

Aequora: Outreach and Literacy

The purpose of this panel is to present Aequora, a program for outreach in the Classical humanities, based on teaching literacy through Latin. To that end, the panel will feature a general introduction to Aequora and four short presentations by coordinators and teachers implementing the program in various locations across the United States.

Aequora is based on a literacy-through-Latin curriculum designed for elementary and middle school students. Drawing on a combination of Greek and Latin language, ancient history, and Greco-Roman mythology, the Aequora curriculum aims at enhancing students' English vocabulary, grammatical awareness, and reading fluency. Nearly 60% of English vocabulary comes from Latin, and pedagogical research shows that students who are exposed to ancient languages score higher on standardized tests and have improved literacy outcomes (Rasinski et al. 2008; Fromchuck 1984; Masciantonio 1977).

Aequora, currently partners with colleges, private schools, and local community organizations to offer introductory Classics courses for elementary and middle school students. Over thirty Aequora sites are currently active all over the United States, and new sites are established each year. Aequora sites are created in the following way: Classics students at a college-level institution reach out a local K-12 school interested in bringing Classics-based educational enrichment to their community, and Aequora the relevant teaching materials and any teacher training the coordinators might need.

In this panel, panelists will describe the way in which the Aequora program is implemented at different schools nationwide and share their coordinating and teaching experiences with the audience. As this panel will show, pilot partnerships established in 2017-2018 indicate that Aequora has potential both as a professional training opportunity for doctoral

students interested in a career in teaching and as a formal class that reinforces public school curriculum standards. Aequora, provides Classics graduate students with a form of pedagogy training that they typically lack in research-oriented doctoral programs, where their strong interest in school-teaching careers is often neglected or marginalized.

Besides tackling urgent literacy problems, as this panel will illustrate, Aequora also provides Classics students and teachers with a fun, engaging, and rewarding activity that bolsters interest in Latin and Greek. As this panel will show, Aequora makes Classics students feel more connected to the ancient world and the discipline by offering them an immediately applicable, service-learning oriented way to use Greek and Latin to address issues of educational inequality and literacy lag.

Bibliography

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