

TCL

TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

An Online Journal of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South

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**Competency and
Collaboration:
An Approach to the
Second-Semester
Latin Course**



**An Old Teaching Dog
Tries Some New Tricks:
Changing a Traditional
Latin Classroom**



**Book Review:
*Alexandros to
Hellenikon Paidion***

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Cover illustration “A Greek boy and his dog learning new tricks”
by Meghan Yamanishi.

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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.

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Guidelines for submission may be found at

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

Letter from the Editor

John Gruber-Miller
Cornell College

It is easy to think that learning vocabulary, grammar, and syntax and exploring Greek and Roman culture are the essential ingredients for learning Latin and Greek. Yet motivation is a key ingredient in the recipe, too. How do we encourage our students to continue studying Latin or Greek? How do we motivate them to reach higher levels of proficiency and reward them for their success? One possible solution is to offer your students the possibility of being awarded a state-endorsed “Seal of Biliteracy.”

So what is a Seal of Biliteracy? The Seal of Biliteracy certifies that a student has attained a certain level of proficiency in both English and another world language, including Latin and Greek. The recognition becomes a part of a student’s high school transcript and diploma. “It is a statement of accomplishment that helps signal evidence of a student’s readiness for career and college, and for engagement as a global citizen” ([ACTFL Guidelines for Implementing a Seal of Biliteracy](#)). Bottom line, it is a way to encourage students to continue studying Latin and Greek, and help them to be open to diverse cultural behaviors and values.

ACTFL recommends that students achieve Intermediate Mid proficiency as a minimum, but that level of performance can be measured in many different ways. This document makes clear that not all languages should be assessed in the same way. To help states understand what are appropriate measures, the National Committee for Latin and Greek has drawn up some suggestions. For classicists, measuring success in Latin can be done through a variety of instruments: ALIRA (ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Exam), AP Latin, IB Latin, National Latin Exam, National Greek Exam, SAT Subject Tests. Besides these national exams, state and local assessments can be developed that meet the approval of a state department of education or school district. Most importantly, the NCLG Guidelines recommend that states recognize but do not require students to demonstrate productive use of Greek or Latin in either oral or written mode.

When I first looked into the Seal of Biliteracy a year ago, I was concerned that as classicists and Latin teachers we should recommend a specific score on various exams to indicate the Intermediate Mid level of proficiency. But what I have

come to realize is that such a list does not do justice to all the ways that students can demonstrate their proficiency. Some students will have achieved it in reading while others may demonstrate it through analysis and interpretation of a text, while still others through integrated performance assessments or presentations or portfolios. The possibilities are quite varied. What is important is for students (and parents) to recognize the value of learning a classical or modern language, achieving some measure of intercultural competence, and be motivated to continue that pursuit.

Momentum is building quickly. The NCLG recommendations for implementing the Seal of Biliteracy has been endorsed by CAMWS, JCCAE, and regional and state classical organizations. In just the past few years, more than twenty five states have endorsed the Seal of Biliteracy and many more state legislatures and school districts are considering legislation to implement the Seal. You can advocate for the Seal in your school district or state. To see if your state has approved the Seal of Biliteracy, visit the [Seal of Biliteracy website](#). To learn more about the Seal of Biliteracy, consult the [ACTFL Guidelines for the Seal of Biliteracy](#) to see how you can motivate your Latin and Greek students to reach higher levels of success. Semper ad meliora!

The three articles in this issue share several common themes. First is the importance of teacher self-reflection and dedication to constant improvement. Each author tells the story of how they perceived a need in the classroom and sought a solution. Additionally, each author shows that it is okay to take risks in the classroom as long as one can articulate the challenges faced, the goals of the course, and then respond with thoughtful revision. Second, these authors review both old (the Direct Method), recent (communicative language instruction) and new (SCALE-UP) methods to see how they might be adapted to the Latin or Greek classroom.

Finally, each article offers a different approach to research. In “Competency and Collaboration: An Approach to the Second Semester Latin Course,” Kristina Meinking takes advantage of both experiential data provided by her students in the heat of the course and qualitative data retrieved from them at the end of the course. In “An Old Teaching Dog Tries Some New Tricks: Changing a Traditional Latin Classroom,” Matthew Panciera offers an autobiographical case study, chronicling key events and offering sample activities as he sought to transform his classroom from an eclectic, traditional reading approach to a more communicative one. Finally, in his review article of the Greek reader *Alexandros*, Paul Nitz sets the work in historical context and suggests new ways to make use of it in a communicative classroom. Wishing you a fabulous vacation. Enjoy!