

Report on the Completion of Research project: John Walsh

It is with great appreciation I write to thank you for supporting my research through the award of the Provost's Study and Development Fellowship Program for Sessional Lecturers. Please now accept this report in fulfillment of the requirements of the Fellowship, as outlined in the guidelines and as indicated in your letter of September 12, 2014.

In accordance with the research proposal, two articles have been prepared and submitted to scholarly journals, and a course proposal—which takes into account these research findings—has been developed to be submitted for consideration as part of the curriculum of Guelph-Humber University to Dr Matthew LaGrone and the Electives Advisory Committee. As a report on the activities and outcomes of my project, a short summary of each article and its conclusions (I and II below), along with a description of the course and its learning objectives (III) follow:

I. “The History of Latin Language Education in the English-Speaking World from the Late 19th to the Early 21st Centuries”

This is an article-length (13,000+ words) historical review of the history of Latin teaching in English speaking countries (mainly Britain and America) since the late 19th century. The article is supported by 133 footnotes and includes a bibliography of 130+ sources and government publications. The article employs statistical US enrolment data from the 19th and 20th centuries and includes four figures tabulating these data. As of the writing of this report, the article has been submitted to the editor of *Classical World* for review.

Among its conclusions, the article summarises and analyses the four main approaches to Latin teaching over the past 150 years, which may be categorised as follows:

- (1) “grammar-translation” approach;
- (2) “behaviourist/structuralist” approach;
- (3) the “reading approach”, and
- (4) the “direct method,” “living language,” or “natural method” approach.

The paper posits a view that even in regard to enrolment numbers in high-school and university Latin programs, by the early 21st century, there remains guarded cause for optimism. The formal teaching of Latin in secondary and tertiary education systems will continue to face problems of justification and relevance in the 21st century, but, as argued in the article, Latin has managed to survive at least three major existential crises over the past 150 years, and, at least with respect to the methods by which it is taught, has emerged all the stronger for it. Despite periodic crises in the teaching of Latin—most notably in the late 19th century, the early 20th century, and the 1960s and 1970s—Latin has survived and its teaching undergone many reforms and changes, arguably strengthening the discipline and securing its place in teaching curricula, even in the 21st century.

II. “The Benefits of Latin Language Education in the 21st Century: A Realistic Assessment”

This is an article-length (ca 11,000 words) critical analysis of the benefits Latin language courses can have and provides a review of all the traditional arguments with reference to nearly all modern studies and surveys. The article is supported by 85 footnotes and includes a bibliography of 114 sources. As of the writing of this report, the article has been submitted to the editor of *Syllecta Classica* for review.

This paper critically analyses the traditional arguments adduced in support of Latin language education. A critical review of the evidence, including the most recent surveys [e.g. Haag and Stern (2003)], suggests that not all such arguments can be sustained, but there are still powerful and convincing reasons for the value of Latin in modern education. In Britain and North America, Latin continues to be taught in both secondary and tertiary education, although the numbers of student enrolments has dwindled since the 1920s. Thus, Latin is often attacked for being outdated and being out of tune with the requirements of a modern education. Nevertheless, Latin still has its defenders. The article explores what, then, *are* the benefits of Latin language education in the 21st century, both in higher secondary school courses and tertiary/university study. The discussion focuses primarily on English-language students and countries, mainly Britain and America. In general, the research concludes that Latin *can* still be defended for many good reasons, even if classicists should be more modest in their claims, and be more sceptical of the some of the traditional claims that have been made for it.

III. Course Development

Consistent with the findings of the German research of Haag and Stern, it seems clear that there is benefit to be had for students from studying Latin. And, even if the ultimate intended objective is not fluency in the language there is a worthwhile benefit to be realised: increased English proficiency. This is a powerful incentive to create courses that maximise the demonstrated potential of Latin study to improve student performance in the area of English verbal proficiency. This outcome would be especially beneficial to the non-native English speaker. And, as the result is not, in this case, strictly Latin proficiency, but rather increased English proficiency, this goal may be achieved in fewer than the multiple semesters of study required for those seeking reading fluency in the ancient language. Here, we see the justification for a course that exploits the proven capability of an inflected ancient language (in this case Latin) to improve the student’s abilities in English. This improvement is achieved by the ‘transfer benefits’ (as demonstrated in article II). Ideally, a course that explored the development of the history of the English language—tracing its development through the influence of its historic influences: Greek, Latin, Norse/Viking languages, Saxon and Germanic, and French would yield a more thorough command and understanding of English to the student. Such a course would also develop a broader cultural fluency, beyond English written or spoken fluency. Emphasis would also be placed upon the changes to English through colonisation (the influence of First Nations and indigenous languages) and globalisation and immigration to Britain and the Americas.