Moving past “critical thinking”, “cultural literacy” and “analytical skills”:
Comments by Classics Majors about what Classics training provides

- Teaches “language algebra”: the ability to recognize categories and sort data
- Working with complex languages creates an ability to recognize the rules and patterns behind a mass of information, and to recognize and deduce relationships between blocks
- Advantage of focusing on written, rather than spoken sources: emphasis falls upon the structure of language and organization of arguments.
- Fine-tuned awareness of grammar and nuance increases clarity in writing and precision in argument
- Word study exercises develop pattern recognition capacities
- Improves speaking and writing by diversifying sentence structures, which allows for greater varieties of expression, and enhances the ability to distinguish one’s personal voice/style
- Learning how to weave together argument and narrative
- Advantages to studying a period removed from modern experience:
  When grappling with complex social/political or philosophical issues in a modern context, personal investment and bias often interfere with objective thinking. By studying such issues in an ancient context, there is freedom in disengagement. It provides an opportunity to inhabit an alternative viewpoint, which provides a path to standing outside modern arguments and thinking about them in new ways.
- Expands sympathetic capacity and perspective on the human experience
- Cultural literacy on steroids! – because the leap between cultures is greater and more challenging. Develops imagination.
- Engaging in a scholarly conversation which has taken place over centuries
- Historical and archaeological study requires filtering of multiple perspectives: encourages a return to the source to look carefully at where the argument starts.
- The challenge of making arguments with an incomplete data set forces attention to detail and a precise and systematic approach
- Encourages creative thinking to identify sources of information which are overlooked, to find new ways to integrate data
- More creative thinking: archaeological problem-solving by developing models for identifying patterns or events in the archaeological record – recognizing metadata
- Advantage of a small department: no one can hide! Encourages collaborative work, engagement and active learning.
*comments from a student discussion with departmental faculty on 10/11/2013*