latin word ending in ‘-ī’:

NOUNS

- *Genitive Singular*
- *Dative Singular*
- *Ablative Singular*
- *Nominative Plural*
- *Locative*
- *Vocative Singular*
- *Vocative Plural*

VERBS

- *Present Singular Imperative*
- *Present Passive Infinitive*
- *Perfect Active First Singular*

But sorting through possibilities is not reading, and a strong vocabulary can preclude such ambiguity. When I audited a course in Biblical Hebrew at Samford’s Beeson Divinity School in 2010-2011, I was introduced to the relatively simple system of prefixes and suffixes for verbs along with the complexity of Masoretic vowel pointing. I have discovered that recognizing the stem allows me to quickly and even unconsciously recognize the form before I come to grips with the vowel points. I suspect that is true for Latin students, so I want to do more than present a list of words with the commandment, “Go and Memorize.” Too many of my students have stumbled over the brute application of memory, so my textbook and I need to deploy the science of learning to develop a strategy for constructing a framework that connects new Latin words to what students already know (Distler Chapter 4). Word frequency lists should help determine which words we ask students to invest their mental energy in learning (Muccigrosso; Francese).⁶ The selected words should be learned at a sustainable pace. Images, derivatives, and word families should help connect these Latin words to prior knowledge, and Latin sentences containing new vocabulary, as well as English sentences with the target word in Latin, will situate each new item in a meaningful context. Above all, the targeted words should appear frequently in reading.

Disce! and *Latin for a New Millennium* make an intentional effort to support vocabulary acquisition. *LNM* has geared its vocabulary selection for the Advanced Placement examinations, while *Disce!* has consulted several frequency lists to determine which words students should commit to memory (1.xxi). Both textbooks present in every chapter a list of twenty to twenty-five words intended for learning that is distinguished from additional vocabulary printed to assist in reading a passage. Each also offers vocabulary exercises based on derivatives in the book as well as in the printed and online workbook material. *LNM’s Teacher’s Manual* recommends some basic

⁵ Vocabulary, like reading, is the focus of research in the field of Second Language Acquisition.

⁶ I regularly and gratefully return for guidance on vocabulary to the hard work of the Resources page at the [Dickinson Classical Commentaries](#)..

strategies for vocabulary acquisition: speaking the word aloud, writing it down, making flashcards, identifying derivatives, and pairing the word with clip art (Teacher's Manual Volume 1: 5). *Classical Latin* also highlights the lexical connection between English and Latin with its *Thēaurus Verbōrum*, putting into practice a principle outlined in the Introduction: "You Already Know More Latin Than You Think: Using English to Master Latin Vocabulary" (xvi). It does seem unbalanced that its vocabulary lists vary in length from sixty words in Chapter Seven down to twenty-two words in Chapter Nine. Its online exercises focus on vocabulary acquisition with a recording of the words, a definition matching exercise, and web-based flashcards. *I Came, I Saw, I Translated* places relevant vocabulary before the sentence in which it occurs. Words that have appeared three times are considered learned and will not appear in the vocabulary for later sentences. The student is instructed to commit the vocabulary to memory as part of the work in translating the sentence. *Wiley's Real Latin*, through chapter twelve, separates the learned vocabulary of forty words or so from a longer list of lexical support for chapter readings. The entire vocabulary, for learning and for support, is posted at Quizlet.com, which provides a variety of activities based on digital vocabulary flashcards.

All of the texts, however, offer vocabulary as a list of Latin words with English equivalents. Beyond some work with derivatives and digital flashcards, teacher and student are on their own to find ways to achieve deep learning of vocabulary. The potential of the digital world to give meaning to Latin words through imagery and context is untapped.

Table 3. Vocabulary Quantified.

Textbook	Approx. Words per Chapter	Approx. Total Words
<i>Latin for the New Millennium</i>	21	749
<i>Classical Latin</i>	varies from 20-60	747
<i>Disce!</i>	20 (Ch. 2-20) / 25 (Ch. 21-40)	897
<i>I Came, I Saw, I Translated</i>	n/a	498
<i>Wiley's Real Latin</i>	38 (Ch. 1-12) / 81 (Ch. 13-21)	1186

GRAMMATICAL EXPLANATIONS

Latin students, of course, need to recognize the significance of the language's inflected nouns and verbs or their lexical knowledge will result in nothing more than Vocabulary Soup, stirring the English definitions of Latin words in order to fish for meaning. The complexity of the morphology and syntax, according to the science of learning, can only be apprehended when our students' brains connect it to an existing cognitive framework. Grammatical explanations and examples, therefore, need to explicitly build on known concepts, and grammatical analysis should serve the final goal of comprehension and not be an end in itself. Because I have good reason to assume that my students arrive with a limited grasp of English grammar, the text needs to help them triangulate Latin syntactical functions, English syntactical functions, and the language of grammar that describes these functions. Too much information can overload the cognitive capacity of our students: "It is generally accepted that our brain cannot process all the information with which it is bombarded" (Marois and Ivanoff 298, cf. Buschman *et al.*). Clear, simple discussions will connect new syntax to what they have already learned about Latin and to what they intuitively understand about English. All of this should occur in a meaningful context with abundant input so students can repeatedly see forms and appreciate what a form communicates.

Oratio obliqua poses an obvious challenge in learning how Latin communicates and will serve here as a proxy for each textbook's approach to grammar. Quickly recognizing indirect statement and easily comprehending it are a *sine qua non* of fluent reading given its ubiquity in Latin texts. Our students, however, may not easily intuit its meaning since English does not use an accusative and an infinitive for this function. A cognitive bridge must be carefully engineered to connect this new and unusual syntax to what student's already know.

Latin for the New Millenium has the strength of starting early. [Chapter 7](#) in Volume One (out of thirty-six chapters across two volumes) introduces indirect statements (see Figure 1), so students have most of their elementary Latin experience to digest this important construction. Subsequent chapters (I checked 8, 9 and 10) include indirect statements in the reading, so students get to practice what they have begun to learn. Chapters 20 and 21 offer a reprise when perfect and future infinitives are introduced. Thus, only the present active and present passive infinitives are initially available to students, thereby reducing the cognitive load when students first encounter indirect statements. This approach eschews the traditional ordering, à la *Wheelock's Latin* Chapter 25, that summarizes all of the infinitive forms before showing how they operate in an indirect statement. I think the traditional approach risks stressing the cognitive capacity of students by burdening them with the forms of the infinitive when they should focus, as *LNM* permits, on recognizing reported statements. One *LNM* exercise reinforces that focus with Latin sentences for translation that contain indirect statement and reuse the ideas and vocabulary of the initial reading. A second exercise offers direct quotations to be transformed into indirect statement, the workbook offers similar tasks, and the teacher's manual contains two oral exercises asking students to produce reported statements. This emphasis on the relationship between direct quotations and indirect statements may help students achieve the necessary cognitive connection that will make them comfortable with a seemingly unnatural construction.

Disce! teaches indirect statement later in the game, Chapter 29 in Volume Two (out of forty chapters across two volumes). I do like the clever move in the reading: the grandfather, hard of hearing, misunderstands his interlocutors and so needs everything repeated to him—which happens in indirect statement (see Figure 5). The passage highlights the construction with italic and bold type for the introductory verb, accusative subject



Figure 5. *Disce!*, Chapter 29

and infinitive action. I appreciate the clarity in both format and expression of the preliminary overview of the construction and the later, more detailed explanation. The pre-reading and post-reading exercises focus on the relative time represented by the tense of the infinitive in the indirect statement, which I would defer as a later refinement once the notion of an accusative subject and infinitive verb has taken root. I particularly miss additional practice in the workbook and the juxtaposition of sample direct quotations alongside their reported versions.

Classical Latin opens Chapter 21 (out of twenty-eight chapters) with clear English examples of a statement, a quoted statement, and a reported statement (see Figure 2), and a helpful exercise asks students to transform direct statements into indirect statement. I am afraid the chapter will test the cognitive capacity of students with an abundance of explanation in sub-sections titled: Infinitives, Agreement in Indirect Discourse, Infinitives of Irregular Verbs, Translating Indirect Statements, Pronouns and Indirect Statement. Perhaps it's an example of the best getting in the way of the good, but these intricacies may be more than a student can take on in a week dedicated to indirect statement. The presence of *CL*'s mascot *porcus* does mean that the vocabulary will be familiar, and the textbook presents twenty Latin sentences and ten English sentences for translation practice.

When *I Came, I Saw, I Translated* introduces indirect statement as it approaches the tenth of thirteen sentences examined in the first two parts (see Figure 3), it advises students that the construction "is a very common feature in Latin prose and consequently one must become very familiar with this construction" (199), but the text's format means that students will have limited exposure to the accusative and infinitive—I count three appearances (Sentences 10 and 13 and Chapter 5.2). Nor is practice provided in the worksheets. The initial explanation contrasts direct and indirect quotations but then shifts its terminology to object clauses, which seems to me to add a layer of complexity. The model sentences for demonstrating the relative time of the infinitive's tense consist of variations on "**dīcit sē facere** / *He says that he is making*). It is short and sweet, but it seems incomplete and so not an example of comprehensible input.

Wiley's Real Latin uses Chapter 10 (out of twenty-one chapters) to teach infinitives, indirect statement, reflexive pronouns and syncopated perfects (see Figure 4). Early is good, but one brief English example of direct and indirect speech is lost in a compact paragraph describing rather than demonstrating the concept: "What in English is the finite verb of the clause becomes in Latin an infinitive and the subject of the infinitive goes into the accusative case." I don't have the students who will follow that compact explanation nor apply this deductive analysis to the five unadapted Latin examples from five different contexts, two of which appear in the discussion of reflexive pronouns. I'm afraid the concision of this approach leaves the cognitive engineering to the student.

If *Wiley's Real Latin* presents a condensed version of traditional, deductive grammatical instruction with its descriptive rules incorporating examples followed by practice, all of the textbooks utilize some version of this "presentation-production-practice" model that undervalues the need for students to connect form to meaning via comprehensible input (Fernández 155-6).

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Understanding indirect statement specifically and Latin syntax generally, consolidating vocabulary acquisition, and integrating these component skills to read an authentic text demands more time than is available in the college classroom (May 149, Wooten 186). Students need hours of sustained interaction with Latin in order to enable learning, so they need the opportunity to actively engage the language outside of the classroom with effective practice material. That effort

needs focus and it needs feedback. The time-honored practice of translating sentences at home for review in class lacks both focus and feedback: any given sentence presents multiple morphological, syntactical and lexical variables that hamper an instructor from identifying the real obstacles to understanding, and classroom review delays the feedback until students may not remember the reasoning behind their correct or incorrect responses. The contemporary digital ecosystem should enable the development of exercises in reading comprehension and linguistic competency that can be machine-graded, increasing the student's productivity without overburdening the instructor. A spectrum of practice activities should set simpler tasks before more complex challenges. Such exercises succeed when students can experience accomplishment, when they can see the progress they are making and understand where they need to strengthen their understanding.

A central goal of practice is to promote automaticity (Segalowitz), quickly and unconsciously processing Latin lexical, morphological and syntactic information to recognize meaningful input. Because "it can be helpful to minimize cognitive load temporarily while students develop greater fluency with component skills or learn to integrate them" (Ambrose *et al.* 116), many of the exercises should be brief with a carefully targeted goal, followed by the instant feedback available on a digital platform. This need not involve the traditionally mind-numbing drill-and-kill structural practice performed devoid of meaningful context.

What I spend too many hours doing is scrambling to construct what I hope are more engaging materials for student work in and out of the classroom. I want activities with narrow semantic, syntactic and cultural boundaries so that students' attention is directed to the specific goal of the exercise. I want activities that use questions about meaning to examine form: I do not want students to construct Dative Plurals, but to construct a Dative Plural because a meaningful answer to a question requires a recipient. I do not want students to change verb forms from singular to plural, but to notice, choose or produce a plural verb because a plural subject has been mentioned or depicted. I do not want students to find the verb in a sentence, but I do want them to answer a question about what is happening in a clause or sentence. I want meaningful, *i.e.* communicative, rather than mechanical exercises, exercises based in reading and hearing ideas that are familiar to the students from our readings and discussions in class. I would also like activities that encourage reading strategies and comprehension. Because open-ended responses to questions are difficult for machine-grading, perhaps a sentence or a passage could highlight chunks, the words or phrases that constitute the elements of the idea, and students could choose the information supplied by each chunk. Connecting ideas from readings to images also seems feasible in the digital realm.

The printed workbook seems to have become a standard feature of an introductory textbook and the home for the sort of practice in which I need students engaging outside of the classroom. Four of the five textbooks reviewed offer this feature. None, unfortunately, would save me from the arduous labor of inventing my own activities because reading isn't practiced and forms aren't practiced in the context of reading. Decontextualized grammar and direct translation predominate.

Chapter 7 in the *Student Workbook* of *LNM* starts with declining noun-adjective phrases (*longa pax*) and follows with translating a third declension noun phrases into Latin given cues for the case ("by means of love"). Two of the exercises are direct translations of a passage paraphrasing Catullus. I do appreciate the two exercises that ask students to transform direct statements into indirect statements, but translation, composition and paradigms loom large in this workbook and in the textbook. I was surprised that in *Latin for the New Millenium*—given its emphasis on comprehension and communication—translation, composition, and transformations of words, phrases and sentences supply the bulk of the exercises.

Chapter 21 of the workbook for *Classical Latin* starts with parsing one word from an authentic quotation, and then proceeds to more creative drills. *Errant Etiam Magistri* asks students to identify an incorrect word or sentence in a group. *Respice Finem* requires students to supply endings missing from a Latin idea, often an authentic quote, with the help of the English translation. *Verba Distingue* tests lexical and morphological awareness by presenting a string of letters to be divided into words and translated: *QUANDOPORCAMREPERIREPOTERITIS?* (14). *Verba Segrega* lists three words, one of which does not share a characteristic of the other two: *miserārum*, *mīserimus*, *miserrimus* (99). *Verba Rescribe* scrambles the letters of Latin words in a specified grammatical form for students to unscramble: *ISINGUP* (3rd decl. adj.) (36). Finally, *Verborum Formae* sends students to their vocabulary lists and paradigms to identify the requested forms: “Which four forms of **brevis**, **breve** have six letters?” (36). These exercises appear consistently through the workbook, which is a positive; they are brief, another positive; and they are puzzles, a third positive. Students may well enjoy these exercises, even more so with Professor McKeown at the helm, but I don’t see how they will help develop reading habits that are my goal for students. The textbook sets the expected exercises in translation and composition, begins its practice sections with a parsing exercise and often uses a transformation exercise.

Chapter 29 of the *Student Activities Manual* for *Disce!* focuses twelve of its eighteen exercises on identifying, constructing or transforming single words without a context, e.g.

- 29-01. Identify the Gender Number and Case of perfect passive participles
filium captum _____
- 29-02. Select the Present Active Participles from the following list
_____ dicentī
- 29-05. Change the Perfect Passive Participle to a future active participle
matrem missam _____

I do like the two exercises focused on reading comprehension. The first poses Latin questions and asks for open-ended Latin responses. The second presents separate English sentences that together summarize a reading and asks students to number the sentences in order of the occurrence. Like *LNM*, however, the decontextualized grammar overwhelms the reading in the hybrid approach to practicing the language.

I Came, I Saw, I Translated tasks the student with a thoughtful translation into idiomatic English (230). Its exercises in the grammar and in the included worksheets focus on paradigms in addition to translation and composition. Metalinguistic questions recur that ask students to explain syntactical concepts. *Wiley’s Real Latin* has no workbook, and the textbook practice sticks to translation and composition with occasional form manipulation in boxes labeled “Try This.” Both of these texts appear to omit developing component skills before asking for the integration required by translation.

So I am not satisfied with how our discipline in general and these textbooks in particular ask students to practice. I am convinced that work on the component skills is necessary to develop the automaticity that enables true integration. So translation of entire ideas needs to be preceded by focus on particular elements of ideas. And I want to prioritize function over form, with students seeing direct objects or objects of prepositions or duration of time and not just accusatives. I want them to recognize the morphological signals not because they will submit to grammatical analysis but because they answer questions about what the idea communicates. And I want all of this available digitally with assessment instantly available to the student and to me.

ONLINE EXERCISES

Because rapid feedback is central for targeted practice of specific goals, I would like to see all such activities and exercises migrate to the computer, whether floating in the World Wide Web, anchored in some learning management software, or downloaded as an app on a phone or tablet. In my perfect world, preliminary modules would pose simple morphological questions as new concepts are explained and illustrated, practice modules would examine syntax in the context of meaningful ideas, while mastery modules with a vast array of questions would help student and instructor see if the concepts were aiding comprehension. All of this would connect to an extensive reading program that provides a rich cultural context for the more focused instruction on forms,⁷ and all of this would have an empirical basis in the scholarship of teaching and learning that identifies the kinds of practice that show real evidence of effectiveness.

Disce! moves furthest in the direction of feedback with its *My Latin Lab* subscription. This is a digitized version of the workbook exercises, but incorrect responses elicit questions to guide the student's thinking and a **Need help?** tool directs students to relevant resources. A *Readiness Check* quizzes students on their metalinguistic understanding prior to tackling new concepts. Students who score poorly on the pre-test are directed to brief grammar tutorials.

I Came, I Saw, I Translated has no digital presence, while the online components of *Wiley's Real Latin* and *Classical Latin* center on vocabulary acquisition, and do not have the capacity for reporting student performance to the instructor. The website of *Classical Latin* does include an exercise in each chapter that asks students to use a word bank to fill in ten blanks of a new, one hundred word story. This seems particularly difficult but should compel students to build linguistic expectations. The website of *Latin for the New Millennium* describes *Electronic Resources for Students*, but the text does not appear to have its own online or app-based exercises, despite Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers' investment in connecting Classics to the digital universe, as seen in its [iPodius storefront](#) and its presence in *Second Life* and *World of Warcraft*. *LNM* does have digital flashcards for the iPod family by Ed De Horatius, and its *Teacher's Lounge* contains a bank of test questions in a format suitable for use on the educational website *QUIA*. An e-version of the workbooks includes the ability to complete exercises on the screen. A preview of this feature mentioned emailing answers to the teacher—and my email crashed just thinking about it. I prefer for the computer to handle what grading it can and so make my life simpler while giving the students instant feedback. That may be why the publicity materials direct the reader to *Looking at Latin Online*, third-party software sold at *iPodius* that contains over 6,000 self-correcting, illustrated questions based on Anna Andresian's eponymous graphic Latin grammar. This could be a tremendous review tool, but it does not function as an instrument for assessment. Centaur Systems has developed a module of its *Latina* program reviewing forms and vocabulary for *LNM*.

CONCLUSION

The perfect Latin textbook will never exist, and when it does, it will be a learning system rather than a single printed volume. Although not, to my mind, perfect, I expect that each of these new entries to the unexpectedly crowded field of introductory Latin textbooks will acquire adherents who find it suited to their style of teaching. I commend the authors for the passion to embark on such a formidable task and the diligence to complete it. I particularly appreciate the emphasis on comprehension found in the reading passages of *Disce!*, *Latin for the New Millennium*, and

⁷ On extensive reading, see Day and Bamford; on form-focused instruction within a meaningful context, see Anderson and Beckwith.

Classical Latin, all of which also provide audio files that reinforce for students that Latin is a language. This convergence on communication provides direction for the cognitive framework constructed to house the syntax of the language. I also like the move toward digital tools common to those three plus *Wiley's Real Latin*, since these tools can accomplish the focused practice and feedback necessary for deep learning. I do hope that in the coming years, such work is further informed by the science of learning so that we carry forward those pedagogical traditions that are proved sound and discard those that do not promote the consolidation into a stable, neocortical network the information required to comprehend Latin.

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