

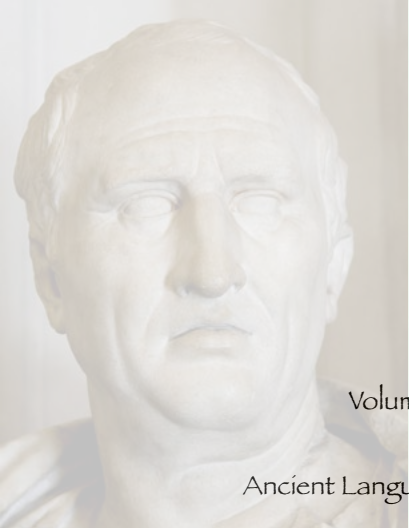
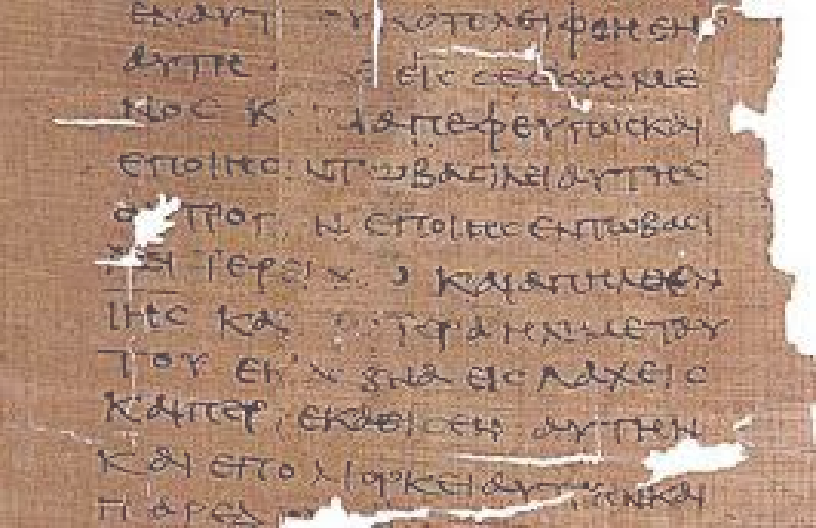
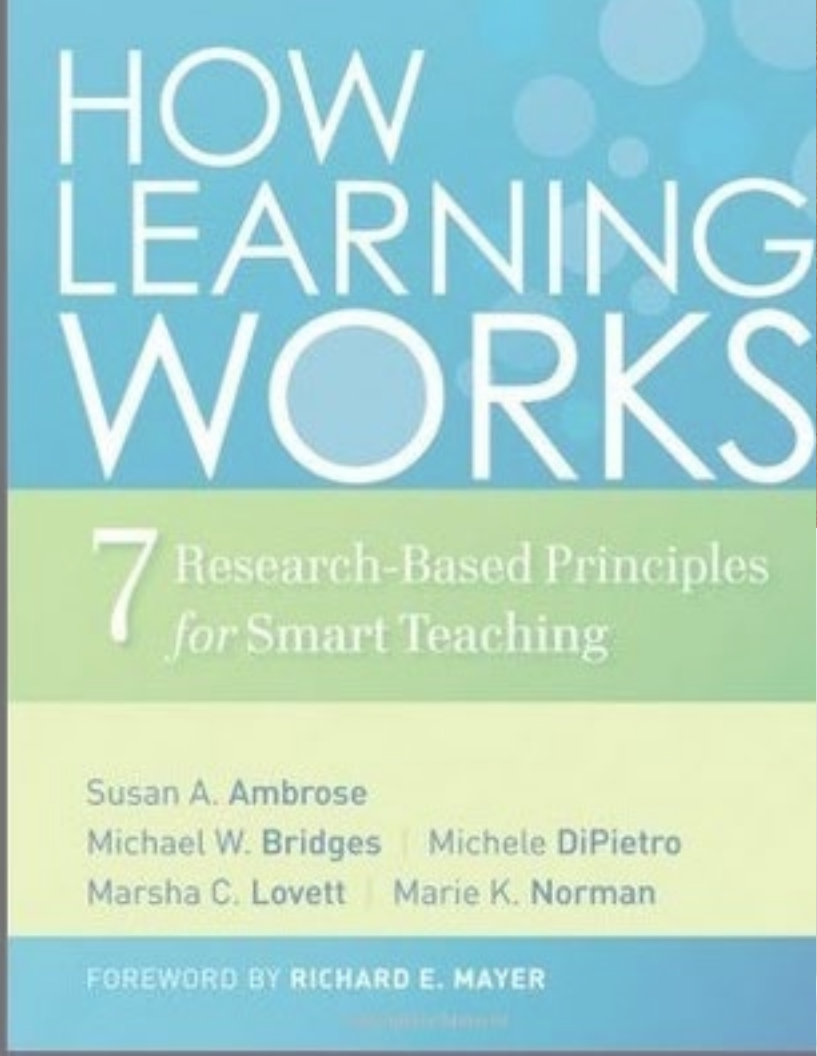
TCL

TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

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Articles by:
 Alan van den Arend
 T. H. M. Gellar-Goad
 Ian Hochberg
 James J. Clauss



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Editor

John Gruber-Miller, Classical and Modern Languages, Cornell College
600 First St. SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314
tcleditor@camws.org

Editorial Assistant

Keely Lake, Hot Springs, SD
vergsoc@yahoo.com

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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.

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Guidelines for submission may be found at

<http://www.tcl.camws.org/guidelines.pdf>.

Attendite: The Art of Listening to our Students

One of the amazing things about language is that there are words for concepts that we must express with multiple words in our first language. The Latin word *attendo attendere* is one of those. In beginning Latin, one of the first words a student learns is *audio audire* “to hear.” Generally speaking, Latin textbooks do not introduce *attendere*, yet it is a word that makes us think harder about listening. It is not just listening or hearing, but “to pay attention, to listen carefully, to be an attentive listener.” It is a compound formed by joining the prefix *ad* “toward” and *tendere* “to stretch toward, to head for, to exert oneself, or to be inclined toward.” These definitions reveal the very physical and tangible quality of the verb. It signifies intention, attention, and being fully present to those we meet. We might call it “leaning in” to someone’s words.

Over the past several years, I have been blessed to have students in my classes who are eager, curious, verbal, artistic, analytical, outgoing, reserved, creative, some who immerse themselves in details, and others who look at the big picture. All of them are able to learn. All of them are able to grow intellectually and socially. If they pay attention to each other, they—and I—discover classmates who can make what we are studying relevant to their peers. While traveling to Greece, I had one student who is a potter and who looked at vases not just as beautiful objects, but as the products of creative artisans. They wanted to understand how they were made, and they took special interest in the bottom of vases. They were thrilled that the Heraklion Museum suspended various perfume jars so that everyone could actually see the bottom of these *aryballoi* and *amphoriskoi*. As we walked through the museum, anyone in the class who was in earshot would gain special insights into making vases and their cultural significance. Most importantly, the students in the class learned to ask new questions and were pushed to examine the ancient world through a new lens.

If I teach my students to listen attentively, they become not only better at noticing key details but more in touch with their humanity. For example, in my [Women in Antiquity](#) course I ask students to complete a three-part project. Step One, they choose a woman that they know who lived through an earlier era than their own, typically a grandmother, an aunt, or a friend who is sixty or older. In pairs, they draft

questions about one aspect of the interviewee's life based on their presentation in class. It could be education, the spiritual, relationships, women's health, or women's role in the economy. Step Two, they interview the woman, identify the most meaningful moments or quotations, and create a seven-minute podcast. In the process, they compare their interview with their partner's and notice the similarities, but even more importantly, the differences between them. They recognize the diversity of lived experience and how it is connected to a person's peculiar circumstances as they grew and matured. Step Three, they write a letter back to the woman they interviewed and compare their experiences with those of women living during the archaic, classical, or Hellenistic age. The project opens their eyes to a close relative, gives them an opportunity to have a deeply meaningful conversation, and offers them the experience of being an attentive, empathetic listener.

Besides students who bring diverse learning styles to their work, I have had students who are anxious, depressed, distracted, lacking confidence, lacking motivation, expecting perfection, or experiencing sensory overload. I have students with learning challenges such as dyslexia. I have had a student on the autistic spectrum who was sometimes too narrowly focused, who was not able to forgive his mistakes, who in frustration exploded in class, frequently at himself, but occasionally at another student. These moments can be extremely challenging because most of us have never had any preparation for handling them. Even if we have experienced one or more of these challenges, every instance can be a little different. Some students have documented accommodations, but some, especially in a language class, discover their need for additional support for the first time. Frequently, I am not sure how much leeway to give them or how much structure to provide. This is when I need to pay attention. I need to give them opportunities to self-disclose, to share their own understanding of how a particular condition affects their learning and their ability to complete assignments.

This term, I had a blind student in a civ course, [Comedy: Greece and Rome to Hollywood](#). Four requirements for the course were particularly challenging. The first is the physical aspect and visual nature of performance. How does one understand a mask or a costume, a set or a theater when the image can't be seen? So, when students gave a presentation with images, I asked members of the class to describe the image in detail. This helped not only the student who could not see it; everyone began to notice the salient details. Second, a key part of the course was to watch six classic Hollywood film comedies. How would my student get the visual

and physical humor in a Chaplin or Marx Brothers film? How would he appreciate the scenes of high society in Mae West's *Goin' to Town*? It turned out that this problem was the easiest to solve since there are services, including Netflix, that provide "descriptives" of films specifically designed for the visually impaired. The third challenge was to perform a scene for the rest of the class. My student and his partner solved it by choosing the scene from Menander's *Dyskolos* in which the cantankerous old man Knemon was incapacitated from falling down a well. As he was rolled out on the *ekkyklema*, my student remained immobilized on the cart while the two slaves kept harassing him by knocking on his door and asking for pots. The fourth challenge was the final project, a website analyzing a Hollywood film comedy and arguing how it exemplifies one of the ancient comic traditions. So my student watched the movie with descriptives, analyzed the film through multiple lenses (plot, character, humor, gender, ethnicity, and social class), and in the end received help from someone in the Academic Technology Studio to find images and post his insights into WordPress. The course worked well because we listened to each other attentively on a regular basis throughout the course and strategized how to solve each challenge as it came along.

Of course, not every student has enough self-awareness to express what help is needed. Not every student is ready to disclose a learning disability or a mental health condition. Yet it is up to me to gain each student's trust and to provide opportunities inside and outside of class for me to listen with care. It is so easy to walk into the classroom and stick to the lesson I had planned. Yet the unplanned insights that come from my students often connect with others in the class if I can affirm their insights and give them room to maneuver and the opportunity to express their nascent ideas. It is up to me to be an intentional listener, to be flexible, to let go of my lesson plan when a student has a new question or fresh insight, to listen to what my students are telling me and each other. It is also up to me to give my students the chance to be listeners. And it is also profoundly important that I keep learning from my students. The key for all of us is not just to listen (*audire*), but to lean in and listen carefully—*attendere*.

Each article in this issue of *Teaching Classical Languages* offers readers several ways to listen carefully. In "Something Old, Something New: Marrying Early Modern Latin Pedagogy and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory," Alan van den Arend reminds us that if we listen to Renaissance pedagogues, we can recognize that many of the effective qualities of being a good teacher were

already being discussed and implemented by Posselius, Erasmus, and Comenius. In the seventh principle of “How Learning Works in the Greek and Latin Classroom,” Ted Gellar-Goad exhorts us to notice how student social identity should be honored through an open, inclusive, and welcoming classroom environment. In “*Quid vultis discere?* Crafting a Student-Guided Latin Literature Course,” Ian Hochberg provides an outstanding road map how to honor students’ curiosity and to challenge them to become co-collaborators within the classroom, giving them choices what texts to read and what projects to choose. Finally, in “Teaching the Old and New Testaments to Students of Greek and Latin Simultaneously,” Jim Clauss asks readers to listen attentively to these two versions of the same text and to be mindful of the choices made in composing a text and interpreting it through translation.