To the instructor

A growing number of Biblical Hebrew professionals are requesting resources to help them take advantage of **Second Language Acquisition (SLA)** benefits for their own classrooms.[*] Since both teachers and students of Classical Greek and Latin are benefitting from SLA methods, should not Hebrew courses enjoy these advantages, as well? *Learning Biblical Hebrew Interactively* responds to this request, providing an SLA-oriented introductory textbook for Biblical Hebrew.

To enable a classically trained Hebrew instructor to employ SLA techniques, the Instructor Edition offers pedagogy tips at the outset of each lesson (see sample, next page). The Student Edition synchronizes with the Instructor Edition in layout and pagination, only without instructor notes.

A "both-and" Second Language Acquisition Biblical Hebrew textbook

Both **traditional elements** and the **new SLA pedagogy** combine in this textbook. Old and new are seamlessly combined in what is known as a "functional syllabus"—a curriculum that orients grammar presentation so that it empowers the learner to read, hear, and express meaningful communication.[1]

Traditional elements retained	New components integrated for **Second Language Acquisition**
◆ **Vocabulary** (over 500 words, primarily high-frequency)	◆ Comprehensible[2] and meaningful[3] L2 **input**
◆ **Grammar and syntax** (cf. Grammatical index and Syntax summary)	◆ Meaningful L2 **output activities**[4] (in which students maintain control over the communication they produce)
◆ **Paradigms**	◆ **Multi-experiential** L2 input (also output), including aural,[5] kinesthetic, and visual (over 230 illustrations and photos)[6]
◆ **Bible readings** (more than 225 excerpted readings and two extended readings)	◆ Connections to the L2 **cultural context** (more than 40 concise articles)[7]
◆ Introduction to **poetry**	◆ Narrative context for grammar and vocabulary through a **comprehensive serialized story**[8]
◆ Introduction to **Masoretic cantillation**	◆ **Immersion opportunities** through L2 class-navigation expressions[9]

Why concern ourselves with Second Language Acquisition?

According to a study reported in *When Dead Tongues Speak: Teaching Beginning Greek and Latin*, 90% of post-secondary students enrolled in a classical language course will **learn more effectively** in an SLA format.[10] This is due, in part, to the following:
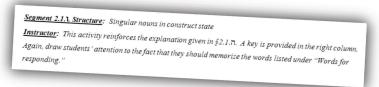
◆ An SLA approach accesses **multiple learning styles**.

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[*] Professor Frederick Greenspahn, past president of National Association of Professors of Hebrew, called for such a textbook in his *SBL Forum* essay, "Why Hebrew textbooks are different from those for other languages" (*SBL Forum*, July 2005, n.p., cited 15 November 2010, online: http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=420). He concluded: "Learning how to teach languages from those who have devoted their professional lives to that project can only increase our success at bringing students closer to the text that is the center of our concern."

- An SLA approach **lowers the affective filter**, leading to greater receptivity for learning.[11]
- An SLA approach expands **automaticity**.[12]
- An SLA approach expands **reading fluency** in target language (L2).[13]
- An SLA approach leads to increased **higher-level processing** of the L2 text.[14]

"Can I effectively teach this course without prior training in SLA?" and other important questions.

Can I effectively teach this course, even though I have not been trained in SLA? Yes, you can. These materials were specifically designed for and field-tested by instructors who had no training in SLA pedagogy. The **Instructor Edition** displays

> **Segment 2.1.ו. Structure:** *Singular nouns in construct state*
> **Instructor:** *This activity reinforces the explanation given in §2.1.ה. A key is provided in the right column. Again, draw students' attention to the fact that they should memorize the words listed under "Words for responding."*

concise **pedagogy tips** at the start of every segment, both to specify the focal grammatical structure and to provide suggestions for conducting this part of the class session, as seen in the example from Unit 2, Module 1, Segment ו.

3.1.ח. Did you know that…? (Diet) הֲיָדַעְתָּ כִּי…?

Ceramic milk churn (25 cm long, Chalcolithic, 4000-3150 BCE).
(Courtesy of Flora Archaeological Center; photo: P. Overland)

…the diet of Israelites was comprised largely of vegetables, legumes, fruit, and nuts? Since it is coarser than חִטָּה *wheat f* and easier to cultivate, שְׂעֹרָה *barley f* comprised the poor person's grain. Grain might be eaten parched or ground daily (see §3.1.ב.) and baked in a beehive-shaped outdoor oven, yielding pita-shaped loaves about 25 cm in diameter.

*How can I introduce elements of **culture**?* Teaching culture can be as simple as assigning students to read segments bearing the heading "Did you know…?" If you wish, you may expand an element of culture with readings from a resource such as King and Stager's *Life in Biblical Israel*.[15]

*Will I be able to teach this course, even if **I do not speak Biblical Hebrew (or Modern Hebrew) conversationally?*** Yes. This material was intentionally field-tested by instructors **without BH or MH conversational ability**. The expressions you will need are fully scripted in this textbook.

*Can I lead this course with minimal **lesson preparation**?* Again, the answer is "yes." Each segment is ready-to-use, whether it presents a grammar lesson or an SLA activity. Simply pre-read the lesson as you would for any course.

*Is this curriculum suitable for an L1 environment **other than English**?* Yes. The first six units have been translated and field-tested in a Portuguese L1 classroom (São Leopoldo, Brazil). Since SLA pedagogy employs less of L1 than traditional language instruction (English or otherwise), the benefits of SLA pedagogy accrue more easily to learners from any L1, not only English L1. In addition, the specific *LBHI* materials by design have sought to remain as western-culture-neutral as possible.

*Can this curriculum be adapted for **independent study**?* While intended for group learning and conversation, this textbook would be sufficient for independent students—especially if they take advantage of the segment-by-segment instructional videos. In addition, they should secure the help of a skilled tutor who will be able to review homework.

Integrated multimedia resources

The following integrated multimedia resources are freely available to help you teach this course (visit www. LearningBiblicalHebrewInteractively.com).

- A full complement of **instructional videos**. Oriented for students, you may use them to conduct your course as a "flipped classroom." Or you may assign them for selective viewing, such as when a student misses a live lecture or would benefit from additional reinforcement (see website).

- **PowerPoint presentations** (with audio) for each Jonah Episode. For use in-class, out-of-class, or both (see sample on left, available from website).

- **MP3 vocabulary files**. If they wish, students can review vocabulary on their mobile devices (audio, see website).

- Communicatively-styled **assessments**. Another tool to let you concentrate on teaching, rather than course-development (contact author).

- The website also enables instructors to **develop and exchange** new activities and visual aids developed when teaching with this textbook.

Origins in the "Cohelet Project"

Learning Biblical Hebrew Interactively began to take shape under the direction of SLA consultant, Dr. Diana Pulido, and Language Learning Technology consultant, Dr. Jörg Waltje, during the Communicative Hebrew Learning and Teaching Project ("Cohelet Project"). This undertaking was made possible through generous funding from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religion and Theology.

The first six units were written and field-tested over a three-year period during the course of the Cohelet Project. For more information concerning the Cohelet Project, please refer to "Can Communicative Principles Enhance Classical Language Acquisition?"[16] or visit https://sites.google.com/a/ashland.edu /cohelet/home.

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[1] Concerning the importance of a **functional syllabus**, Elizabeth Tarone and George Yule observe: "In recent years, there has been a major shift in perspective within the language teaching profession concerning the nature of what is to be taught. In relatively simple terms, there has been a change of emphasis from presenting the language as a set of *forms* (grammatical, phonological, lexical) that have to be learned and practiced, to presenting language as a *functional system* that is used to fulfill a range of communicative purposes" (*Focus on the Language Learner: Approaches to Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Second Language Learners* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 17). While grammatical competence (a primary aim of the Grammar-Translation Method) remains integral to communicative competence, current language pedagogy is not content to leave learners at this level.

[2] L2 messages expressed at a level that the learner can understand comprise **comprehensible input** (Stephen D. Krashen, *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* [New York: Longman, 1985], 2).

[3] Concerning **meaningful input**, Krashen (1985) observes: "The goal is to focus the student entirely on the message; this requires the use of topics and activities in which real, not just realistic, communication takes place" (56). Elsewhere he writes, "[t]he best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even 'forget' that the message is encoded in a foreign language" (S. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* [New York: Pergamon, 1982], 66).

In contrast, sentences that are grammatically accurate but which lack connection to the learner's world do not qualify as meaningful. These are known as "display sentences." Sandra Savignon goes so far as to observe that "[t]he importance of meaningful language use at all stages in the acquisition of communicative skills has come to be recognized by language teachers around the world" (*Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997], xi).

[4] To qualify as **meaningful output**, the learner must have control over whatever response is evoked and may provide new information during the exchange (James F. Lee and Bill VanPatten, *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen* [2d ed.; Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003], 54 and 121). As Krashen comments, "[o]utput aids learning because it provides a domain for error correction" (Krashen [1982], 61). Swain goes so far as to state that "[c]omprehensible output…is a necessary mechanism of acquisition" (Merrill Swain, "Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development," in *Input in Second Language Acquisition* [ed. Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden: Rowely, Mass.: Newbury House, 1985], 252).

[5] Regarding **aural input**, see Lee and VanPatten, "Listening Comprehension," in *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*, 195–216. Paul Sulzberger observes: "Our ability to learn new words is directly related to how often we have been exposed to the particular combinations of the sounds that make up the words. Neural tissue required to learn and understand a new language will develop automatically from simple exposure to the language" ("Exposure to Sound Patterns Aids Language Learning," *Language Educator* [April 2009]: 9). Regarding the vital contribution of **aural output** skills (silently generating the sound of what we are reading) for the development of skilled readers, see Michael Pressley, *Reading Instruction that Really Works* (3d ed.; New York: Guilford Press, 2006), 51.

[6] I.S. Paul Nation observes that learning an L2 word is enhanced when accompanied by a picture (**visual input)**, since the picture leads to "mental elaboration that deepens or enriches the level of processing" of the target lexeme (*Learning Vocabulary in Another Language* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 69). The more than 230 illustrations and photos integrated in this textbook, together with frequent suggestions for visual aids, help visual learners acquire the meaning of L2 words with reduced recourse to an L1 equivalent (known as "binding"). In addition, several of the output activities involve object manipulation, facilitating kinesthetic learning.

[7] Regarding the place of **culture** in language learning, classicist John Gruber-Miller cautions, "Without a coherent and consistent cultural context, students of the ancient world cannot succeed in the task of reading, understanding, and interpreting Greek and Latin texts" (*When Dead Tongues Speak* [ed. John Gruber-Miller; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 14). See American Classical League, *Standards for Classical Language Learning* (Oxford, Ohio: American Classical League, Miami University, 1997; cited 8 April 2014). Online: http://www.aclclassics .org/uploads/assets/files/Standards_Classical_Learning.pdf. *Life in Biblical Israel* by Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager may be the finest resource currently available for cultural information (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001). This volume has been beautifully produced, and would serve as an excellent companion volume for this course, while Ephraim Stern's *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (vol. 2, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods*) can supply additional information for particular artifacts or excavation sites (series ed. David Noel Freedman; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

[8] Regarding **serialized story**, see Bonnie Adair-Hauk, Richard Donato, and Philomena Cuomo-Johansen, "Using a story-based approach to teach grammar," *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction* (ed. J. L. Shrum and E. W. Glisan; Boston: Thomson Higher Education, 2005), 198–213.

[9] The advantages of an **immersion environment** for language acquisition are axiomatic. This textbook supplies both instructor and student with several strategic and frequently recurring class navigation expressions (e.g., "I wish to ask a question," "Please repeat," and "I don't understand")—termed by Krashen, "tools for conversational management" (Krashen [1982], 139). In this way, class participants are able to take significant steps toward an immersion environment. Participants may add to these expressions as the course progresses.

[10] A. Deagon, "Cognitive style and learning strategies in Latin instruction," in J. Gruber-Miller, ed., *When Dead Tongues Speak: Teaching Beginning Greek and Latin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27–49.

[11] The **affective filter** may consist of a learner's sense of anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation, or fear of failure (Krashen [1985], 3–4).

[12] To achieve effective L2 reading, "we need to get to the level of automatized vocabulary rather than focusing on decoding in context" (A.H. Urquhart and C. J. Weir, *Reading in a Second Language: Process, Product, and Practice* [New York: Longman, 1998], 191; cf. Pressley, 205).

[13] This is due, in part, to the fact an SLA approach increases the likelihood that learners will develop three skills that brain imagery research has proven foundational for reading fluency: (a) the ability to phonologically analyze words (sounding out words), (b) the ability to recognize words by sight, and (c) the ability to recognize spoken words (cf. Pressley, 200–3).

[14] Pressley, 68.

[15] Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

[16] For a report on the project and its findings, see Paul Overland, Lee Fields, and Jennifer Noonan, "Can Communicative Principles Enhance Classical Language Acquisition?", *Foreign Language Annals* 44:3 (Fall 2011), 583–93.