

# TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

AN ONLINE JOURNAL OF THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION  
OF THE MIDDLE WEST AND SOUTH

---

## FEATURES

**Latin for Students with Dyslexia**  
AnnMarie Patterson

## ARTICLES

**The Language of Race in the Classroom: Teaching Classical History at an HBCU**  
Karl Baughman

***Ut te exhorter ad bonam mentem* ‘that I encourage you toward a sound mind’:  
How Nuanced Latin Emotional Vocabulary and SEL Routines Can Help Every Latin Student Flourish**  
Evan Dutmer

**Teaching Classics with Texts from Non-Ethnic Romans**  
Nicholas Mataya

**Vergil’s *Aeneid* and 21st-Century Immigration**  
Chris Nappa

---

**ISSUE 12.2  
SPRING 2022**

**EDITOR**

Yasuko Taoka (Temple University, Japan Campus) [tcleditor@camws.org](mailto:tcleditor@camws.org)

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**

Sharon Carr (Wayne State College) [tclassistant@camws.org](mailto:tclassistant@camws.org)

**TCL EDITORIAL BOARD**

Peter Anderson, Grand Valley State University  
Rebecca Harrison, Truman State University  
Caroline Kelly, Mitchell Community College, North Carolina  
Amy Sommer Rosevear, Cherry Creek High School, Denver, Colorado  
Wilfred Major, Louisiana State University  
Bartolo Natoli, Randolph-Macon College  
Robert Patrick, Parkview High School, Gwinnett County, Georgia  
Cynthia White, University of Arizona

Cover and Layout Design by Sharon Carr.  
Imagery used in cover and front matter obtained with permission from [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com).

### **TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES MISSION STATEMENT**

Teaching Classical Languages (ISSN 2160-2220) is the only peer-reviewed electronic journal dedicated to the teaching and learning of Latin and ancient Greek. It addresses the interests of all Latin and Greek teachers, graduate students, coordinators, and administrators. Teaching Classical Languages welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek. As an electronic journal, Teaching Classical Languages has a unique global outreach. It offers authors and readers a multimedia format that more fully illustrates the topics discussed, and provides hypermedia links to related information and websites. Articles not only contribute to successful Latin and Greek pedagogy, but draw on relevant literature in language education, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition for an ongoing dialogue with modern language educators. Teaching Classical Languages welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek.

ISSN 2160-2220.

Guidelines for submission may be found at  
<http://www.tcl.camws.org/guidelines.pdf>.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### FEATURES

- 06** **Latin for Students with Dyslexia**  
AnnMarie Patterson

### ARTICLES

- 27** **The Language of Race in the Classroom: Teaching Classical History at an HBCU**  
Karl Baughman
- 48** ***Ut te exhorter ad bonam mentem* 'that I encourage you toward a sound mind': How Nuanced Latin Emotional Vocabulary and SEL Routines Can Help Every Latin Student Flourish**  
Evan Dutmer
- 81** **Teaching Classics with Texts from Non-Ethnic Romans**  
Nicholas Mataya
- 90** **Vergil's *Aeneid* and 21st-Century Immigration**  
Christopher Nappa

## EDITOR'S NOTE

GUEST EDITORS: CAMWS COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Established by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in 2010, the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion directs attention to the importance and complexity of bringing the languages, literatures, and peoples of the ancient Mediterranean to increasingly diverse audiences.

Central to the CAMWS mission, of course, the committee's efforts aim to provide a service to teachers and scholars in schools and colleges. In this way, the Committee seeks to assist other CAMWS committees and members in their responsibilities and opportunities. Hence, we quickly said "yes" when Yasuko Taoka invited our Committee to join in preparation of an issue of Teaching Classical Languages that focusses on curricular materials, pedagogical strategies, and the challenges for making classics and its languages available to and accessible by new and increasingly more diverse audiences.

A single issue can only scratch the surface. We attempt here to offer a sample of what "diversity" and inclusion allows: the courage of working with specific populations (e.g., students at all levels with special needs), the importance of looking again and anew at canonical authors (e.g., Vergil) as well as authors themselves examples of the diverse nature of the Roman world (Prudentius). And how the ancients looked at the concept of "race" has significance for all of us who teach the past in an increasingly complex present. Both personal reflective essays and more scholarly approaches have a place in our work. And referees from a wide range of institutions have assisted us in preparation of this issue. We thank the many colleagues whose good will and good judgement we have mined.

We believe that the richness of "diversity" and "inclusion" is itself showcased in this way. Further, with panels and round tables at CAMWS' annual meetings, and with a careful but important social media presence, the Committee hopes to make our profession's commitment to each of the segments in the well-known definition offered by writer/illustrator Liz Fosslien:

**"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard"**

## **Latin for Students with Dyslexia**

**ANNMARIE PATTERSON  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**This article follows the personal experience of a Ph.D. student in classics with dyslexia. From high-school Latin classes to an undergraduate major in classical languages and graduate courses focusing on classical Latin authors, this article offers the perspective of a learner who needed to develop various coping mechanisms to successfully acquire language skills and still enjoy language courses. Dyslexia creates a unique classroom experience in foreign language classes. Students are learning to read for the second time, and the difference between dyslexic students and students without a language-processing disorder is intensified. As dyslexia is such a common learning difference, this student's experience may resonate with other dyslexic learners. This piece explores the methods of learning Latin that worked well with dyslexia and offers strategies that may be beneficial for dyslexic language learners and their instructors.**

## Introduction

The topic of my dyslexia did not often come up in my early years of Latin. That was strange since Latin is a foreign language and dyslexia is a language-processing disorder. Dyslexia can make it difficult to learn to read any language, but most dyslexics learn to cope well enough in their native language by the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

I was certainly behind learning to read in early grade-school. My handwriting and spelling choices were nearly unintelligible, and I remember arguing with my first-grade teacher over how to write my name. (I had decided that all the vowels were interchangeable, and each paper would be turned in with a new combination of vowels forced into my name, so my ever-patient teacher and I would re-open the topic of why spelling was important.) This was the first learning difference I noticed between myself and my classmates: They all liked to write their names. It was a point of pride. I liked how my name sounded, but I did not care how it looked on paper. There was a gap in ability between myself and other students for the next five years marked by my slow reading, inability to sound out words, and atrocious spelling.

However, by age ten, I was starting to close the reading and writing gap between myself and my classmates. I developed coping mechanisms for dealing with dyslexia that helped me to keep up with schoolwork. Through a combination of audiobooks, excessive independent reading, and adults reading aloud to me, I developed the necessary language skills to do well in class. I still read slower than most people and I still spell poorly without spell check software, but my English is

not deficient. When high school came around, I was tested for learning disabilities and my dyslexia was confirmed. This did not worry me as I felt I was keeping pace with other students my age. Then I signed up for Latin.

Because we are essentially learning to read all over again, it can be difficult for a dyslexic student to pick up a foreign language; the same sorts of problems many of us had in those early years of learning written English come right back, sometimes even in a new script.

Certain questions then tend to arise: What is the most accessible language for a dyslexic student? Which language can give them the grades they need for college applications or would look best on a resume? How do we get those students through their high school or college language requirements smoothly? As a dyslexic Latinist, I feel strongly that we need to broaden that conversation to include a much wider range of considerations. While I only have my own experience and the experiences that other dyslexic Latin students have shared with me to rely on, it seems clear that this discussion is not only limited: it is limiting. Ease and the shortest path to the finish line are not the only things we ought to consider. Having studied Latin in high school, as well as at the undergraduate and graduate level, I know foreign language can be not only useful but actively enjoyable for a dyslexic student.

### **Discussing Latin as an Option for Dyslexic Students**

When Latin is mentioned as an option for dyslexic learners, I tend to hear two common refrains.

The first is to just avoid studying Latin. It has a reputation for being difficult,

and it is often taught with a grammar-translation or reading-based method, which makes it extra work for a student with dyslexia. This is bad advice. Not all Latin classes are taught using the same methods, so some dyslexic students may find a class that works just as well for them as any other foreign language. Furthermore, not all dyslexics share the same symptoms. For example, some have an auditory component to their dyslexia, creating problems with pitch and accent. For me, this is not so great a problem. Personally, the visual ‘letter-flipping’ component of dyslexia is strongest, and it affects my ability to process English just as much as it does Latin. The core of dyslexia is a phonological processing issue (Downey, Snyder, Hill 102). However, this problem manifests in a large range of symptoms<sup>1</sup> and, generally, different dyslexics have different groups of symptoms. There is no catch-all advice we can be given regarding which languages to study. I ought also to point out that an easy language is not always our end goal. Instead of asking what the easiest language for a dyslexic to learn is, we are better off asking what the easiest method for them to learn a language is.

The second thing I tend to hear regarding Latin and dyslexia is much more optimistic: Latin is a great option for dyslexic students since it will help them improve their English writing and spelling skills. To a degree, this is true. We know learning a foreign language increases capability in one’s native language, and Latin is a great option for bettering one’s native English (Ashmore and Madden 63). However, I steer away from encouraging dyslexic students to take Latin specifically to better their English because – while it does help one’s English – Latin is not a magic bullet: no matter how much time I spent studying Latin, I was not getting

the grades I wanted in high school English classes, but that did not mean Latin was pointless. I enjoyed Latin for the sake of history, mythology, literature, and the language itself. Compelling content is as good a reason as any to take a course, and dyslexic students can enjoy that as well as anyone. I do not think of my elementary Latin years as some kind of remedial spelling class while everyone else was there to prep for the SAT. The benefits of Latin cannot be boiled down to how they might aid us in another language.

Despite frustration with memorizing endings and difficulty learning the patterns of a new language, my early experience with Latin was generally good. This had a lot to do with the learning environment that my first Latin teacher created. He managed to create a space beneficial for dyslexic students beyond just meeting the required accommodations. The school administration oversaw accommodations from an IEP (Individual Education Program) or 504 Plan (the accessibility requirements specific to the student), but our Latin teacher saw to it that his class was accepting, joyful, and uninterested in the elitism often associated with Latin. This environment helped raise my self-esteem and lower my anxiety about my dyslexia – both of which can help lower affective filters and increase language acquisition (Krashen 31). This likewise increased my interest in the subject, making it easier to stay engaged and more rewarding to put in the effort Latin required.

I have had many Latin teachers and tutors over the years, and am also a Latin teacher myself, now with a few of my own dyslexic students, and have learned from being on both sides. My hope for this article is that my perspective will inform other language teachers as they shape their classroom practices.

## The Numbers

There are more dyslexic students in our classes than we think. Dyslexia is one of the most common learning disabilities, but since so many dyslexic people go untested and undiagnosed, it is difficult to accurately gauge how much of the population has dyslexia (Shaywitz 29). Some estimates put it between 5% and 10%, others as high as 17–20% (Wadlington 16). Any way you slice it, with numbers like that, all of us have dyslexic students in class. However, we are not always aware of them. Some students will choose not to use their accommodations (a common occurrence at universities). Even when they do, students are not required to tell instructors what learning disabilities they have – though I encourage dyslexic students to tell their language instructors, since it can help their instructors tailor their approach to more learners. In addition to this is the problem of undiagnosed and subclinical dyslexia.

Subclinical dyslexia refers to the diagnosed or undiagnosed dyslexics who receive no accommodations. Suppose someone is tested for learning disabilities and it is clear that they have some degree of light to moderate dyslexia, but they are compensating for their language-processing issues in other ways. In that case, they will typically not receive accommodations (Miles 340–342).<sup>2</sup> However, while not as severe as other types of dyslexia, subclinical dyslexia still presents major obstacles to language learning. Just because a student is compensating for a symptom with certain adaptations does not mean a language-processing disorder does not hinder them. Often it is not until students take a foreign language that they realize they are dyslexic. Between the shame of admitting to someone that they read very slowly,

the general avoidance of the topic, and the sheer number of undiagnosed people, it is no wonder that the estimate of dyslexia in the population vary so widely.

As awareness about dyslexia has grown, so too has research interest. Research within the field of foreign language acquisition and learning differences is led by the work of Loenore Ganchow and Richard Sparks, which has provided the basis for many current research projects pertaining to language learning and dyslexia. Ganchow and Sparks did not work specifically on Latin, though. Due to the unique way Latin is often taught — with an emphasis on increasingly complex translation, instead of comprehension followed by production — the effect of dyslexia on Latin learners manifests a bit differently than it does in learners of other languages. The gap in research pertaining to Latin and dyslexia is beginning to diminish thanks to the work of those like Barbara Hill, Ronnie Ancona, Althea Ashe, and others. Still, research in this area is much sparser than research about dyslexia and other languages.

### **Observing and Listening to your Students**

Dyslexic students take in information differently than their peers, but, because we are used to being in a classroom designed for students without learning differences, we usually develop a variety of coping mechanisms, which often fall outside the range of prescribed accommodations. That is okay. If a dyslexic student is only entitled to the accommodation of time-and-a-half on exams, for instance, but they also find it useful to whisper a sentence a few times whenever they find new vocabulary in context, the student is just self-accommodating a more specific

issue than their IEP requires. Ronnie Ancona has outlined her experience working one-on-one with a dyslexic college-level Latin student successfully.<sup>3</sup> The strength of her approach was her willingness to listen and adapt to this student's strengths, weaknesses, and, in particular, their coping mechanisms.

However, not everyone will be able to provide one-on-one teaching for dyslexic students. This is why I advocate for a classroom environment that does not micromanage student behavior, one which allows students to use the tools they need that others might not; for me, these classroom environments meant that I could use some coping mechanisms which I was not entitled to through disabled student services, but which cost the instructor nothing, did not break the rules of the class or exist in tension with academic integrity standards, and which made it easier for me to learn.

Asking for a seat in the front of the room to read the board better or let professors know that it would take me longer to read aloud were important coping mechanisms for me. One of my symptoms is the transposition of words across a vertical axis as well as a horizontal one. In practice, this means I will occasionally read a word as part of a sentence in which it does not belong. To combat this, I usually have a bookmark with me to cover up the lines below the one I am reading (blocking any 'flipping' from happening) or I will fold the bottom of the paper up to cover yet-unread text. This looks strange to some teachers and bothered some professors, but other than looking a little odd and adding crease lines to exam papers, this coping mechanism does no harm. These are not the sort of things delineated on an IEP, so having a professor or instructor who would make it clear that doing

things in a slightly unorthodox manner was acceptable was always a great relief to me.<sup>4</sup> By teaching in such an environment, we allow students to address some of their own learning differences.

From the perspective of a language teacher, I understand the need for greater control in middle school and early high school Latin classes. Students are still learning cases, conjugations, and grammar and will not always know efficient ways to go about it. Teachers' experiences are valuable in laying out best practices for studying and use of classroom time. However, since dyslexics are not always learning in a course designed for us, we need to lean on our own life experience for best personal practices as well.

Open dialogue between the student and instructor is the only bridge for this gap in understanding. I urge dyslexic students who know this experience well to be an advocate for themselves, and I urge teachers to listen. Both teachers and students have different language learning experiences to bring to the table, and it benefits both groups to hear the other out. Having a conversation about language-processing issues at the start of term, even if the student has an accommodations plan, is a common piece of advice given by specialists give to dyslexics — and, in my experience, it is one of the best. This works in both directions: Teachers may also be able to suggest strategies and coping mechanisms the student has not thought of yet.

### **Technology as a Tool**

In terms of coping mechanisms, one of the best tools I have used in class was is a laptop. Many language teachers at both high school and undergraduate

level ban laptops from classes or express clear displeasure at the sight of them. I understand why. Having a personal screen in the room increases our ability to distract ourselves and each other. However, a laptop also offers tools that can make reading ancient languages much easier for a dyslexic student.

Spell-check, for instance, is a godsend. When I am translating a passage to be graded, I do not have to worry about my English because spell check will ensure it is legible. Before I was permitted to use a computer, I often needed to know four of five meanings of any given Latin word to choose the word in English that could most easily be spelled. Now I can use whichever word best suits the context of the passage.

I also use a laptop in class for font manipulation. One of the symptoms of dyslexia is seeing letters as closer together than they are and thus having trouble distinguishing them (Pierson). Since Latin is an inflected language and it is necessary to know which letters make up which endings, we cannot rely on full-word recognition in Latin. Distinguishing between letters, then, is a must. Predictably, certain fonts create more problems for me than others. An easy way to remedy this is to increase the font size and change the font style. The bigger the font, the easier it is to distinguish the letters. This is beneficial for non-dyslexic students, too, as larger fonts appear less intimidating and limit eye strain. I also appreciate it when an instructor provides a digital copy of whatever resources they distribute. Physical photocopies of an *Oxford Classical Texts* edition are practically inscrutable compared to a PDF that I can zoom in. Better yet is a Microsoft Word document that can be reformatted to increase font size and spacing.

Then there is the keyboard itself. Like many dyslexics, I write slowly, so the keyboard facilitates any written exercise. Bringing a computer to class was frowned upon at my high school, but in college, I noticed I was easily able to keep up with everyone on a laptop. Most older students type faster than they write, so everyone might appreciate the increased ease. For students with a language-processing disorder, a keyboard can be the difference between missing and catching important information, including logistical announcements and homework assignments.

I also depend on electronic dictionaries. For dyslexics, paper dictionaries can be frustrating since we have a hard time keeping a visual representation of letters in our heads. When a word is written in the text, we need to repeatedly look back and forth between the text and the dictionary entries to find it, which can be disorienting and often lead to losing our place in either book several times. Looking up new vocabulary, even in alphabetical order, can be much more challenging for a dyslexic student. When I can just type the word into a searchable document or online dictionary, I can have the computer highlight it for me and then always find it on either page while I look back and forth. This makes reading much more enjoyable. Nobody's favorite part of a translation exercise is thumbing through *Lewis and Short*. The faster I can get back to the primary text, the faster I can learn the vocabulary in context and keep absorbing the language.

Useful as digital dictionaries may be, I do not recommend constant usage of click-to-retrieve websites like Perseus<sup>5</sup> or NoDictionaries<sup>6</sup> which allow you to see the English word right next to the Latin word while still within the original text. While they have their uses, these programs have made it easier for me to click on

a new word and reveal the English definition before I have even finished reading the Latin word, which is not productive for vocabulary acquisition. However it has been a beneficial practice to have a separate browser window that I can open with a few Latin dictionaries that require me to type out the new vocabulary, such as the ones on the website Latinitium.<sup>7</sup>

I don't have a catch-all suggestion for technology use in class. I think all language instructors need to decide for themselves what level of technology they want to incorporate into their class, based on their classroom dynamic. There is no denying that technology can be abused and lead to distraction in the classroom. I would urge, however, that the needs of students with dyslexia and other learning differences weigh heavily in that decision.

### **Teaching Methods to Reach Dyslexic Students**

In the Latin classroom, we tend to recognize three main methods of instruction: grammar-translation (exemplified by textbooks such as *Wheelock's Latin*) the reading method (exemplified by series such as *Cambridge Latin* or *Ecce Romani*), and active Latin, in which all four aspects of language – listening comprehension, reading comprehension, oral production, and written production – are emphasized.

Barbara Hill wrote an excellent explanation of why and how language classes that focus on all four skills are some of the most effective for any student's acquisition, but especially for students with a learning disability. I highly recommend this piece to anyone teaching a foreign language.<sup>8</sup> Her chapter is based

on the premise that we all acquire language through the four types of input and production. These are our tools for language acquisition. When some of us have one or two tools that do not function well – such as those that come with a learning disability – the use of the other tools ensures that we do not fall too far behind our peers.

I have tried various Latin classes with various methods, from traditional Grammar-Translation to courses conducted entirely in Latin. For just the reasons Hill discusses, the active Latin classes which focus on all four skills have by far been the most effective for me. Even when my reading comprehension and ability to memorize forms was lagging, I still managed to acquire language via the other tools.

All of my classes in high school and universities have followed a grammar-translation format. GT relies heavily on translation formulas and morphology memorizing, which is difficult for me. In addition to that, GT classes seemed to focus on English just as much as they do Latin. I found I would make mistakes in both languages. Parsing out how the “should/would” phrasing works in a contrary-to-fact conditional in English, while trying to learn which Latin moods are used in that conditional just doubled my confusion.

However, in undergrad, I discussed different language acquisition methods with another Latin student, and we decided to try a comprehensible reading approach with no translating after our required Latin classes. My Latin got better fast. While before, I had needed to frequently review verb charts to get through a translation assignment, after starting this reading practice, all those verb forms came naturally.

Translating in class became more natural as well. I had developed a much better mental representation of Latin and was having an easier time translating meaning – not just the individual word’s definitions – into English.

After adding the comprehensible input into my studying, I started to seek out venues for active Latin. I have since taken online courses, sought private tutors who specialize in active Latin, and attended summer and weekend programs to bolster my Latin speaking and writing. Working on my active language skills has had immense benefits for my reading comprehension, and again, developing these skills aided my translation abilities in a GT classroom setting.

Since starting to speak Latin I also found that I can spell Latin words more accurately and read aloud more fluidly. Inscriptions and manuscript pages which only use capital letters or cramped letters are now more manageable as well. I even have a better understanding of meter and scansion, which used to seem impossible to me when I was taking in Latin only as a written language. Laying a rhythm over a series of written letters is a dyslexic nightmare but hearing a rhythm in spoken words is not so difficult.

In my experience, active Latin mixes the benefits of both ancient and modern language classrooms. There was hardly any emphasis on reading in my elementary German and Italian classes, and the speaking was too much. I could not hear where one word began and the other ended, a common complaint among dyslexics (Hill 50). In GT Latin classes, we were certainly reading more, but without the aid of sound, my forms and vocabulary acquisition were lagging. In active Latin circles, there seems to be much more emphasis on reading than in

elementary modern language classes, therefore I do not experience the words as bleeding together as much when spoken. I can almost see the discrete words in my mind when I hear them. In turn, the aid of auditory learning and oral production helps me to retain the written language much better. The increased auditory input and comprehensible reading are the same tools that got me up to speed in English classes during elementary school. Now they work for me in a second language.

I now attend a digital spoken Latin hour once a week to keep up my comprehension. I also listen to the ever-growing auditory content in Latin<sup>9</sup> and frequently write in Latin. I doubt I will ever maintain my current level of reading comprehension without the aid of active Latin.

While this is a bit of extra work outside of coursework requirements, I prefer this method of language maintenance. The reality of being dyslexic is that I will never learn foreign languages as quickly as others. I have heard from other dyslexics and have even said myself that we can only remedy this by working harder and spending more time on assigned work than our peers. However, by taking time to routinely work on my active Latin, I find that I no longer have to spend extra time reading an assigned passage two or three more times than my classmates, and my sight reading has become a much more useful and reliable skill.

I should add a caveat to my approach. Since all my active Latin instruction has been extra-curricular, it got expensive. As an undergraduate, I would not have been able to afford it without scholarships and departmental aid. The stipend in graduate school has allowed me to continue active Latin without economic burden, but should you have a student whom you think may benefit from such outside help,

please also consider what sources of institutional funding might be available for them and recommend those as well.

### **Trouble Shooting and Potential Quick Fixes for Specific Problems**

If you have dyslexic students in your class and are looking to recommend help for specific problems, here is a list of simple tricks I have used to overcome pesky reading blocks. They might work for you as well with varying levels of success.

- 1) If a student cannot memorize a written verb or declension chart, suggest learning the chart in a song and allow the student to sing it if they are required to write out endings.
- 2) If a student cannot read aloud or cannot recognize a verb ending/stem, take a bookmark and cover everything but the word's first syllable. Reveal the other syllables one at a time as they read aloud. This breaks the word into easier-to-digest pieces. Have them say the word again once they have it all uncovered. This also works in reverse to target the ending of a word.
- 3) If a student complains that the letters themselves are illegible, try printing classwork in double spaced font, at least size 12, and format material so that no words are hyphenated over a line break. Choose one or two fonts in which all class materials will appear so the student does not need to get used to new fonts. Font created especially for dyslexic readers may also be useful.<sup>10</sup>
- 4) If a student does not pronounce the letters in order, encourage the student to memorize a short poem or speech in Latin, both by reading and by listening

to an audio track of another speaker. This will not solve pronunciation problems instantly but can help over time.

- 5) If a student has a hard time reading Latin from screens, try putting the section the student is asked to read in bold, in a darker color than the rest of the text, or highlight the passage in a soft color. This may help prevent vertical-axis ‘flipping’.
- 6) If a student seems to understand Latin but is underperforming on written exams, know that dyslexics tend to write slower than others. If written exams are not working, talk to the student’s counselor about amending their accommodations to include oral exams or extended time. Alternatively, you can try testing comprehension using non-written methods: i.e., a drawing exercise in which the student needs to draw an image based on a Latin description or activities that make use of physical responses.
- 7) If a student is frustrated or unable to see their progress when moving to more complex grammar or ancient authors, try giving them an easy Latin novella. They are numerous and multiplying fast. A little comprehensible input that they can read by themselves can do wonders for self-esteem.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching Latin to dyslexic students does not have to be a painful experience — for either side. It does not need to emphasize an endpoint or a finish line. Learning Latin can be an enjoyable, long term or life-long pursuit for dyslexic students, as it has been for me. Teachers make such a difference in our early days with a new language, and accepting teachers who were willing to work with us and

encourage us to explore different techniques, coping mechanisms, and methods of instruction to learn what worked best for me are extremely beneficial for language acquisition. Because of these positive classroom environments, I felt more at home in Latin class than in most courses offered in my native language, even as someone with a language-processing disorder. Over time, I have noticed the stigma behind learning disabilities begin to fade away. I still catch it occasionally, but educational environments have become more accepting of learning disabilities as research has proliferated. People still react with surprise when they learn that I am dyslexic and enjoy foreign — especially ancient — languages, but over time I expect that it will become quite common.

## Endnotes

1 For a list of common symptoms, common questions regarding dyslexia, and other well-curated resources, J.M. Pierson's website – frequently updated and run by the University of Michigan's dyslexia center – is most helpful: <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/faq>.

2 For troubleshooting with students who are subclinical, see Pierson (2021). "Re-evaluation of Dyslexia turns No Results - Where to Go From Here." <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/ask-dr-pierson/re-evaluation-dyslexia-turns-no-results-where-go-here>

3 Ancora's experience can be read in her article "Latin and a Dyslexic Student. An Experience in Teaching" (1982).

4 For a fuller list of my coping mechanisms, see my article <https://medium.com/in-medias-res/learning-latin-with-dyslexia-afef65bfbf>.

5 <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collections>.

6 <https://nodictionaries.com/>.

7 <https://www.latinitium.com/latin-dictionaries>

8 Hill, Barbara. "Latin for Students with Severe Foreign Language Learning Difficulties." *When Dead Tongues Speak* edited by Gruber-Miller, J. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2006. pp. 50-67.

9 My favorite Latin podcast, *Quomodo Dicitur*, can be found here <https://quomododicitur.com/>.

10 'Dyslexi' by Christian Boer <https://www.dyslexiefont.com/>, 'Open Dyslexic' by Abbie Gonzalez <https://opendyslexic.org/>, and the British Dyslexia Association's style guide <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/employers/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-workplace/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide>, all have useful fonts.

**Bibliography**

- Ancona, R. "Latin and a Dyslexic Student. An Experience in Teaching." *The Classical World* 76.1 (1982): 33-36.
- Ashe, A. "Latin for Special Needs Students: Meeting the Challenge of Students with Learning Disabilities." *Latin for the 21st Century*. Ed. Richard Lafleur and Glenview III. Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1998. 237-250.
- Ashmore, R., and J.D.Madden. "Literacy via Latin." *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 23.1 (1990): 63-70.
- Celestino, W. "Total Physical Response: Commands, not Control." *Hispania* 76 (1993): 902-903.
- Downey, D., L. Snyder, and N. Hill "College Students with Dyslexia: Persistent Linguistic Deficits and Foreign Language Learning." *Dyslexia* 6.2 (2000): 101-111.
- Hill, Barbara. "Latin for Students with Severe Foreign Language Learning Difficulties." *When Dead Tongues Speak*. Ed. J. Gruber-Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 50-67.
- Krashen, Stephen D. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. 1st ed. New York: Pergamon, 1982.
- Miles, T.R., T. J. Wheeler and M. N. Haslum. "The Existence of Dyslexia without Severe Literacy Problems." *Annals of Dyslexia* 53 (2003): 340-354.
- Peirson, Johann Marttila. "Frequently Asked Questions." Dyslexia Help University of Michigan. N.p., 2021. Web. 10 June 2021 <<http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/faq>>.

- Pierson, Johann Marttila. "Transforming Engagement in Literacy Instruction: The Role of Student Genuine Interest and Ability." *Annals of Dyslexia* 49 (1999): 302-329.
- Shaywitz, Sally E. *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level*. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage Books, 2003.
- Stringer, G. "What Can Active Latin Accomplish? Well Let Me Just Show You: Some Facts and Figures Illustrating the Benefits of Active Latin Instruction." *The Classical Outlook* 94 (2019): 81-93.
- Wadlington, Elizabeth M., Patrick L. Wadlington. "What Educators Really Believe about Dyslexia." *Reading Improvement* 42 (2005): 16-33.
- "Universal Learning Design Guidelines." *Universal Learning Design*. 2.2. N.p. 2018. Web. 10 June 2021. <[https://udlguidelines.cast.org/?utm\\_source=-castsite&lutm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=none&utm\\_content=aboutudl](https://udlguidelines.cast.org/?utm_source=-castsite&lutm_medium=web&utm_campaign=none&utm_content=aboutudl)>.