

It's Not A Puzzle: Reading Success in Latin and Greek

“Studies suggest that word processing . . . strategies cultivated in a first language . . . [have] a major impact on the cognitive processes that are used in reading a second written language” (Akamatsu, 2006). As a result, when students enter a Classical language classroom, their existing expectations about language often lead them to grasp for strategies that treat Latin and Greek more like a puzzle to be solved than a language to be read. We argue that it is possible to read classical texts as their authors composed them, in a linear fashion, building meaning during the process of moving through sentences from left to right.

Much has been written over many years on how to enable students to deal with the disconnect between English and classical languages. The goal of this workshop is to provide participants with an analysis of the issues and provide a range of strategies for use at all levels of teaching drawn from a wide range of articles and books as well as from the presenters' classroom experiences.

After a discussion of the implications of methods commonly in use - for example approaching texts primarily as a series of words to be decoded or using translation in order to get at meaning - the presenters will offer basic strategies to help students avoid inefficient reading strategies at all levels from elementary to post-secondary. Following Hoyos (1997/2006), Knudsvig and Ross (1998), and Markus and Ross (2004), we will demonstrate the pitfalls of treating Latin or Greek as encoded English. Hoyos, writing about Latin, points out that this misconception often leads to the use of such vocabulary-focused strategies as 'write-English-meanings-over-Latin-words' or quasi grammar-focused 'find-the-verb-now-find-its-subject', which render Latin a “dishearteningly impenetrable mass of print” (Hoyos). The presenters will

show how teachers can guide students in reading text as it was written, with appreciation of how authors structured their texts.

Participants will discuss problems of teaching reading as merely decoding, evaluate their own reading instruction practices, and learn and practice 3-5 specific strategies to guide their students' (and themselves) in reading in a linear fashion. They will have an opportunity to experiment with the strategies outlined, to read passages of different levels of difficulty, and to consider the problems their students might encounter with these texts.

Examples will primarily address Latin, but presenters will have examples prepared in Greek if participants would like us to present these as well. Participants will receive links to the articles mentioned in the abstract as well as to the following:

Bibliography

Rebecca Boyd, Students' bottom-up and top-down strategies for reading Latin literature and the impact of cross-linguistic influence, *Journal of Latin Linguistics* 2018; 17(2): 301-332

A. K. Gavrilov, Techniques of Reading in Classical Antiquity, *The Classical Quarterly*, 1997, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1997, pp. 56-73

Gerda Seligson and Glenn Knudsvig, On Reading Latin, *The Classical Outlook*, January 1974, Vol. 51, No. 5 (January, 1974) pp. 52-55

W. G. Hale, *The Art of Reading Latin - How to Teach It*, Ginn & Co, Boston, 1887 (Google book)

Richard Hamilton, Reading Latin, *The Classical Journal*, Dec. 1991-Jan. 1992, Vol. 87, No 2. pp. 165-174

B. Dexter Hoyos, Decoding or Sight Reading? *The Classical Outlook*, Summer 1993, Vol. 70,
pp. 126-130

B. Dexter Hoyos, Latin, How to Read It Fluently, A Practical Manual (PDF handout)

B. Dexter Hoyon, Translating: Facts, Illusions, Alternatives, *CPL Online*, 3.1, Fall 2006

Donka Markus, The Gap in the Latin Curriculum, *The Classical Outlook*, Spring 2004, Vol. 81,
pp. 106-109

Donka D. Markus and Deborah Pennell Ross, Reading Proficiency in Latin through Expectations
and Visualization *The Classical World*, Autumn 2004, Vol 98, pp. 79-93

Patrick McFadden, Advanced Latin Without Translations? Interactive Text Marking as an
Alternative Daily Preparation, *CPL Online*, 4.1, Winter 2008

Dirk Panhuis, Gapping in Latin, *The Classical Journal*, Feb-Mar., 1980, Vol. 75, No. 3, pp. 228-
241

Deborah Pennel Ross, Latin pedagogy at the University of Michigan (PDF)