

Greek Pedagogy: Seeds for STEM

The current press among academic circles for greater emphasis on sciences and mathematics has pushed the study of foreign languages further toward the periphery of university subjects. Classics, of course, is already on the periphery of foreign language study by virtue of enrollment figures, so we have been under assault, as it were, from administrators and even in some cases from our own colleagues, some of whom see little merit in sending students to a Greek or Latin class. In an age when administrators are more than ever watchful for low enrolled courses and programs, we can ill afford to ignore any threat to our discipline.

We know that Greece and Rome laid the foundations for the fields in which our colleagues in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (the STEM areas) spend their careers, and so we can provide good reasons for STEM students to pursue some Greek and Latin. Examples of groundbreaking discoveries in mathematics and science abound in the ancient world, and it is not difficult to fold some of these into even an elementary language class. Furthermore we understand that all of our students are becoming increasingly interested in courses that do not demand a regular investment of in-class time. Hybrid and on-line classes have become far more common in all areas, but Classics has perhaps not kept pace with this demand.

This panel will propose various means of introducing topics relevant to STEM students in elementary and second year language courses, and will also open a discussion on means of using the hybrid method of delivery in language classes. We hope to provide some practical advice for anyone who would like to incorporate such ideas into their own classes. Science and mathematics ideas do not demand a deep understanding of contemporary science and

mathematics, nor need they take much class time, but they can stimulate interest in understanding the roots of their disciplines.

As humanists, we are obligated to continue the fight for a true university education, as opposed to the job training mind-set which is currently driving the thinking of some administrators. Classics will always be fundamental, regardless of the swing of the pendulum, but we once again face a current issue that demands of us that we look for new ways to interest students in our basic language classes, and to keep them interested once they are in those classes. To that end, this panel hopes to provide a few tools, and to generate some discussion about other possibilities.