

# 2 Years of Latin in 10 Difficult Week-Long Lessons

By EVAN JENKINS

New York Times (1923-Current file); Aug 6, 1973;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2008)

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In Mrs. Lilia Subrizi's dreams this summer, menacing pluperfect subjunctives march through her window. A teacher, juggling rules of grammar, inches gingerly across a rope of intertwining dactyls and spondees, metric feet of verse symbolized typographically by combinations of dashes and loops.

The dreams, which Mrs. Subrizi recounts with ample portions of her ready laughter, reflect her nearly obsessive concern these days and nights with, of all things, Latin. Along with 26 other men and women, she is trying to learn as much of the language in 10 weeks as she would acquire in two to three years of normal college courses.

The vehicle is the Summer Latin Institute, run by Brooklyn College in conjunction with the City University's Graduate School and University Center in the center's quarters at 33 West 42d Street.

The method is total immersion—up to 15 hours a day, seven days a week, leading to 12 academic credits.

A total of 40 students began the course, believed to

*Nusquam nec opera sine emolumento, nec emolumentum ferme sine impensa opera est.* Livy. There is never work without profit, nor is there profit without doing work.

be the first of its kind in the East, June 18. They had been carefully screened from among 145 applicants nationwide for academic ability and interest, but, by the half-way mark last week, 13 had found the demands too severe and had dropped out or been advised to leave.

The ages of those who are left range from 20 to 47, their academic level from college undergraduate to postdoctoral.

"For this to work, everyone has to be totally absorbed and has to be under tension," said Floyd L. Moreland,

*Generosos animos labor nutrit.* Seneca. Work nourishes noble spirits.

land, the institute's 30-year-old director and an assistant professor of classics at Brooklyn College.

"We're making unreasonable demands; I admit that," he went on. "In the first three days, they get the entire verbal system, and they're actually reading texts by the second week."

The course's first five-week section was devoted to Latin's forms and syntax, using a text written by Dr. Moreland and Rita M. Fleischer, who teaches at Queens and City Colleges as well as at the Summer Institute. The reading included relatively easy poetry—selections from Catullus—and 12 chapters of Caesar's Gallic Wars.

In the second five weeks, the focus is on literature as literature—Vergil, Cicero, Horace—plus a survey course and electives.

Why Latin, and why so much at once?

The answers range from the need to fulfill academic requirements to sheer intel-

lectual thirst, often in combination. And despite the pressure generated, the speed of the course is a key attraction.

Mrs. Subrizi, married and the mother of one child, is a part-time lecturer in Italian at Queens College and a Ph.D. candidate in comparative

literature. Latin is a requirement for the degree, but she insists that an equally compelling motive stems from her Italian heritage—"In Italy, not to know Latin is ridiculous."

Carl Ehle Jr., 46, teaches at Berkshire Christian College in Lenox, Mass., and is

president of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

"I'm interested in medieval works for research, and I'd like to read them in the original," he said after class recently. "When you get along in age and you can condense two years into 10 weeks, you do it. I'm hanging on by my fingertips, but I'm making it."

Dennis Spinger is a colleague of Dr. Moreland's at Brooklyn College and, at 33,

*Labor omnia vincit. Vergil. Work conquers all things.*

has his doctorate and is chairman of the college's department of comparative literature. He said he found in the Summer Institute a chance "to fill a gap" in his education.

Peter Fidelman, described by Mrs. Subrizi as "the genius of the class," is 25 and about to enter his senior year at Queens College. He said he was fluent in Greek, French, German and Italian and had taken the equivalent of a semester of Latin before

he enrolled in the institute—not, apparently, an advantage.

"One comes with a false sense of security," he said,

"which is shattered by the second day."

For those like Mr. Fidelman who are enrolled in a college of the City University

system, the cost of the summer program is \$32 in fees. For others, tuition is scaled to a maximum of \$450 for out-of-state students. The in-

stitute, with a staff of five, is also supported by a City University grant of \$20,200.

The program is modeled after a successful effort at the University of California at Berkeley that Dr. Moreland helped establish. Ethyle Wolfe, dean of the School of Humanities at Brooklyn College, encouraged him to join the faculty and set up a similar course here.

"I'm dismayed that at Brooklyn College we have so few students that there are

*Hoc opus, hic labor est.* Vergil. This is the task, this is the labor.

only two sections of beginning Latin in the day session, with maybe 35 people," Dr. Moreland said. "At a college with 30,000 kids, that's a horrendous figure."

He cited the Berkeley program and others bucking the national language trend as hopeful signs, and added that one goal of the Summer Institute is "to make this the place on the East Coast for the study of Latin."

The summer's rewards, it is hoped, will be more than just an ability to read and translate. If all goes well, there will also be the capacity to appreciate the lean loveliness of lines like one that Gail Smith, an assistant professor at Brooklyn College and a member of the institute's staff, was discussing with a group of students last week.

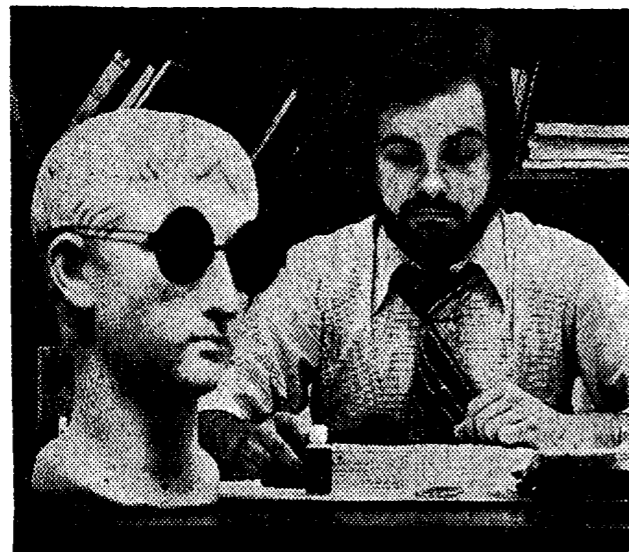
It was Line 209 of Book I of the Aeneid, in which Vergil says of his hero: "Spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem."

Literal translation does grievous damage: "He simulates hope in his face, he presses down deep grief in his heart."

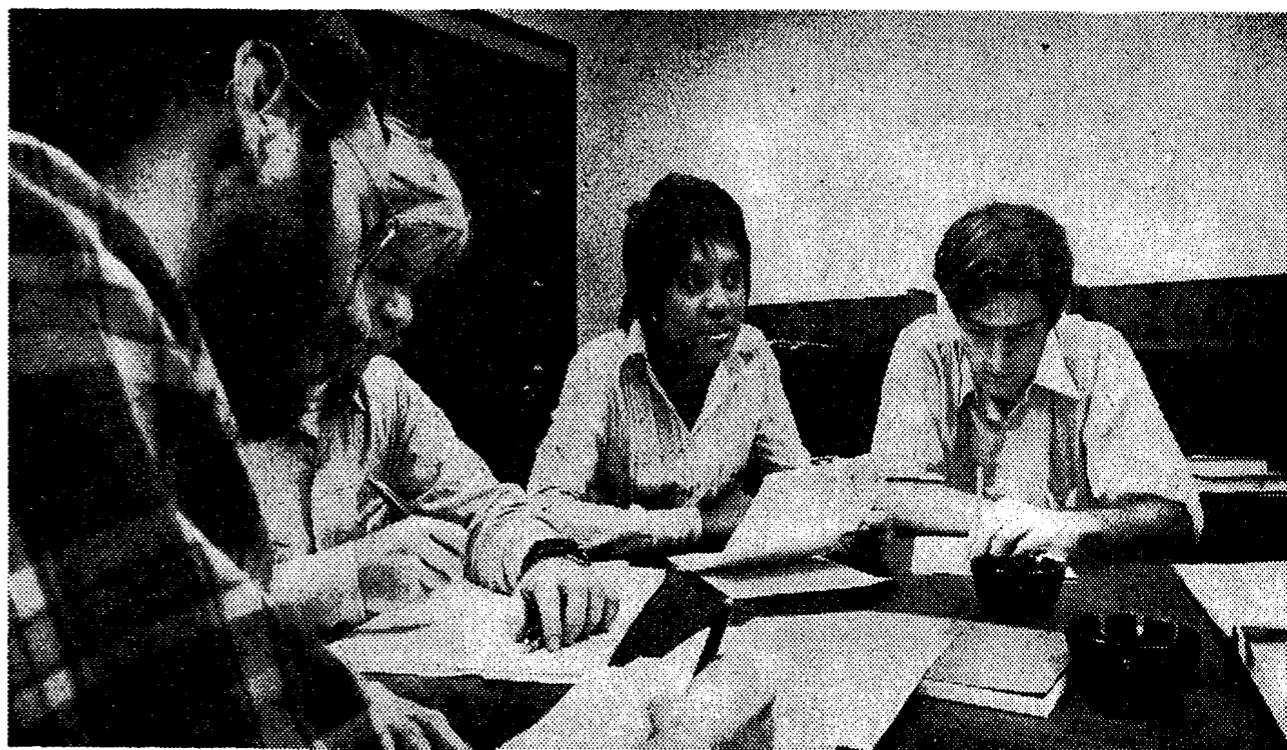
Dryden, in two lines, did better and added an alliterative juxtaposition to point up the conflict of pretense and reality: "These words he spoke, but spoke not from his heart;/His outward smiles concealed his inward smart."

But Dr. Smith and her listeners clearly preferred the spare Vergilian original with its single brimful line.

"Simulat' and 'premit' at the same time . . . It's really beautiful," she said. "Sometimes it's a shame we have to translate him at all."



Dr. Floyd L. Moreland, director of 10-week Latin course, has a bespectacled bust of Augustus Caesar on his desk.



Dr. Gail Smith, an assistant professor teaching in the intense course, works with a small group of students

The New York Times/Don Hoan Charles