

How the Revised *Standards for Classical Language Learning* Help Beginning Teachers

Graduate students who are beginning teaching careers certainly face many challenges, not least of which is the task of devising effective lesson plans and teaching units. While mentoring beginning teachers in Hunter College's graduate program in Latin Education as a Field Supervisor, I urge candidates to devise and deliver lessons and units that touch upon various spheres within and outside the world of classical languages; doing this can make the learning experience more dynamic and more effective. I have often found that candidates for a teaching degree choose to focus their lessons and units within a relatively narrow, specifically linguistic or cultural range; this may be a result of the college and/or secondary school instruction they have received. Furthermore, teaching candidates often do not fully realize that the learning of classical languages occurs across various perspectives, and that by incorporating these various perspectives, a teacher is not getting "off-topic," but is rather enhancing what the focus of the lesson or unit is, so that the students can have a fuller, more profound understanding of the topics at hand.

Fortunately, the revised *Standards*, which contain five goals, carefully enumerated and explained, can help teacher candidates give depth to their lessons, and can also help students make connections and comparisons across and beyond the world of classical languages. Furthermore, the revised *Standards* provide a helpful outline for the different modes of communication that may take place in the classroom; this is a much-needed resource, given the trend toward greater use of spoken Latin and Greek in the classroom, a trend that many beginning teachers often find appealing as they hone their methods of teaching Latin or Greek. By consulting the revised *Standards*, beginning teachers can better visualize the goals of their classical language teaching, as well as the many possibilities that exist in enhancing their

instruction. The *Standards* also provide beginning teachers with a justification for their teaching methods, something they truly need.

It is beneficial for teacher candidates, and for their mentors and supervisors, to see that the *Standards* need not only represent a requirement which teachers and departments should meet, but, more importantly, that they can give nuance and meaning to both the teaching and learning experience.