

Lillian DOHERTY

Teacher Training and Professional Support
in a Traditional M.A. Program

My university has offered for almost twenty years a traditional M.A. program in Latin or Latin and Greek. The fellowships available to us are primarily teaching assistantships linked to our large introductory mythology course. I will describe the ways in which we prepare these students (some of whom come with, and some without, teaching experience) to lead discussion sections and grade papers in the myth course. I will try not to belabor the obvious but to focus on some specific components of our teacher preparation that have worked well. Our orientation workshops, for example, have included sessions on teaching methods led by graduates of our program who were recognized for exceptional teaching and have gone on to teaching assistantships in Ph.D. programs or to careers in Latin teaching. Our preparation for essay grading has included simultaneous grading and discussion of a set of anonymous essays from the course in question. The research for my presentation included individual interviews with six of our graduates who are now teaching; much of what I have to say is derived from their feedback on the usefulness of specific components of our program.

Our department also seeks to support our graduates, and other Latin teachers in the area, in their professional lives. I will conclude with a brief description of the ways in which we do this, such as offering graduate workshops on Saturdays that can be used to fulfil continuing education credits; involving the teachers and their students in our annual Latin Day; and creating online lesson plans for their use in preparation for Latin Day.