Backward Mapping with the New *Standards*

Teachers at all levels often struggle to match effective learning units with specific

assessment criteria or similar, more generalized measures. This is especially true when new

Standards are introduced. Even so, most well prepared teachers very often intuitively design

learning units that meet multiple standards or that, with some reflection and small adjustments,

could meet a wide variety of assessment goals. This paper articulates a design approach to two

learning units that starts from a broad and clear understanding of the new *Standards*, develops

and analyzes learning units from a backward mapping framework for the pedagogical aims of a

traditional Latin classroom, then reassesses the learning unit from the point of view of the

standards.

The first unit, a three meeting learning scenario based on Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*

Book 1 (or for Latin on Wilhelm (Xylander) Holzmann's translation), demonstrates how a

reasonably simple project can fulfil multiple elements of the new *Standards*, e.g. that activates

interpersonal and presentational modes and engages Cultures and Comparisons goals. In this

project students in groups identify four key individuals who influenced Marcus Aurelius, and the

personal qualities associated with those individuals, then develop and practice a question-

response framework for the identified individuals and qualities. Next, students identify four key

individuals who have influenced their lives and the personal qualities they learned or inherited

from those individuals; students seek the best Greek or Latin word to express that personal

quality (e.g. ambition, courage, frank speech, cleanliness). Students may use the source text

exclusively, but may also seek other connections to the ethical systems and terms of the ancient

world through relevant parallel texts, dictionaries, or secondary scholarship. Finally, students

develop and practice their own question-response framework for their own influential individuals and qualities.

  The second unit, a multi-week dialogue project designed for prospective Latin teachers and other upper level Latin students, demonstrates how a long term project can be used on the one hand to scaffold both learning and assessment goals through the study and imitation of neo-Latin pedagogical dialogues and on the other to teach and implement standards for Latin teacher preparation. In this project, students use interpretive reading skills to find and assess potential models for a brief dialogue composition among the many preserved neo-Latin scholastic dialogues. At the same time, students choose a relevant historical figure, historical/political event, social situation, or monument from Roman antiquity and research the chosen subject, e.g. biographical information, cultural contexts, images, and other primary sources. As they develop skills in recognizing and proposing Latin grammatical structures and framing them correctly within a constructed dialogue in a creative and informed way, they also learn to express (through the presentational mode) ideas, feelings, contextual, and social information relevant to a specific historical entity in a culturally accurate way.