

The Assault on “The Assault on Humanism”: Classicists Respond to Abraham Flexner’s “A Modern School”

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ABSTRACT

Historians have devoted surprisingly little attention to the political activities of academic traditionalists who resisted progressive reforms that threatened their historical hegemony over the school curriculum. The concerted and protracted response of classicists to Abraham Flexner’s “A Modern School” (1916) represented an effort to preserve their influence and power in the face of criticism of the value of the classics to modern society by progressive educators. Classicists exploited private and professional networks, appealed to social and political elites, and fueled public controversy to pressure Flexner and the General Education Board to retract criticisms of the classics and to underwrite a campaign to improve classical pedagogy. The classicists’ tactics resembled, but also exceeded, those that historians have associated with administrative progressives; faced with curricular marginalization, the classicists’ activities exemplified status politics in action, as they endeavored to revalidate their threatened cherished beliefs.

RÉSUMÉ

Les historiens ont étonnamment prêté peu d’attention aux activités politiques des traditionalistes scolaires qui s’opposèrent aux réformes progressistes qui menaçaient leur hégémonie historique sur les programmes d’études. La réponse concertée et prolongée des classicistes au texte « A Modern School » (1916) d’Abraham Flexner représenta une tentative pour préserver leur influence et leur pouvoir en dépit des critiques que formulaient les éducateurs progressistes sur la valeur des humanités pour une société moderne. Les traditionalistes exploitèrent des contacts privés et professionnels, firent appel aux élites sociales et politiques et alimentèrent la controverse publique afin de forcer Flexner et le Conseil scolaire général à désavouer les critiques à l’endroit des humanités et à soutenir une campagne pour l’amélioration de la pédagogie humaniste. Les tactiques des traditionalistes ressemblaient, tout en les surpassant, à celles que les historiens ont associées aux administrations progressistes ; face à la marginalisation du programme d’études, les activités des classicistes illustraient leur souci de maintenir une politique de prestige, alors qu’ils s’efforçaient de réaffirmer la valeur de leurs opinions chéries qui étaient menacées.

"I thought it would be well to introduce as an evidence of your absolute tolerance, the statement about the readiness of the General Education Board to work in common with a body of Latinists for the good of the common cause; it would completely take the wind out of the sails of your detractors."¹

So wrote Julius Sachs, a classicist on the faculty of Teachers College, Columbia University, in June 1920 to Abraham Flexner, assistant secretary of the General Education Board (GEB), about a draft of a revision of Flexner's essay, "A Modern School," which had drawn hostile criticism from classicists. Flexner's contention that the classics should be categorically eliminated from the secondary curriculum ignited a firestorm of indignation and protest from embattled classicists, including the University of Chicago's Paul Shorey, who characterized Flexner's essay as nothing short of an "assault on humanism."² Although in the long run enrollments in the classics declined dramatically, in the short run savvy leaders of the classicist community in the United States managed to turn the controversy surrounding Flexner's essay to their advantage for the purpose of securing substantial appropriations from the GEB to subsidize The Classical Investigation and, eventually, the fledgling American Classical League (ACL) during the hard times of the Great Depression.

The concerted responses to Flexner's "A Modern School" represent an effort on the part of classicists to preserve their influence, power, and even livelihood in the face of criticism of the educational relevance of their subject from progressive educators. In their history of educational leadership, Tyack and Hansot exposed the professional aspirations of administrative progressives, whom they described as "a new breed of professional managers who made education a lifelong career and who were reshaping the schools according to canons of business efficiency and scientific expertise." The work of administrative progressives effectively succeeded both in "consolidat[ing] power in large and centralized organizations" and "enhanc[ing] the power of cosmopolitan elites."³ Tyack and Hansot, evoking a contemporary term, characterized this new class of professional educators as the "educational trust." Administrative progressives "saw educational science as applied social science, the systematic collection of facts for the purpose of policy formation," which was best dictated by professional experts.⁴ These new experts formed private and professional networks, which served to enhance both the influence of their ideas and their power. Tyack and Hansot explained networks this way:

As we use the term [networks] here, we mean an informal association of individuals who occupied influential positions (usually in university education departments or schools, as policy analysts or researchers in foundations, and as key superintendents) who shared common purposes (to solve social and economic problems by educational means through 'scientific' diagnosis and prescription), who had common interests in furthering their own careers, and who had come to know one another mostly through face-to-face interactions and through their similar writing and research. They controlled important resources: money, the creation of reputations, the placement of students and

friends, the training of subordinates and future leaders, and influence over professional associations and public legislative and administrative bodies.⁵

Although Tyack and Hansot discerned these characteristics exclusively in administrative progressives, in the process implying the existence of hypocritical and even ignoble motivations and actions in their work, most of these characteristics apply to contemporary classicists as well. In response to Flexner's "A Modern School," classicists, exploiting their existing networks, tapped social and political elites to keep controversy surrounding Flexner's proposals in the popular press and professional journals, established a formal association devoted expressly to combating criticism of their discipline, all the while privately pressing Flexner and the GEB for a public recanting. And the Classical Investigation may represent the quintessential example of "the systematic collection of facts for the purpose of public policy formation," though the presentation and interpretation of statistics by classicists was often problematic. In effect, classicists employed methods similar to those Tyack and Hansot associate with the administrative progressives not only to preserve the place of the classics in the school curriculum, but also to preserve their status and influence.

Archival materials suggest that classicists, especially the leadership of the newly founded ACL, benefited from, if not took advantage of, the GEB's largesse to aggrandize not only the place of the classics in the school curriculum but also the fledgling ACL. Thus, Tyack and Hansot's argument that an important intent and effect of progressive reform was the enhancement of the power of professional elites applies also to contemporary classicists. Unlike progressives, however, classicists were in the position not of staking claim to new educational territory, but of defending a shrinking share of academic turf. Thus, Kliebard's "status politics" thesis could also explain the Classical Investigation, seen from this angle as an effort on the part of classicists, whose "cherished beliefs" at the time were under siege and threatened with curricular marginalization, to promote the place of the classics in the school curriculum by associating with the prestige of the GEB and even with the emerging professional prestige of "scientific" educational research.⁶ After summarizing the development of and recommendations in Flexner's "A Modern School," this study reconstructs the response to Flexner's proposals, which classicists mounted as a counter assault against what they depicted as an "assault on humanism." This study evaluates the extent to which these historical interpretations explain the classicists' activities. First, however, a brief summary of educational contexts within which this conflict occurred is in order.

Educational Contexts

During the opening decades of the twentieth century, high school enrollments in the United States grew as a percentage of fourteen to seventeen year olds from 10.2 percent in 1900 to 31.2 percent in 1920, and to 50.7 percent by 1930. During this period, the number of pupils enrolled in public high schools increased more than eight-fold, from about 519,000 to 4,399,000.⁷ This growth in enrollment introduced to high schools both a larger number and a wider variety of students in terms

of aptitudes and aspirations. Educators sought to accommodate these new students, who were atypical of the more academically-oriented students of the past, with expanded curricula, particularly in vocational education, and with calls to make subject matter applicable to students' lives and to the life of society.

The early twentieth century growth of secondary education in the United States also prompted efforts not only to prepare more educators but also to professionalize teachers and administrators, which in turn accelerated an expansion in the number of professors of education who engaged in the preparation of teachers and administrators and who sought to apply a new "science" of education to the resolution of educational problems. Reflecting wider trends of progressive era reform, the expert application of the new "science" of educational research increasingly characterized education reform efforts.⁸ Proposals that marshaled "scientific," that is, quantitative evidence enjoyed greater prestige than mere appeals to authority or tradition.

By the early twentieth century, Latin pedagogy in the United States was rooted in long-established tradition. Indeed, its aims and methods had changed little over the previous two centuries. According to Reinhold,

the aims were humanistic integration of knowledge, inculcation of moral truth, stimulus to civic purpose, and molding of character. But the methods employed and the classroom experience were harsh, dry, formal, and traditional. The students memorized rules, forms, phrases, sentences, whole passages; they wrote Latin prose and some poetry. The method was almost exclusively drill on grammar, construing, parsing, and quizzing on prepared passages. The Latin masterpieces were not studied as belles-lettres or for their content. The aim was firmly mental discipline, the satisfaction of overcoming difficulties, and thereby the strengthening of character.⁹

Although reading selections began to change, these methods persisted into the early twentieth century.

Despite this stability of methods, however, classicists perceived their discipline to have been under attack at least since the 1890s. The Committee of Ten, for example, in addition to proposing that the secondary curriculum include new subjects, particularly the sciences, also would reduce the amount of time students would study the classics. Just two of the four programs of study that the committee sanctioned required Latin, and only one required Greek. Additionally, the committee prescribed just two years of Greek and merely four periods per week of work in Latin. Classicists met this offense with a recommendation from the American Philological Association's Committee of Twelve for three years of Greek and five periods per week of Latin study. Krug summarized the turn of the century temperament of classicists when he averred, "They felt like a beleaguered host defending the citadel of traditional culture against the onslaught of barbarians."¹⁰ A subject that for centuries had enjoyed a veritable hegemony of prestige in the secondary curriculum was increasingly depicted as obsolete. Although between 1890 and 1930 public secondary school enrollment as a percentage of fourteen- to seventeen-year olds grew by a factor of nine, from

5.6 percent to 50.7 percent, by 1934 the proportion of all enrollments in Latin had fallen to 16.04 percent, less than half of 1890 proportions. Simultaneously, while the proportion of enrollments in Latin declined, the number of students in Latin classes grew ten-fold between 1890 and 1934, from 70,411 to 721,320.¹¹ Ever vigilant and ever ready to fend off the barbarian encroachment, in 1916 classicists again encountered such an opportunity.

Flexner's "A Modern School"

Abraham Flexner is usually recognized either for his famous and influential 1910 report on medical education in the United States and Canada or for founding in the 1930s the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton University and recruiting Albert Einstein to its faculty. After studying Greek at Johns Hopkins University, Flexner began his career as a teacher of Greek and Latin at his hometown high school, and then for about fifteen years administered and taught in a highly successful private school, both in Louisville, Kentucky. He attributed the success of his school, which had attracted the attention of Harvard University President Charles W. Eliot, to small class sizes and to individualized instruction that capitalized on personal interests of students. In 1905, Flexner sold the school and spent two years studying psychology, philosophy, and science at universities in the United States and Europe, and wrote his first book, about higher education. After conducting the medical study for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and a study of prostitution in Europe for John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in 1913 Flexner accepted the position of assistant secretary for the General Education Board (GEB), a Rockefeller philanthropic institution. Initially, the GEB provided him with experience organizing school surveys, most notably of the Gary, Indiana system. When in 1915 the GEB asked him to prepare recommendations for a modern school, Flexner was eager for the task.¹²

A meeting of the General Education Board trustees that took place from July 8 through July 10, 1915 at the coastal town of Rockland, Maine served as the catalyst for the generation of Flexner's "A Modern School." At this meeting, attended by trustees such as Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, Henry P. Judson, president of the University of Chicago, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. himself, the Board discussed prospects for improving secondary education. Eliot's statement on secondary education, "The Needed Changes in American Secondary Education," served as the centerpiece of the trustees' discussion. Eliot argued that modern advances in scientific knowledge and industrialization rendered the traditional heavy literary emphasis in the secondary curriculum obsolete. He called for greater emphasis on "training of the senses" and on "training of the powers of observation" that scientific investigation is based upon. Eliot summarized his argument this way: "If one had to choose between training the senses and training the memory and the language powers, one would choose the latter; but both are indispensable to the best results in education." The changes he called for included the addition to the high school curriculum of such courses as drawing, carpentry, and cooking, as well as chemistry, biology, physics, and geography—which, of course, would necessitate the elimination of a portion of the

“memory studies” and mathematics. Eliot appears to have put the issue of secondary education before the GEB. To follow up on what by all accounts was a lively discussion, the Board requested that Flexner prepare his own statement with an eye toward practical implementation.¹³

Influenced by both his own experience and progressive education theory of the day, and with Eliot's encouragement, Flexner began writing that summer.¹⁴ In the fall, he wrote confidentially to Otis W. Caldwell, professor of education at the University of Chicago, and to Henry W. Holmes, professor and head of the Division of Education at Harvard University, asking Caldwell for his thoughts on the ideal approach to science education and Holmes for suggestions on the general administration of a secondary school. Caldwell responded that science curriculum should address “both rural and city situations,” that is, that science teachers should have training in both agricultural and domestic science so that principles of science could be applied in ways relevant to students from both rural and urban communities.¹⁵ In a lengthy response, Holmes outlined important practical considerations that ranged from assessment of student learning, to providing opportunities for individual and cooperative work among teachers, to the importance of home-school relationships. Holmes implored Flexner to maintain a student body representative of the general population to make the work of such an “experimental” school transferable to other schools.¹⁶ Although Caldwell's suggestion can be discerned in Flexner's published proposals, with the exception of transfer of knowledge of practice to other schools, Holmes's practical suggestions appeared in neither the initial draft nor the published versions of the paper.

In “A Modern School” Flexner rejected academic formalism and dismissed appeal to tradition as a justification for educational practice. He maintained that “drilling in arbitrary signs by means of which pupils determine mechanically what they should do, without intelligent insight into what they are doing,” actually feeds “stultification rather than intelligence.”¹⁷ He observed that “the subjects commonly taught, the time at which they are taught, the manner in which they are taught, and the amounts taught are determined by tradition, not by a fresh and untrammelled consideration of living and present needs.”¹⁸ He advocated instead that the modern school involve students in genuine activities and that its curriculum include “*nothing for which an affirmative case cannot now be made out.*”¹⁹ He would have students master “the fundamental tools of knowledge” and would organize the school curriculum around four areas, science, industry, esthetics, and civics, and called for correlation between and among them. For Flexner, subject matter would be included in the curriculum only to the extent that it contributed to developing students' understanding of science, industry, esthetics, and civics. The extracurriculum of Flexner's Modern School would include gymnastics and other sports.

In what would become the most controversial section of his essay, Flexner advocated omitting from the modern school curriculum aspects of mathematics, history, and literature that held limited pertinence to real life, and favored the categorical elimination from the school curriculum of the study of Latin, Greek, and formal grammar. As he bluntly put it, “Neither Latin nor Greek would be contained in the

curriculum of the Modern School . . . because their present position in the curriculum rests upon tradition and assumption. A positive case can be made out for neither."²⁰ Flexner rejected training for "mental discipline" as a reason for teaching Latin and Greek or any subject, and asserted that the suggestion that the study of Latin and Greek improves proficiency with English remained empirically unsubstantiated. Flexner presented 1915 figures from the results of College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) tests which revealed that, despite the claims for academic formalism and mental discipline, anywhere from 42 percent to 76 percent of examinees failed to attain 60 percent correct in tests of knowledge about Cicero, Virgil, quadratics, and plane geometry. Flexner also criticized progressive education for preserving too much of the traditional academic curriculum. The primary aim of Flexner's modern school, the cultivation of "intellectual power," would be achieved "through the doing of real tasks."²¹ Echoing his proposals for medical education, Flexner envisioned the Modern School as a laboratory where educational problems would be studied scientifically, where state-of-the-art teacher training would occur, and from which improved educational practices would be disseminated to other schools. As a result of his proposals, the Lincoln School was established at Teachers College, Columbia University to operationalize Flexner's vision for the modern school.²²

At about the same time that Flexner submitted his January 1916 paper to the GEB trustees, he also sent it to a number of noted educators and others for review and feedback. Responses were notable for their approval and endorsement of Flexner's proposals for the high school curriculum, tempered by concerns and suggestions for their practical feasibility. For example, Leonard Ayers wrote, "I believe in the general soundness of the argument," but he expressed concern about the difficulty of finding teachers who could teach the "new subject," that is, teachers who could teach the application of knowledge. Charles Judd agreed with Flexner's proposals "very heartily," and doubted "very much whether any progressive educational thinker would disagree radically with you." Like Ayers, Judd was concerned about the "great difficulty of adjusting this new body of material to instruction." Judd also suggested that new forms of teacher training and of student evaluation would be necessary to make implementation of Flexner's progressive ideas successful. Judd cautioned Flexner, "your attitude with regard to Latin and Greek would probably not be accepted by a good many people," among whom Judd implicitly included some progressives. C. Rigborn Mann of the Carnegie Foundation wrote, "Your outline of the Modern School seems to me both comprehensive and perfect in detail. I find no word or expression within it with which I have any quarrel." Mann only wondered about the feasibility of enacting Flexner's proposals. Julius Sachs, who during the 1890s had served on the Latin Conference of the Committee of Ten and on the Greek Auxiliary Committee of the Committee of Twelve, characterized Flexner's proposal as "a truly inspiring one" and expressed reservations about the financial cost of such a project and suggested the need for teacher training. In a handwritten note, John Dewey exclaimed to Flexner, "I hardly need to think to express an opinion in detail. I am most enthusiastic about your paper and the plan proposed, which I hope may become a reality." Finally, David Snedden claimed that he was "in great sympathy" with Flexner's criticism of

traditional education and recommended that an implementation plan be developed collaboratively by a team of reform-minded educators.²³ If Flexner incorporated any of these suggestions into the April 1916 version of "A Modern School," it would have been the recommendation from several respondents that the training of teachers would be an important consideration both in terms of staffing the school and of the contribution the school could make to educational practice, which appeared in the final paragraph of the published version.

General Education Board trustees were generally receptive to Flexner's plan as well. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. wrote: "It seems as though the dawn had really come. If only I had had such an education as is here outlined, it seems to me that I should be a much more useful and valuable citizen today, and I naturally covet such opportunities for my children." Fellow trustee Charles Eliot found Flexner's proposals "interesting and sound" but suggested more attention should be devoted to the relationship between school and college.²⁴ Flexner's simultaneous challenge to elite knowledge and elevation of practical knowledge, however, would not sit well with academic traditionalists.

Classicists Respond

In stark contrast to the feedback on the pre-publication draft from like-minded educational reformers, defenders of the traditional academic curriculum, notably classicists, received Flexner's published paper, specifically his call to eliminate Latin and Greek from the secondary curriculum, with thinly veiled disdain. Given the extraordinary influence that Flexner's report on medical education had exerted, the already beleaguered classicists had good cause to be concerned about the possible ramifications of Flexner's proposals.

Initial reactions to Flexner's proposals included exonerations of mental discipline and ancient history, claims for the ideas and ideals fostered through classical study, proposals for improved training of Latin teachers, qualifications that CEEB exams provided insufficient information to judge student and teacher performance, and assertion that Flexner's rejection of mental discipline and call for developing "intellectual power" represented something of a contradiction. *Current Opinion's* report, however, that the *Baltimore American* used the phrase "an education freak" in reference to Flexner's proposals, portended the tone of criticism to come.²⁵

Alfred E. Stearns of Phillips Andover Academy, for example, presented in *The Atlantic Monthly* a categorical juxtaposition of traditional or "old" education and modern or "new" education. For Stearns, while traditional education sought to impart high ideals to youth, modern education was "frankly materialistic and utilitarian. Practical efficiency is its goal," Stearns wrote.²⁶ Stearns characterized Eliot's and especially Flexner's proposals as "some of the most significant and radical of these modern views."²⁷ Stearns dismissed Flexner's rejection of mental discipline and disputed the CEEB exam figures that Flexner had cited as true but incomplete—for Stearns the fact that larger proportions of students failed exams in subjects other than Latin and mathematics mitigated the high failure rates in those subjects. Stearns called for

proof that “scientific” or “observational” studies would hold student interest more than traditional subjects. His principal objection was to Flexner’s recommendation that subjects such as Latin simply be dropped from the curriculum. As Stearns put it, referring to Eliot, Flexner, and the GEB, “In spite of theorists and of educational foundations we shall continue to find values in the education of the past, as our fathers did before us.”²⁸

With the announcement that the GEB would invest heavily—in the amount of at least \$35,000,000—in the implementation of a school along the lines proposed by Flexner and Eliot, lines that explicitly excluded the classics from the school curriculum, criticism turned hostile and eventually emanated almost exclusively from classicists. *The New York Times* reported on the announcement of the GEB-Teachers College experimental venture, presenting views of educators, especially classicists, on the project. Concurrently, the *Times* ran an editorial titled, “Radical and Dangerous,” which characterized the proposal as “radical and subversive,” questioned the GEB’s authority to “impose its views” on all levels of education, and compared discarding traditional educational practices, such as teaching the classics, to abandoning “our system of common law.” Charges of “unblushing materialism” would be echoed in other opinion columns. Two weeks later, auguring the character that criticism of “A Modern School” would soon assume, the *Times* published an editorial by Walter V. McGuffee, President of the Massachusetts State Teachers Association, which challenged Flexner’s use of statistics about the CEEB exams, purporting that Flexner claimed that Latin and Greek were the worst-taught subjects, and imploring that a full view of examination results revealed that in fact the opposite was the case.²⁹ In his history of the GEB, Fosdick recounted that “a deluge of editorials, most of them condemning the project, followed the newspaper accounts.” The GEB received complaints from the president of Brown University and the secretary of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and from most of the regional classical associations in the United States, calling for the GEB “to repudiate publicly Flexner’s thesis that Latin was not an essential discipline.”³⁰

In contrast to Stearns’s largely reasonable critique of Eliot’s and Flexner’s proposals, Paul Shorey, the first professor of Greek at the University of Chicago and a leading classicist of the time, mounted a disdainful retaliation against Flexner’s proposals, which Shorey characterized as a dangerous “assault on humanism.” Shorey dismissed Flexner’s criticism of traditional education and proposals for modern education as a passing fad and accused Flexner of saying nothing new, of employing public relations techniques, and of applying numerous logical fallacies, including shifting the issue, oversimplifying causes, false dualisms, misrepresenting the opposite position, and “the substitution of prophecy, or unsubstantiated assertion, for fact.”³¹ Ironically, Shorey engaged many of these and other fallacies himself. For example, he responded to Flexner’s assertion that no evidence existed to support the claim that Latin study improves English language skills not by evoking the missing evidence, but with: “But his dictum that no evidence has ever been offered is not an argument, but a petulant ebullition of feeling.”³² Shorey closed his first installment with a litany of supercilious “thou-shalt-nots” in chastisement of Flexner.

Shorey continued his attack on Flexner in the next month's issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, beginning by demeaning Flexner as a former high school teacher "who has presented no public evidence of specialized and scientific competency beyond administrative ability and the mastery of a ready journalistic pen."³³ Shorey asserted that no evidence existed to support Flexner's rejection of mental discipline, identifying as "the chief and final fallacy of the militant modernists, the insinuation of pseudo-science under cover of real science," and finally calling for the re-establishment of study in the humanities as the centerpiece of a curriculum for "the relatively small class of educated leaders who graduate from high schools and colleges."³⁴

A Prestigious Conference

The most high profile response to Flexner's proposals took the form of a Conference on Classical Studies in Liberal Education that was held on June 2, 1917 at Princeton University. Andrew F. West, professor of classics and Dean of Graduate Studies at Princeton University, who twenty years earlier had served on the American Philological Association's Committee of Twelve, organized the conference and edited a volume published the same year, titled *Value of the Classics*, which assembled addresses delivered at the conference, along with statistical information in defense of the classics.³⁵ As a first order of business, however, in an immediate follow-up to the conference, West released a pamphlet prepared by Walter Adriance, an assistant professor of economics at Princeton, which charged that Flexner's statistics were fallacious; *The New York Times* reprinted most of the pamphlet, characterizing Flexner as "the chief leader of the anti-classical movement."³⁶

West stated in the preface to *Value of the Classics*, "In education definite evidence is worth more than theorizing. This book is chiefly an appeal to facts, and two classes of facts appear in its pages." The first class of facts comprised testimonials about the value of the classics from members of the social elite. The second class of facts presented a statistical portrait of classical curriculum and instruction derived from the United States Commissioner of Education and from independent sources. The introduction to the volume, written by West, articulated a detailed response to recent criticisms of the place of the classics in the high school curriculum.

West began by evoking World War I, claiming that we were fighting it "to save our civilized freedom."³⁷ As a historian of the classics put it, in West's introduction, "Latin is identified with country, truth, and discipline."³⁸ West then identified a prevailing "hostility" toward liberal education and a related "remarkable spectacle of attacks on disciplinary studies," without naming the sources of these attacks.³⁹ He claimed that no body of evidence existed to dispute the theory of mental discipline. West argued that the real problem with classical teaching was not mindless drill and memorization, as critics had attested, but insufficient time devoted to the classics in the curriculum, especially compared to the time devoted to classical studies in European school systems. He asserted, "The superiority of classical students is beyond question." In response to criticism that classics students seem to out-perform non-classics students not because of the nature of the classics, but because more

academically-oriented students choose to study the classics in deference to tradition, West retorted, “The fact that the abler students take the classics therefore looks at least like an indication that they do not do so merely because their fathers did so, but because it is also an intelligent thing to do.”⁴⁰

In response to the contention that “the newer psychology has experimentally disproved the ideal of mental discipline,” West wrote, “The subject is inviting, even alluring, but there is no space to go into it fully here,” and referred the reader to Shorey’s *Atlantic Monthly* article.⁴¹ West dismissed the claim that translations of classics were a more efficient vehicle than original texts for most students because of the years of study required to develop sufficient reading mastery, maintaining that originals were always superior. Without mentioning the criticism that no evidence exists to support the claim that study of the classics improves English language proficiency, West contended that because “nearly half” of the English language derived from Latin, “The better we know Latin, then, the better our use of English.”⁴² He characterized the classics as “the languages which best train us in expression and the literatures which best help us to understand both ourselves and our civilization.”⁴³ West concluded, “Thus the cause of the classics is part of larger questions—the unity of our higher knowledge, the best training for all who can take it, the welfare of our land.”⁴⁴

The bulk of the volume was devoted to reproducing the nearly 300 testimonials from the Princeton Conference on behalf of the place of the classics in the curriculum. Among the “competent observers representing the leading interests of modern life and including many of the highest names in the land” who contributed to this section were United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and presidents Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. But this lengthy section of the book, encompassing pages 131 to 356, amounted to an extended application of the logical fallacy of appeal to authority, ironically not the most empirically rigorous defense of any cause. Part IV of *Value of the Classics* presented statistical data collected from the United States Commissioner of Education, the CEEB, and from nineteen public and private high schools and seventeen colleges and universities, purported to secure the place of the classics in the contemporary curriculum. Although the number and proportion of secondary students enrolled in Latin was never an issue for recent critics, West cited federal figures which indicated not only that real numbers of enrollment were up, but also that the proportion of all enrollments in Latin increased from 33.62 percent to 49.37 percent between 1890 and 1900, remained stable from 1900 to 1910, but, due to the addition of new subjects to the curriculum, dropped to 39.03 percent by 1915. West emphasized that, despite the drop in proportion of students enrolled in Latin by 1915, “Latin retains the first place among all the subjects not required of practically all students in secondary schools.”⁴⁵ West surmised that enrollment in Latin and mathematics “gives evidence of a widespread and powerful belief in their efficacy in modern education.” Responding to the criticism that mere tradition keeps students returning to Latin, West submitted, “Theirs is clearly the strength, not of tradition merely, but of proved worth.”⁴⁶

Although the recent modern educational “theorizing” and the “hostility” toward Latin mentioned at the outset by West referred obviously to Eliot’s and especially to Flexner’s proposals, and although West responded almost point by point to Flexner’s criticisms and cited a number of other defenses of the classics in the introduction, Flexner did not receive the academic courtesy of a direct reference until page 364 of *Value of the Classics*. In “A Modern School” Flexner had cited 1915 figures from the results of CEEB tests which revealed that, despite the claims for the educational superiority of academic formalism and mental discipline, anywhere from 42 to 76 percent of examinees failed to attain 60 percent correct in tests of knowledge about Cicero, Virgil, quadratics, and plane geometry.⁴⁷ West devoted most of the statistics section of *Value of the Classics* to refuting these figures. Apparently because the figures that Flexner cited were accurate, West ignored them and cited figures (prepared for him by the CEEB) for the proportion of students who scored above 60 percent on these exams, comparing the performance of students in this group who had studied the classics to those who had not. In three ranges of scores, 90 to 100, 75 to 89, and 60 to 100, a greater percentage of classics students attained those scores than non-classics students: 2.95 percent over 2.05 percent, 17.31 percent over 12.31 percent, and 51.96 percent over 40.97 percent respectively. Additionally, West divided the difference between percentages in each range by the percentage of non-classical students to arrive at a “superiority” figure, as in, for the 90 to 100 range, the “classical students show a superiority of forty-four per cent.” For West, all of this data pointed to the irrefragable conclusion “that the training which the classical students have received, whether because of the subject, the teaching, the inherent ability of the candidates who elect the classics in the schools, or all three combined, has somehow enabled them to sustain the examination tests of the Board with notably greater success than those who lack this particular training.”⁴⁸

West maintained that in non-classical subjects, classics students tended to outperform non-classics students, as well. West also reproduced “refutations” of Flexner’s data he had solicited from two classicists, one of whom quoted arguments from W.V. McDuffee’s *New York Times* letter, and from a Princeton economist. Additionally, a special committee appointed at the Princeton Conference conducted a survey of nineteen public and private high schools and seventeen colleges and universities, and found that, whether in terms of students receiving high honors or honors at graduation, or receiving prizes for debating, public speaking or writing, or at the college level being selected for Phi Beta Kappa, receiving scholarships, or writing for school newspapers, a greater percentage of classics students achieved such recognitions than non-classics students. Similar to the reporting of CEEB scores, “superiority” figures were offered, too: for example, when 46.8 percent of college classical students received honors at graduation compared the 38.5 percent of non-classical students, it was said that “The classical students show a superiority of 20.7 per cent.”⁴⁹ Again dismissing the suggestion that Latin students perform better apparently because Latin traditionally attracts better students, West concluded “that the classical students are, generally speaking, of superior mental endowment, and prosecute the severer studies with greater success than the non-classical students who often pursue the easier studies.”⁵⁰

A Persistent Grievance

Meanwhile, through correspondence, Flexner received feedback on “A Modern School,” which had been reported widely in the popular press. Some of the feedback was positive. For example, after reading both Eliot’s and Flexner’s papers, Thomas A. Edison returned the copies of the occasional papers to a third party bearing the following handwritten comment: “No school which adopts the suggestion of Eliot and Flexner can possibly fail. That school will anticipate that which in twenty years will become universal.”⁵¹ Other feedback was less than sanguine. William C. Bagley, professor of education at the University of Illinois, charged Flexner’s proposal for an “experimental” school with prejudice. Bagley suggested that because Flexner was already on record with his views of what modern education should be, “The teachers in your school will know what this position is, and it is not in human nature to believe that this knowledge will not influence their work.”⁵² But it was the Latinists who, in private, as they had in public, objected vehemently to Flexner’s arguments. In particular, William V. McDuffee, a Latin teacher at Central High School in Springfield and president of the Massachusetts State Teachers Association who had published his objections to Flexner’s use of statistics in *The New York Times*, would hound Flexner and the GEB about “A Modern School” for two years.

McDuffee first contacted Flexner in July 1917, just following the Princeton Conference and Shorey’s *Atlantic Monthly* critique of “A Modern School.” McDuffee inquired whether Flexner had made a statement advising Yale students not to prepare to teach Latin because it would be obsolete within ten years, leaving them out of work. Flexner, likely aware of McDuffee’s *Times* letter, promptly responded, asking McDuffee what he planned to do with Flexner’s response. Fifteen months later, McDuffee wrote to George Vincent, who was completing a term as president of the GEB, demanding that the GEB publish and distribute a three- to four-page pamphlet correcting the inaccurate Latin exam statistics in “A Modern School.” McDuffee wrote again on November 5, 1918, protesting once more what he saw as statistical errors. That same fall, Wallace Buttrick succeeded George Vincent as president of the GEB and suggested to Flexner that he meet with McDuffee. When, because Flexner was disabled for several weeks following surgery, no meeting materialized, in January McDuffee wrote to Buttrick demanding to know what action the GEB had taken on his grievance.⁵³

In March 1919, Flexner prepared an internal memorandum for Buttrick that presented his response to McDuffee. Although Flexner was willing to clarify the figures in the paragraph in question, he did not believe that they could be made to support what Flexner understood to be McDuffee’s contention, which was that actually Latin was largely taught well in schools. Flexner also indicated that, although McDuffee and other critics, namely those at the Princeton Conference, claimed that Flexner had suggested that Latin teaching was worse than teaching in other subjects, Flexner had in fact made no such claim. Finally, Flexner also indicated that it was not a standard practice for any publishing concern to retract errors made by their authors, but rather to leave correction to public debate.⁵⁴

By April 1919, McDuffee was waging a tenacious campaign against the GEB to compel Flexner to revise and even to recant the sections of "A Modern School" that discussed the teaching of Latin. McDuffee drafted material for the pamphlet, that he requested the GEB publish, titled, "The Misleading Latin Statistics in 'A Modern School'" and sent a copy to Flexner. McDuffee argued not with the figures Flexner had cited, but whether they were representative, and with Flexner's interpretation of them. In fact, McDuffee correctly noted that, of the twelve CEEB Latin exams, the two Flexner had cited had the lowest passing rates (of the twelve tests, the highest passing rate was 68 percent and the average passing rate was 50 percent). McDuffee suggested that Flexner had implied that Latin teaching was worse than in any other subject, though Flexner had not stated such, and provided figures of passing rates for other subjects, which revealed that Latin passing rates were generally the highest of the lot. McDuffee wrote to Buttrick that Flexner's errors had engendered bitterness among Latinists and friends of Latin, objected to "Mr. Flexner's persistent evasion of the point at issue and his repeated refusals to make any adequate correction of his mis-statements," and offered that the whole controversy reflected poorly on the GEB.⁵⁵

McDuffee's remonstrations resulted in a meeting between McDuffee, Flexner, Buttrick, and Vincent on the morning of Saturday, April 19, 1919 in Manhattan. No record of the meeting survives, but McDuffee followed-up with Flexner ten days later, reiterating the corrections he unconditionally demanded, warning Flexner that any failure to make the changes would only aggravate the situation, insisting on reviewing a draft of Flexner's revised text, and suggesting that if Flexner's new statement was unsatisfactory, they could "leave the matter to Dr. Buttrick and Dr. Vincent for adjustment."⁵⁶ As had become his practice, McDuffee copied his letter to Flexner to Buttrick.

Flexner Revises

By this time, likely with the encouragement of Buttrick, Flexner was at work on a second edition of "A Modern School." Indeed, in early June 1919, both Buttrick and Vincent appealed to Flexner to appease the Latinist critics.⁵⁷ Flexner sent a draft of a new preface to McDuffee, Paul Hanus, a professor of education at Harvard University, and Nelson McCrea, professor of classics at Columbia University. In the new preface, Flexner addressed a number of criticisms his original essay had garnered. He emphasized that the Modern School he envisioned was not narrowly vocational, was not intended as the only way to organize secondary education, and that he did not advocate that student interests should dominate the curriculum, but that they should serve as points of departure for teachers to build upon. Flexner devoted most of the new preface to responding to criticism of the single paragraph in which he had cited statistics about Latin exams. Flexner conceded that the exams he cited were "extreme" (that is, that they had the lowest passing rates) and were not representative of all Latin exams, that he should have included the number of students taking those two exams (which was relatively small), and that the CEEB

was phasing out these exams. He noted that he had cited the CEEB exams as mere illustrations, and that in any event by themselves they represented insufficient data to reach a definitive conclusion about the effectiveness of teaching in Latin or in any subject. Flexner rejected the contentions that, because Latin exams tended to have higher passing rates than other subjects, Latin was both well taught and better taught than the others.⁵⁸

On June 14, 1919, McDuffee offered his feedback on the draft of Flexner's new preface, and it was not favorable. McDuffee began by reiterating the crux of his criticism by quoting from his previous correspondence. Barely acknowledging the corrections to which Flexner conceded, McDuffee expressed dismay that Flexner would not yield to all of his demands. McDuffee even provided Flexner a draft of a statement that he felt should be included in any new edition of "A Modern School." McDuffee copied his response to Flexner to both Vincent and Buttrick, writing to the latter, "My persistence is still intact, but my patience is rapidly nearing the exploding point, and if the explosion comes it will be violent."⁵⁹ During that summer, at the request of McCrea, and paid for by Flexner, the CEEB checked the figures that Flexner used in his discussion of Latin, which included CEEB reviewing a copy of Flexner's new draft for the second edition.⁶⁰ McDuffee continued to lobby Flexner to put the new preface in line with McDuffee's interpretations of the facts, which held that the CEEB statistics could only be construed to reflect favorably on Latin, accusing Flexner of deliberate deception and advising him to "be prepared for whatever results may follow the publication of the revision."⁶¹ Flexner sent copies of McDuffee's August correspondence to McCrea at Columbia (who knew McDuffee), requesting insights into McDuffee's motivations. Clearly exasperated at this point, Flexner noted to McCrea that he would no longer respond to McDuffee, and suggested, "It might not be a bad idea to refer the whole matter to the League of Nations." Later that fall, McCrea endorsed Flexner's interpretation of the CEEB statistics presented in the new preface.⁶²

By the summer of 1919, then, Flexner's original "A Modern School" had been subject to sharp and persistent criticism, both publicly and privately, from classicists. Classicists, initially independently but soon led by Andrew West, kept the issue before the public through editorials in the popular press, before educators through articles in professional journals, before social elites through networking, the Princeton Conference, and *Value of the Classics*, and before the GEB through persistent correspondence. Flexner was preparing a second edition of the piece, which would include concessions to some criticisms. GEB leadership, namely Presidents Vincent and Buttrick, were eager to diffuse such criticism, and had urged Flexner to respond constructively to his critics. Announcement of the GEB's plans to support the Lincoln School also had elicited sharp criticism of the Board. The GEB was eager to appease the classicists. Given the constant pressure that classicists exerted on Flexner and the GEB, Krug's conclusion that, at the opening of the doors of the Lincoln School in the fall of 1917, "With heads unbowed, the classicists nevertheless went down to defeat," was premature.⁶³ In fact, the battle-ready classicists had just begun their counter-offensive.

A New Classical Organization

The Princeton Conference and *Value of the Classics* marked only the beginning of a protracted counter attack orchestrated by Andrew West. In 1918, as a follow-up to the Princeton Conference, a national Classical Conference convened in Pittsburgh in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Education Association. At West's suggestion, a General Advisory Committee was appointed to draft a proposal for a new classical organization. West chaired the Committee, which included Alfred E. Stearns and Paul Shorey, and in December of that year a document entitled "The Proposed American Classical League" was mailed to interested classicists. A scarcely disguised response to Flexner's attack on mental discipline, the proposal proclaimed, "So far as this enfeebling theory [Flexner's progressive proposals] prevails it destroys the possibility of vigorous and comprehensive training and makes the chance preferences of immature minds the basis for the curriculum. In addition to the wasteful cost of such so-called 'education,' its supreme folly is seen in the disastrous undermining of the ideas of discipline and duty on which both the intellectual and moral integrity of everyone depends."⁶⁴

The proposal identified a plan of activities for the new association that included not only member recruitment and improvement of classics instruction, but also a "campaign of publicity" for the classics and "combat" against the new educational theories, with the strategic recognition, "The campaign for the classics is to be fought and won mainly in the secondary schools."⁶⁵ The proposal implored that the classics, which had yielded to expedient practical subjects during wartime, in the post-war period should be restored to the school curriculum. The proposal also included a draft of a constitution for the forthcoming association. In July 1919, the second national Classical Conference convened in Milwaukee in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Education Association. The proposal was accepted, the Constitution was approved, and Andrew West became the first president of the American Classical League.⁶⁶ As one overview of classical scholarship later put it, the ACL would "serve as a shock-troop unit in the war for the survival" of the classics in the curriculum.⁶⁷

Within months of the founding of the ACL, leading classicists began lobbying the GEB to underwrite a study of the teaching of the classics in high school to be conducted by the ACL. Julius Sachs initiated the effort, with West's approval. In May 1920, Sachs wrote to Butterick, mentioning the GEB's recent funding of a study of mathematics teaching and broaching the possibility of similar support of a study of "the field of ancient languages." Sachs wrote, "I have talked with a number of progressive scholars, and I believe they are eager to apply to the problem of classical teaching methods similar to those which are being applied by Professor Young and his associates to the problems of mathematics."⁶⁸ Sachs recommended, however, that the ACL would be an appropriate overseer of such a study. Although Sachs implored to Buttrick that he was acting of his own volition, a telegram to Sachs from West stating, "Fully approve of your proposed letter to Buttrick," perhaps suggests otherwise.⁶⁹ On the following day, Flexner received a letter proposing a study of the teaching of

Latin in colleges and universities from Robert W. Rogers, at the time a visiting professor of Ancient Oriental Literature at Princeton, where West was Dean of Graduate Studies. Less than a week later, Flexner received a letter reiterating Sachs's proposal of a study of Latin teaching similar to the contemporary study of mathematics teaching from his associate Nelson McCrea who, in addition to being a professor in the Department of Greek and Latin at Columbia University, was a member of the Board of Directors of the new ACL.⁷⁰ In late May 1920, Flexner informed Sachs that all of this correspondence, including West's telegram, was read at the recent GEB meeting, and that the Board, if officially requested, would "be happy to appropriate a reasonable sum" to support such a study.⁷¹

As these classicists lobbied the GEB for funding of a study of classical pedagogy, following McDuffee they continued to press Flexner to revise his positions on the place of Latin in the school curriculum. In early June 1920 Flexner received feedback from Sachs on the draft of his new preface to "A Modern School." In his lengthy critique, Sachs disagreed with a number of Flexner's points, and suggested that Flexner substantially shorten the preface. Sachs claimed, for example, that he had little confidence in statistics about test results and that he disagreed with Flexner's contention that the skill-drill methods of Latin teaching had influenced the teaching of modern subjects. Significantly, Sachs suggested that further investigation of actual teaching methods was in order. As noted at the outset, Sachs concluded by suggesting to Flexner, "it would be well to introduce as an evidence of your absolute tolerance, the statement about the readiness of the General Education Board to work in common with a body of Latinists for the good of the common cause."⁷² Flexner flatly, but politely, rejected this last suggestion as inappropriate. Sachs's suggestion clearly establishes the link between the constant pressure Latinist critics exerted on Flexner to revise his statements in "A Modern School" and the ACL's lobbying of the GEB for funding.

At its June 24, 1920 annual meeting, the ACL resolved to embark on such a study. After consulting with Clarence Kingsley, chair of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, about the logistics of national committees, in November Flexner met with West to discuss the prospect of the ACL coordinating such a study. Flexner and West discussed the complexity of conducting a nationwide study and estimated its cost. The conversation became strained when West noted that he had asked W. V. McDuffee, among others, to serve on the preliminary advisory committee. When Flexner described the interactions between McDuffee and Flexner and the GEB, according to Flexner's summary of the meeting West claimed that he "has never seen Mr. McDuffee nor does he know anything about him." Flexner continued about West, "He said that he certainly would have taken the facts into consideration before acting, had he been aware of them."⁷³ Flexner left the meeting with the impression that West would not appoint McDuffee to the permanent advisory committee. West, however, certainly knew something about McDuffee because he had included in *Value of the Classics* McDuffee's refutation of Flexner's statistics in "A Modern School," which had been published in *The New York Times*.⁷⁴ Eventually, West not only appointed McDuffee to the Advisory Committee, but also

to the four-person Special Investigating Committee of the Classical Investigation.

At its December 1920 meeting, the GEB granted the ACL \$2,500 to support the planning of the proposed study. After a January 1921 meeting of the preliminary advisory board, Sachs wrote assuredly to Flexner, characterizing McDuffee as “all cordiality and appreciativeness.” Sachs reported that he (Sachs) had emphasized the need for the study to be not “an attempt at explanation or apology, but should be distinctly constructive” and forward looking, and that “this view prevailed” in the meeting.⁷⁵ By late January 1921, the ACL submitted a formal proposal to the GEB. At the GEB’s request, the ACL appointed an advisory committee, which included Sachs and McDuffee and, after slight modifications to the proposed budget, in March 1921 the GEB approved a \$60,000 grant to the ACL to execute the Classical Investigation.

Earlier that month, Flexner had asked West for feedback on the draft of a new preface for “A Modern School.” Like Sachs, West suggested that the preface to the second edition of “A Modern School” should be shortened, and that in it Flexner should explicitly admit his mistakes, acknowledge that not only the classics but that all subjects were poorly taught, and clearly define what he meant by a “modern school.” West also implied that the debate over the place of the classics in the school curriculum had become merely a game, a suggestion to which Flexner objected. In his reply, Flexner suggested that because the classical studies historically had received more attention and were better organized, the stakes for success were higher than for “newer” subjects. Flexner also suggested that as West added criticisms of Flexner’s argument, it became not only impossible to shorten the preface, but also necessary to lengthen it with additional responses. Nevertheless, Flexner offered to forward to West the next version for further feedback. Flexner also agreed to West’s suggestion that the two meet to discuss the next draft.⁷⁶

It is evident, then, that classicists, in addition to continually beseeching Flexner and other GEB officials privately for a retraction of Flexner’s criticism of the classics, also exploited the public controversy surrounding “A Modern School” as they lobbied the GEB for funding to conduct the Classical Investigation. Capitalizing on the prestige that the classics enjoyed among social and political elites, classicists succeeded, through deft use of the existing and establishment of a new professional network among themselves, to persuade the GEB to subsidize a comprehensive and high-profile study of classical pedagogy that would employ the latest “scientific” methods of educational research.

The Classical Investigation

Although the Classical Investigation responded directly to no specific recent criticism of Latin, in effect it reaffirmed a number of key claims made in defense of the classics and, moreover, it sought to provide an updated legitimation for the place of the classics in the school curriculum. This new legitimation had two parts: a defense of the classics based upon “scientific” evidence; and a rationale for the place of the classics in the secondary curriculum based on their utility to students. That is, the Classical Investigation represented an effort on the part of classicists to co-opt two central

tenets of progressive education in defense of their beleaguered discipline.

The Classical Investigation officially aimed to identify appropriate purposes, subject matter, pedagogy, and teacher qualifications for the classics.⁷⁷ The status of classical pedagogy was determined by assembling statistical data obtained from the U. S. Bureau of Education and the CEEB and from specially designed tests and surveys. Testing eventually involved the cooperation of 1,313 schools and 8,595 teachers, and the administration of nearly 750,000 tests to about 150,000 students during the 1921–22 and 1922–23 school years. The task of determining the most important purposes, subject matter, pedagogy, and teacher qualifications was accomplished by surveying about 1,200 Latin teachers as well as Latin students, and by consulting professors of psychology and education.⁷⁸

As other studies were conducted, as well, few opportunities were missed in the final report and in press releases to stress the scientific basis for the claims made.⁷⁹ Language such as “scientific studies, including tests and measurements,” “ascertained facts,” and “definite experimental evidence” littered the report. Even “analysis of expert opinion” was presented as scientific because expert opinions had been tallied from questionnaires. This emphasis on basing recommendations for classical pedagogy on empirical evidence was an effort to renew the case for the classics through a definitively progressive method.

Announcement of GEB funding of the Classical Investigation was greeted with some skepticism from the education community. B. R. Buckingham, editor of the *Journal of Educational Research*, speculated about the meaning of such a relationship, wondering whether it signaled a new openness on the part of classicists or that the new educational research was finally accepted—even whether “it may have been the intention of the donors to let the classicists hang themselves.” In any event, Buckingham called for objectivity and fair play from all parties. (Buckingham was subsequently recruited to assist with some of the Investigation’s studies.) Privately, Flexner received correspondence expressing serious reservations about West’s capacity for impartiality. W. D. Lewis, Deputy Superintendent for Pennsylvania, conveyed his experiences interacting with local classicists, estimating that “there is not a man among them who I should consider capable of rendering a nonpartisan judgment on any question involving the classics,” and offered that, based on his experience with West, he was “inclined to place him in the same category.” Similarly, William McAndrew, Superintendent of Schools in Chicago, characterized classicists as “evangels,” and recounted a comment of one of his colleagues to the effect that “testimony as to the classics is when given by Dr. West like using a boy’s mother as a character witness.” Given Flexner’s experience with McDuffee, for example, his diplomatic responses to such correspondence, in which he consistently expressed faith in the ability of the ACL to prosecute the study, were remarkable.⁸⁰ Perhaps in anticipation of such concerns, the Classical Investigation featured seventy-seven professors of education and psychology as having collaborated in some aspect of the project. Evidently, however, the participation of these non-classicists, beyond conducting a few studies and participating in fewer consultations, was minimal.⁸¹

The results of the numerous “scientific” studies conducted under the auspices of

the Classical Investigation, however, were not exactly what the classicists had hoped for. One study found, for example, that “the correlation between general intelligence and the extent of vocabulary”—a correlation that supported the presumption that facility with Latin boosted English vocabulary—“is not as high as had been supposed.”⁸² Likewise, other comparative studies of language usage and intelligence found that, although “Latin pupils are superior on the whole to the non-Latin group, especially in word knowledge,” the “superiority, on the whole, is not as great as has been supposed.”⁸³ Little doubt the fact that non-classical students often outperformed the Latin students on tests of English usage chagrined the classicists.

Despite these meager findings, the final report reaffirmed previous claims for the purported academic superiority of Latin students over non-Latin students in their performance in the classics and in other subjects—a point that McDuffee and other critics of Flexner had been pushing by now for half a dozen years. Although the final report acknowledged in passing that the “superiority” of Latin students “is not so great as has been generally supposed,” it minimized this problem by suggesting that, because non-college bound students were included in these studies, the finding of such a small difference was “inconclusive.”⁸⁴ Because published studies failed to provide sufficient statistical substantiation for these claims, the Advisory Committee reported results—apparently employing the same percentage superiority tactic as employed in *Value of the Classics*—from several unpublished studies.

As skeptical educators had expected, the final report always presented statistics in ways that favored the classics. Discussing enrollment figures in Latin for the 1923–24 academic year, for example, the Advisory Committee noted that they comprised “approximately 27.5 percent of the total enrollment of pupils in all secondary schools, including the seventh and eighth grades of junior high schools, or 30 percent if these grades are not included.”⁸⁵ The Committee emphasized that, for example, “It will be noticed that the Latin enrolment is not only much larger than has commonly thought to be the case, but is also a little larger than the combined enrolment in all other foreign languages.”⁸⁶ As the proportion of adolescents attending secondary school increased, the number of students enrolled in Latin courses increased, more than two-fold from 1900 to 1923; at the same time, however, the proportion of enrollments in Latin out of all enrollments had decreased, from about 50 percent in 1900 to the 27.5 percent figure cited in the General Report.⁸⁷ The Advisory Committee saw the decline as no cause for concern and instead portrayed the increase in the sheer number of Latin students as a cause for celebration: “Latin pupils are crowding, as never before, into our courses,” the Committee approved. “Never before in our history has there been so good an opportunity for wide diffusion of the educational benefits of Latin.”⁸⁸

The regular publication of progress reports of studies not yet completed and even of plans for studies that had yet to be conducted suggests that West and the Investigation leadership, and likely also the ACL leadership, regarded the work of the Classical Investigation not only as a professional matter, but also as an opportunity to promote their discipline, if not to give the appearance of a recantation from Flexner and the GEB. West sought widest exposure of the release of the results of the Classical

Investigation by preparing not only a summary statement for professional journals, but also press releases for major newspapers.⁸⁹ The press releases were disseminated in eight installments from September 22 to October 5, 1924, covering topics such as “Extent to Which the Classics are Studied in American Schools and Colleges,” “Do Pupils Who Study Latin in Schools Do Better in Other Subjects Than Those Who Do Not Study Latin?” and “Status of Latin Instruction—More Trained Teachers Needed.” Archival documentation reveals several instances in which Flexner had to check West’s tendency not only to inflate the significance of the GEB funding, but also to imply that Flexner had come around to support the classics. For example, in one draft of a press release, Flexner edited West’s proposed opening sentence from “I [West] am authorized by Secretary Abraham Flexner to announce that the General Education Board has approved \$60,000 to provide for an investigation of classical education in the secondary schools of the United States,” substituting “Secretary Abraham Flexner” with “the officers of the General Education Board.”⁹⁰ In another instance, Flexner objected to West’s phrase, “the Classical Investigation, authorized by the General Education Board,” which West subsequently agreed to revise to substitute “authorized” with “supported by an appropriation from.”⁹¹ West seems to have been eager to provide the appearance that the GEB funding of the Classical Investigation negated criticism of the classics, namely Flexner’s, which previously had emanated from the GEB.

West had little difficulty requesting additional monies from the GEB. In March 1922, after initial funding began running low, West requested an additional \$33,000 to \$40,000; the GEB granted him \$50,000. During the spring of 1924, again short of funds, West requested additional monies for printing all six parts of the investigation. The GEB denied this request, committing only to subsidize the printing of the general report and the comparative study. Then in the fall of 1924, the GEB granted an additional \$5,000 to print extra copies of the general report. GEB support of the ACL did not end with the Classical Investigation. In November 1929, as lean financial times loomed, for example, the GEB granted the ACL annual appropriations totaling \$19,000 over the years 1929 to 1934. Ultimately, the GEB provided the ACL over \$150,000 in subventions.⁹²

The final report of the Classical Investigation was prepared in six parts, but only two, a general report and a comparative study of the classics in selected European countries, were published.⁹³ Final recommendations for Latin pedagogy that emerged from the Classical Investigation included progressive practices such as taking into account students’ prior language experience, recognizing student interests to motivate them, and using complementary readings about classical civilization in English.⁹⁴ Yet as the Advisory Committee endorsed these progressive practices, it also held that the “indisputable primary immediate objective in the study of Latin is progressive development of the ability to read and understand Latin.” Learning Latin as an end in itself became the primary goal. Conventional methods, including drill and sight reading, the Advisory Committee still recognized as effective practices of Latin pedagogy.⁹⁵ The recommendation that the teaching of Latin begin in the seventh grade, a favorite proposal of classicists since at least the 1890s, appeared in the Classical Investigation, as well.

Most remarkable, however, was the proposal that Latin pedagogy stress “functional Latin” and “comprehension at sight.” Functional Latin referred to the capacity of the pupil to manipulate formal rules of Latin within Latin without benefit of an English translation. Comprehension at sight referred to the ability of the pupil to understand a Latin text also without benefit of an English translation. This emphasis on comprehension at sight and functional Latin amounted to a deviation not only from the progressive practices recommended elsewhere in the final report, but also from established Latin pedagogy, which focused on mastery of “formal” rules of Latin, often at the expense of comprehension, although these proposals were not without precedent.⁹⁶

Both classicists and education professors commented on the Advisory Committee’s published recommendations. In January 1925, the *Classical Journal* featured three commentaries on the Classical Investigation, which, aside from quibbles about details of the recommendations, considered the General Report quite favorably. H. C. Nutting, University of California, objected, for example, to the elimination of forms and syntax in the first year of Latin study and cautioned that reading aloud should attend both to pronunciation and to comprehension. Payson Smith, Commissioner of Education for Massachusetts, praised the Advisory Committee’s definitive statement of objectives and welcomed the General Report as proof that the classics were alive and well. Dorrance S. White, who taught in the Department of Greek and Latin at Ann Arbor High School, expressed concern about the recommendation to reduce translation of Latin to English in order to promote functional understanding.⁹⁷

Professors of education and psychology were less favorably disposed toward the General Report. A short editorial in the *School Review*, likely prepared by Charles Judd, reprinted a press release about the Classical Investigation and then asserted that selective use of enrollment data suggested that “the findings are biased by the prejudices of those who gathered the figures and interpreted their meaning.” Four months later, the same journal ran editorial commentary about the General Report, which it characterized as “defensive” and “amateurish.” It criticized “the most extraordinary statistical juggling” in the report, and, related to the claim that Latin study contributes to English language facility, raised the question, “If the time spent in studying Latin were devoted to a good course in English, would the gain in interpreting English be as small as it is now? This question is not asked in the report.” After presenting examples of fallacious statistical manipulations, in a particularly sharp wording, the editorial characterized the General Report as “a painful example of the blind offering leadership to their kind.” In a similar vein, the *Educational Review* published a lively parody of the use of the questionnaire to substantiate any preconceived notion aimed at the Advisory Committee’s presentation and interpretation of statistics. Harold Rugg, writing about the recent role of national committees in curriculum making, praised the Classical Investigation for conducting numerous studies, but cited it for its incessant “special pleading” and misuse of data to substantiate a priori positions. The *New Republic* interpreted the Classical Investigation as “a vague muttering about English derivatives” that demonstrated that “at the present moment the illumination of classical learning has dimmed to a murky twilight.” Four years

later, B. R. Buckingham, who earlier had speculated about the capacity of classicists to conduct a fair-minded study and was subsequently recruited to participate in the Classical Investigation, dismissed criticisms from the likes of Judd and Rugg, praised the General Report, and regretted that the task of reforming classical pedagogy was left solely to classicists.⁹⁸

In summary then, although giving the appearance of pro-action rather than reaction, in effect the Classical Investigation was the culmination of a series of counter-attacks that classicists had launched in response to Flexner's high profile criticism of the place of Latin in the school curriculum in "A Modern School." Through the Classical Investigation classicists co-opted progressive educators' utility criterion and "scientific" method, tempered recommendations for progressive practices in the Latin classroom with and exaltation of the value of learning Latin for the sake of learning Latin, exploited opportunities for favorable public promotion of their discipline, and procured funding from the GEB that supported not only the Classical Investigation, but also the ACL in the lean years ahead. It is easy to imagine that at the time, while the GEB saw this as a small price to pay to end the public controversy surrounding Flexner's "A Modern School," classicists viewed the episode as a major strategic victory in their tenacious campaign to defend the classics.

Perspectives

As one might expect, looking back, the GEB and the ACL held markedly different perspectives on the Classical Investigation. Fosdick's house history of the GEB merely alluded to the Classical Investigation in a single sentence as part of a listing of GEB appropriations for the humanities. The Final Report of the GEB's activities made no mention of the Classical Investigation, not even in connection with criticism of Flexner's "A Modern School." Similarly, Flexner mentioned the Classical Investigation in neither version of his autobiography, though he expressed disappointment that critics of "A Modern School" failed to appreciate, never mind to acknowledge, his personal affinity for the classics, especially for Greek.⁹⁹

During the late twentieth century, however, classicists regarded these years as a sort of golden age of classical activism. In the house history of the American Classical League, Edward Phinney recorded that "People came from everywhere" to attend the Princeton Conference and "listened to the speeches and applauded wildly."¹⁰⁰ He characterized the conference as "epoch-making."¹⁰¹ About the Princeton Conference, Phinney, president of the ACL from 1986 to 1990, claimed, "It was this essentially conservative reaction to contemporary changes that led to the formation of the American Classical League." Phinney emphasized, "The important thing to remember is that The American Classical League was organized for political and educational reasons, and the political reason was essentially conservative, to preserve what was best of the status quo in American education." Phinney concluded, "In short, The American Classical League represented American conservatism at its noblest, working to make American education superior to the Old World's wider, more modern form of education with a decreased emphasis on Latin and Greek."¹⁰²

Classicists similarly retrospectively viewed the Classical Investigation with approval and employed laudatory language to describe it. Beyond the reality that the Classical Investigation was certainly a “remarkable” and “noteworthy” accomplishment of the ACL during the 1920s, classicists praised it for “striking back” at critics of the classics and noted that it had “a tremendous influence on the teaching of Latin.” Moreover, Kennedy described Andrew West as “formidable” and characterized him glowingly as “the William Jennings Bryan of the classics.” Kennedy contended, “After the war the General Education Board was persuaded to redress its earlier unpatriotic actions by funding an extensive study of the status of Latin in the schools, conducted by the American Classical League, which came into being as a result of the crisis.” He continued, “Latin in the schools did not decline because it had no public defenders; few professions have ever made so mammoth an effort to plead their case and to accompany their defense with reform from within.”¹⁰³

As suggested at the outset, Tyack and Hansot’s characterization of the political machinations of the new class of professional educators they called “administrative progressives” and the “educational trust” explains the actions of classicists involved with the Classical Investigation as well. Like the administrative progressives, the classicists operated through private and professional networks, established and newly-formed—through a “classical trust,” if you will—to enhance both the influence of their ideas and their power, and employed “scientific” methods to construct a renewed case for the place of the classics in the school curriculum. In response to Flexner’s “A Modern School,” classicists, exploiting the existing network of classicists, tapped social and political elites to keep the controversy in the popular press and professional journals, and established a formal association devoted expressly to combating criticism of their discipline, all the while privately pressing Flexner and the GEB for a public recanting. And the Classical Investigation may represent the quintessential example of “the systematic collection of facts for the purpose of public policy formation,” though the presentation and interpretation of statistics therein was often problematic. In effect, classicists employed methods similar to those of the administrative progressives not only to preserve the place of the classics in the school curriculum, but also to protect their very livelihood.

Tyack and Hansot’s description of the administrative progressives reminds us that, at the very least, altruism and self interest operate in concert, although Tyack and Hansot emphasize the latter in their account of the administrative progressives. Of course, the members of the new generation of professional educators that emerged from the progressive era were not the only educators concerned with protecting self-interest. Indeed, historical research on the progressive era has found that middle-class reformers in general intended to impose their values on the rest of society and expected recognition for their efforts.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, it is probably safe to suggest that operating out of self-interest, even when advocating social betterment, is endemic to the human condition. It should not be surprising, then, that traditionalist educators, themselves elites, and especially those who rightly viewed their disciplines as under attack by progressives, would also endeavor to maintain their prestige and status in the education system. But educational and curriculum historians have paid scant

attention to the political activities of academic traditionalists who resisted progressive reforms that threatened their historical hegemony over the school curriculum.

During the 1920s, as the influence and power of administrative progressives waxed, the power and influence of classicists over the school curriculum, despite their best efforts, clearly was on the wane. Thus, Kliebard's application of status politics to explain curriculum reform may apply to the classicists' activism and resistance. Kliebard claimed, "In the context of status politics, conflicts revolve around the question of whose cherished beliefs shall be sanctioned, officially or otherwise." This contest "is primarily a symbolic one over whose most fundamental beliefs shall occupy center stage in a continuing drama."¹⁰⁵ Kliebard emphasized that the power of the status politics thesis to explain a curriculum reform does not inevitably deny the sincerity of pragmatic goals to ameliorate existing educational conditions. Kliebard summarized, "In the context of status politics, then, the curriculum in any time and place becomes the site of a battleground where the fight is over whose values and beliefs will achieve legitimation and the respect that acceptance into the national discourse provides."¹⁰⁶

Because American historians have documented that the desire to validate cherished beliefs during the 1920s "appealed not to the middle class in general but to troubled, usually marginal people who expressed their inchoate anxieties in largely symbolic terms," the status politics thesis may have limited explanatory power in the case of either mainstream progressives or classicists.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the status politics thesis may more appropriately, though incompletely, apply to classicists, whose discipline was increasingly marginalized in the curriculum by social and educational forces beyond their control. In the Classical Investigation, beleaguered classicists sought legitimation of their subject through evocation of the utility criterion and of the "scientific" methods of progressive education research and through high profile advocacy of their cause. As the cherished beliefs of the classicists no longer occupied center stage, classicists struggled to keep them there, though the battle was much more than symbolic—the very livelihood of classicists was in jeopardy.

Although initially Flexner probably did not anticipate the irony that his call to eliminate the classics from the secondary curriculum would engender circumstances from which would emerge the American Classical League and the Classical Investigation, this irony was likely clear to him by the time of Sachs' linking of a proposed disclaimer on Flexner's part to the General Education Board's support of the Classical Investigation. In the short run, Flexner's vision for "A Modern School" was implemented at the Lincoln School with relative success and the American Classical League was able to weather the Great Depression. In the long run, although the position of the classics in the secondary curriculum would continue to decline precipitously, the prestige associated with the classics, as well as classicists' will to persevere, would endure.

Notes

- 1 Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), General Education Board, 826.41, Accession No. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, Julius Sachs to Abraham Flexner, June 3, 1920.
- 2 Paul Shorey, "The Assault on Humanism," *Atlantic Monthly* 119, no. 6 (June 1917): 793-801.
- 3 David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980* (NY: Basic Books, 1982), 106, 107.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 106, 120.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 130.
- 6 *Ibid.*; Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958*, 3rd ed. (NY: Routledge Falmer, 2004), xv, 289; Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Educational Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Although historians such as Tyack and Hansot and Kliebard recognize a variety of approaches within progressive education, during the early twentieth century such distinctions were largely irrelevant to classicists, who were concerned with responding to attacks on their subject regardless of the perspective from which those attacks came. For a contemporary articulation of the varieties of progressive education, see Boyd Bode, *Modern Educational Theories* (NY: Macmillan, 1927).
- 7 David L. Angus and Jeffrey E. Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890-1995* (NY: Teachers College Press, 1999), 203.
- 8 Lagemann, *An Elusive Science*; Richard L. McCormick, "Public Life in Industrial America, 1877-1917," in Eric Foner, ed. *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 121, 122; Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1983), 85.
- 9 Meyer Reinhold, "The Latin Tradition in America," *Helios* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1987), 124-25, 133.
- 10 National Education Association, *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies, Education Report, 1892-93* (Washington DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1893), 1415-1495; American Philological Association, "Report of the Committee of Twelve on Courses of Study in Latin and Greek for Secondary Schools," *Transactions and Proceedings* 30 (1899), xxix-cxxi; Ken F. Kitchell, "The Great Latin Debate: The Futility of Utility?" in *Latin for the 21st Century: From Concept to Classroom*, ed. Richard A. LaFleur (Glenview, IL: Scott-Foresman-Addison-Wesley, 1998), 11; Edward A. Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School, 1880-1920* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 83.
- 11 Angus and Mirel, *Failed Promise of the American High School*, 203; Carl A. Jessen, *Offerings and Registrations in High-School Subjects, 1933-34*, Bulletin 1938, no. 6, United States Department of the Interior, Office of Education (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1938), 28.
- 12 Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, Bulletin no. 4 (NY: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1910); Franklin Parker, "Abraham Flexner, 1866-1959," *History of Education Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (December 1962): 199-209; Thomas Neville Bonner, *Iconoclast: Abraham Flexner and a Life in Learning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Abraham Flexner, *Abraham Flexner: An Autobiography* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1960).
- 13 Raymond B. Fosdick, *Adventure in Giving: The Story of the General Education Board* (NY: Harper & Row, 1962), 213-214; Charles W. Eliot, *Changes Needed in American Secondary Education*, Occasional Papers, no. 2 (NY: General Education Board, 1916), 5, 10-11, 13. Eliot's paper was subsequently published with a supplementary statement in *Needed Changes in Secondary Education*, Bulletin 1916, no. 10, Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior. (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office,

- 1916) and also reprinted in Eliot's *A Late Harvest: Miscellaneous Papers Written Between Eighty and Ninety* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1924). This decidedly progressive take on the high school was not included in Edward A. Krug, ed. *Charles W. Eliot and Popular Education*, Classics in Education no. 8 (NY: Teachers College Bureau of Publications, 1961).
- 14 See Lester Dix, *A Charter for Progressive Education* (NY: Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939), 1; and Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (NY: Knopf, 1962), 280.
 - 15 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 352, Folder 3637, Otis Caldwell to A. Flexner, December 8, 1915.
 - 16 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 352, Folder 3636, Henry W. Holmes to A. Flexner, November 11, 1915.
 - 17 Abraham Flexner, "A Modern School," *American Review of Reviews* 53, no. 4 (April 1916), 466.
 - 18 *Ibid.*, 465.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, 471, emphasis in original.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, 472.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, 467-68, 473.
 - 22 Otis Caldwell would serve as its director. On the Lincoln School, see, for example, Cremin, *Transformation of the School*, 282ff.
 - 23 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 352, Folder 3636, Leonard Ayers to A. Flexner, February 3, 1916, Charles Judd to A. Flexner, February 4, 1916, C. R. Mann to A. Flexner, February 5, 1916, Julius Sachs to A. Flexner, February 17, 1916, John Dewey to A. Flexner, February 21, 1916, David Snedden to A. Flexner, February 28, 1916.
 - 24 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 352, Folder 3636, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to A. Flexner, January 21, 1916, C. W. Eliot to A. Flexner, January 13, 1916.
 - 25 William K. Prentice, "Mr. Flexner's 'Modern School,'" *Nation* 102, no. 2655 (May 18, 1916): 541-42; H. G. Good, "Mr. Flexner's 'A Modern School,'" *School and Society* 3, no. 75 (June 3, 1916): 825-27; H. Rushton Fairclough, "Dr. Flexner's 'Modern School,'" *Nation* 102, no. 2661 (June 29, 1916): 705; "Pros and Cons of the Flexner Scheme of Modern Education," *Current Opinion* 60, no. 6 (June 1916): 423.
 - 26 Alfred E. Stearns, "Some Fallacies in the Modern Educational Scheme," *Atlantic Monthly* 118, no. 5 (November 1916), 642.
 - 27 *Ibid.*, 644.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, 653.
 - 29 "Educators Approve Rockefeller Plan," *New York Times* (January 21, 1917), 4; "Radical and Dangerous," *New York Times* (21 January 1917), sec. E, 2; "The 'Unblushing Materialism' of the New Rockefeller Education Plan," *Current Opinion* 62, 3 (March 1917): 195-96; Isaac Thomas, "Dr. Flexner's 'A Modern School,'" *School and Society* 6, 152 (24 November 1917): 605-608; W. V. McGuffee, "A Reply to Dr. Flexner: Latin and Greek Taught As Well as Other Subjects," *New York Times* (5 February 1917), 10.
 - 30 Fosdick, *Adventure in Giving*, 217.
 - 31 Shorey, "The Assault on Humanism," 796.
 - 32 *Ibid.*, 799.
 - 33 Paul Shorey, "The Assault on Humanism. II." *Atlantic Monthly* 120, 1 (July 1917), 94.
 - 34 *Ibid.*, 97, 103. In fact, Thorndike had begun challenging claims for mental discipline with empirical studies as early as 1901. See E. L. Thorndike and R. S. Woodward, "The Influence of Improvement in One Mental Function upon Efficiency of Other Functions," *Psychological Review* 8 (May, July, November, 1901): 247-261, 384-395, 553-564.

- 35 Andrew F. West, ed., *Value of the Classics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1917).
- 36 "Charges Flexner Misused Statistics," *New York Times* (8 July 1917), 6.
- 37 West, *Value of the Classics*, v, 3.
- 38 George A. Kennedy, "Afterword," in Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 340. Kennedy continued by implying that John Dewey, the "arch-priest" of progressivism, opposed all three (p. 338).
- 39 West, *Value of the Classics*, 7.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 17, 18.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 21; Shorey, "The Assault on Humanism. II."
- 42 West, *Value of the Classics*, 29.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 31.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 362.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 362.
- 47 Flexner, "A Modern School," 466.
- 48 West, *Value of the Classics*, 365.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 382. One of the "superiority" figures was inexplicably inflated from 4.2 percent to 36.7 percent, as well.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 385.
- 51 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 352, Folder 3637, A. Flexner to C. W. Eliot, April 28, 1916.
- 52 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 352, Folder 3638, W. C. Bagley to A. Flexner, May 29, 1916.
- 53 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, W. V. McDuffee to A. Flexner, July 16, 1917, A. Flexner to W.V. McDuffee, July 20, 1917, W.V. McDuffee to G. Vincent, October 19, 1918, W.V. McDuffee to G. Vincent, November 5, 1918, W.V. McDuffee to W. Buttrick, January 30, 1919.
- 54 RAC, General Education Board, 826.41, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, Memorandum Re Mr. McDuffee, March 6, 1919.
- 55 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, W. V. McDuffee to W. Buttrick, April 8, 1919 and attachment.
- 56 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, W. V. McDuffee to A. Flexner, April 29, 1919, W. V. McDuffee to W. Buttrick, April 29, 1919.
- 57 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, Vincent to A. Flexner, June 3, 1919, W. Buttrick to A. Flexner, June 6, 1919.
- 58 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, "Preface."
- 59 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, W. V. McDuffee to A. Flexner, June 14, 1919, W. V. McDuffee to W. Buttrick, June 14, 1919.
- 60 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, Thomas Fiske to A. Flexner, July 14, 1919, A. Flexner to T. Fisk, July 16, 1919, T. Fiske to A. Flexner, July 25, 1919, A. Flexner to T. Fiske, July 26, 1919.
- 61 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, W. V. McDuffee to A. Flexner, August 7, 1919, W. V. McDuffee to A. Flexner, August 16, 1919.

- 62 RAC, General Education Board, 826.4, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, A. Flexner to N. G. McCrea, September 11, 1919, A. Flexner to G. Vincent, October 29, 1919.
- 63 Krug, *Shaping of the American High School, 1880-1920*, 346.
- 64 Ed Phinney, "The Beginning," in *The History of the American Classical League, 1919-1994*, ed. Ed Phinney (Oxford, OH: The American Classical League, 1994), 31.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 33, 34.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 67 Walter G. Agard, "Classical Scholarship," in *American Scholarship in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Merle Curti (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 162.
- 68 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, J. Sachs to W. Buttrick, May 19, 1920.
- 69 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, A. West to J. Sachs, May 19, 1920 (telegram).
- 70 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, Robert W. Rogers to A. Flexner, May 21, 1920, N. G. McCrae to A. Flexner, May 26, 1920.
- 71 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, A. Flexner to J. Sachs, May 28, 1920.
- 72 RAC, General Education Board, 826.41, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 353, Folder 3640, J. Sachs to A. Flexner, June 3, 1920, A. Flexner to J. Sachs, June 15, 1920.
- 73 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, Memorandum of Interview Between Dean West and Mr. Flexner, November 9, 1920.
- 74 West, *Value of the Classics*, 364, 376-377.
- 75 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, J. Sachs to A. Flexner, January 11, 1921.
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- 77 "The Classical Survey," *Classical Journal* 17, no. 1 (Oct. 1921): 17.
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- 80 B. R. Buckingham, "The Latin Investigation," *Journal of Educational Research* 4, no. 4 (November 1921), 312; RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3231, W. D. Lewis to A. Flexner, June 20, 1921; Folder 3233, W. McAndrew to A. Flexner, July 26, 1924.

- 81 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3232, A. Flexner to A. Inglis, September 15, 1922, A. Inglis to A. Flexner, September 19, 1922, A. West to A. Flexner, October 5, 1922.
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- 83 Edith I. Newcomb, "A Comparison of the Latin and Non-Latin Groups in High School," *Teachers College Record* 23, no. 5 (November 1922), 422.
- 84 *General Report*, 239.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 18, 21, 29.
- 87 Jessen, *Offerings and Registrations in High-School Subjects, 1933-34*, 28.
- 88 *General Report*, 250-51.
- 89 Andrew West, "The Classical Report [Editorial]" *Classical Journal* 20, no. 1 (October 1924): 1-4; Andrew F. West, "The Classical Investigation General Report," *School and Society* 20, no. 515 (November 8, 1924), 578-581; RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 310, Folder 3235, "Report on the Inquiry Into the Teaching of the Classics."
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- 92 RAC, General Education Board, 699, Accession no. 23, Series 1, Subseries 2, Box 309, Folder 3232, A. West to W. Buttrick, March 6, 1922, A. Flexner to A. West, October 15, 1922; Box 310, Folder 3236, Brierley to Magoffin, November 29, 1929. Fosdick, *Adventure in Giving*, 236.
- 93 Although the Advisory Committee claimed that the reports of Documentary Evidence would be available for inspection, and although five years later this evidence was reportedly gathering dust in a Washington archive, efforts to locate these materials for the present study, including examination of relevant archive indexes, archival finding aids, and inquiries to the American Classical League, have yielded no surviving documents. See *General Report*, 15, and Florence J. Lucasse, "What the Classical Investigation has Accomplished," *Journal of Educational Research* 20, no. 1 (June 1929), 15.
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- 95 *Ibid.*, 32, 209-210.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 167, 189-91, 202-203.
- 97 H. C. Nutting, "Reflections on the League Report," *Classical Journal* 20, no. 4 (January 1925): 211-219; Payson Smith, "The Classical Investigation—A Review," *Classical Journal* 20, no. 4 (January 1925): 220-222; Dorrance S. White, "On A Recommendation by the Committee Reporting the Classical Investigation," *Classical Journal* 20, no. 4 (January 1925): 223-24.
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- 104 McCormick, "Public Life in Industrial America, 1877-1917," 121, 124-25.
- 105 Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958*, xv.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 290.
- 107 Alan Brinkley, "Prosperity, Depression, and War," in *The New American History*, ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 138.