

Students Teaching Students: Implementing Goals for Undergraduate Research,
Active Learning, and Collaboration

The Text-Commentary Project (link below) in the *Online Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women* <http://www2.cnr.edu/home/sas/araia/companion.html> is an effective teaching-learning activity for the Latin classroom. It restores the responsibility for learning to the student and satisfies four of the five goals of the *National Standards for Classical Language Learning*: #1 Communication (Standard 1.1); #2 Culture (Standard 2.1-2); #3 Connections (Standard 3.2); #5 Communities (Standard 5.2).

The project can be assigned to one student, a group of students, or an entire class, divided into working teams. It can be used as a classroom exercise or offered as an independent research option. The instructions ask students to choose a Latin passage from a critical edition which they will annotate by consulting published commentaries as models for writing lexical and grammatical glosses, and to research the events, persons, and ideas they find in the selection. In sum, the project invites students to take on the role of peer mentor by annotating the language and culture of a text for intermediate-level Latin students.

This project has proven to be broadly motivational, as colleges increasingly seek opportunities for students to undertake research with professors. The possibility of online publication and recognition outside the classroom is a strong incentive to quality student performance. While completion of the project requires students to work collaboratively and faculty to direct student research and provide correction, the final goal of publication is only achieved after the instructor submits the project for review to *Companion's* editorial board and receives approval (see Gloyn's article below).

Over the past decade five colleagues in five different schools (including one high school) have utilized the Text-Commentary Project to introduce the topic of Roman women to their advanced Latin students. The success of their efforts speaks for itself in the publication of eleven student-teacher generated webpages in *Companion* (links below). Faculty report greater student engagement in research and reflection and facility with the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical elements of Latin. Students find it a welcome challenge to go beyond translation to investigate, illustrate, and interpret a Latin passage in order to mediate it for Latin students in transition to unadapted texts. They take pride in “owning” a text and express new appreciation for the literary accomplishments of the authors whose work they studied closely. Most importantly, faculty and students testify to enhanced student comprehension and reading skills.

In the Fall 2016 term, this project was assigned to eleven undergraduates in an advanced Latin course. The instructor met with students during and outside class meetings, directing their research, reviewing and critiquing written drafts of their work, and documenting the process as they worked in groups to annotate and illustrate the text of Catullus 34. This presentation will include a discussion of the Text-Commentary Project and a full report of the pedagogy and outcome of the students’ project.

Bibliography

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