

Teaching Ancient Greek in the 21st Century

Despite the closing of 650 plus foreign language departments over the past three years, Classics continues to hold steady in its foreign language enrollments and to attract large numbers to its courses in translation. At the same time retaining students in ancient Greek and in Latin is difficult. Over the past several years I have developed an elementary Greek textbook, designed to increase student retention and at the same time to maintain rigor. I organized the textbook around the 500 most frequently occurring vocabulary words; around the most commonly encountered grammatical structures; and around the principal parts. I also adopted the strategy of including running vocabulary as found in intermediate texts by Evan Hayes, Stephen Nimis, and Geoffrey Steadman. In this paper I discuss the rationale behind the development of the textbook, and I offer successful strategies for teaching students to learn how to memorize endings and vocabulary and for teaching them to learn how to apply grammatical concepts to novel situations. In presenting strategies, I have found to be particularly effective and successful, I also offer ones that I have failed to implement successfully. In doing so I hope to spark discussion concerning the adoption of best practices for retaining students and for maintaining high standards of learning.

Bibliography

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