High School Latin: An Apology

By

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Abstract

The presented study is concerned with the effects learning Latin has on high school students. I pose this inquiry in the context of a provincial education system that has come largely to reject Latin as a central piece of its curriculum. To answer this question I review Latin’s history in Ontario and North America as a whole. I then present a literature review of quantitative studies that explore the measureable benefits of learning Latin, all while exposing the underlying cognitive and linguistic frameworks at play. This serves as supplement to the core of the study, the synthesis and analysis of interviews with two English high school teachers. Through their insights I unearth the immeasurable and explore the study of Latin as an intrinsically edifying process, one that provides safety and opportunity for intellectually curious and engaged students. With this research established, I conclude with an exploration of the implications of this study, as well as some recommendations for future practice and further research.

Key Words: Latin, language, Classics, intellectualism
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction to the Research Study

The study of the Latin language in high schools was originally a core part of the curriculum, a mandatory course in the Ontario secondary school system up to 1968, but over the last half-century classes in this ancient language have dropped dramatically, and it has been a constant struggle to continue justifying its place in high school classrooms (Allen, 2010). The same is found in the United States, where enrollment in Latin classes dropped by 75% around the 1960s and 1970s (Reynolds, 1982). Closer to home, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board recently shifted their curriculum around, with Latin being designated a “Tier 2 program,” to be offered by certain high schools in accordance with need (Hayes, 2013). In Ontario as a whole there were, as of 2010, only 60 schools that offered Latin courses, of an original 159, and this in spite of a recent upswing in popularity for the dead language, the result of popular culture’s fascination with classical history (Allen, 2010; Peritz, 2009). Latin in Quebec has all but disappeared from high school classrooms, discarded in the 1960s as the remnants of an antiquated Christian high school system (Peritz, 2009). Interest in Latin in Ontario is on the rise, and there is support from the Ministry of Education through their Literacy initiatives, but between student shortages, budget cuts, and the Ministry’s push toward specialist and apprenticeship programs, there is still a struggle to justify Latin’s place in the curriculum (Ontario Classical Association, 2014; Peritz, 2009). In fact, in the most recent Ontario curriculum review classics teachers narrowly fought off an attempt to remove many of the classics courses (Allen, 2010). All of the above demonstrates that studies in Latin at the high school level have been slowly eroded in recent history.
As noted in the Ontario Curriculum for grades 11 and 12, issued in 2000, not only do “classical studies and international language programs provide ideal opportunities for students to develop and refine… important skills,” but “it could be said that the only way to appreciate fully the particular nature and functions of language is by studying and comparing several languages” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.3). In fact, a specific expectation of the Classical Language courses is to “speak and write in English with clarity, precision, and good diction” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.16). In arguing in favour of the dead language, Reynolds, a Latin teacher, cites a study which demonstrated that studying Latin for three or four years at the high school level boosted SAT marks by about 40 points (Reynolds, 1982). This same result was found in a study by Holmes and Keffer (1995). Kate Allen, a staff reporter for the Toronto Star, also noted a boost in grades for those students that were learning Latin, greater even than for those studying modern languages, which translated to a higher GPA in post-secondary schools, per an American study (Allen, 2010). Yet if Latin is such a powerful tool, why is it not found at more Ontario high schools? After all, as Dominic Wyse notes in the Cambridge Journal of Education, “the role of language is fundamental to learning in all other areas,” a contention that forms the basis of his argument that “the learning and teaching of English, language and literacy is the main priority for the education systems of many of the world’s nations” (Wyse, 2009, p.287). It is the purpose of this study to examine such claims in order to determine if studying Latin has a discernable impact on high school students, and from this to determine the dead language’s place in the modern academy.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discover whether teaching Latin at the high school level has a noticeable impact on students, from the paradigm of the English classroom. If there is a
positive correlation between the study of Latin and, for example, improved English literacy, the implication for high schools throughout Ontario would be to provide more opportunities to study the ancient language. In this way I am following Masciantonio (1977), who, after presenting several studies concluding the efficacy of learning Latin for English proficiency, urgently calls for language educators to spread information in an attempt to bolster Latin’s place in the curriculum. The question that follows is whether or not the same holds for modern languages, or if it is an element of this dead, inflected, and highly structural language, this forbearer of modern English that is only read, not written or spoken. However this latter point, supported by the aforementioned study cited by Allen (2010), is of less importance to the overarching goals of this study: on the one hand, there is an intrinsic value to studying any and all languages, each adding to one’s understanding of linguistics and communication (Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979); on the other hand, while this question is certainly interesting and relevant to determining the role of Latin (and other languages) in high schools today, it is likely beyond the scope of this research paper.

1.2 Research Questions

My primary research question is: how does learning Latin at the high school level affect performance in the English classroom? More specifically I would add: are Latin students’ understanding of English grammar and syntax enhanced over students only learning English (or English and French, as the case may be)? And is there an appreciable difference in their writing ability, and/or their ability to read and critique a piece of literature? Another question of importance concerns the caliber of student: if there is a discernable difference, is it because learning Latin has particularly edifying, or is it the case that high school students that choose to take Latin as an elective are simply more academic, or more serious students? This question is
broached in a study by Nimnicht, Aspegren, and Franzen (1961), where the trio polled the students in their study for their desire to attend university and their selectivity regarding future occupation, and it was determined that Latin students were no more motivated for post-secondary education nor picky regarding their careers than any of the other students. Any difference between the groups was thus a result of the subject matter and the teaching. The group admits, though, that this “tentative conclusion” is based on “limited evidence,” and that at the time of publication additional studies were ongoing (Nimnicht, Aspegren, and Franzen, 1961, p.61). This question is hard to tease apart, and given that this is a case study based around the interviewing of high school teachers the answer will depend upon their professional judgment. All of these questions lead inevitably to the question: should Latin be taught at the high school level?

1.3 Limitations

Thus far I have touched on two limitations of this research: first, differentiating between learning Latin and learning other languages, such as French or Spanish; second, the differences in the students themselves. The former is less of an issue, as several studies, presented in Chapter 2, have shown that there are more benefits to learning Latin for English proficiency than learning French or Spanish, for example. At the same time, based on language theory and the theory of cognitive development, also explored in Chapter 2, there is innate value to learning any second language. In learning languages in addition to one’s native tongue students gain linguistic understanding and newfound appreciation for the nuances of their own language that are otherwise impossible to attain (Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979). Thus while there may be a greater benefit to learning Latin for English proficiency than learning Mandarin, simply based on the close relation of the languages, learning any language is beneficial. These
differences, whether great or minute, will be almost impossible to tease apart, and I will be reliant on the teachers’ professional judgment.

The latter limitation will also be reliant on the judgment of the teacher, and will be incorporated into my interview questions. By grade 12, without any prior experience or relationship with the students, it will be almost impossible to differentiate between the students simply being “better students” and those who are seeing benefits from the Latin itself. It also begs the question whether more ambitious students would be the few to enter a Latin program to begin with, mentioned above, and if this might be the reason for any increased proficiency in English class. There have been studies that have attempted to take this into account using literacy rates or measuring ambition, as well as pairing test subjects based on socioeconomic status, age, intelligence, and gender (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979; Nimnicht, Aspegren, and Franzen, 1961), but how satisfactory these are is up for debate, and it is also impossible for me to attempt anything similar. This limitation is coupled with potential socioeconomic and cultural differences that may affect student performance, which I will also not be able to properly account for (Fitzgerald and Relyea-Kim, 2013). As a result I will have to rely on the teachers’ professional judgment.

A further limitation regards the quality of the Latin teacher(s) that have taught and are teaching the children in question, an issue that Fitzgerald and Relyea-Kim (2013) note as a perennial challenge to research design in the area of bilingual education. There are several studies that indicate that, while learning Latin in any capacity will show some impact on a student’s English proficiency, the degree to which this occurs relies more on how the Latin is taught, as will be explored further in Chapter 2 (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977). To ameliorate this limitation I have tried to choose respondents from schools with
flourishing Latin programs, where Latin and the attendant Classics Club are inextricable from the fabric of the school, the presumption being that these are more successful and pedagogically sound teachers. Without sitting in these classes, however, it is difficult for me to completely resolve this limitation.

One final limitation is founded in the respondents’ own practice – do they have grammar assessments? If not, it becomes particularly difficult to determine the quantifiable effects of Latin on English proficiency with any degree of certainty. Through the course of interviewing my respondents I found that this was the case for both, and so I was unable to make claims as to direct impact on English proficiency. As a result, while the linguistic effect of Latin is of crucial importance, and is still centrally represented in the literature review, presented in Chapter 2, the qualitative research analysed in Chapter 4 focuses more on the nebulous effects of learning Latin, what Masciantonio calls “the aesthetic, socio-political, and ethical relevance[s]” (Masciantonio, p.382, 1977). I explore this modification to the research study further in Chapter 4.

1.4 Background of the Researcher

The study of ancient languages has, over recent years, been a passion of mine. Admittedly, prior to my post-secondary career at McMaster University, language had never been a strength of mine. Growing up I attended the United Synagogue Day School for elementary and middle school, and the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto for high school. At these schools I was educated in Hebrew, both modern and ancient, alongside the typical Québécois French. I never found massive success in either of these languages, though, finding only average accomplishment in the former and being merely passable in the latter. I always demonstrated an aptitude for English, however, with writing being a particular strength. Despite this, my grasp of
how the language worked was lacking. I knew what to write simply by feel and sound, rather than understanding. This was, of course, unsatisfactory, and I was struck by a rude awakening in university when my vaunted writing skills proved unsatisfactory, plagued by a lack of true understanding.

I graduated from McMaster University in 2012 with a BA in History and a BASc in Classics, and followed my five year undergraduate tenure with a two year Masters in Classics. The focus of most of my time as an undergraduate student was history, mostly ancient, the rest Russian and modern. In the summer before my fourth year I determined that I wanted to focus entirely on ancient history, thinking particularly about graduate studies, and after a correspondence with the chair of the Classics Department, Dr. Claude Eilers, I discovered that I would have to learn yet more languages – Latin and ancient Greek. I started with Latin, learning the content of the first year of university Latin over the course of an intense six weeks, tutored privately by the aforementioned Dr. Eilers, just prior to the start of my fourth year. The goal was that I would be able to enter second year Latin immediately come September, in order to maximize my familiarity and understanding of the language come graduate school. After another year of study, at a much more reasonable pace and alongside ancient Greek, I quickly became enamored with the ancient languages.

While I favoured ancient Greek, in part due to the fantastic professors I was fortunate enough to have, and also because I fell in love with the literature, I was also fortunate enough to have begun with Latin, a simpler language. It was during my final two years as an undergraduate student that I truly learned the intricacies of grammar, from the form and function of participles to the complicated nature of tense (simple past/aorist versus perfect versus imperfect versus pluperfect). This follows the logic of the Ontario Ministry of Education, which explains that “by
learning classical languages, students become more aware of grammar in English,” and “in addition, the study of Latin and/or ancient Greek root words increases their vocabulary and improves their spelling” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.7). My eyes were opened for what felt like the first time, despite having been a high achieving student in high school English classes and also having been taught French (up to grade 9) and Hebrew (up to grade 12).

Naturally my study of ancient languages began to creep into my use of my native tongue. I became more careful, paying attention to often-antiquated matters of diction, for example when to use “may” and when to use “might” (a matter of primary versus secondary sequence), or more simple matters like when to use “who” and when to use “whom,” or why there are so many ways to conjugate words like “see” or “write” into past tense (“have/had seen, saw,” “have/had written, wrote, writ”). I also gained an appreciation for linguistic nuances and things like idioms, and the fact that certain sentences simply cannot be translated verbatim from one language to another. There is something incredibly beautiful about reading a sentence in Latin that cannot be properly translated, with all its nuances and shades of meaning. All of this amounted to an appreciation for language, and my loose designation as a philologist – literally a “lover of language/learning.”

The nascent question that grew from all of this, then, was: why are Latin and Greek so special? Why did they have this effect on me, and on several of my colleagues who reported the same or similar results, and not French or Hebrew or what little I know of Aramaic? Hebrew and Aramaic are easier to account for – they are Semitic languages, a subdivision of the Afro-Asiatic group of languages. To put it simply, they are from a different family of language, and so have different rules and patterns than their Indo-European cousins. Part of the reason that Latin helps so much with English is because English originated, in part, from Latin, and over 50%
(somewhere between 60-80%) of modern English words have Latin etymologies (Allen, 2010; Holmes and Keffer, 1995; Reynolds, 1982).

But what of French? This question is trickier, but I have a few hypotheses. First, French is mandated from a young age, and like many of my peers I never took to the language, perhaps from lack of desire and/or improper teaching. Latin and Greek, on the other hand, were labours of love, means to an end that I myself had chosen, much like any high school student who is curious enough to opt into a Latin class. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, is that learning French involves learning to read, write, and converse, whereas learning Latin is entirely a reading exercise. It is, for all intents and purposes, less a language and more a word puzzle, to be dissected and derived. This is because Latin and ancient Greek are both dead languages – like Hebrew until its revival in the late 19th century – which means neither is spoken anymore. The Ontario curriculum recognizes this as well, noting that while there is an “Oral Communication (Listening, Speaking)” expectation for the high school courses, these are simply to learn how to pronounce words and solidify understanding in order to “improve their reading comprehension” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.9). The purpose of studying these languages is to read ancient texts, epigraphs, papyri, etc., in order to understand language and/or to properly understand the ancient world, as only reading primary texts can achieve. The purpose of studying French, on the other hand, is much more involved, and includes all those things belonging to Latin as well as the added, and massive, objective of learning to communicate. Perhaps this focus on the page cultivates greater care with grammar and syntax, as they amount to almost the entirety of ancient language studies (the missing piece being vocabulary). The aforementioned study by Nimnicht, Glen, Shirley Aspegren and Carl Franzen (1961) found that this was also the case when comparing the effects of Latin versus Spanish on achievement in high school English classes,
and cited the difference in teaching goals – transferring knowledge of Latin versus teaching how to converse in Spanish – as a possible factor. Interestingly, it was found in another study, this one examining native German speakers, that learning French was more beneficial than learning Latin in order to learn Spanish (Haag and Stern, 2003). The fact that these were German students is a major change, however, and Spanish is not equatable to English. It will be worth comparing this study with those presented above, as well as others, in Chapter 2.

1.5 Overview

For the purposes of this study I have interviewed two Ontario high school English teachers that teach in schools that still offer classes in Latin. I sought out teachers of Grade 11 and/or 12 classes, with the rationale that any impact from studying Latin would be more apparent the longer they are studying the language. Relying on their professional judgment I sought to determine whether there is a significant advantage to learning Latin at the high school level.

This MTRP is composed of five chapters. Chapter One has served to introduce the study, outlining its importance, purpose, the guiding research questions, the limitations of the study, my relevant background information, and an overview of the entire project. Chapter Two serves as a review of current literature on the effects of learning Latin on English-speaking students, examining both quantitative studies as well as the theory behind learning languages and cognitive development. Here I elucidate the relationship between Latin and English, and also present an abridged analysis of research over the last century.

Chapter Three outlines my research methodology. This includes an elaboration of my approach in selecting my respondents and an explanation of how I performed the interviews and collected and analysed the data. Here I review the ethics of my study, and also restate and reconsider the limitations I encountered over the course of the research process.
In Chapter Four I synthesize and analyse the findings of my research, while in Chapter Five I enumerate the implications of my study and my recommendations from the data, while also suggesting further avenues for research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Latin the Progenitor

This chapter presents and examines the relevant literature surrounding the study of Latin in high schools and its effect on student performance, with particular interest in English proficiency. This focus serves a twofold purpose: 1) to situate my study in a broader research landscape, and 2) to supplement this qualitative study with quantitative data, particularly on the linguistic benefits of learning Latin, which the interviews were not able to wholly capture. I begin by examining the relationship between Latin and English, presenting data from various studies over the last century. I follow this with an exploration of language theory and cognitive development theory – two theories that work together to explain Latin’s significance to English learners.

2.1 Etymology

English, though not a Romance language – meaning that it was not directly descended/related to Latin – was nevertheless heavily influenced by Latin over the course of its evolution from its Germanic roots. English has come to owe a great debt to Latin for the many words it has borrowed, and thus through understanding Latin one unlocks a plethora of English vocabulary (Masciantonio, 1977). Understanding even one word of Latin can lead to an understanding of several words in English. Masciantonio uses the example of *aqua* – “water” – which serves as part of the etymology of words such as aqueduct, aquamarine, and aqueous, among others (Masciantonio, 1977). Other examples are not hard to find, though they are sometimes less obvious: take the words adult and adolescent, for example, which are both derived from the same Latin verb, *adolescere*, which means “to grow.” More specifically, adult
is derived from the perfect passive participle of *adolescere* (*adultus*), so to be an “adult” is to be someone who has grown.

This is beneficial not only for attaining a true understanding of the English language and the nuances of vocabulary, but it also aids in the acquisition of English vocabulary in the first place: when coming across a foreign word while reading, students will be able to fall back on their knowledge of Latin to decipher the word’s meaning. Take the first line of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, for example – *Arma virumque cano*… “I sing of arms and of a man…” From *arma* (“arms”) one finds words like arms, armament, and armor. *Virum*,\(^1\) which is *vir* (“man”) in the nominative, serves as the origin for words like virile and the related virtuous, which both mean something like “manliness” in their most basic sense. Finally, *cano*, the verb meaning “I sing,” from which we find words like cantus or canto, the former a musical term, the latter poetic. In understanding these three simple Latin words we become accustomed to a multitude of English words, many of which we may not have already known.

In the academic setting this is crucial, as it has been found that the robustness of one’s vocabulary is the surest indicator of academic success (Gu, 2013). It has also been found that “vocabulary intervention” – that is, the focus on building up vocabulary over the course of a short intensive program – as well as teaching “word learning strategies” have been shown to significantly increase students’ reading comprehension, whether these are L2 students – individuals for whom English is a second language – or native English speakers (Gu p.308, 2013). The use of Latin to understand etymology is a potent word learning strategy, as has been demonstrated. It follows that the fight for Latin is all the more important, as it contributes so directly to overall student success.

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\(^1\) NB: the suffix *-que* is another way to write “and” in Latin, and is not part of the word *virum*. Also, NB, which stands for *nota bene*, is Latin for “note well.”
This linguistic usefulness is keenly felt in certain technical professions. Many vocations have their own technical languages and jargon, founded in Latin, that can obfuscate neophytes. Such professions include medicine, law, and philosophy, to name a few (Masciantonio, 1977). This is the logic behind university courses like McMaster University’s CLASSICS 2MT3, Ancient Roots for Medical Terminology, a relatively new course meant to assist students on their way to medical school (McMaster University, 2014). With even a passing understanding of Latin and a shallow Latin vocabulary it becomes much easier to retain anatomical nomenclature or pharmacological terminology.

The very structure, syntactically and grammatically, of Latin serves as a potent tool for understanding our language (Masciantonio, 1977). English originally functioned as an inflected language, like Latin. In inflected languages word order is unimportant, and instead the endings of nouns shift and change with the nounal function they perform. These interchangeable noun endings are known as declensions, and remnants of this (like the “who” versus “whom” example mentioned above in Chapter 1 – “who” being the nominative, or subject, and “whom” acting as the object, whether dative [indirect object] or accusative [direct object]) are extant in Modern English. Thus in studying Latin, a language that has stagnated in death, students get a glimpse at how English once functioned, as well as a peek behind the curtain of a few of English’s rarely explained idiosyncrasies. More than this, studying the regimented and rule-laden Latin gives students an opportunity to discover a different kind of linguistic logic than what they are accustomed to, to try something new and experience a different linguistic flavour. In the process they will acquire what the Germans call Sprachgefühl – “a linguistic instinct” – which will aid them in learning any language, while deepening their knowledge of those they already know (Masciantonio p.376, 1977).
This idea of structural blueprints also applies more broadly to English literature, which is often fashioned after classical precedents (Masciantonio, 1977). Whether parsing the subtle allusions of Shakespeare or exploring the netherworld of Dante, so firmly based in classical thought, knowledge of Latin and Latin literature enriches the experience. And in studying these ancient texts the students also become more practiced in close, careful reading (Masciantonio, 1977).

2.1.1 Relevance

With the relationship between English and Latin established, let us now scrutinize the research that has been conducted examining said relationship. Early studies on the effects of learning Latin on English proficiency dating back to the beginning of the 20th century found that there was little to no correlation between the two, and that any differences came down to intellectual differences among the students themselves (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935). These studies were not very thorough, however, and they spurred the American Classical League to attempt a more exhaustive and objective investigation. These later studies took intelligence and teaching method into account, and found that Latin students surpassed their fellow students who did not study Latin on several metrics (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935).

Douglass and Kittelson (1935) held their own study of six schools that taught Latin, pairing the Latin students with non-Latin students of equivalent age, socioeconomic standing, gender, English ability, and intelligence, to compare the two groups with respect to English proficiency. The Latin students were also split into two categories: those who had studied Latin for two years, and those who had studied the language for three-four years. In testing the students on spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, it was found that students who had studied Latin for three-four years achieved the best scores overall, followed closely by those who had studied for
two years. The degree of difference was slight, however, which led Douglass and Kittelson to question how the Latin was taught. Their conclusion was that while the learning Latin has demonstrable benefits, the subject itself does not guarantee a marked improvement of English proficiency (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935).

More recent studies have shown that these differences between students who study Latin versus students who do not are greater than previously noted, especially in English vocabulary and reading skills (Masciantonio, 1977). Masciantonio, in analyzing the data, comes to a similar conclusion as Douglass and Kittelson regarding the importance of pedagogy: it is not simply about transmitting the grammar, overseeing rote memorization, and translation, but rather “involve[s] multisensory media, structural linguistics, the direct method, programmed and computer-assisted instruction, and attention to the affective domain,” while also making “extension of English verbal functioning a specific goal” (p.382, 1977).

A study in 1971 of elementary school students (grades 4-6)\(^2\) that received daily Latin instruction (approximately 15-20 minutes worth) showed that students performed a full year higher on English vocabulary tests than the control group of non-Latin learners (Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979). Another study, from 1973-74, compared around 400 students studying Latin in 6\(^{th}\) grade with 200 students that were not taking the Latin course. The two groups were tested before the year, and no discernable differences were found. After the year, the Latin students were eight months ahead in vocabulary, one year ahead in reading skills, over a year ahead in general language skills, four months advanced in spelling, as well as far ahead in non-English areas such as science and math (Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979). In another

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\(^2\) While these are elementary school students, the effect of Latin demonstrated in these studies surely applies in the high school setting, as has and will continue to be shown with examples from high schools. This data simply corroborates and strengthens the contention that Latin has a positive impact on English proficiency.
study it was found that learning Latin increased motivation to learn more about linguistics, etymology, and Roman history (Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979).

In Chapter 1 I briefly touched upon a study that compared German students that had a background in Latin versus a background in French for proficiency in learning Spanish (Haag and Stern, 2003). In response to this study I would cite the study from 1970-71, mentioned above, which examined 1,100 sixth graders split into three groups of students: a group that studied Latin for one year, a group that had been taught French or Spanish for four years, and a group without any second language education. It was found that the group of Latin students, many of whom were originally below the reading level for their grade, progressed to being the top of their respective classes, catching up to those who had been studying French and Spanish for years (Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979). Similar results were found by Nimnicht, Glen, Shirley Aspegren and Carl Franzen in their 1961 study which compared learning Latin to learning Spanish.

The reason for the differences in these studies could be the parameters of the studies themselves, or perhaps the result of the unpredictability of the Hawthorne Effect (Mavrogenes, 1979). The variables of the studies are also markedly different, with the end goal being Spanish rather than English in the Haag and Stern study (2003), while the mother tongue was German, as opposed to English. Regardless, the preponderance of evidence, both from the studies mentioned above as well as the many others enumerated in Masciantonio (1977) and Mavrogenes (1979), point to how important and impactful the study of Latin can be on one’s English ability. One particular study that was especially telling surveyed adults. Here 220 native English speakers were split into two groups: one of people who knew Latin and another foreign language, and the other consisting of people who only knew English. In testing the groups’ English vocabularies it
was found that the latter group averaged in the 28th percentile, while the former averaged in the 58th percentile, a considerable difference (Masciantonio, 1977).

It is no wonder, then, that the study of Latin has been found to boost standardized test scores (Allen, 2010). It is from this logic that the Ontario Classical Association (2014) asserts that Latin is an “assistive” course, one that adds and gives support “to other areas of the curriculum.” This is the same reason that Masciantonio (1977) urges administrators to take the research data into account when planning curricula, while also beseeching language teachers to spread this information and fight for the dead language.

2.2 Language Theory and the Theory of Cognitive Development

Having established the relationship between Latin and English, as well as provided data on the impact Latin has been found to have on English proficiency, it is worth examining how and why this is the case. How do we learn languages? In order to understand this, I will now explore Language Theory and the Theory of Cognitive Development, two theories that I will present in tandem.

2.2.1 Language and Cognition

An editorial from *Time*, quoted by Mavrogenes (p.677, 1979), provides an apt explanation of the importance of language and its relationship with thought:

To a great extent, a people’s language is its civilization, the collective storage system of a tribe… The argument is not between changes, linguistic innovation, new combinations on the one hand, and a priggish correctness on the other. It is between meaning and meaningless. When language is reduced, so is civilization. George Orwell understood that “the smaller the area of choice [of words], the smaller the temptation to take thought.”

An idea is worthless if it cannot be expressed in language, and one cannot claim to understand a concept if he or she cannot verbalize it. But it is more than this – language is not only the manifestation of thought, but it also shapes how we think, intellectualizing our thought by
allowing us to express and process information. Through this positive feedback loop the expression of thoughts further enhances our own cognition (Noormohamadi, 2008). A study of deaf children, for example, demonstrated that delays in language often lead to delays in the processing of information. Noormohamadi (2008) ties this to our mother tongue – our first or native language – and how important it is for children to have strong foundations in their mother tongue in order to process and understand concepts and ideas.

Two of the foremost thinkers on cognitive development, with its implication of language, are Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Noormohamadi (2008) analyzes the work of both thinkers. While some of Piaget is antiquated, such as his dismissal of the intellectualizing capacity of language, the main implication of Piaget’s work that Noormohamadi (2008) draws is that cognition is a process – the means are just as important as the ends – a conclusion reached in several of the studies elaborated in the previous sections. In this way we as educators need to encourage what Piaget refers to as adaption, a cognitive process that he further delineates into assimilation and accommodation: assimilation is the integration of new information into an already established schema, while accommodation is the creation of new schema for information, the adjustment of preconceived paradigms in order to comprehend alien information (Noormohamadi, 2008). So, for example, learning a tense in a new language, say the perfect past tense, is learning new information – how the perfect past tense functions grammatically in said language – that will be assimilated into an already established schema of how verbs function in a sentence and how the perfect past tense is conceptualized, and is thus an instance of assimilation. On the other hand, a native English speaker with no other linguistic experience learning the declensions – the numerous interchangeable noun endings that denote the function of a noun in a sentence (subject, direct object, indirect object, etc.) – of an inflected language serves as an
example of accommodation. Any hints at inflection found in Modern English are simply vestigial, evidence of the language’s evolution, and so the native English speaker would be faced with information that does not conform to his/her established schemata; a new one, or at least the adaptation of established ones, is required, and this is the process of accommodation. ³ All of this explains why it is so important to draw connections between Latin and English, and vice versa, in order to maximize the results of learning the dead language by playing off both assimilation and accommodation (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977).

Lev Vygotsky, the other major thinker in cognitive development, serves as a complement to Piaget, emphasizing different avenues towards cognitive development (Noormohamadi, 2008). Vygotsky focuses on language, arguing, like Noormohamadi who cites him, that language informs intellectual development (Noormohamadi, 2008). As Vygotsky writes, “through language, we construct reality” (quoted in Noormohamadi, p.33, 2008). Where language for Piaget was simply a semiotic tool used to communicate thought, for Vygotsky language itself actualizes thought, in part in its function as the tool through which children acquire and eventually adapt their thinking. It allows for the formulation and reflection of thought (Noormohamadi, 2008). This is the positive feedback loop – mentioned above – as Vygotsky writes (1986, p. 218): “the relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought…” (cited in Noormohamadi, p.33-34, 2008). Through this cycle, Vygotsky continues, “thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech. It does not merely find expression in speech; it finds its

³ I would add that, while the example of declensions is imperfect as it contains an aspect of assimilation, namely the fact that the English language has the same set of nounal functions as Latin, the fact that the endings shift with function and that word order no longer matters is an antiquated aspect of English that would be alien to any English speakers without linguistic experience and would thus require accommodation.
reality and form” (cited from Golub and Reid 1989, p.46, found in Noormohamadi p.34, 2008). It would thus follow that the greater our understanding of language, the greater its intellectualizing potency.

The research supports this conclusion, as it has been found that students who know more than one language best students who only know one language not only on linguistic or metalinguistic tasks, but also on tests of cognition (Fitzgerald and Relyea-Kim, 2013; Harley, 2008). Harley (2008) uses the example of Canadian students in French immersion who were found to score higher than their monolingual peers on tests that examined creativity. Gu (2013), in discussing English Language Learners (ELL) and L2 learners, makes the important distinction between BICS, basic interpersonal communicative skills, and CALP, cognitive academic language proficiency. Both refer to linguistic proficiency, but the former is “cognitively undemanding,” an indication of “pseudoproficiency” (Gu p.308, 2013). It is only with CALP that students can truly succeed past elementary school, as in high school and above “achievement at this level is tied to cognitive and conceptual growth, with academic language in general and academic vocabulary in particular being the carrier of knowledge. In other words, the academic deficiency of L2 learners may well have resulted from a lack of CALP, the development of which is dependent upon conceptual growth related to the academic vocabulary in L2” (Gu p.308, 2013). This of course transfers to students who are born English speakers that do not reach a satisfactory level of CALP, and the study of another language is a powerful tool to develop the needed level of linguistic and cognitive proficiency to succeed in secondary school and beyond.
2.2.2 Second Language Transference

What, then, does this mean for the learning of Latin? As Noormohamadi (2008) writes, understanding and reasoning are cultivated, in part, through reflection. I can think of no better reflection upon language than the learning of a second language, especially one with linguistic ties to your mother tongue. This also fits with Piaget’s understanding of language and his twin notions of assimilation and accommodation (Noormohamadi, 2008). In learning Latin one is confronted with familiar schemata, which studies have shown to bolster understanding and ability in one’s original language (Harley, 2008), as well as new schemata, ones within which English was once fit but are now vestigial limbs, scarcely noticeable within the malleability of English syntax. The process is thus one of rediscovery and also adaptability, of assimilation and accommodation.

As his theories might suggest, Vygotsky argues that learning a second language improves cognition and intellectualizes the individual (Mavrogenes, 1979; Noormohamadi, 2008). According to Vygotsky, cited in Mavrogenes (p.675, 1979):

“A foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language. The child learns to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations. Goethe said with truth that ‘he who knows no foreign language does not truly know his own.’”

This passage truly encapsulates the notion of linguistic sensitivity, or Sprachgefühl, discussed above (Masciantonio, 1977). The intellectual stimulation of learning another language, both for cognitive development as well as proficiency in one’s mother tongue, simply cannot be matched by any other avenue (Gu, 2013; Mavrogenes, 1979). The statistical data corroborates this, as Fitzgerald and Relyea-Kim (2013) assert in their analysis of fears concerning regression in one’s first language through learning another. As would be expected, these fears were misplaced, as
students in bilingual programs advanced beyond their monolingual peers in regards to their proficiency with their native tongue in the majority of cases, and none showed any form of regression (Fitzgerald and Relyea-Kim, 2013). The same is asserted by Harley (2008), who adds that the vocabularies of bilingual children are much larger than those of monolingual children.

It is with an appreciation of the presented statistical data and theoretical understanding that I have interviewed two grade 12 English teachers to gain their professional insight into the effect of learning Latin. My goal, like Masciantonio urges (1977), is to gain another perspective on the issue and promulgate information about the efficacy of learning Latin in the hopes that administrators and boards will consider this during subsequent curriculum reviews. I also hope to elucidate some of the “aesthetic, socio-political, and ethical relevance[s]” (Masciantonio, p.382, 1977) of Latin, those nebulous qualities that cannot be grasped through quantitative study alone.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This research project is a qualitative study consisting of a literature review and in person interviews with two Ontario high school English teachers who teach in schools with active Latin programs. In the previous two chapters I explored the basic premise of this study, justifying its execution by means of a survey of academic opinion with regards to learning Latin, Latin’s current position in the Ontario curriculum, and an exploration of relevant psychological and linguistic theories as they pertain to cognitive development and understanding language. In this chapter I delve into the methodology by which I answered the question: does learning Latin at the high school level affect performance in the English classroom?

To answer this question I turned to two Ontario high school English teachers. Each teacher was, at the time of interview, actively teaching upper level (Grades 11 and/or 12) English courses at schools with Latin programs. Probing their knowledge, in accordance with the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) and guided by their professional expertise, I explored their unique understanding of their respective classrooms to discern any possible differences among their students. Armed with the microphone app on my iPhone, a pen, paper, and a timer ticking down the seconds, I met each of these teachers separately to conduct the 30-minute interviews.

I initially made contact with the respondents through teachers I met in the public school system. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and both have submitted a signed consent letter to that effect. Below I summarize my selection criteria, their brief biographies (bound
within the limits of anonymity), as well as an outline of my data analysis and a presentation of
the study’s strengths and limitations.4

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

This paper follows a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of learning Latin
at the high school level. Several quantitative studies have been conducted (though still not
enough) on the positive impact learning Latin has not only on English or other languages, but
also on other disciplines such as mathematics and the sciences (see Chapter 2). What I could not
find, however, were qualitative studies. The benefit of a qualitative study is that it allows for the
researcher to better explore what Heyink and Tymstra (1993) term quality of life, or QoL. By
this they mean not the countless census statistics, from health to economic security, but rather
individual experiences and stories. To relate it to the study at hand, I am interested in the
students’ quality of education – not just the fact that learning Latin may increase one’s English
aptitude, as the literature shows, but how, why, and to what degree this may happen (Heyink and
Tymstra, 1993). This provides a different perspective with which to explore this crucial issue.

The paper is composed of a literature review (Chapter 2) and informal, semi-structured
interviews. The literature review establishes a context for the study while also informing the
reader of already existent research. This is crucial, as the findings of this study are not
generalizable. Instead, the information must be evaluated upon its transferability, that is,
“resonance—the extent that research findings have meaning for the reader” (Kuper, Ayelet,
Lingard, and Levinson, 2008, 688). In giving the reader a theoretical basis from which to
interpret this study, per the advice of Kuper et al. (2008), it is my intention that the reader be able
to test the transferability of the present study.

4 Note these limitations are methodological, and stand in addition to the limitations already
explored in Chapter 1.
Interviews are the most common form of qualitative research (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993). During these interviews I probed the teachers in an attempt to uncover if there is any discernable difference between the English abilities of students learning Latin and those who are not. I began the interview with cordial, general inquiries to set them at ease and build rapport, all the while establishing their knowledge and character (Creswell, 2013; Heyink and Tymstra, 1993). I asked them questions regarding their academic history, and if they have any background in additional languages. I then turned to their practices in the classroom: what their classes are like, what they assess when they teach an upper level English class, etc. After establishing the teacher’s history and goals, as well as their classroom practice, I turned to the heart of the issue: “In your work as a teacher, is it possible to discern which students have taken a additional language, specifically Latin?” It is here that the protocol branches out depending on their response. The open-endedness of the interview protocol, its semi-structured nature, is meant to give room for the respondent’s voice to come through, allowing for focus on his/her subjective paradigm as opposed to my own (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993).

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The instrument of data collection is the semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix B). I constructed the protocol carefully in an attempt to guide the respondents in their reflection, distilling their experiences in the classroom into interpretable data, all the while allowing them the maneuverability to respond in their own way. This allowed the interview to wind down (often worthwhile) tangents and ideas, and, as mentioned above, allowed for each respondent’s perspective to shine through (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993).

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5 The remainder of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.
3.3 Participants

Here I review the sampling criteria I used to select my respondents. I also introduce the two respondents that I have recruited. The crucial criterion by which I selected my respondents was that they be teachers of English at schools with Latin programs, a purposeful sampling, as they are surely the most qualified to speak to differences between students in the English classroom, and likely have less of an investment in the outcome of the study than their Latin-teaching coworkers (Creswell, 2013).

3.3.1 Sampling Criteria

I selected these respondents because they teach English classes at schools with Latin programs. More specifically, they teach Grade 11 and 12 English. Grade 11 and 12 Latin students will have taken Latin for at least two years, possibly three, and thus will have had more experience with the ancient language. Based on the research presented in Chapter 2 (specifically Douglass and Kittelson, 1935), this extended experience should make the impact of learning Latin more apparent.

I also selected teachers with several years of experience teaching English: a minimum of five with at least three at their current school, or at schools with active Latin programs. With experience comes understanding, an ability to discern the nuances of student performance and how students differ from one another. This was crucial in determining differences and subsequently making positive claims about learning Latin.

Lastly, the teachers needed to have a minimum of five active or former Latin students in their classrooms. While it is likely that the teachers will have taught several dozen Latin students, both active and former, over the course of their three-five (or more) years of teaching
English, I wanted to ensure an accurate assessment, one not clouded by the fogginess of memory, distorted by time.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedures

Both respondents were found with the help of Latin teacher contacts I have throughout Ontario. Both respondents have been given pseudonyms for the purpose of this study, in order to guarantee the protection of their anonymity. I will also not reveal their respective schools.

3.3.3 Participants Bios

I have selected and interviewed two Ontario high school English teachers from different schools. Both respondents have been teaching English at the high school level for well over my minimum requirement of 5 years, and both schools have flourishing Latin programs. Respondent 1, whom I will refer to hence with the pseudonym Edward King, has taught almost exclusively senior level English classes in recent years. Respondent 2, who has been given the pseudonym Joseph Andrews, teaches mostly English courses, though he occasionally teaches the Classical Civilizations course as well, and so he has knowledge of the Classics curriculum. Andrews has also taught at various universities and colleges.

3.4 Data Analysis

In anticipation of data analysis, I transcribed both interviews using the recorded audio files. I then proceeded to code the two transcripts utilizing my research questions as interpretive tools. I coded the data looking for common themes and divergences, as well as what the respondents did not mention, that is, null data.

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6 While Latin teachers assisted in setting me up with both respondents, it was at my request, and the teachers were given minimal information about the purposes of this study. As a result there is no conflict of interest or potential spoiling of the participant pool.
3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

For the purposes of this study I have followed the ethical review approval procedures for the Master of Teaching program. As I mention in section 3.3.2, I have sought to protect the anonymity of my respondents by using pseudonyms and not disclosing the name of their respective schools. I have provided only sufficient information to demonstrate the fulfillment of my sampling criteria.

The process, from interview to transcription, analysis, and publication, were explained in full to the participants, both via e-mail and in person. It was with this understanding that I requested their participation; no demands were made, and their participation was entirely voluntary. They both had the right to withdraw their interviews, and the resultant analytical data, at any point up to the publication of the research paper. Both have been assured that the original audio recordings, stored on my password-protected iPhone and my password-protected laptop, will be destroyed no later than five years from the publication date. Neither was obligated to participate, in part or in full. Both have read, signed, and returned a letter of consent that details the above (Appendix A).

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

The scope of this research paper has been limited to interviews with teachers and other professionals in education. As such, I was not able to interview students or parents of students, or to perform classroom surveys, in order to delve deeper into the subject. Also, due to time constraints as well as the recommendation of my professors at OISE, I limited my qualitative study to two respondents, giving a narrow perspective on the topic. This was especially necessary due to the laborious nature of the interview process (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993). Thus, while these limitations may have kept me from reaching “saturation,” the typical
culmination of qualitative research (Ayelet, Lingard, and Levinson, 2008), I believe I have elaborated on and sufficiently explored the ideas at hand.

Despite these limitations, the respondents themselves – their experience and subjective position – proved an asset. Looking through their eyes at their students I was able to explore a perspective that I would not be able to access on my own, as I lack both the many years of classroom experience and the rapport built up with their current students. By means of their professional expertise I was able to explore the nuances of the classroom, the subtle differences between students, and this proved the cornerstone for this entire endeavor. I was also able to gain their personal, subjective perspectives on the subject, each providing a unique paradigm founded in their lived experiences.

It also bears mentioning that qualitative research, unlike its quantitative counterpart, rarely produces generalizable conclusions or results. One cannot take the information induced from these interviews to make universal statements about learning Latin. Rather, this study will provide a perspective on the issue, one asserted as valid and reliable based on an analysis of the common themes and ideas derived from the interviews (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology for this research paper. It is a qualitative study that relies on semi-structured informal interviews to probe the accumulated knowledge of two veteran Grade 11 and 12 English teachers who currently work at schools with active Latin programs. Relying on their professional expertise and guiding them through an introspective process using my Interview Protocol (Appendix B), I then transcribed the interviews and coded them using my research questions for important themes. In Chapter 4, I report my research findings and parse their meaning.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.0 Introduction

This research project seeks to evaluate the place of Latin within the Ontario curriculum by examining the subject from the paradigm of the English classroom. To this end, I interviewed two Ontario high school English teachers who teach senior level English classes at schools with Latin programs. Having already established a thorough literature review and explained the study’s methodology, in this chapter I will parse and analyse my findings.

I begin the chapter with a reflection on the research process, with specific interest in the quandaries that emerged, especially in light of my inexperience with qualitative research. I take special care to elucidate how this affected the research produced, and how the study has coalesced into its current form. I will then delve into the major ideas that emerged from the two interviews: the overarching theme of what I have termed intellectualism; the problematic state of the public school system; the importance of placing Latin within its historical and cultural context; how students of Latin differ from their peers and how Latin and Classical Studies as disciplines augment these differences; and the importance of the teacher in this synergistic equation. Finally, I will conclude by exploring the implications of this research for our education system as a whole.

4.1 Qualitative vs. Quantitative

As with any research, this study has evolved through the course of the research process, most noticeably during the coding process. Like I explain in Chapter 1, I have never completed qualitative research before, and as a result I could not anticipate the course of my research or my results. The planned focus of the study was to examine Latin as a tool for enhancing grammatical understanding and augmenting linguistic sensitivity and cognitive development, with a focus on
how this positively affects performance in the English classroom. But as I discovered through the course of my research, this question is better suited to a quantitative study, and was complicated by several factors, including the respondents’ pedagogy and assessment strategies, the composition of the classes, and school culture.

Edward King and Joseph Andrews, the two respondents in this study, held differing opinions about Latin’s effect on student performance in the English classroom, though their opinions were often speculative. With respect to language, this is because neither educator focuses on grammar in their English classes, outside of a few micro-lessons in Andrews’ class. King opined that “learning Latin… and any other foreign language definitely does help with grammar,” though he has not noticed “anything exceptional about Latin students” when marking grammar on writing assignments. He also contended that learning grammar is only fruitful in the context of writing, as he believes learning grammar in the abstract is not useful. Joseph Andrews, on the other hand, does contend that there is a difference, albeit an imperceptible one. While the effect of learning Latin rarely shows itself in the classroom, it is later, while inputting report card marks, that Andrews says he will notice that a certain student takes Latin, and in that moment he thinks to himself, “oh, that kid takes Latin; well, that makes sense.” But he admits that, while the knowledge and understanding garnered from learning Latin is “there to an extent,” the English classroom is “not really the forum for it; I think if we did grammar more formally and more extensively it might (emphasis mine, based on his intonation) come up.” As a result, given that neither educator explicitly instructs grammar in the large, the opportunity is not there to provide much useful information about this effect.

Another complicating factor is that the students at both schools are high achieving and ambitious. Almost all students are university-bound at both schools, with Joseph Andrews’
school scoring, based on his recollection, somewhere between 92%-96% on the OSSLT, and with somewhere between 85%-87% going on to university. It is not a stretch to postulate that the same can be said for Edward King’s school, where, he explained, the weaker students usually leave before they reach Grade 11, and those who remain will take summer school courses to avoid difficult senior level courses and maintain their GPAs. The result is a high achieving student body in general, making it difficult to discern when a student or students stand out from the crowd, or deconstruct specific trends within the school. Yet with both respondents asserting that Latin students are of a different stock, as will be explored below, this raises another question: are there shades, as it were, of ambition? Is the ambition for university different than the ambition for intellectual pursuit? The answer is surely in the affirmative, as will be explored further below in my discussion of the public school system.

The facility to distinguish the ability of Latin students is complicated further at Joseph Andrews’ school, which includes a French immersion program. Much of the student body, as a result, already has a great deal of linguistic competence. Many are also involved in other edifying programs, such as music, which makes it difficult to parse subtle differences amongst the student body. This is even further convoluted when one takes into account the fact that there are only so many Latin students at each school, and these students are spread thin across many an English class.

Along with the linguistic sensitivity is the question of increased literary competency, mentioned in Masciantonio (1977). Edward King noticed this, especially in his Literature class, where the Latin and Classics students discern allusions and make comparisons. It was also telling

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7 For more on how various quantitative studies have attempted to account for complicating variables like ambition, socioeconomic status, gender, and intelligence, see Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977; Mavrogenes, 1979; Nimnicht, Aspegren, and Franzen, 1961, all of which are presented and explored in Chapter 2.
for Joseph Andrews that in his now defunct Studies in Literature (ETS) class a fourth or fifth of the students would have taken Latin through high school. The ETS course, a grade 12 Academic elective that “attracted some of the very brightest Humanities students,” centred around reading and engaging with literature. It was classes like this and Latin that Andrews asserts are “part of the equipment an extremely intelligent kid would carry… because they would. It satisfied their ambitions for themselves, it was intellectually rigorous; that satisfied their sense of themselves.”

Yet there remains the issue of school culture inhibiting students from standing out from the crowd. While Edward King noticed Latin students contributing to his classes, pointing out allusions and the like, this was less noticeable in Joseph Andrews’ classroom. Andrews contends that this is the result of a school culture that shames anyone who stands out as the “other”, in this case as a “nerd.” Andrews argues that teenagers want to remain inconspicuous in the classroom; they do not want, even at this academically-oriented public school, to raise up their hand and put a target on their back. In his Classical Civilizations course, for example, Andrews noticed students sharing thoughts from their previous English studies when familiar topics around the Greek gods came up, but the reverse – a Latin student referencing something from a Classical Studies course in English class – is rare. This is because the former is a shared experience that all students will have had, with English being compulsory, while the latter is inherently ostracizing. This adds further hindrance to one’s ability to discern the differences between the students.

Given all these inhibiting factors, it became difficult for me to answer my initial research questions satisfactorily. It was through the coding process and my confrontation with these difficulties that I was forced to reassess my study. While an exploration of the direct impact on the English classroom from linguistic, literary, and cognitive perspectives is still a part of my research, and can be found in Chapter 2, the two interviews both focused on a separate, nebulous
concept: the intellectualizing power of Latin. This is understandable given the nature of the study: where my desired aims are better fit for a quantitative study, this qualitative approach has yielded the ethereal, the imperceptible, which lies beneath the surface. As Griffiths (p.11, 2009) explains, in her elaboration on Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition*:

> Lyotard argues for a distinction between knowledge that can be measured against a yardstick of efficiency (information and competence) and other kinds of knowledge for instance, that which is concerned with ethics, ethical wisdom, individual human beings or with beauty. As he points out, knowledge of information and competence can be measured and then expressed using numbers, which is why it can be stored in computers. In contrast, ethics, ethical wisdom, aesthetic knowledge or knowledge of a person cannot. All of these may make use of numbers but they each require a human being, a knower, before they can be adequately expressed or preserved. They are more likely to be expressed in words, stories, pictures, gestures, dance, etc.

Where my research questions originally sought measurable data, the interviews reveal a form of “beauty”, of “aesthetic knowledge,” from Griffiths’ words above, that is not quantifiable. As such, this paper stands in two forms: as a presentation of quantifiable data, culled and presented in Chapter 2; and as a qualitative exploration of the ill-defined and immeasurable, presented in this chapter.

### 4.2 Intellectualism – Defining Our Terms

Over the course of both interviews it became clear that intellectualism was of central importance to both respondents, as will be explored below. In discussing intellectualism it is integral to understand from the outset that I am not talking about rationalism bereft or at the expense of emotion – there are no negative connotations at play. Rather, intellectualism refers simply to the pursuit of knowledge, the exploration of understanding. And an intellectualizing force, by extension, is something that expands the mind. It is edifying and sophisticating, and in the course of both interviews it became clear that this is the dominant reason for teaching Latin at the high school level.
4.3 The Academy

This speaks to the role of school itself. Both respondents believe that school should be a place of intellectualism, where students’ minds are expanded and they are taught meaningful things. That said, both respondents recognize that their goal in the Academic level English classes, the basic level of English study at the secondary level, is to teach the necessary skills for success at the university level. For Joseph Andrews this is derived from his own teaching career, which spans university, college, and high school, which, unsurprisingly, colours his definition of the academy. Andrews misses the ivory tower of the university, in large part because that is where ideas can be explored and “you can spend a lot more time inside your knowledge… you’re professing a discipline,” while high school, by contrast, is where educators “are cultivating a skill set,” which is “a big difference.” This informs his pedagogy, where his ultimate goal in the English classroom is simply to make sure the students can read and understand a text, and be able to write an essay, so that they can survive in university. There is little room for philosophizing in the mandatory English classes.

In the typical grade 12 English class, Edward King explained that his “primary goal is to give them (the students) the skills I think they’ll need to be successful at university.” But this is, again, the base level, the expected and required classes to attain entry into any university, and as I mentioned above and in Chapter 3, both of these teachers teach at schools with an incredibly high number of alumni attending university. Intellectualism emerges in the niche classes, such as Edward King’s Grade 11 Enriched English class and his Literature class, or Joseph Andrews’ Studies in Literature (ETS) class, though the latter is no longer offered. In these classes the goal becomes one of cultivating creativity, of establishing thoughtful engagement. This speaks to the importance of intellectualism, to the lofty position it holds for both of these educators, as these
classes transcend the basic skill base deemed necessary for university. “For me it’s the intellectual engagement, it’s what it all comes down to,” asserted Edward King.

This gets at the heart of the problem for both of these educators, who independently lamented the state of their schools and the public school system as a whole. “University has become the new high school,” claims Edward King, which begs the question: what does high school become? King’s school itself has changed: originally students attended the school because their parents wanted them to pursue “traditional intellectual pursuits,” or because the students themselves were interested in such things. The school had no business department, they had a larger music department, and more students took languages, classics, and art. King views the reduction from 5 to 4 years of high school as one of the culprits, making it difficult to take optional courses. Another is that “parents want their kids to take what they see as pragmatic choices,” a rationale that he deems shortsighted. “Anyone can learn to balance a leger,” asserted Edward King, “you don’t need a year of high school study.” King also sees this as an attempt by students to earn easier marks in a climate where marks are everything, as Latin at his school is a much more difficult class than Business.  

For these reasons King fears his Literature class may no longer be offered before he retires, a fate that has already befallen Joseph Andrews’ ETS class. And based on Andrews’ opinion, King’s fears are well founded:

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Joseph Andrews also commented on mark anxiety, though at his school he saw this as one of the impetuses enticing students to taking Latin. Compared to core French, for example, Latin is easier, and so students will opt to take Latin instead. This is because the Latin that is studied is understandably basic, compared to the French class where the students would have been studying this for most of their lives and so they would be studying and practicing higher level activities and assignments. But this is his speculation based on his perception of the courses offered. He also repeatedly emphasized that the students do still have to desire to learn the language when taking Latin, and there is no reason to doubt that they will still see the benefits of both learning about Latin and Classics, as well as being surrounded by a certain kind of student, which is explored below.
One of the reasons ETS isn’t running, for example, is that increasingly kids have never read anything outside young adult literature. And the adults in their world increasingly are in lock step with them. So that the place and importance of classical culture to the culture of learning and intellectual life is something that most people in most public schools have no understanding of, or sympathy with…

With the loss of interest and engagement, and the devaluing of intellectual pursuit, the school boards have been brutal in their cuts, Andrews laments. Much of this originates from a societal condemnation of what the public, or the “proletariat,” as Andrews coyly termed them, view as an “elitist crap-trap.” Anything perceived as complicated, as highbrow – that is, as intellectual – is scoffed at and dismissed as superfluous, and this is a travesty, an infectious mindset that transmits from parent to child. The result is that intellectual engagement in the classroom is at a premium in both schools, despite the fact that both boast such high numbers of university-bound graduates.

There is also the issue with the teachers themselves, and the language used to discuss this once proud vocation. “They like to use the word ‘educator’ now, and that becomes not that far from ‘facilitator’,” and anyone can be a facilitator, Andrews explains. This insidious shift in language undermines the learning, as teachers no longer need expertise in their fields to educate their students. As a corollary, this also devalues teaching as a profession, allowing for the justification of pay cuts. Edward King echoes this sentiment, expressing the need for English teachers to be readers. He went as far as saying English teachers should have a background in Classics, contending that one cannot truly appreciate literature without being able to decipher and place Biblical and Classical allusions. For this he provided the example of Milton’s “Lycidas”, which he reads with the students in the Literature class. They read it “to make the point that it is, to a great degree, inaccessible to us today, because Milton’s expectation was that his readers would immediately, without having to check things out, pick up on two or three
references per line, and they are almost all Classical references.” As a result, he described it as a “great shame” that English teachers can teach without being educated in the foundations of their subject.

King’s thought process is reminiscent of Northrop Frye’s proposed curriculum for teaching literature, which he describes in *The Educated Imagination* (1963). Frye’s curriculum begins with Western civilization’s founding mythology, the Bible, which provides the structural artifice into which all subsequent Western literature fits, and following that with the Classics, which provides a blueprint for all subsequent literature to follow, and of course both the Bible and Classical mythology serve as inspirations for allusions throughout literature. Joseph Andrews had a more pessimistic outlook on teacher education, quipping that “if they could be trained in English grammar that would be a victory.”

**4.4 Intellectualizing Potential**

**4.4.1 Latin in a Vacuum**

One of the issues that came up constantly through the interviews, and was also found in the studies presented by Douglass and Kittelson (1935) and Massignan (1977), presented in Chapter 2, was that it is not simply the language that inherently has positive effects on students. In much of our discussion, Edward King would preempt his statements by saying that he is referring to Classics as a whole, more than Latin as a singular topic. Rote learning of Latin, with a focus on grammar in the abstract, “would have been terrible for me,” he opined. “If you’ve got a teacher who is conjugating verbs all day long then it will kill any interest you have. If you’ve got a teacher who can recreate a vanished world… then I think it will be something that you’d want to pursue for the rest of your life.” Joseph Andrews also championed this perspective, pointing out that it is not only the language, though that has a salutary effect in that it provides
linguistic sensitivity and acumen, but everything – the texts, the artifacts, even the classroom environment – that provides this benefit. The key to unlocking Latin’s power is through exploring the culture, the literature, and the language.

4.4.2 Importance of the Pedagogue

This leads naturally into the role of the teacher in actualizing the potential intellectualizing power of Latin. Edward King stressed this to the fullest: the Latin teacher at his school is “the most irreplaceable teacher in the school,” he asserted. Apparently this teacher had taken a year off once, and King was concerned that if the teacher had extended the time off, the teacher “would have had no program to come back to.” At Joseph Andrews’ school the Latin teacher has the good fortune of only teaching Latin and Classics courses, enabling the teacher to focus entirely on these subjects, which expectedly enriches the material for the students. As a result we may say that how the Latin is taught is the crucial criterion for determining whether the learning is worthwhile, as other studies have suggested (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977). It seems the Latin is not innately edifying, or at least the potential for edification is sorely missed with improper instruction.

4.5 Latin Students

Despite the fact that the vast majority of both respondents’ students have the ambition of attending university, as King is quick to point out, “even though I said our students are almost all university bound… that doesn’t mean they’re intellectually engaged in any way.” With reading and intellectual engagement as his ultimate benchmark, it is telling when King goes on to say that “the kind of kids who are drawn to a Classics program are overwhelmingly the kind of kids who are pretty serious readers.” The students who choose to take Latin are already intelligent individuals headed in the direction of sophistication; these are the kinds of students King finds in
his upper level English courses, the Enriched English and Literature courses, the kids who truly enjoy school as an edifying experience.

Joseph Andrews reports the same thing at his school, as Latin is the kind of unusual course that you choose because you actually desire to learn something. Where a student might choose French because they have been doing immersion for years, or music for the same reason or because they simply did not want to take the Business class (BTT) or Art, a student chooses Latin because they actually want to learn Latin. “I think the interesting thing about Latin is its pure fascination and the love of the language and the culture, and that’s what drives that program,” Andrews explains. And in spite of the allure of easier marks, according to Andrews, those who are intellectually incapable of keeping up leave the program.

The Classics Club and the Ontario Student Classics Conference⁹ are fantastic examples of this love of learning. This Club, which functions at both schools and facilitates each school’s participation in the Conference as well as seasonal Certamen (that is, academic competitions between various schools throughout Ontario), unites the students in their passion for everything Classical. The Conference, which I have attended as chaperone and facilitator, takes place over the course of three days and is composed of academic, creative, and athletic competitions. The artwork, the theatrical shows, and the academic achievement the students exhibit is truly astounding, and finds its way into Edward King’s class on a regular basis in the excited and jubilant exclamations of his students. In fact, in King’s view the Classics Club, which is facilitated by the Latin teacher at the school, is more important even than the Latin class for its power to motivate and excite, which transcends the classroom and “becomes central to their identity.” King provides a statement on this:

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⁹ http://www.classicsconference.org/
What excites me about the kids that I see is... the fact that these are the kids that like to learn... they’re having fun... as opposed to they feel they are doing something worthwhile, or that [it] will be better for them in the future; there’s no sense of medicine to education for them.

The reason it may be more powerful, and thus more important in King’s view, is that the Classics Club engages the students in and out of the classroom and is framed in a fun, albeit serious, way. This manages to draw the students into the material in a pressure-free domain, in contrast to the actual classes which are viewed, by necessity, from a paradigm of evaluation and gravitas. This is, however, my own conjecture. More importantly, the “medicine” he speaks of is exhibited by clubs like DECA, for example, which are fueled not by passion but rather by a desire to “pad resumes,” in King’s opinion. The students who constitute the ranks of the Classics Club are students that are choosing to learn Latin and participate simply because they view it as a worthwhile pursuit, something to challenge them, something they find stimulating, fulfilling, and fun. And this is something to be lauded, as Andrews rightly asserts, as these students and their teachers are maintaining their “responsibility to everyone [who] has gone before us” in accepting and maintaining this cultural heritage.

4.6 A Haven for Intellectualism

All of these qualities I have just expounded that differentiate Latin students from their peers, however, are not solely innate. There is a synergy at play here, where these students start out as more intellectually engaged and then, over the course of studying in the Latin classroom and participating in the Classics Club, become engaged even more. This seems a twofold process: on the one hand, the students are surrounded by likeminded individuals and are better for it, forming a sort of “tribe” that unites and explores the world together, as Andrews puts it. It becomes a space where these students can share their knowledge, share their passions, without fear of reprisal or shame. “I would want [my child] to take Latin... and it would have nothing to
do with learning Latin,” Edward King explains, “[but rather] it would have everything to do with
being in a classroom full of other kids who took Latin… and a belief that these will be… the kids
who like literature, the kids who like to read, who… are intellectually engaged.” The Latin
classroom itself is a safe haven for the quiet, intelligent student looking to share his/her ideas and
be rewarded for it.

The second element is the Latin itself. As King notes, while the students start out as
engaged, they become even more so over the course of studying Latin and other Classical
courses. The students recognize the power of the literature, language, and culture, and then
explore and hone their understanding through its study. As Andrews aptly puts it: “there’s an
ideal about human civilization that the impulse to continue to study Latin responds to…” And
something unique to these students is that “they bring that understanding that they are doing
something uniquely intellectual in studying Latin.” And there is surely merit in providing that
intellectualizing outlet, just as it is important to accommodate all students.

4.7 What now?

Much like Latin at King’s school occupies a precarious position, kept aloft by the efforts
of the Latin teacher, so too is his own Literature course on the precipice of cancellation. These
stellar students are few and far between, and their number seems to be dwindling. This comes
back to the issues surrounding intellectualism and the public school system, as more of the
“practical” pushes out the edifying and academic.

Yet Latin, and Classics more generally, can be taught to anyone. It is intrinsically
appealing, because, as Edward King astutely noted during our interview, “it’s just great
storytelling with some sort of Jungian appeal… just really cool stories.” It requires expertise, to
be sure, but so should any school subject. “You can’t teach them solid things if you don’t know
solid things,” Joseph Andrews rightly contends. And it is our responsibility, both to give these intelligent students an outlet to express themselves without judgment and to cultivate their ambition and intelligence, as well as to simply understand and demonstrate value for our cultural legacy.

Joseph Andrews has a more optimistic perspective on the fate of Latin at his school, based in the knowledge that his school has a booming Latin program that has actually grown in recent years. This despite the floundering of other programs, like Spanish and even core French to an extent, which have been approaching the executioner’s block for years. But this is not based on any understanding of the importance of Classics on the part of administration and the board: “they are not intellectuals,” he says of administrators in general. “They would have no understanding what that meant, and they would not understand its value, at all.” Thankfully, from my experience, this is not the case at every school or every board. That said, the point Andrews is making is that his school’s Latin program flourishes not because of an understanding that this is important, but rather that it is a reflection of the school’s neighbourhood. The school is situated in an affluent area with a high standard of living, and so, much like a university, it holds to conservative aspiration. “It pretends to be super liberal, but it’s actually very conformist in establishment, and it likes to study things that validate its attachment to the establishment, and the Classics is one of those things that just does that,” Andrews explains.

But this is not sufficient for continuity, and it also only serves to affect those in a particular area. Without understanding why this is important and worthwhile, one does not have the ability to transpose that decision-making process to other situations. Joseph Andrews’ school lacks true understanding of why they should study these things, as elaborated above. They have an “intellectual conscience,” to be sure, that facilitates and supports French, through French
immersion, and Latin; but still core French flounders, still after Grade 10 history courses become electives, as they do throughout the province. With respect to Latin at other schools, there remains the threat from administrators and boards, as well as a cultural wave espousing pseudo-pragmatism. As Andrews so perfectly puts it, “the hands are not holding the lamp that’s being passed them… and so if there’s a value in Classical culture as an extension of the global intellectual tradition, the vocabulary that’s able to articulate the value doesn’t exist in public education.” And that is the crux of this research – to ask these questions and develop this vocabulary, so that when a parent or administrator questions a child’s desire to learn the Classics, or a teacher’s desire to teach it, they can respond from a place of knowledge in a convincing way.

All of this points to the importance of continuing to teach Latin at the high school level. “In a place that pretends to prepare students, young people, for the world,” Andrews contends, school “has to be more than counting change and detecting bullshit in politicians.” This is the crucial question that this study forces into the air, to Andrews’ pleasure: what is the role of public education? I specify “public” because private schools have the freedom to teach what they deem is valuable, whereas at public school teachers are consigned to teaching what is accessible, the basic skills necessary for subsistence in our modern world. Latin and Classics, and to that point, as Andrews astutely brought up, Classical Mandarin and Sanskrit, provide points of access to our cultural heritages. But instead of reading real literature, instead of engaging with and maintaining our traditions, Andrews decries the fact that “they read Hunger Games; they read all these dumb things… and that’s partly looking at the designs of bookstores in the last 20 years. There is a place where you’re labeled and constructed, and so you read that stuff, and because your parents don’t know, you read that stuff. And increasingly when they start telling themselves
that Harry Potter is literature, then we are lost.” The result is classes that are too impatient to examine etymologies, to illiterate or uneducated to appreciate literature, and this cycle is self-perpetuating.

4.8 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the place of Latin and Classical Studies in Ontario public schools. It found that, while the students who choose to take Latin and participate in the Classics Club are typically intelligent, curious students, it is also the case that Latin itself serves to further sophisticate those who take it. This sophistication is predicated on proper pedagogy, which involves situating the language within its historical and cultural milieu and exploring the literature, art, and archaeology. It also requires a teacher who is not only educated and skilled, but also able to connect with the students on an intellectual level. All of this serves to not only stimulate the students, but also provide them with a safe haven within which they can explore their ideas and express the connections they make and the puzzles they solve.

If the purpose of the school system is to educate the young, to introduce them to a history of ideas, to expose them to career paths and theories of thought in a way that is more than simply cultivating worker bees, Latin and courses like it are essential. Latin, and its attendant Classics courses and the extracurricular Classics Club, preserve a cultural heritage, the legacy of our civilization. “It’s at the basis of everything that we believe is important in our lives,” as Andrews succinctly puts it. In practical terms, it enhances linguistic proficiency and cultivates curiosity, specifically with literature and reading. We cannot allow our curricula to be ruled by money and convenience. We must return to considerations about what is actually worth learning, and endure the necessary pains to provide it.
In the following chapter I will continue my analysis of the implications of this research. This will have a twofold focus: firstly, on how this research informs my own practice; and secondly, the broader implications of this research for the field as a whole, which I have already begun to elucidate. I will then delve into questions that remain or have arisen as a result of the research process, and recommend further research to help refine this important area of study.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The research presented in this paper has explored the question of Latin’s place in the Ontario high school curriculum. In Chapter 1, I set the stage with my own biographical information, exploring my connection to Latin, Classics, and language. I then elucidated the historical trends, which demand redress. Chapter 2 served as a literature review, probing the mostly quantitative data on Latin’s positive effects on the mind as well as some linguistic and cognitive development frameworks through which to understand said effects. With the methodology explained in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 exhibited and analysed the qualitative data from interviews with two senior English teachers in Ontario. The study found that while students who take Latin are typically intellectual, interested, and engaged, the Latin classroom and its attendant Classics Club and Classical Civilizations course serve to further intellectualize and edify these students.

If these findings, which correspond neatly with the evidence presented in Chapter 2, are correct, the question then becomes a matter of how the system should react. If our goals as educators are to educate, to pass on a cultural inheritance and expose succeeding generation to the foundations of our civilization, then surely Latin and courses like it must find a place within cramped curricula.

This is, of course, easier to say and much more difficult to accomplish. In this chapter I will elaborate further on my analysis, particularly surrounding the implications of this research both for my own practice and for education as a field, and present recommendations. I will then introduce questions that remain unanswered, potential areas of study for future research, and close with some concluding ideas.
5.1 Key Findings

From the qualitative research and analysis presented in Chapter 4, the findings of this study can be distilled to three main claims. It should be noted, however, that these claims are not generalizable. Rather, they are credible claims derived from the experiences of two teachers at separate high schools in Ontario that accord with the research presented in Chapter 2 (Creswell, 2013). The three assertions are: 1) Students that take Latin courses are typically the kind of students that are curious and want to learn; 2) The Latin classroom, and to a greater extent the Classics Club and other Classics extra-curriculars, provide students with an identity, a community, and a safe place in which to explore their aforementioned curiousity; 3) Latin and Classics have an intellectualizing power.

This third point has the caveat that Latin is only a piece of a larger whole. The language should not be taught alone as a series of grammar exercises or isolated readings, as this fails to engage students. The language needs to be situated in its historical context, presented as a cultural artefact, and explored alongside tangential topics like art, architecture, religion, etc. This understanding emerged in both the research from Chapter 2 (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977), as well as both interviews. The Classics Club, which existed at both schools, helps a great deal with facilitating this, but there must also be room within the Latin classroom itself for such explorations.

A final requirement emphasized by Edward King is that the Latin and Classical Studies teacher needs to be academically rigorous, committed, and engaging, in order to actualize the potential inherent in Classical education, a conclusion that coincides with research presented in Chapter 2 (Douglass and Kittelson, 1935; Masciantonio, 1977). To be a successful Latin teacher,
then, is to be knowledgeable in all of these areas, willing to engage with students both in and out of the classroom, and able to stoke student excitement about the subject matter.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Narrow

As a researcher I have used this research project as ingress to qualitative research, a first step that will serve me when I inevitably engage in professional learning communities and other research opportunities. It was my first time constructing an interview protocol and using individuals’ lived experiences as my data, as well as my first time conducting a formal interview. These are translatable skills that I will continue to hone in the coming years.

Looking beyond the role of researcher, it was also fruitful in that I had meaningful, philosophical conversations with educators. I was exposed to their views on the field, and able to exchange and refine my own thoughts and ideas. Teachers have been the most illuminating sources of knowledge for me on issues in education, and this was magnified to even greater levels in this instance, as the conversations took place in a formal setting with a planned trajectory. Armed with this insider knowledge I feel more prepared to engage with other educators in conversation and debate, and eager to take a stand among the philosophical tides currently shaping the educational landscape.

More practically, this study informs my practice in that the findings illuminate the power of the pedagogue. While material may have inherent value, whether it be the gorgeous verses of Virgil or the biting satire of Petronius, the potential power that exists can only be actualized by a skilled educator. As Edward King argued, “if you’ve got a teacher who is conjugating verbs all day long then it will kill any interest you have.” Though the language itself is edifying in all the ways this study suggests, it is only one part of an equation. To truly engage and intellectualize, to
move beyond the classroom and, in King’s words, “…recreate a vanished world…,” the educator must contextualize and enliven with culture, history, art, literature, etc., as expressed above. It becomes clear that teaching Latin is no easy task. Granted, that can be said for any subject, but Latin seems particularly demanding, necessitating a wealth of knowledge that transcends the language as well as requiring the time, patience, and drive to explore these many avenues with students both in the classroom and out of it.

While this may seem daunting, I see it as an exciting challenge, and a worthy one at that. Latin and Classics provide safety and intellectualization to the student on the path towards intellectualism, and I see that as a most worthy cause. Though there are few Latin programs left in Ontario, it is my goal either to join a Latin program in progress or create my own Latin program at the school at which I eventually work. While this latter goal is loftier and will require a great deal of time, work, and the grace of administrators, I can in the meantime as a young teacher at the very least form and facilitate a Classics Club of my own.

5.2.2 Broad

From a macro perspective, the clear implication of this study is that Latin and Classical Studies are worthy of inclusion in school curricula. Where Chapter 2 served to demonstrate the positive cognitive and linguistic effects, the research presented in Chapter 4 illuminated that Latin and Classics serve to intellectualize students in more ways than simply the linguistic. The Latin classroom can also provide curious and interested students with a place to explore their interests free of judgment and social pressure, as they are part of a small cohort of likeminded peers.

But more than being worthy, it is also important that it be included. “It’s the basis of everything that we believe is important in our lives,” Joseph Andrews contends. That is not to
say that every student should or must take Latin. And as Andrews pointed out, these same questions could be asked about classical Mandarin or Sanskrit, and they should. What he argued, and I think rightly so, is that Latin is a “boutique inside the board,” which he likened to the International Baccalaureate program. This same categorization could apply to any other such course, like Sanskrit, for example. But it is the very fact that Latin appeals to a smaller, unique cohort, that causes boards to falter and strip it from schools. This, Andrews argues, is a symptom of the current climate around intellectualism: “the proletariat like to use the word elitism, and most of the administrator cadre in this board love to spit that word around to justify mediocre… Latin is clearly something that for them… that’s elitist.” It is this anti-intellectualism often masked as pragmatism that has had such a deleterious effect on our education system, with the loss of Latin being one of many side effects. With all the information demonstrating the power of learning Latin, from the quantitative data presented in Chapter 2 to the qualitative research analysed in Chapter 4, it is crucial that we fight back against such myopic and destructive paradigms, lest we descend into a world where education devolves into a purely mechanistic process.

5.3 Recommendations

The primary recommendation of this study is to reintegrate Latin into public schools throughout Ontario. This will require that pre-service learning be offered more frequently, as currently the Additional Qualification courses pertaining to Latin are rarely offered. Professional development should also be offered to relate the power of learning Latin and Classical Studies to administrators and other teachers, so that they can offer informed opinions when guiding students through their curricular choices.
5.4 Areas for Further Research

It would be beneficial to perform further research into the effects of Latin on students, both in the English classroom and in general. It would also be helpful to interview other teachers at the same schools as Edward King and Joseph Andrews, to get a broader understanding of the effects of Latin in these specific environments.

Quantitative studies should also be administered, such as a test of grammar and writing school-wide. These were aspects of learning Latin that could not be explored through this qualitative study, given that neither educator tested much for grammar. Such studies should attempt to account for variables such as ambition, reading/writing ability, and IQ, to test the claims that these students are in fact more curious or sophisticated than their peers before they enter the Latin program.

I also recommend polling parents, students, and administrators on their views on Latin, in order to assess any potential disconnects between their opinions and the findings of this study. It is my belief, given my experience in the classroom and talking with students and parents, that Andrews is correct in asserting that this brand of pseudo-pragmatic anti-intellectualism has run amok in our society, and this would likely be apparent in such a survey. Still, it would be of use to refer to actual data. This would also serve educators in that they could then construct language and present these “boutique” subjects in such ways that will persuade those of the “practical” perspective.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This study strikes at the heart of what it means to be an academy. At work here is a precarious balance between transmitting knowledge and churning out “functional” citizens; between filling schools with competent teachers and managing cost-benefit analyses. Practical
concerns cannot be ignored, but it also must be recognized that intellectualism, and the value of knowledge, are cornerstones of the education system and should be treated as such. Latin and Classical Studies satisfy this pursuit of knowledge, providing curious students with a safe pathway towards intellectualism, given the presence of a capable and willing pedagogue. We must provide students with the opportunity to engage with such material, claims of elitism be damned.

As Joseph Andrews put it, “…if there’s a value in Classical culture as an extension of the global intellectual tradition, the vocabulary that’s able to articulate the value doesn’t exist in public education.” Masciantonio hits upon this as well: “while giving deserved attention to the linguistic relevance of Latin and its new ‘practicality,’ we should not overlook the substantial aesthetic, socio-political, and ethical relevance of Latin. These other benefits are not readily measurable and observable, but they are very real and important to students” (Masciantonio, p.382, 1977). It is my hope that this study has taken a step towards constructing such a descriptive lexicon. As a Classicist by training, I have experienced the power of learning Latin, as well as Ancient Greek. It was not until my studies at the post-secondary level that I truly appreciated the power of language and gained command of English. I am under no misconception that Latin will be such a powerful force for everyone, nor do I think we should make the course mandatory for all students. But I also believe that anyone who desires to read the unmatched beauty in the story of the son of Venus, or who wishes to experience the pride and pain of Achilles, should have that opportunity, and we as a society need to remember the intrinsic value of knowledge.
Appendix A: Interview Consent Letter

Date: __________

Dear ________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying how learning Latin impacts one’s English proficiency for the purposes of investigating an educational topic as a major assignment for our program. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr. Arlo Kempf. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 30-minute interview that will be recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Binder
jason.binder@mail.utoronto.ca
(416) 543-8286
Dr. Arlo Kempf
arlo.kempf@utoronto.ca
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Jason Binder and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): _________________________________

Date: _______________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Section 1: Background Information

1. How long have you been teaching (both in general, and specifically teaching English)?

2. What is your academic history? What degrees do you have, and what did you study in university?

3. Do you have any background in additional languages?

Section 2: Teacher Practices

4. What are your primary goals in the English classroom?

5. What are the assessment methodologies that you use to assess your students?

6. What are your classes like as far as:
   a. What pedagogical strategies do you employ?
   b. The composition (homo vs. heterogeneous racially/socioeconomically) and demeanor of your classroom?
   c. And, student performance?

Section 3: Beliefs/Values

7. Do you notice Classics (that is, Classical themes, ideas, allusions, or knowledge of language) finding their way into your classrooms, whether from your own practice (using etymology/derivative information) or from your students?

8. In your work as a teacher, is it possible to discern which students have taken a foreign language, specifically Latin?

If yes, ask the following:

   a. Can you describe how these students perform differently than their peers?
b. Why do you think there are these differences?

If no, ask the following:

a. Would you expect there to be differences? Why or why not?

**Section 4: Next Steps/Challenges**

9. Do you think English teachers should have some training in Latin (whether simple etymological understanding, further grammatical training, and/or knowledge of Latin literature)?

10. Could you speculate on the impact of learning Latin at the elementary level?

11. Would you recommend your students take courses in Latin?

12. Can you think of any ways we as teachers might make Latin a more appealing topic to students and, more importantly, to parents?

13. Are there any other thoughts you’d like to add that we have not yet addressed?
Works Cited


