

Institution: University of Reading		
Unit of Assessment: 29 Classics		
Title of case study: Using an immersive 'Ancient Schoolroom' to reinvigorate ancient language learning.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 1 September 2013 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Eleanor Dickey	Professor of Classics	1 September 2013 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact Teaching the “Roman World” to school pupils is a challenge, particularly as most Latin texts are difficult for young people to engage with. Dickey’s research has been the first to explore how schools worked in ancient times with reference to teaching languages and how these methods can be used today in modern classrooms. It has led directly to changes in Classics and ancient language teacher training and the production of new teaching materials for use in the classroom. Dickey’s distinctive approach has highlighted the value of an immersive experience in learning difficult subjects. It has also had a significant cultural impact on the school pupils involved, who are more willing to engage with and learn about “ancient things”.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research Surviving information on ancient schools and language learning is rare, hard to locate and challenging to interpret. Much of it consists of small scraps of papyrus, ostraca, or wooden tablets found in archaeological excavations. Although these fragments are important because they come directly from ancient classrooms, they are difficult to understand without some context. That context is provided by a large body of texts surviving via the medieval manuscript tradition, namely the <i>Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana</i>. The <i>Hermeneumata</i> are a vast body of bilingual (Latin and Ancient Greek) language-learning materials, the core of which was created for teaching Greek to Roman schoolchildren and the majority of which was created for teaching Latin to Greek speakers who were part of the Roman Empire. Among the <i>Hermeneumata</i> texts the most useful for understanding ancient language-learning practices are the <i>Colloquia</i>, a set of short dialogues, phrasebooks and narratives used as an ‘easy reader’ for ancient language students. They include not only material on topics like how to buy food, borrow money, hold a dinner party, or have an argument, but also sections describing schools and language learning during antiquity. Despite the immense value of this material, it had never received a proper scholarly edition, meaning that no-one had ever been able to translate these texts into any modern language; indeed, they had largely been neglected by researchers simply because no-one was quite sure what they said.</p> <p>Volume two of the <i>Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana</i> and subsequent publications fundamentally changed that situation by providing the first ever scholarly editions, translations, and commentaries on these texts. To create these outputs, Dickey located and read every known manuscript and papyrus of these texts, a process that allowed her to discover previously unread sources and to solve many corruptions. Her work on these and other ancient language-teaching texts has also provided a body of 15 articles – 12 already published and three are in press. Together they provide editions and interpretations of other texts that are important for understanding ancient education and for examining in more depth key questions about ancient language-learning materials and their history. The articles include studies of the oldest known set of grammatical paradigm tables (output 2), the oldest known bilingual grammar (output</p>		

4), the special translation system used in the *Hermeneumata* (output 5), and numerous aspects of the ancient forms and uses of language-learning texts, as well as their transmission histories (output 6).

Dickey has also made her research accessible to a wider non-specialist audience through two popular publications: *Learning Latin the Ancient Way* (CUP 2016) and *Stories of Daily Life from the Roman World* (CUP 2017). These books received significant attention in the national and international media and have sold 6,495 copies between them. *Stories of Daily Life from the Roman World* has also been translated into Dutch (*In een Romeins klaslokaal*, published by Athenaeum), and a German translation of *Learning Latin the Ancient Way* is in progress.

3. References to the research

Evidence for meeting the 2* threshold: The publication of *The Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* was the first ever scholarly edition, translation and commentary on these texts. This and the associated body of research constitutes a primary and essential point of reference and contribution to the range and depth of research on ancient schools and language learning.

1. *The Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana*, vol 2 (CUP 2015). ISBN: 9781107065390 (volume 2).
2. 'The origins of grammatical tables: a reconsideration of P.Louvre inv. E 7332' (with R. Ferri and M. C. Scappaticcio), *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 187 (2013): 173–89. ISSN: 0084-5388.
3. 'Word division in bilingual texts', in G. Nocchi Macedo and M.C. Scappaticcio (eds), *Signes dans les textes, textes sur les signes* (Papyrologica Leodiensia 6, Presses universitaires de Liège 2017), 159–75. ISBN 9782875621191.
4. 'The authorship of the Greek version of Dositheus' grammar and what it tells us about the grammar's original use', in R. Ferri and A. Zago (eds), *The Latin of the Grammarians: Reflections about Language in the Roman World* (Brepols 2015), 205–35. ISBN 9782503566276.
5. 'Columnar Translation: an ancient interpretive tool that the Romans gave the Greeks', *Classical Quarterly* 65 (2015), 807–21. ISSN 0009-8388
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838815000087>
6. 'Teaching Latin to Greek Speakers in Antiquity', in E.P. Archibald, W. Brockliss, and J. Gnoza (eds), *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to the Present* (Yale Classical Studies vol. 37; CUP 2015), 30–51. ISBN: 9781139992947

4. Details of the impact

The impact of Dickey's research in the education sector in the UK, Europe and the USA has been realised through the development of *Learning Latin the Ancient Way*, which has received considerable critical acclaim and is hugely popular for its clear and accessible explanation of complex research (E1) While developing the book, Dickey experimented with creating a physically immersive experience of an ancient schoolroom which was trialled during the 2014 Being Human Festival. The success of this trial has led on to wide-ranging engagement with students and educators across the UK, Europe and USA that is changing the way Latin is taught.

1. Educational and cultural impact on school pupils, teachers and home educators

Dickey's reconstruction of an ancient school for Reading – the "[Reading Ancient Schoolroom](#)" – offers local children the chance to experience ancient education for themselves (E2). Volunteers come from as far away as the Netherlands and they leave with the ability to replicate the event at their own institutions. The concept was developed in collaboration with schoolteachers, home educators (predominantly parents of school-aged children), and the co-ordinator of a home-schooling network, to design and execute an event that is highly educational and at the same time attractive both to children and to schools. Dickey worked with colleagues at the Institute of Education at the University of Reading to develop the Schoolroom into a larger activity; since 2014 the Schoolroom has run five times, for a total of 19 days,

engaging with 16 schools from Reading (three of which are widening participation schools) and as far away as London and Dorset; average daily attendance was between 20 and 60. These events have involved approximately 30 teachers and 470 schoolchildren (aged 5 to 18), c.240 people who took part independently (children and parents, including home educators and home educated children), as well as approximately 30 children from the Reading Young Archaeologists Club (E3). On the whole, counting the c.50 volunteers who helped run the events over the years, nearly 800 people have interacted with the Ancient Schoolroom. Dickey's article 'An Immersion Class in Ancient Education' (*Journal of Classics Teaching* 16, 2015: 38-40) further disseminated the benefits of this approach.



The Schoolroom has been primarily held on the University's campus, but in June 2016 a mobile version was trialled with great success at Reddam House School (Berkshire). This involved extensive collaboration with Reddam House teachers and with other academics who delivered additional events (E3).

Direct engagement with the Schoolroom has had a pedagogical impact on education practitioners, teachers and home-school educators and a [cultural impact](#) on schoolchildren and volunteers. Teachers who have participated in the Schoolroom confirm it has had an effect on their teaching practice, making them reconsider how they approach children with different educational needs (E3-5). Teachers have learnt new and different methods to use in their own teaching as well as being empowered to teach an often-challenging subject for children to relate to (E3-5). Home educators confirm that this teaching style has validated their approach to teaching, especially if their reason for home schooling is for neurodiversity or disability reasons. For one in particular, it enabled a child with selective mutism to talk in a classroom setting for the first time (E3-5).

Children participating in the Schoolroom started the activity with no previous understanding of ancient behaviours and the similarities and differences compared with behaviours today. The immersive experience had an immediate impact on participants and changed their attitude towards learning about "ancient things". Children expressed their enthusiasm for learning "about the Romans first-hand" and experiencing for themselves how an ancient schoolroom would have worked. The Schoolroom provided them with a "hands-on" appreciation of the way children used to learn and a greater appreciation of the advances that have been made in their education: "it really brought to life everything that we had previously read about Roman schooling and helped us to appreciate just how tough those memorisation exercises were and how difficult it is to actually write on a wax tablet" (E3, E5).

2. Training and workshops for teachers, home-educators and students

Dickey's research is being used to train the next generation of Classics teachers on the PGCE Classics programme at the University of Cambridge. The course now incorporates Dickey's methods in two sessions: the first is about the history and range of Latin courses in which trainee teachers compare a wide range of Latin textbooks; and the second is about the history of teaching Latin, which incorporates extracts from the *Colloquia* (output 1) to understand how an ancient classroom may have operated. Dickey's research was incorporated into the curriculum for PGCE Classics teacher-training at Cambridge in 2015/16 and was taught to 15-20 trainee teachers. The methods have since been learnt by a further 75-100 trainee teachers (E6).

Dickey's workshops on ancient schooling and language learning have enabled teachers, students, and Classicists around the world to reconstruct ancient educational settings for themselves. These workshops have been delivered in Harvard, Baltimore, Lausanne (in French), Leiden (in Dutch), and a variety of sites in the UK; on each occasion participants leave with a set of materials that they can use in their own teaching. In Lausanne the workshop participants were exclusively schoolteachers and trainee teachers (more than 30 individuals from all over the Francophone area of Switzerland) (E7).

Dickey's Ancient Schoolroom has inspired similar immersive learning experiences across the UK and Europe. For example, since 2016, ten student volunteers from Durham 6th Form Centre have been running an immersive schoolroom and temple experience for over 100 local primary schoolchildren on an annual basis (E8); and in 2017-18, a replica ancient schoolroom activity was run in San Tomé in Spain (E9).

Dickey's research has made learning Latin immersive and accessible, which is enabling a new generation of teachers and pupils to engage with these texts. The Ancient Schoolroom and the associated training workshops have allowed for this model of immersive learning to be used across the UK, Europe and the USA to reinvigorate the teaching and learning of ancient languages while enabling participants to have a clearer and tangible understanding of how ancient schooling worked.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [E1] Reviews and Media Coverage of *Learning Latin the Ancient Way* including The Guardian, CBC Radio, BBC World Service and Bellaria (supplied as a PDF file).
- [E2] Reading Ancient Schoolroom website <https://readingancientschoolroom.com> (supplied as a PDF file).
- [E3] Surveys from participants of the Ancient Schoolroom including children, teachers and parents (PDF file).
- [E4] Testimonials via email from participants including teachers (PDF file).
- [E5] Film of the activity and interviews with participants (children, teachers, volunteers, project lead) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjelkRKnJOQ>
- [E6] Email correspondence from PGCE course leader at the University of Cambridge (PDF file).
- [E7] Correspondence with international workshop trainers and participants (PDF file).
- [E8] Report and correspondence from Durham Sixth Form College (PDF file).
- [E9] Blog and testimonial from Spanish school organizer <https://fernandolillo.blogspot.co.uk/2018/01/schola-graeca-et-romana-ies-san-tome.html>