



TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

An Online Journal of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South

In This Issue:

Ovid and his Ars: Preparing
a Commentary for the
*Online Companion to the
Worlds of Roman Women*

◆
Three Categories Of
Humor In Latin Pedagogy

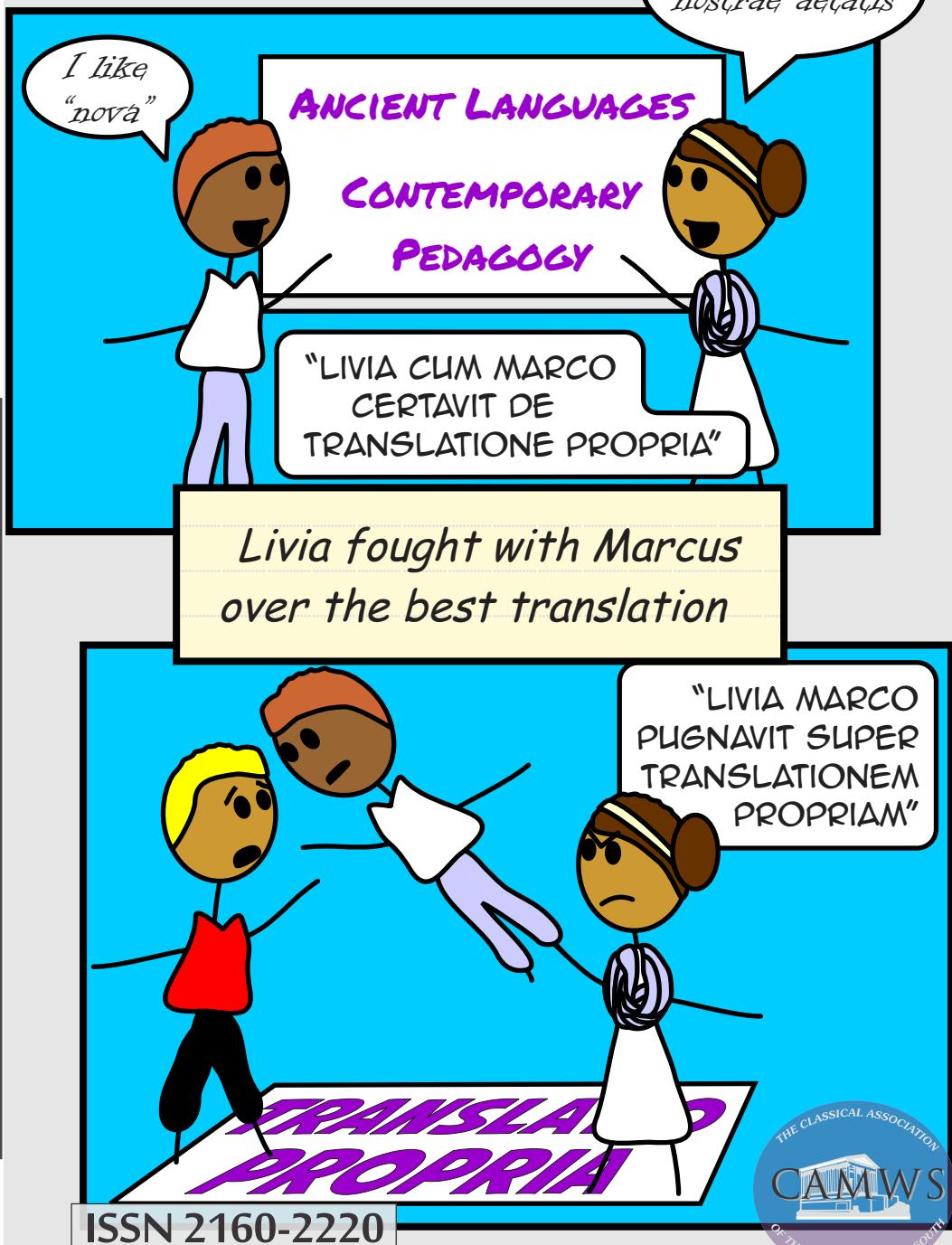
SPECIAL SECTION ON SPOKEN LATIN

Why Oral Latin?
*Cur Discipuli Linguae
Latinae Latine Loquantur*

◆
A Podcasting Approach to
Greek and Latin Orality

◆
The *Biduum* Experience:
Speaking Latin to Learn

◆
Making Sense of
Comprehensible Input
in the Latin Classroom



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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Letter from the Editor | v |
| Ovid and His <i>Ars</i> | 1 |
| Preparing a Commentary for the <i>Online Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women</i> | |
| Liz Gloyn | |
| Three Categories of Humor in Latin Pedagogy | 18 |
| Jiha Min | |
| Special Section on Spoken Latin | |
| Why Oral Latin? | 37 |
| Susan Thornton Rasmussen | |
| Cur discipuli linguae Latinae Latine loquantur | 46 |
| Aemilia Thornton Rasmussen | |
| A Podcasting Approach to Greek and Latin Orality | 51 |
| Christopher Francese | |
| The <i>Biduum</i> Experience | 72 |
| Speaking Latin to Learn | |
| Ginny Lindzey | |
| Making Sense of Comprehensible Input in the Latin Classroom | 108 |
| Robert Patrick | |

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Teaching Classical Languages Mission Statement

Teaching Classical Languages (ISSN 2160-2220) is the only peer-reviewed electronic journal dedicated to the teaching and learning of Latin and ancient Greek. It addresses the interests of all Latin and Greek teachers, graduate students, coordinators, and administrators. *Teaching Classical Languages* welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek. As an electronic journal, *Teaching Classical Languages* has a unique global outreach. It offers authors and readers a multimedia format that more fully illustrates the topics discussed, and provides hypermedia links to related information and websites. Articles not only contribute to successful Latin and Greek pedagogy, but draw on relevant literature in language education, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition for an ongoing dialogue with modern language educators.

Letter from the Editor

John Gruber-Miller
Cornell College

Teaching Classical Languages has always taken advantage of its online presence with links to other material, images, and audio. This issue, which includes a Special Section on Spoken Latin, keeps these online elements that print journals cannot always accommodate and provides several new, notable features.

TCL publishes its first article in a language other than English—appropriately, in this case, Latin. In the Special Section on Spoken Latin, Susan Thornton Rasmussen has prepared two versions of her article, both English (“Why Oral Latin?”) and Latin (“*Cur discipuli linguae Latinae Latine loquantur*”). The Latin version was written first and readers will be able to tell that it falls into a somewhat more rhetorical, persuasive style than the more academic style of its English counterpart. Her essays offer both practical and pedagogical reasons why it makes sense to use spoken Latin in the classroom.

Two articles make extensive use of video, transcriptions, and appendices that show teachers how to incorporate new strategies into the classroom. Ginny Lindzey’s article, “The *Biduum* Experience: Speaking Latin to Learn,” takes readers through a typical two-day Latin immersion weekend, compiling and illustrating a huge number of scaffolded activities to help teachers use spoken Latin with their students. In order to help teachers recreate the techniques described, the article contains more than two dozen images of classroom content transcribed and illustrated and features several videos of Nancy Llewellyn (SALVI) teaching.

Bob Patrick’s article, “Making Sense of Comprehensible Input in the Latin Classroom,” elucidates how using spoken Latin provides comprehensible input for his students. His essay not only explains how and why to use spoken Latin in the classroom, his links to six YouTube clips demystifies how he teaches using a Comprehensible Input approach in a classroom setting. In addition, his article has an extensive appendix that links to teacher-generated and classroom-tested materials, including assessments, on a fourth year unit on Roman *ludi*.

In addition, two articles discuss online projects that make Latin and Greek texts and their interpretation available to diverse audiences. In “Ovid and his *Ars*: Preparing a Commentary for the *Online Companion to the Worlds of Roman Wom-*

en," Liz Gloyn presents a professional development opportunity for teachers, explaining the process of writing a commentary on a short passage from *Ars Amatoria* 3 for intermediate Latin students from a feminist perspective. The end result is a text that can then be used in the classroom with one's own students as well as students around the globe.

In a "Podcasting Approach to Greek and Latin Orality," Chris Francese expands the audience for his students' work from the classroom to the wider world. He asks them to create a podcast that interprets a poem or passage for an educated, but non-classically trained, audience. As a result, students get to the heart of the text they are discussing in five to seven minutes using NPR-style audio.

Finally, in "Three Categories of Humor in Latin Pedagogy," Jiha Min shows how thinking about different types of humor can lead to productive questions about a satirical or humorous Latin text. I hope that this issue inspires you to try new techniques and new technologies to make Latin and Greek more accessible and more appealing to your students.

Teaching Classical Languages welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek.

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Guidelines for submission may be found at

<http://www.tcl.camws.org/guidelines.pdf>.

Ovid and his *Ars*: Preparing a Commentary for the *Online Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women*

Liz Gloyn
Royal Holloway, University of London

ABSTRACT

This article¹ describes the author's experience of preparing a text-commentary for the *Online Companion to The Worlds of Roman Women*. *Companion* provides a collection of unadapted Latin texts, with hyperlinked grammatical support, by or about Roman women from all parts of Roman society; it also places each text in its cultural and social context. Preparing a commentary with a feminist focus offers a unique teaching resource for *Companion*'s target audience of intermediate Latin learners because of the otherwise neglected aspects of Roman culture and the Latin language that emerge from this approach. The process of creating such a commentary for *Companion* has multiple benefits for Latinists at all levels. It provides an on-going professional development opportunity for pre-collegiate teachers, graduate students, and both pre-tenure and post-tenure university faculty by maintaining and improving contributors' proficiency with Latin and enhancing their knowledge of Roman cultural practices and perspectives. The article outlines the process of identifying a suitable text, creating grammatical glosses, and collaboratively editing the commentary into its final form. The article explores the value of *Companion* as a teaching tool, offers suggestions for classroom use, and encourages others to join the collaborative project of increasing the range of *Companion*'s texts.

KEYWORDS

Latin pedagogy, text-commentary, grammar, intermediate Latin, feminism, gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

The work of preparing a Latin text-commentary may appear a daunting prospect, seen as a time-consuming activity reserved for those who are creating a substantial edition for a prestigious press or a new version of some long-neglected work. The finished product is indispensable to Latin teachers and the profession at

¹ This article began life as a series of informal blog posts. I thank Ann Raia and Judith Sebesta both for the opportunity to collaborate with *Companion*, and for their helpful comments on various drafts of the manuscript. John Gruber-Miller and *TCL*'s two anonymous referees also offered invaluable advice on improving and developing the piece.

large, but the process is generally conceptualized as the work of a solitary researcher. However, as a teacher and early career researcher, I have found the process of preparing a text-commentary on a smaller scale within a supportive and collaborative community both instructive and rewarding. The experience has both enhanced my own proficiency with Latin and deepened my understanding of Roman cultural expectations.

In this article, I want to share my experience of preparing a text-commentary and a brief introductory essay for the *Online Companion to The Worlds of Roman Women (Companion)*. The experience of preparing a resource in this way offers valuable benefits for Latinists at all levels, including graduate students, pre-collegiate teachers and university faculty; its explicit feminist focus also serves to counter some of the issues raised by the traditional commentary form. I hope to encourage readers of *Teaching Classical Languages* to participate in a project that offers opportunities for personal development and professional collaboration. I also intend to cast some light on the process of using modern digital resources to create a text-commentary (cf. Mahoney, “Latin Commentaries on the Web”).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORLDS OF ROMAN WOMEN PROJECT AND COMPANION

The feminist pedagogy underpinning first *The Worlds of Roman Women* and now *Companion* seeks to offer a range of materials for teaching Latin that counter the gender bias embedded “in contemporary textbooks, readers, and methods of learning Latin” (Churchill 89). *The Worlds of Roman Women* is a print text anthology designed for Latin students at the intermediate level, set in the context of cultural history from the perspective of an underrepresented population. The essays, Latin passages, and illustrations are organized under rubrics that introduce attitudes towards and expectations of women from differing social groups who lived in the ancient Roman world. The online *Companion* serves as a website that both supplements the print textbook with additional passages and acts as a freestanding resource; it uses modern technology to enhance the student’s experience of reading Latin. Its virtual nature means that *Companion* can be constantly enlarged, updated and improved.

The special nature of preparing a *Companion* commentary is markedly different from writing a commentary for an established press. If we take the Cambridge green and yellow series as a point of comparison, four key differences emerge.

First, *Companion* aims to reach language learners at the intermediate level, while the green and yellow volumes see advanced undergraduate and graduate readers as their audience. This means that the kind of information contained in *Companion* glosses is fundamentally different to the entries in the green and yellow volumes. Of course, commentaries aimed at intermediate Latin readers are also available from traditional publishers, but these do not share the other unique qualities of *Companion*.

Second, *Companion* adopts a consistent feminist approach to its texts; its goal is to “make available and promote unadapted Latin texts and material evidence about Roman women’s lives within the context of the world they inhabited” (Raia 28). The green and yellow series, by contrast, has the broader goal of making accessible “both texts traditionally considered canonical and texts which have not enjoyed popularity until recently but are eminently suitable for reading with or by students at those levels [undergraduate and graduate]” ([Cambridge University Press website](#)). Other traditional presses tend to share this approach, making *Companion*’s explicit feminist perspective and freely available content all the more valuable.

Third, the structure of *Companion* means that preparing a passage is a far less intensive or prolonged commitment than taking on the creation of a completely new edition. Because of the length of passages appropriate for intermediate students, contributors can choose to prepare a short inscription or a brief extract rather than an entire text. The workload this entails is much easier to balance alongside other teaching and research obligations, and so presents a much lower bar to becoming a contributor to *Companion* than producing a traditional print text-commentary. As such, taking on the preparation of a text-commentary becomes feasible not only for college faculty, but also pre-collegiate teachers and graduate students.

Fourth, contributing to *Companion* thus becomes an important opportunity for professional development, in that it allows a contributor to deepen their Latin proficiency and familiarity with Roman cultural perspectives through engaging with a clearly defined and manageable text they have selected as particularly relevant for their own interests or suitable for their students.

Companion’s feminist focus participates in an ongoing dialogue about the importance of women in classics and in classical texts. Historically women were excluded both from the classroom and the curriculum, given Latin’s position as a sign of privilege and authority among a male elite (see Fowler 341-2). Students are presented with a world in which the dominant perspective is that of the upper-class

white male. As a result, the ancient world becomes limited to one small sphere of activity, with hierarchies of value often set in the male-inhabited classrooms of the nineteenth century. Within my own praxis, I feel uncomfortable presenting material in a language class that unreflectively adopts patriarchal assumptions about the world when I feel strongly about asking students to interrogate those hierarchies in other areas of my teaching. *Companion* seeks to address both these inherited deficiencies, by providing more material that features women for teachers to use to widen all students' conception of the ancient world, and providing resources which engage female students by showing them otherwise hidden aspects of their gender's historical experience.²

The desirability of such resources has been widely recognised since Laurie Churchill called for a range of strategies "to promote the empowerment of students, especially women students" in the Latin classroom (92). Women are hard to find in traditional Latin textbooks such as *Wheelock's Latin* and the *Oxford Latin Course*, which continue to have significant weaknesses in their representation of women. As John Gruber-Miller's analysis of chapter 19 of the *Oxford Latin Course* shows, while independent female characters do exist, they tend to not go beyond stereotypes, and rarely capitalise on the possibility of exploring the wider context in which Roman women lived (26-8). These problems seem extremely similar to those identified by Alice Garrett and Polly Hoover in *Wheelock's Latin*, the *Oxford Latin Course*, the *Cambridge Latin Course* and *Ecce Romani* at the start of the new millennium (Garrett; Hoover). The absence of women from the texts that learners encounter during their formative years of language acquisition has several undesirable consequences. As female students encounter no figures with whom they feel they can connect, both their learning and their commitment to continue with the language to higher levels are negatively affected.³ The types of passages gathered in *Companion* provide an antidote to these two common afflictions.

2 This approach arguably draws on the model of liberation pedagogy articulated by Paulo Freire to enable the "the classroom empowerment of oppressed and silent groups in opposition to the dominant exploitative ideology" (Maher 92); it privileges gender as the focus of that liberation without risking an essentialist approach to female nature. The focus on gender also permits other inequalities, such as those created by class and free/unfree status, to surface within that framework.

3 As Churchill remarks, "the underrepresentation of women is a major concern, since research has shown that noninclusion of women and girls in materials used to teach them seriously impairs their ability to learn" (89); a failure to grasp a subject will have a natural impact on a student's desire to progress with it.

Companion's texts are divided into [ten Worlds](#) (Figure 1) representing various areas of Roman women's experience, such as Marriage, Family, State or Religion; this structure enables teachers to concentrate on one particular area, sample texts from across a broad range of topics, or assign passages based on their difficulty. Each passage has a brief introductory essay focused on the woman who is the subject of the selection, including links to useful supplementary resources and images. The images in particular help support the often challenging task of incorporating material culture into language teaching. Each Latin text contains hyperlinks to vocabulary and grammar aids, as well as further relevant images. The grammatical glosses encourage student independence in translating outside of the classroom, and prepare them for working with the sort of glosses that appear in a more traditional commentary. The range of passages gives female students an opportunity to relate to the personalities and activities of the women in the text and to use their learning to reflect upon their own lives; it provides male students with an alternative perspective on antiquity, and a chance to thoughtfully engage with lived experience that differs from theirs because of gender as well as chronology. All students gain a deeper understanding of the hierarchical and status-based nature of Roman society.

I use *Companion* in my own teaching, most recently for students with one or two year's prior experience of university-level Latin. I use it as a source of passages for students to practice unseen translation as homework, and have been pleased with the results. Students at different levels of language proficiency benefit from the variety of passages and the range of content and difficulty available for me to assign. I can set passages of increasing difficulty throughout the semester as students increase their confidence and skill level; stronger students enjoy the exposure to 'real' Latin, and weaker students are supported by the glosses provided. My students appreciate the fact that *Companion* is available electronically and free, and thus easy for them to use and access. They also find that the background information provided in the

[INSTRUCTION](#) [COMPANION](#) [WORLDS](#)

Explore the Worlds of Roman Women in Texts and Images

| | | | |
|--|-----------|--|------------|
| | CHILDHOOD | | STATE |
| | LEARNING | | CLASS |
| | MARRIAGE | | WORK |
| | FAMILY | | FLIRTATION |
| | BODY | | RELIGION |

[TEXTMAP](#) (site passages). Profiles: [AUTHORS](#), [WOMEN](#)

Figure 1. *Online Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women* Homepage

introductory essay provides the scaffolding that prepares them to translate the assigned passage with confidence. The number of easy passages on the site, including many inscriptions, also allows *Companion* to be incorporated from the first year of teaching (see DiBiasie for the value of using non-conventional texts like inscriptions and graffiti early in classrooms).

As a long-term member of the *Companion* team, I am now an Editorial Consultant with the project, as well as a repeat contributor of Latin text-commentaries. My first submission was Tacitus' account of [the death of Pompeia Paulina](#), Seneca the younger's wife, which forms part of the World of Marriage and is categorised as an intermediate-level passage. The second is in the World of Class, and is a passage from Seneca's *Consolation to Helvia*, which [describes his aunt's courage](#) after her husband, the prefect of Egypt, died in a shipwreck that she survived, and is categorised as challenging. I prepared both these passages while writing my doctoral thesis, which examined the ethics of the family in Seneca's philosophical works. Both of these passages featured prominently in my research, so it seemed natural to offer text-commentaries on material with which I was very familiar. They raised questions about the role of elite women in their husbands' public lives; they also both participated in some way in the Roman moral tradition of *exempla*, demonstrating how women too could offer ethical models worthy of imitation.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A TEXT-COMMENTARY

Selecting a Text

The selection of a text is guided in the first instance by the contributor's interests and inclinations. A contributor might select something grounded in their current research, a passage that they would like to have the resources to teach, or something that will expand their expertise and cultural knowledge as they prepare it. For my third contribution, I decided to propose a section of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. I had spent a long time working with prose in general and Seneca in particular; the *Companion* passage format offered the opportunity to return to poetry in a comparatively low-risk environment with a manageable selection of text. I also wanted to prepare a text-commentary for *Companion*'s World of Body, which was less fully populated than other Worlds. The *Ars* seemed perfect for my purposes.

While the first two books of Ovid's poetic handbook on seduction address male readers, the third book offers women advice designed to make them equally

cunning players of the romantic game. The *praeceptor* even goes as far as advising women on the most flattering position to adopt during sex according to their body type. Although such explicit passages are not appropriate for *Companion*'s high school users, the *praeceptor* also pronounces on posture, how to dress and other topics that are suitable for a young adolescent audience.⁴ The *Ars* as a text appeals to teenage and young adult students because of its playful treatment of flirting and courtship. It also looks surprisingly modern when placed next to fashion magazines targeted at their demographic, which offer instructions on the correct choice of make-up, hair-styles and clothing as well as broader life-style issues.

The overlap between ancient and modern offers an opportunity for students to interrogate both the target text and features of contemporary culture, and ideally to reflect critically upon the purpose and motivations of both (cf. Standard 4: Comparisons [*Standards for Classical Language Learning*]). Various activities could enable students to further explore these distinctions:

- Get students to bring in an advice column from a newspaper or magazine and compare the contents with Ovid—this could apply to book three more widely for older students.
- Review the vocabulary used in the passage and discuss the ways in which it reinforces a male perspective on female beauty standards.
- Ask students to rewrite the passage from the perspective of one of Ovid's female readers, or as if the *praeceptor* were a woman rather than a man. Depending on student ability, this assignment would work in English or Latin.
- Assign students a response paper in which they consider how the passage reinforces the established gender hierarchies of Roman society, and whether they see similar mechanisms at work around them.
- Ask students to compose their own love and relationship advice in Latin.
- Students could illustrate or act out the sorts of behaviours that Ovid identifies as undesirable, to bring out the comic aspects of the poem's ridiculous and unrealistic gender expectations.

⁴ University instructors can, of course, further encourage their students to act as independent learners by directing them to a translation of the full poem.

Once a contributor has identified a passage or text they feel is suitable, they consult with the editors of *Companion*, Ann Raia and Judith Sebesta, to ensure that the selected passage harmonises with site's stated goals. This collaborative approach ensures that the needs of everyone involved in the project are met. In this case, we identified three possibilities from book three of the *Ars*, based on the World I had selected and *Companion*'s overall aims: 3.235-250, in which a mistress mistreats her slave hairdresser; 3.255-280, on minimising defects in appearance; and 3.281-310, on adjusting one's laughter and walk to attract a man. Ultimately I rejected the first two passages. The first felt as if it belonged to the World of Class rather than the World of Body, and the second passage used potentially problematic technical language to describe Roman dress. The third passage felt like the appropriate choice because of its approachable subject matter, its straightforward vocabulary and its sly humour, which students would appreciate. The passage I selected from the *Ars* also offers a springboard to various possible culture-focused activities in the classroom, beyond grammar analysis (Standard 2: Culture [*Standards for Classical Language Learning*]):

- Read the *Ars* passage alongside other passages from *Companion* that focus on the female body and the correct way to inhabit it. Ask students to consider the difference between Ovid's attitude and, for instance, the sort of physical behaviour expected of a *matrona*.
- *Companion*'s [image database of female figures](#) in various poses, including the *pudicitia* pose (Figure 2), could provide a material culture entry point into the text, as students compare artistic representations of female body posture with Ovid's descriptions. These images are available throughout the site, for instance in the [images of marriage](#) list.
- Ask students to compare the presentation of women in the passage, and book three of the *Ars* more broadly, with the presentation of



Figure 2. *Venus pudica* signed by the sculptor Menophantos. Roman, 1st century BCE. Rome, Palazzo Massimo. Photograph by Ann Raia.

women in a different context—inscriptions, graffiti, or a different literary genre—to see which qualities are emphasised in different sorts of texts, and the difference between literary and archaeological representations.

- The passage could serve as an entry into a wider research assignment into the representation of the female body in Roman love poetry.
- Ask students to write two book reviews of the *Ars Amatoria*, one for an ancient Roman publication and one for a modern newspaper or magazine.
- In class, give students presentation topics, either individually or in groups, relating to the *Ars* and to Ovid; grade them both on the quality of their presentation, and on their ability to use the *Ars* passage in their answer. (This suggestion is modelled on Anne Leen's [group presentation activity for Propertius 4.11](#).)
- Use Ann Raia's [Text-Commentary Project](#) as part of the course assessment for advanced Latin students, and ask students to prepare a commentary themselves on a text of their or the instructor's choice. Some passages produced through such assignments now form part of *Companion*'s corpus.⁵

First Steps in Preparing the Text-Commentary

After an appropriate text has been agreed on, the contributor generates a standard version of the original Latin, a first draft of the commentary notes, and an introductory essay. The first stage of this process is a review of recent scholarship. In my case, this process was facilitated by Roy Gibson's 2003 commentary on *Ars Amatoria* 3, which highlighted current trends of thought as well as significant issues of textual emendation. While *Companion* tends to use Oxford Classical Texts as standard, should there be any differences of interpretation raised by more recent academic work, then the contributor is free to alter the submitted text to reflect those advances. Generating the Latin itself was very straightforward for me, in part because of Gibson's work, and also because the section of the *Ars* I had chosen was relatively uncontroversial; I was faced with only a few decisions about punctuation and alter-

⁵ Examples include [Catullus 36](#); [Tacitus, Annales 11.12 on Messalina](#); [Virgil, Aeneid 7.803-817 on Camilla](#); and [Valerius Maximus, Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilia 8.3.1 on Maesia](#).

native readings for a handful of words. Contributors who submit inscriptions often face more difficult challenges of reconstructing damaged text or interpreting barely-visible lettering on the monument with which they are working.

Once I had decided my position on the text and studied the scholarship, I began the process of writing grammatical glosses. A recent response to the 2014 *Cloelia* survey asking for wish list items colleagues would value in their teaching requested “simpler commentaries that help students read without translating for them or bogging them down with details” (Gloyn and Jeppesen-Wigelsworth 19). *Companion*’s glosses aim to do just this by offering generous grammatical support in accessible and straightforward language. Their goal is to aid students in traditional classrooms and support independent learners who may not be attached to a formal institution. The glosses always list the meaning of a word that is relevant to the given passage first—in the case of my passage, this policy was particularly important since I was preparing the only surviving classical Latin sentence in which the word *lacunae* means dimples! The glosses also provide grammatical assistance and suggestions to help weaker students navigate complicated syntax, although as a rule they do not provide word-for-word translations of phrases. This strategy enables *Companion* to include passages that contain, for example, eccentric poetic constructions or Tacitean syntactical complexities. A gloss might explain why a verb is in the subjunctive, identify the role a seemingly random genitive plays in a sentence, or gently suggest students translate *ut* as a preposition rather than a conjunction. Sometimes the dictionary entry alone is sufficient, as that will signal to students that, for instance, an unfamiliar noun belongs to the fourth rather than the second declension, and so may be in a wider number of cases than they initially thought.

The preparation of grammatical glosses is, for me, the most time-consuming and creative part of generating a text-commentary. All of us who teach language know that it is one thing to translate a passage to your own satisfaction and understand its meaning, but quite another to explain the grammatical underpinning of the syntax to another person. For me, working through these grammatical knots to write glosses reinforced my ability to clarify them clearly in my own classroom, and strengthened my general Latin language skills. Engaging with complex grammatical questions in a text which was new to me meant that I sharpened my familiarity with Latin syntax more broadly, and helped improve my proficiency both in translation and explanation. The benefits of contributing to *Companion* thus include not only the end users of the passage but also each individual collaborator.

The final task involved in this initial stage is writing the introductory essay. This introduction needs to serve several purposes. It must put the passage in its broader context, particularly when it is a brief selection from a longer work, without overwhelming the student with detail. It must bring the woman in the passage into focus as subject rather than object (Raia 33); it should also “alert the reader to prejudices of source and culture as well as to bias embedded in genre conventions” (Raia 32) so that they are prepared to interpret the passage within its socio-historical framework. To get all of this into a readable five hundred words or so is a challenge in itself! However, the feminist focus required in the essay also presents contributors with its own particular difficulties. Moving women to the centre of our view means “the whole enterprise of understanding and teaching history is transformed,” and so our approach to otherwise familiar material must, in its turn, be completely transformed too (Garrett 2).

Contributors benefit from the experience of Ann Raia and Judith Sebesta in refining their introductory essays. The collaborative aspect of the project means they are able to offer advice on how to avoid common problems in constructing this part of a text-commentary. The most frequent issue that they encounter is that first drafts of introductory essays tend not to focus on the woman featured in the passage and her particular experience, but instead offers more traditional interpretations that privilege patriarchal concerns such as the activities of women’s male relatives (Raia 33). My previous two essays, on Pompeia Paulina and Seneca the younger’s aunt, both initially suffered from this fault; I provided as much historical background as I could find for them, but in ways that privileged the lives of their husbands and sons. One way to circumvent this issue, which I used successfully in the essay on Pompeia Paulina, is to begin with the genealogy of the woman, including her mother’s name where known; this starting point leads more easily into a biographical sketch of the woman rather than details about the text in which she appears or of her famous male relatives.

However, writing the introductory essay for the *Ars* excerpt presented a different challenge. In this case, there is no specific woman upon whom to focus the essay. The passage only mentions generalised women, whom Ovid holds up to his female readers as embodying behaviour they should avoid. My first attempt at drafting the essay approached the passage by outlining the context of the poem, Ovid’s envisaged audience for the passage, and the fact that it ultimately teaches women how to please men, not how to take control of their own romantic lives. These areas

seemed to me to cope with the passage's focus on generalised rather than specific women, and to contextualise the passage within the wider playful yet problematic world of the *Ars Amatoria* as a whole. As the process of shared review made clear, in taking this approach I still fell into the trap of making the essay about a man—in this case Ovid as poet—rather than Roman women and their lives, but my initial draft helped me to identify the key issues that the introductory essay for this passage should address.

Refining and Publishing the Text-Commentary

When I had prepared a version of the Latin text and drafted the glosses and introductory essay, I e-mailed the three initial documents to *Companion*'s co-editors. At this stage, Ann reviews the documents, makes suggestions for edits and further glosses, and returns the materials for the contributor to approve the changes. This is the first of several collaborative stages involved in the editing process. Our discussion about the *Ars* focused on Ann's questions about the glosses and text that I had sent her, where she brought a fresh perspective to some phrases for which I had found it difficult to write brief, helpful glosses. We agreed the best way to clarify some of the explanations, and how to handle the places where I had chosen to follow Gibson's version of the text rather than the OCT.⁶ We also ensured that my documents were in line with *Companion*'s house style.

After I had made the agreed changes to my master document, Ann took the information and coded the passage into a webpage. She identified appropriate images to illustrate the text, which students access by pressing an SPQR button alongside the passage (Figure 3).⁷ For instance, next to the line in which

Illa sonat raucum quiddam atque inamabile ridet,

290

ut rudit a scabra turpis asella mola.

SPQR



Figure 3. SPQR link and accompanying detail of Marble "sarcophagus" of Zethus the baker. Rome, Vatican Museums (Chiaramonte). Photo by Ann Raia.

⁶ As an example, in line 281, I followed Gibson in reading *aque* rather than the manuscripts in reading *atque*; the gloss reads “Although all the MSS read *atque*, most scholars prefer this emendation (see Roy K. Gibson, ed. *Ovid, Ars Amatoria Book 3*, Cambridge 2003).”

⁷ Many of the pictures used come from [VRoma](#), an associated project based around a virtual learning environment that has [an extensive online image library](#).

Ovid compares a girl with a raucous laugh to an ass at a millstone, the SPQR button links to a picture of an ass working at a mill so students can see what Ovid refers to. She also hyperlinked the text to the glosses, laid out the introductory essay and included a sample picture to head the passage. Once the preliminary version of the webpage was complete, Ann sent me a link to it for my thoughts.

For the picture that accompanies the introductory essay, she had chosen an



Figure 4. Mosaic portrait, Pompeii, 1st Century CE. Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Photo by Barbara McManus.

illustration of a woman from a mosaic portrait in Pompeii (Figure 4). We discussed whether a different image might be more suitable; I suggested one of the Tanagra figurines, but it seemed wise to avoid cultural dissonance given that they are Hellenistic rather than Roman. Other options turned out to be few and far between. I had not realised that few ancient images survive of a woman, or anybody else, smiling or laughing. The obvious exceptions are the satyr scenes on Greek vases, and potentially some statues of old women normally classified as drunk, but women tend to wear expressions that are more enigmatic than amused. The face from the Pompeii mosaic has one of those expressions, so it remains the image used on the [final version of the webpage](#).

The editing process also made significant differences to the introductory essay. To shift the focus away from Ovid himself, I included a new section on who the women reading Ovid's poem would have been, bringing out the comparison between the *Ars* and other didactic literature. This strategy allowed me to address the lived experience of women in the ancient world who would have had access to Ovid's text, thus encouraging students to consider the number of women who would have had the intellectual training to engage with a poem that is both playful and mindful of its literary antecedents. The editors also noted that my first draft explored themes more related to *Companion's* World of Flirtation. As a result of their feedback, I emphasised the physical aspects of the text that Ovid suggests rather than concentrating on his flirtation strategies, bringing out themes more relevant to the World of the Body as I had initially planned.

After the contributor and editor have approved the first version of the webpage, the final stage of the publication process begins. This phase once more draws

on the collaborative strengths of *Companion* through [its team of editorial consultants and collaborators](#), all of whom have submitted passages to *Companion* themselves. The editor sends the team a link to the draft webpage, and asks them to offer any suggestions for improvement that they may have. When I am serving in this role, I normally look for glosses that either do not make sense to me as a translator or seem potentially confusing for weaker intermediate students; additional information that would enrich the glosses or introductory essay; and errors of punctuation or syntax. The collaborative process means that in essence each new passage is peer-reviewed several times over. The process of sharing work with a larger group of reviewers also gives the contributor a broader perspective on their own approach to the language, highlighting areas where they might adopt alternative methods of explaining a grammatical concept or offering fresh insights into how to approach a passage.

Once additional edits have been implemented, a link to the passage is added to the relevant World homepage, the [TextMap](#) page, and the [Recent Additions](#) section of *Companion*. The passage now becomes accessible to teachers and students, and is ready to be used. However, unlike a printed version of a text-commentary, a passage does not necessarily remain the same once it has been posted. *Companion* welcomes suggestions for improvement and corrections of errors discovered by those who are using the texts with students, and so can report back on how they are received in practice; this means that every passage is a constantly evolving resource, tested by use. The online format allows such improvements to be made quickly and simply, and thus involves a wider community in the collaborative work of enhancing the resources *Companion* offers.

REFLECTIONS

After my passage went live, Judith Sebesta was one of the first people to use it in the classroom. She reported two very different responses from her male and female students. The female students found the passage fascinating and wanted to read more of the *Ars*; one male student's response was best summed up "you've got to be kidding."⁸ Judith feels this reaction was grounded in disbelief that Ovid would offer this kind of advice, as if the idea that the Romans might too have participated in games of seduction was completely unexpected.⁹ Both reactions reveal student

⁸ Personal communication to Ann Raia, 10th July 2011; personal communication to myself, 20th October 2014.

⁹ Personal communication to myself, 28th December 2014.

engagement with the passage, of surprise that the ancient world can be so similar to our own and of curiosity to discover more about the poem. These students thus demonstrated two key results I hoped to achieve by adding this passage to *Companion*—they were challenged to widen their comfortable perceptions of what the ancient world was like, and they actively responded to the text they were studying, rather than dutifully translating it because it was put in front of them without connecting to the material.

From a personal perspective, working with this passage from the *Ars* provided me with a valuable opportunity to deepen my knowledge of Roman literary culture in ways which turned out to be unexpectedly beneficial for my broader academic work. The *Ars* belongs to the subgenre of erotodidacticism, that is, literature that seeks to teach about good erotic practice (see Gibson 13–19). I first came across this concept when preparing the introductory essay, but had no inkling of how useful I would subsequently find it. Shortly after submitting the *Companion* passage, I began work on a conference paper on the *Priapea* that argued that the corpus distinguishes between male and female kinds of erotic knowledge. The background I had become familiar with while researching the *Ars* was invaluable in shaping my initial ideas, which I am continuing to develop into an article. My experience illustrates how preparing a well-chosen passage for *Companion* can strengthen a contributor's knowledge of Roman society as well as draw on prior expertise, with unexpected beneficial consequences both for scholarship and in the classroom.

I also found the experience valuable from a professional development perspective. It gave me an opportunity to improve my knowledge of a genre with which I had not previously worked professionally in any depth, and an author who is perennially popular with students. My grasp of Latin syntax inevitably benefited from close examination of and engagement with a manageable amount of text; the move to poetry from my usual focus on prose also gave me an opportunity to familiarise myself with a different literary genre. My confidence with these kinds of texts increased as a result of preparing the text-commentary, thus enabling me to teach passages like this in the classroom more confidently, both in terms of the language and the cultural context.

The final professional benefit of engaging with *Companion* is joining and cooperating with a network of new colleagues to create new material. *Companion*'s electronic form enables interaction with scholars across continents, just as *Companion* itself is freely available to anybody in the Anglophone world who is inter-

ested in Latin. The larger the network of contributors, the richer the resources that *Companion* offers will become—and the more resources teachers will have in their classrooms to combat the gender stereotypes prevalent in other teaching materials.¹⁰

In conclusion, the process of preparing a text-commentary for *Companion* offers the opportunity to engage in commentary work and to deepen one's knowledge of Roman gender relations without the obligations of committing to a full edition of a text. It also enables contributors to offer something to the wider community of teachers and learners of Latin, particularly those at the intermediate level. The broader use of *Companion* in classrooms will remind teachers and learners alike that not all Romans were men, and not all Roman women belonged to the elite. By representing the breadth and variety of life in Rome and its provinces, we give our students a better understanding of the richness of the ancient world.

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¹⁰ If this article has encouraged you to join the *Companion* team, or you would like to find out more, please get in touch with Ann Raia at araia@cnr.edu, with any particular passage or theme that you would like to explore—she is always delighted to hear from potential contributors.

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Three Categories of Humor in Latin Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Making the Classics relevant in a contemporary classroom setting has been a perennial problem in Latin language instruction for the past few decades. Humor, by contrast, has found increasingly widespread acceptance and direct application in the classroom. This study selects several examples of Latin epigram and satire by canonical authors of suitable difficulty from approximately the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. These passages are classified by the mechanism of their comedic import. The three main sources of humor are identified as arising from incongruity, superiority, and release. Pedagogical methods are devised to reflect this categorization, enabling students to grasp background knowledge of Roman history and culture by analyzing the corresponding operation of humor. Students will also be encouraged to discern the moral implication of the passages and to relate the lessons to their own experience. In this way, texts will be used to fulfill the Horatian definition of poetry: both delighting students and instructing them.

KEYWORDS

Latin, humor, pedagogy, Martial, Catullus, Horace

As educators have recognized the advantages learning Latin can bring, many more schools have been implementing Latin into their curriculum. Matthew Potts, formerly Admissions Counselor of the University of Notre Dame, has even gone so far as to say, “If Latin were dead, every Western culture and language would be also bereft of life.” With this rising interest in Latin has come an increased effort to make Latin and Roman culture more applicable to this day and age. Mythology especially has been espoused as the ideal tool to teach even young students about how the Romans explained events in their lives, and about how various myths have seeped into our own art and literature (Conte 1). While such efforts are successful to a limited extent, this does not preclude developing them further. One method is to promote the use of humor. In order to make Latin seem more approachable, humor can be used to stimulate interest where it might be otherwise lacking and to motivate students to attain the many benefits of Latin study. Humor can also be employed to aid students to form cognitive connections through challenging word play or histori-

cal references. In particular, by dividing comic Latin texts according to the nature of their humor—incongruity, superiority, release—and exploring the passages in the context of this classification, teachers can use the categories of humor present in the selections to guide their students to explore different facets of the Latin language and Roman culture.

BENEFITS OF HUMOR

As a pedagogical tool, humor has found increasingly widespread acceptance and application in the classroom. Humor has measurable medical benefits for students: laughing triggers the brain to start producing catecholamine, a drug that increases alertness. Laughter also reduces stress because the brain discharges endorphins, the body’s natural painkillers (Shade 97). On a more psychological level, humor has been thought to provide the mind with momentary respite “from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naïveté and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality” (Michelson 29). By laughing, we free ourselves from social tensions and whatever constraints we feel in everyday life. Laughter therefore is a healthy and fun way to improve students’ motivation.

Furthermore, humor provides cognitive benefits by training students’ minds to make associations quickly between many subjects in a conceptually valuable way. Laughter is generated when the joke taxes the student’s brain; humor that is too easy or too hard to understand will not result in the same degree of mirth. Humor comprehension requires the ability to condense material and to become aware of and identify the incongruities in logic that render the joke funny. Understanding the joke also requires social, political, or historical background knowledge of the subject; humorous texts can therefore bring delight and be used as a portal into new subjects. Furthermore, according to Shade, the use of humor triggers “the meaningfulness of the material and enhance[s] the learning and retention of such material by increasing associations between material to be learned and material students already knew” (Shade 47). The use of humor not only allows students to become inventive thinkers and analysts, but also to learn and have fun at the same time.

Humor is especially applicable in the classroom, because laughter can help students learn about social boundaries. As Saracho states, “humor seems to be an important tool for young children to feel and construct togetherness, as well as to feel agency of the self and to test limits and boundaries in social relationships”

(Saracho 289). Students feel a sense of unity by laughing together at one common joke. By trying to make each other laugh, students also learn what is allowed to be ridiculed and which topics do not generate the laughter they expect (Raskin 19). A culture of mutual respect is developed through the use of humor and the development of a classroom atmosphere that allows for this opening up (Lytle 199). Motivation and unity are thus enhanced through humor.

THREE TYPES OF HUMOR

This potential application of humor becomes especially clear when we consider the following categorization. In his book *On Humor*, Simon Critchley offers three theories of different types of humor to explain why we laugh under different circumstances (Critchley 2). The first is incongruity theory, according to which we laugh when there is a break between what we would normally expect and what we read. This was recognized in classical antiquity as *para prosdokian*. In his *Problemata*, Aristotle even wrote, “Laughter is a sort of surprise and deception” (*Probl. 965a*). For example, “There are two fish in a tank. One turns to the other and says, ‘Do you know how to drive this?’” Initially, we think that two fish are in a fish bowl. However, the joke subverts our expectations through the double meaning of the word “tank,” and we laugh at the surprise.

The second and most commonly used is superiority theory, according to which we laugh at others’ faults because doing so asserts our superiority. To illustrate, consider this classic “superiority joke” that takes the form of Q & A:

Q: What do you call a lawyer who has gone bad?

A: A senator.

We laugh because we can assert our moral superiority over politicians, whom many of us find difficult to relate to.

The third category of humor is release theory, which was suggested by Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that jokes and humor represented a way in which people could release their pent-up thoughts about death, sex, marriage, authority figures, or bodily functions in a socially acceptable way. In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud describes three different sources of laughter: joking, the comic, and humor. “In joking, energy used to repress hostile feelings can be released in laughter. In the comic, cognitive energy used to solve an intellectual challenge is released. In humor, emotional energy is released by treating a situation

in a non-serious manner" (Smuts). The following is an example of a joke that fits this theory: A woman told her friend, "For eighteen years my husband and I were the happiest people in the world! Then we met." The woman is able to express her supposed frustration at married life by making this joke, which dilutes the possible severity of her statement through laughter. Theoretically, it is possible to divide all forms of humor into these three categories.

The three distinguished theories of humor can potentially apply to a single complex joke. For example, the following joke has been voted "The Winning Joke" on LaughLab, a year long project to discover the world's funniest joke: "Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed. The other guy whips out his phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps, 'My friend is dead! What can I do?' The operator says 'Calm down. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead.' There is a silence, then a shot is heard. Back on the phone, the guy says 'OK, now what?'" Professor Wiseman explains how the joke makes us laugh: "we feel superior to the stupid hunter, realize the incongruity of him misunderstanding the operator, and the joke helps us to laugh about our concerns about our own mortality" (Wiseman). We laugh because the combination of various psychological factors triggers a physical response.

Through the process of studying these three types of humor in Latin texts, therefore, students can recognize a deeper understanding of the semantic range of words and learn otherwise less engaging features of Roman culture. Each type of humor offers its own particular pedagogical advantages.

- If a student would like to focus on the lexical range of a word and to understand how Romans manipulated language, for example, the incongruity approach may be emphasized. Incongruity humor, the surprise coming from a violation of expectations, can tell students what the Romans' initial expectations would have been and what the Romans considered funny or witty.
- If students would like to explore the Romans' social attitudes, then the instructor may guide them to passages with the superiority approach. Superiority humor used by Roman poets will teach students about whom the Romans considered to be outsiders and the different stereotypes extant in imperial Rome.

- Finally, if the instructor would like to have his or her students investigate the social pressures surrounding the Romans, then the focus should lie in passages containing release humor. Release humor, the laughter that frees us from constraints of conventionality, is most apparent in satire, which in turn reveals Romans' opinions about their political climate and their social mores. The same passage may contain all three types of humor, but focusing on a particular category will guide students to a more specific path of knowledge. Humor thus provides entertainment and education.

The editors of *Wheelock's Latin* and more modern textbooks such as *Learn to Read Latin* understand the need for more humorous texts in the Latin classroom, as shown by the abundance of excerpts from Martial's *Epigrammata* instead of contrived Latin sentences or passages from Livy. The next step for instructors is to think about how to organize such texts and to teach them properly. The following part of the paper contains several examples of humorous Latin epigram and satire by canonical authors from approximately the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. Not all of these texts are present in *Wheelock's Latin*, but they are meant to be of suitable difficulty for beginning Latin students with basic knowledge of grammar and for intermediate students who wish to further explore Roman culture and Latin syntax. These passages are classified by the mechanism of their comedic import: incongruity, superiority, and release. Studying these texts with a more critical eye will enable students to grasp the operation of humor as well as corresponding background knowledge of Roman history and culture. Through group critical reading, instructor elucidation, and small group discussions fostering self-examination, students will be further encouraged to discern the moral implications of the passages and to relate the lessons to their own experience. The short analysis following each text is merely a guide as to how the instructor may help students interpret the passages; for those further interested, the annotated bibliography will lead to scholarly studies that explore the texts in depth.

A SELECTION OF HUMOROUS PASSAGES

Incongruity Humor

If the teacher wants students to focus on the lexical range of a word, then the incongruity approach would be suitable. Incongruity humor is semantically illumi-

nating in a way that will be useful for students of the language. The double meaning of a word can create laughter by subverting our initial expectations that were fostered by the original use of the word. Martial was especially conscious of his use of incongruity in his epigrams, of the “unexpected contrast between perfection or completeness, previously conceived by the mind with or without the aid of external presentation, and imperfection or incompleteness of too trifling a character to cause serious emotion” (Craig 9). Studying the operation of this type of humor will force a student to seriously think about how language can be manipulated. Through these examples of word play explained below, students will learn to keep an open mind when approaching literary texts.

Martial Epigrammata 2.38

Quid mihi reddit ager quaeris, Line, Nomentanus?

Hoc mihi reddit ager: te, Line, non video.

You ask what the land Nomentanus yields to me, Linus?

The land gives this to me: I do not see you, Linus.

Teachers of this passage would want to emphasize Martial’s usage of the word *reddat*. In the first line, Linus uses the word *reddat* in its agricultural and economic sense: “yield.” Consequently, we expect Martial to reply with some discussion on money or agricultural harvest. However, Martial reduces the word into its most basic definition: *red-* “back” and *-do* “give.” This word play creates the gap between the expected discussion on economics set up by Linus’s question and the resulting insult by Martial. When we investigate the Latin further, we also discover that the name Linus “serves as a more generic butt for insults, with a noticeable tendency toward the sexual and the financial” (Williams 143).

Teaching the humor in this passage to students would require a combination of self-investigation and instructor elucidation in the classroom. First, with no context given, the students should be allowed time to translate the epigram on their own with some grammar or vocabulary help from the teacher. Even with reading *reddat* as “give back” both times, students would find the epigram funny because the split in tone between the first part of the epigram and the last four words is already clear. Students will then be encouraged to go to the dictionary and find out all the possible definitions of *reddat* apart from the most basic meaning of “give back.” They will discover the extent of its semantic range and figure out one of its secondary mean-

ings: “yield, make a return, produce” (OLD, *reddo* 15). Finally, they will understand the pun and recognize why Romans would have found this epigram so amusing. Through this process, students will thus learn to appreciate the multiplicity of meanings present in one word and begin to understand the correct interpretation of both Latin and English. Furthermore, students will retain the imparted lesson better in the context of this funny passage, thus bringing laughter to learning. As an exercise, the students might be instructed to make their own pun with a word they find from a dictionary.

Martial Epigrammata 3.9

Versiculos in me narratur scribere Cinna.

Non scribit, cuius carmina nemo legit.

Cinna is said to write little verses against me.

He doesn't write, whose poems no one reads.

After the first line, the reader expects Martial to contest the claim and say that Cinna doesn't write poems about Martial. Indeed, Martial starts the second line with *non scribit*, which causes us to expect denial. Martial, however, redefines the word *scribit* in its philosophical context: if you write something but no one reads your work, are you actually writing? While no meaning is lost in translation, Martial thus gives two distinct definitions of the same word and creates laughter by subverting our expectations.¹

This text, as well as each of the following passages, can be taught as one would teach Martial *Epigrammata* 2.38. In the case of this epigram, however, a dictionary would not be able to capture a range of connotations present in *scribit*. The definition of *scribit* as “writing, the act that depends upon someone reading the written work” is not a meaning represented in a dictionary. While *reddo* demonstrates the openness of language as represented by the dictionary, *scribit* teaches that language evolves beyond the dictionary. Students will realize that there is no need to always reach for the dictionary to find a humorous pun. Understanding the context will force them to think beyond the confines of grammar and syntax.

¹ The humor is further heightened by the irony of the situation. Martial is criticizing Cinna, just as Cinna is said to do. In this case, however, Martial proves himself right because we are reading this epigram two thousand years later while none of this Cinna's writing remains.

Superiority Humor

Superiority humor is especially useful in the classroom because it gives access to Roman language and culture in an amusing way. From the Latin passages, students can learn about elements of Roman social history—whom the Romans considered strangers or inferiors and who deserved to get insulted when they overstepped certain social boundaries. In many cases, incongruity humor is used as a means to further the insult introduced through superiority humor. The word play sets the stage for the final blow in the latter part of the texts. Students can thus learn about Roman social attitudes and explore the lexical range of a Latin word at the same time.

Martial 5.47

Numquam se cenasse domi Philo iurat, et hoc est:

Non cenat, quotiens nemo vocavit eum.

Philo swears that he has never dined at home, and this is true:

He does not dine, as often as no one has invited him.

The incongruity humor in this epigram lies in Philo's self-conceived image, as opposed to the truth as given by Martial. The reader is led to think that Philo is so popular that he always has friends willing to treat him to dinner. However, we learn in the second line that Philo is so stingy that he will not even eat dinner if he has to pay with his own money. Howell offers a slightly different explanation that concisely summarizes the epigram's effect: "This epigram deals with the traditional butt of humorous attack, the parasite ... if no one else feeds him, he cannot afford to feed himself, and goes hungry. The first line gives Philo's hyperbolical boast, and then arouses our interest by confirming its truth, so that the second line can deliver the explanatory blow" (131). The superiority humor gives the incongruity a comic edge that it otherwise wouldn't have if Philo didn't seem to be such a boastful stooge or a pitiful parasite.

In order for the students to understand this epigram properly, some elucidation from the instructor is needed. The incongruity humor is not hard to comprehend, and students can easily recognize that Philo is being maligned. However, the insult against Philo reveals far more than his supposed stinginess. In Roman society, the culture of the *cena* required reciprocation from all parties. When one noble invited another to dinner and entertainment, it was expected that the guest respond by

becoming the host at a *cena* at his own home. Declaring that he never dines at home shows that Philo is abusing the system of mutual respect and gift exchange. Philo does not understand this language of social equality and must be reprimanded. By the time the teacher explains the background information above and demonstrates how the superiority humor is enhanced recognizing the importance of the *cena*, students will have explored a large part of Roman dining culture and forms of etiquette.

Catullus 39

*EGNATIVS, quod candidos habet dentes, 1
renidet usque quaque. si ad rei uentum est
subsellium, cum orator excitat fletum,
renidet ille; si ad pii rogum fili
lugetur, orba cum flet unicum mater, 5
renidet ille. quidquid est, ubicumque est,
quodcumque agit, renidet: hunc habet morbum,
neque elegantem, ut arbitror, neque urbanum.
quare monendum est te mihi, bone Egnati.
si urbanus es aut Sabinus aut Tiburs 10
aut pinguis Vmber aut obesus Etruscus
aut Lanuuinus ater atque dentatus
aut Transpadanus, ut meos quoque attingam,
aut quilubet, qui puriter lauit dentes,
tamen renidere usque quaque te nolle: 15
nam risu inepto res ineptior nulla est.
nunc Celtiber es: Celtiberia in terra,
quod quisque minxit, hoc sibi solet mane
dentem atque russam defricare gingiuam,
ut quo iste uester expolitior dens est, 20
hoc te amplius bibisse praedicet loti.*

*EGNATIUS, because he has snow-white teeth,
smiles all the time. If you're a defendant
in court, when the counsel draws tears,
he smiles: if you're in grief at the pyre
of pious sons, the lone lorn mother weeping,
he smiles. Whatever it is, wherever it is,*

*whatever he's doing, he smiles: he's got a disease,
neither polite, I would say, nor charming.
So a reminder to you, from me, good Egnatius.
If you were a Sabine or Tiburtine
or a fat Umbrian, or plump Etruscan,
or dark toothy Lanuvian, or from beyond the Po,
and I'll mention my own Veronese too,
or whoever else clean their teeth religiously,
I'd still not want you to smile all the time:
there's nothing more foolish than a foolish smile.
Now you're Spanish: in the country of Spain
what each man pisses, he's used to brushing
his teeth and red gums with, every morning,
so the fact that your teeth are so polished
just shows you're the more full of piss.*

(A. S. Kline, trans.)

Teachers will use this epigram to show which neighbors the Romans considered to be inferior. Catullus cites *aut Sabinus aut Tiburs/ aut pinguis Vmber aut obesus Etruscus/ aut Lanuuinus ater atque dentatus/ aut Transpadanus* “a Sabine or Tiburtine or a fat Umbrian, or plump Etruscan or dark and toothy Lanuvian, or from beyond the Po” as the non-*urbani* considered socially acceptable in Roman society. The farther away from *urbanus*—both literally the “city-dweller” and figuratively “sophisticated”—the list moves, the more foreign the *Celtiber* “Spaniard” is, both geographically and socially (Nappa 79). Thus, students will discover how much Roman history and culture they can learn from one funny, insulting poem.

Students will observe that the insult against Egnatius goes beyond ethnic discrimination against the Spanish. Catullus finds Egnatius to be uncouth because he does not use his mouth as a proper Roman would. The word *renidet* specifically denotes a false smile (Ellis 139). By displaying his teeth at such inappropriate moments, Egnatius is letting his vanity take the place of his rhetoric—there is incongruity in the way his mouth is used. Whilst he should be defending a client in court or offering a eulogy at a funeral, he is smiling and flaunting his immaculate teeth. Catullus adds insult to the injury by accusing Egnatius and his fellow Spanish countrymen of brushing their teeth with urine, a practice that has never been well

regarded. From the superiority humor of this poem, students will recognize how much Romans valued rhetoric and using his mouth properly.

This poem can be used as a tool to branch off into different topics of classroom discussion. The teacher could hold a geography lesson, using the names listed in this poem as a starting point to show students the extent of the Roman Empire. The teacher could engage in a discussion about rhetoric, which formed a vital part of a Greek or Roman male noble's life. Apart from pointing out parts of the poem that generate superiority humor, the teacher can thus use the poem as an introduction to a variety of different subjects as he or she sees fit.

Release Humor

The theory of release humor states that laughter sometimes arises because it allows us to free ourselves from social expectations and helps maintain homeostasis in our bodies and in society. Dirty jokes are one popular form of release humor. Society looks down upon vulgarity and discussing sex in public settings; by making a dirty joke, we laugh because we are glad to be temporarily relieved from the burden of speaking properly all the time. Besides obscene jokes, parody and burlesque and other non-sexual humor can also mock social norms. By studying this form of humor, students will be able to recognize the social tensions and concerns of the Romans.

Martial Epigrammata 2.38

Quid mihi reddit ager quaeris, Line, Nomentanus?

Hoc mihi reddit ager: te, Line, non video.

You ask what the land Nomentanus yields to me, Linus?

The land gives this to me: I do not see you, Linus.

There are two ways the humor in this epigram can be shown to depend on relief. First, there is a release of energy when going from the complex to the simple. Linus uses the word *reddat* in its economic and agricultural senses: "yield." Martial reduces the word into its most basic definition: *re* "back" and *do* "give." The Romans and reader alike are relieved because there is no need to think so hard about words anymore. Our minds are relieved from having to search for complicated connotations all the time.

Second, it can be illustrated that Romans would have found relief from the social pressure to make the procurement of money one of their priorities in daily life. They would have laughed not only at Linus, the man who can only see the economic benefits of a country estate, but also from the relief of defying the social convention of always striving to make money. For the elite who could afford it, the countryside sometimes served to provide respite from society. Linus is further ridiculed because he intrudes into Martial's sanctuary; he does not know decorum. Students will thus benefit from learning the varying social expectations present in Roman society.

In order for them to understand release humor, the teacher must explain the cultural context behind the *ager*. Elementary schoolers will not have as firm a grasp on the concept of economics as middle or high schoolers, so this particular epigram might be suitable for students of higher grades to understand. *Epigrammata* 3.9, on the other hand, deals with the concept of writing, which any student would be able to understand more easily. Any humorous text should be analyzed thus so that students of all levels of Latin proficiency can tackle passages suitable to their level and find it funny and educational.

Horace, Sermo 2.5.1-3

*[Ulixes:] 'Hoc quoque, Tiresia, praeter narrata petenti
responde, quibus amissas reparare queam res
artibus atque modis. Quid rides?'*

*[Ulysses:] Answer this, too, Tiresias, add to what you've told me:
By what methods and arts can I hope to recover
My lost fortune? ... Why do you laugh?
(A. S. Kline, trans.)*

Students at a more advanced stage of study will learn to apply their background knowledge of the Greek and Roman epic tradition to find the humor in this passage. Horace's satire, written as a dialogue between Ulysses and Tiresias in *Odyssey* 11, burlesques Homer's underworld meeting between the two and exposes the Roman practice of legacy-hunting. As Juster writes, "This satire is perhaps the first great spoof of Roman literature, although there was a long tradition of parodying Homer in Greek literature" (140). Odysseus' literary image is quite complicated, but he is never portrayed as a money-grabbing thug as in this piece of satire. Knowing that Romans laughed at a humanized Odysseus displaying unheroic qualities such as greed, students will realize that even the Romans occasionally thought epic and

tragedy, as well as the values these genres advocate, to be overbearing. It's a relief when we learn that Odysseus does not have to don his heroic mantle every day. This case confirms that there are opportunities for learning through humor at multiple education levels. Even when students mature and advance to the more difficult texts, there will be yet more for them to learn. Satire may be the ideal educational tool for students of advanced levels because Roman satiric social criticism had moral content intended to engage readers into discussions (Keane 107).

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Alexander, Richard J. *Aspects of Verbal Humour in English*. Germany: Tübingen, 1997.

This book is a great source on verbal humor in general. It explores how humor only works under the right sociocultural context and discusses how jokes and other forms of verbal humor reveal aspects of English culture. The author even provides visual aids that illustrate the various components of a successful joke. Chapter 10 specifically deals with humor and education.

Attardo, Salvatore. *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 2001.

This book expounds upon the Semantic-Script Theory of Humor and the General Theory of Verbal Humor, which were developed by Salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin. Most of the book is devoted to demonstrating how to apply these theories to texts.

Davies, Christie. *Jokes and their Relation to Society*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998.

This book is a comparative and historical study of jokes and other forms of humor. The main argument is that people make jokes when they feel threatened by the fear of failure and the fear that they will lose their humanity in the pursuit of perfection. The author explores ethnic jokes from all over the world and tries to discern what the nature of these jokes can reveal about the specific culture and race.

Latta, Robert L. *The Basic Humor Process*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 1999.

This book presents and defends a new theory of humor that the author calls “theory L.” The first two chapters give a general overview on humor, and the rest of the book is devoted to “theory L.” The author further argues that the incongruity theory of humor and “theory L” cannot coexist. To corroborate his thesis, the author provides an in-depth analysis on incongruity humor that instructors may find insightful.

Zupancic, Alenka. *The Odd One In*. London: The MIT Press, 2008.

This book offers a psychoanalytic approach to comedy by “philosophizing comedy.” It explores how comedy has become distant from people’s actual emotions and has made emotions distant as well. Jokes and humor “naturalize” and bring “immediacy” to man, nature, political differences, and other aspects of life; these in turn become unnatural.

On Latin Literature

Duckworth, George E. *The Nature of Roman Comedy*. 1952. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1994.

Most of this book deals with Roman comedy in its dramatic nature. It gives a comprehensive look from the characters to the meter of the lines to the stage. Chapter 11 may be of particular interest to those studying ancient and modern theories on humor.

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This book offers a full explanation on every genre of Latin literature, useful for a general overview of epigram or satire.

Miller, Paul Allen, ed. *Latin Verse Satire: An Anthology and Critical Reader*. London: Routledge, 2005.

This book contains many texts and commentaries on Latin verse satire as well as a general explanation of the genre.

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This book also offers a comprehensive look on Roman verse satire and how the satirist uses humor to make a political statement. It contains a section dedicated to Horace’s *Sermo 2.5*.

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ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES FOR EACH CATEGORY OF HUMOR

This list is by no measure complete. I focus on Martial, Catullus, and Horace, but many other authors have written humorously educational material as well. Persius and Juvenal are known for their satires, but I find them to be less humorous and more moralistic. For comedic novels, there are two renown ones: Apuleus's *Golden Ass* and Petronius's *Satyricon*. However, these novels are rather raunchy and proper caution must be exercised in choosing passages suitable for students.

Likewise, the categorical organization is by no means definite. Some may find elements of one category of humor in selections listed in another.

Superiority

Martial *Epigrammata*

7.3

11.92

Catullus *Carmina*

12

22

26

44

84

Horace *Satires*

1.9

Incongruity

Martial *Epigrammata*

7.3

11.92

Catullus *Carmina*

26

Petronius *Satyricon: Dinner of Trimalchio*

Chapter 36

Testamentum Porcelli (text found [here](#))

Release

Horace *Satires*

1.9

Petronius *Satyricon: Dinner of Trimalchio*

Chapter 41

Testamentum Porcelli

Why Oral Latin?

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ABSTRACT

Should all students and scholars of Latin use an oral approach? This increasingly common question is important as we consider whether we as teachers are utilizing the best possible methods for our purpose—whether that purpose be overall linguistic competence, or strictly the ability to read canonical texts. Five motivations for the use of oral Latin by teachers and students of any level are described: deepening the understanding of Latin, developing fluency in reading, offering variety for students of different learning styles, historical success of the method, and motivating learners. This paper delineates these motivations and explores to what extent oral Latin is effective for each.

KEYWORDS

spoken Latin, benefits of oral Latin, reasons for oral Latin

The question of whether all students and scholars of Latin should use an oral approach has become increasingly prevalent throughout recent years, and pertains to all learners and instructors of Latin. It is important to consider whether we as teachers are utilizing the best possible methods for our purpose—whether that purpose be overall linguistic competence, or strictly the ability to read canonical texts. Although none of them are necessarily incompatible, there seem to be at least five distinct motivations, or reasons, for the use of oral Latin by teachers and students of any level. By “oral Latin” I mean anything from the spectrum of communicative activities, categorized here according to the [World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#). These Standards use three categories to determine competency in the broader goal of communication, both spoken and written: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication. A type of interpersonal communication, for instance, would be natural conversation, where students can make exchanges freely on any subject, or teacher-directed oral drills, where students create and compose responses. Interpretive communication, on the other hand, describes aural comprehension, where learners “understand, interpret, and analyze” Latin words and discourse when heard.

Presentational communication involves activities, where students report information, discuss assigned topics, or narrate a story or event.

1) The first and perhaps most widespread reason for the incorporation of an oral component into any language classroom is in order to attain as complete a comprehension of the language as possible. When a person desires to work to a deep understanding and knowledge of a language, they need to cultivate all aspects of that language. If a person can only read or perhaps write in that language, it certainly cannot be said that they have mastered it in its entirety. This is particularly evident in many modern language classes; students must come to master the language not only by listening and reading, but also by speaking and writing ([National Standards for Foreign Language Learning](#)). It is because of this that the [Standards for Classical Language Learning](#) recommend that students of Latin and Greek also speak, hear, read, and write when learning either language (8).

While the reasons one wishes to learn Latin in the first place vary from person to person, the reason why many already use some sort of oral approach is that it is proven to be effective and efficient in developing linguistic competence as a whole (Richards and Rodgers 36). Language students of communicative approaches demonstrate a familiarity and knowledge of the more subtle distinctions of the language when they speak it, which demands immediate production. According to the results of a study evaluated by Lightbown and Spada, “second language programmes that focus only on accuracy and form do not give students sufficient opportunity to develop communication abilities in a second language” (158-159). Even when one’s goal is solely the ability to read and translate Latin texts fluently, developing communication abilities is vital to building these skills—a reader engages with the author in a communicative way in order to understand and interpret correctly the author’s meaning. An understanding of subtle and nuanced writing can best be learned by developing communication skills. There is current and increasing research and evidence that producing output can facilitate development of a second language: “Output has a number of functions, including promoting automatization, pushing learners to notice gaps in their L2 [second language] knowledge, encouraging them to process syntactically rather than just semantically, and providing opportunities for them to test hypotheses they have constructed about the target language” (Mackey and Abbuhl 218, summarizing Swain).

Although it requires extra time and effort to incorporate a speaking component into a curriculum, the ‘short-cut’ method alone, known as the ‘grammar-

translation' method, has shown itself to be bankrupt in the goal of overall linguistic competence: students (as well as teachers, perhaps) are often unable to read Latin proficiently outside of a very narrow range of (two or three) authors; thus, if our end is to teach them the language as a whole, or even just to read more broadly, an oral component is necessary. The grammar-translation method predominantly trains students to develop only one principal skill—that of reading—while ignoring the development of skills such as writing or speaking. It limits the purpose of language learning to literary fluency and the ability to translate from the target language into the first language. While this is arguably the worthiest and most essential goal of learning a dead language, it can best be accomplished by means of fluency in the language as a whole. Furthermore, as an effect of the grammar-translation approach, the culture of the target language—whether explicitly or implicitly—is viewed as consisting solely of literature and fine arts (Larsen-Freeman 17-18).

2) Developing fluency in reading, however, is also a common motivation for the use of oral Latin in the classroom. “We can better teach students to read Latin and understand the cultures of Latinity by having them engage in a combination of speaking, listening, and writing as well as reading” (Coffee 256). There are several ways that oral Latin enhances reading ability. For example, when listening to spoken Latin, the listener’s comprehension must match the speed of the speaker, and requires him to comprehend in Latin word order, so that he must process in chunks rather than single words. All of these skills develop a faster, more capable, and more fluent reader. Another advantage of oral input is that it offers more comprehensible input than is possible from just reading—because, for example, the instructor, or interlocutor, can modify what is said to correspond to the listener’s ability to understand. Considerable research has been done on the value of second-language input—particularly interactionally modified input, where the speaker and listener negotiate for meaning, while the speaker checks for understanding, and adapts and adjusts in real time the level of speech to the learner’s particular stage in their development (Mackey and Abbuhl 207-15).

Not only listening, but speaking in Latin also assists a great deal in developing proficiency in grammar and syntax, as well as in building and reinforcing vocabulary (Gruber-Miller 88; Swain). Conversation necessitates an instinctive and immediate oral comprehension and response formulation in a way that reading alone does not. Although using Latin to speak about daily life forces students to learn some words that may not be useful for reading canonical authors such as Cicero,

Caesar, or Vergil, it still provides them with much needed exercises of the majority of common vocabulary and syntax used both in speech and in reading the greats.

Moreover, this separation from the written language and the spoken language is not specific to Latin: if a lover of Dante takes an introductory Italian course, there are many words of daily usage that he will learn that will be of no use in reading Dante; the diligent student does not disregard those words, but learns them because that is precisely what is meant to “know Italian” or any other language. Finally, although there are some more recent neologisms that are useful when speaking Latin today, even the daily and colloquial vocabulary that is commonly used aids students in reading more broadly, such as Terence or Plautus.

Furthermore, second language learners who are accustomed to speaking that language generally learn and remember grammatical forms and vocabulary better than students who are not, because they are familiar with creating and repeating these words and forms—not to mention the fact that their accuracy and consistency in pronunciation, phrase grouping, and voice inflection is much greater.¹ These skills are especially useful when students try to read more difficult Latin, where they need to be able to understand complex forms and sentences, as well as recall much vocabulary, in order to read such works; indeed, “learning vocabulary is a basic prelude to reading, and oral Latin drills and activities are demonstrably the best way to do that” (Wills 32). Because of this, students who can speak and write Latin read more easily as well as more quickly.

Another important aspect of reading fluency is the proper expression and performance dimension of certain written texts—and oral Latin clearly builds the skills necessary to do this. “Listening and speaking offer students a way to understand Plautus and Catullus, Cicero and Petronius as writers of texts not just to be read, but also to be heard and performed” (Gruber-Miller 88). These important aspects of literature are worthy of consideration, for communication involves more than just grammar, syntax, and word choice. In order to wholly understand what an author is communicating, it is essential to be able to identify certain stylistic devices, for example, that can best be recognized when spoken.

3) A third reason for incorporating oral Latin into the classroom is that it adds variety for a diversity of ages and learning styles—which, as all teachers know, are many. “History repeats itself. It was as a reformer of elementary education that

1 These are sample progress indicators of Standard 1.2 of the [Standards for Classical Language Learning](#)

Comenius argued for active learning in his *Ianua Linguarum* of 1631: *Omnis lingua usu potius discitur quam paeceptis, id est, audiendo, legendo, relegendō, imitatiōnē manu et lingua temptando quam creberrume*” (Wills 28). Many students have a difficult time learning languages by grammatical analysis only; and, evidently, they learned their first language by a communicative method. Thus, it is counterintuitive to entirely exclude the one method best attested for successful language learning (Wills 32). Furthermore, an oral approach provides another means of teaching and using the language, and thus contributes to the variety necessary for a successful classroom. For example, it is estimated that as few as 10 percent of the students in our classrooms are operation learners—they who would do well with the grammar-translation method—while the rest are comprehension learners, and excel with a method more suited to their learning style (Deagon 33-34). There are many other ways to categorize the multitude of diverse learning styles, such as the contrast between visual and auditory learners. While visual learners process information best through what they see, auditory learners process best through their ears. There is a great deal of research focusing on these learning styles, and the methods that are best suited to them: “Obviously, a reading course, which focuses on the printed word, will appeal most to visual learners. The challenge for the teacher, then, is to assist the auditory types with the reading process, which can be approached in several practical ways” (Hedgcock and Ferris 67). Two of these approaches that are particularly applicable to second language acquisition are reading aloud to students, and encouraging them to discuss aloud what they have read or heard.

4) Many use oral Latin in the classroom simply because of its proven success in history. As Jeffrey Wills explains, “we know that almost all the millions of people who learned Latin in the ancient world did so by an active, oral method” (Wills 31). The tradition whereby teachers teach Latin by speaking and writing as well as reading continued, in one form or another, all the way from antiquity to the twentieth century. It was particularly preserved in Catholic seminaries. Although Latin was no one’s native language in the middle ages, nor in the Renaissance, educated men and women used it actively, as it was the language of the church, scholastics, and law. Thus, the ability to use Latin extemporaneously, both in writing and in speaking, was of great value in those days. The pedagogy of the Society of Jesus, for example, established in the sixteenth century, was an oral method that remained without many changes up until the eighteenth century. Because we are a consortium wishing to draw wisdom from those who have gone before us, we ought

to consider the ways and wisdom not only of the ancients but also of the past two thousand years, especially of the times when classical studies were at their zenith. Persuaded and inspired by the success of the past, many believe that we ought to follow and reinstate the mode of teaching that was maintained for so long in Europe, that produced so many great scholastics in the Renaissance, and that long preceded the “traditional method” of today.

Inspired by its expansive role in the communication of the past, there are some who cultivate and promote an oral use of Latin—particularly a conversational use—for the sake of modern unity, for a common, neutral language, whether between scholars, or among classicists, or throughout the whole world. They think that the Latin works and thoughts passed down throughout the ages should be an anchor, a font of unity in the modern world. As Pope John XXIII wrote, “*suae enim sponte naturae lingua Latina ad provehendum apud populos quoslibet omnem humanitatis cultum est péraccòmodáta: cum invidiam non commoveat, singulis gentibus se aequabilem praestet, nullius partibus faveat, omnibus postremo sit grata et amica*” (Pope John XXIII 3). Though Latin is not now the first language of any people, some say it should be the sole mode of communication among those who study Latin works, or even among scholars of other disciplines, as it was at the time of Erasmus, for example. One instance of this is seen in the periodical *Vox Latina*, established in 1965, which, self-described, “*ad communicationem internationalem spectat*” (“Descriptio”).

5) The final motivation that I have found among those who use any aspect of oral Latin is simply that it is enjoyable and fosters the joy of learning; indeed, as only those who use it know, it is a language that “is special for each of us who uses it, that no one owns, where the construction of every sentence can have charm, and the use of a half-remembered word or phrase brings a shared pleasure of recognition” (Coffee 269). When they realize it is a possibility, many students request the use of oral—especially conversational—Latin in their classes; they recognize the joy and value of communicating in the language they are learning. They see students of modern languages learning to speak and communicate, and desire to do so themselves. The sense of accomplishment from being able to speak in a second language works to encourage students to progress in their learning. Furthermore, oral Latin excites in students—especially in young children—a greater interest for the language. At a younger age, they are less capable of grasping the complex grammatical and syntactical concepts explained in high school and college language courses.

Many younger students learn better by speaking and listening than they do by reading. Those who are proponents of *Foreign Language Exploratory Courses*, for example, where “children receive paramount benefit not so much from the particular language chosen for instruction, but from the experience and process of learning a language,” utilize oral activities for this very reason: because they are the most effective method for engaging and inspiring younger students. (“FLEX or FLES?”).

CONCLUSION

Hopefully it is clear that whether one desires mastery of the language as a whole or the greatest fluency in reading, or whether they wish to accommodate more learning styles in the classroom or to emulate the success of history, it is necessary to use Latin orally. But perhaps this final motivation will persuade those still struggling to recognize the pedagogical and intellectual benefits of oral Latin: who would not want to speak with the same words, in the same tongue that the most brilliant minds of the past two millennia so eloquently and lucidly used?

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Cur discipuli linguae Latinae Latine loquantur¹

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Cum fines vel causas gregium Latine loquentium describuntur atque intelleguntur, rogare num omnes discipuli fautoresque huius linguae Latine loqui debeant possumus, quae a nonnullis nonnumquam rogatur. Nam quorsum ac quatenus discipuli linguae Latinae Latine loquantur, atque num omnes ex his discipulis Latine loqui debeant, omnium Latinae studentium interest.

Iam multum pridem causae et tuitiones ab aliis hac in provincia bene versatis propositae sunt atque eae rationes cur discipuli in scholis Latinis Latine loquantur apud plerosque laudantur. Quinque saltem fines Latine in scholis loquendi exstant, ex quibus nulli sunt omnino contrarii, atque quidam a multis simul adhibentur—licet ultimus vel summus finis inter eos differat.

1) Finis ex his quinque maior, maxime vulgatus, saepius invenitur, est idem quem etiam magistri discipulique nondum Latine loqui assueti efficere conantur: id est, linguam comprehendere quanto fieri potest—penitus, argute, subtiliter. Licet fines vel causae cur discipuli linguam Latinam discere cupiant inter se different, causa prior cur Latine in scholis loquantur est ut linguam melius discant, quod omnes discipuli et magistri huius linguae, vel cuiuslibet linguae, cupiunt; Latine loquuntur *discendi causa*.

Ii, qui iam pridem rationes his de rebus proposuerunt, discipulos Latine loquendo et efficacius, et profundius, et naturalius linguam ipsam discere dicunt. Lingua nihil aliud est nisi modus communicandi. Discipuli linguarum, qui colloqui assuescunt, generaliter et universe melius formas et res grammaticas discunt memoriaque retinent, quia multa vocabula et varias formas grammaticas facere atque repetere solent, nedum de ictu ponendo dicamus.

Discipuli qui linguis modernis student, suam linguae notitiam atque agnitio-nem discriminum subtiliorum demonstrare solent cum linguam proferant loquendo, quod cogitationem subitaneam postulat. Si quis totam linguam intellegere et scire conari cupit, omnes partes, omnes modos hanc linguam usurpandi discere debet. Adhuc etiam est regula multorum collegiorum lyceorumque quod discipuli cui-

¹ A version of this paper was first delivered at the 2014 Annual Meeting of CAMWS in Waco, TX.

usquam linguae peritiam et volubilitatem quodam modo habere debent; plerumque non licet linguae Latinae hanc regulam supersedere. Si discipuli tantum legere et fortasse scribere sciunt, totam linguam callere dici non possunt. Hoc enim videtur in scholis linguarum modernarum; discipuli linguam discunt non solum audiendo, sed etiam loquendo. Ne multa sim, sufficiat hoc: opus est linguis nostris, linguas dico in oribus, uti, ut linguam novam quamvis perdiscamus. Pedagogia saltem linguarum modernarum nobis persuadeat: si omnes virtutes discendi usurpantur, non modo legere et in linguam aliam vertere, lingua melius tenetur. Propter haec indicia, quidam greges fautorum linguarum antiquarum hanc formulam in scholis postulant: quod discipuli et loquantur, et audiant, et scribant quo efficacius linguam discant.

Quomodo homines praeteritorum saeculorum linguae Latinae studuerint quoque Latine loqui in scholis Latinis esse utile demonstrat. Continua fuerat traditio qua magistri linguam Latinam colloquendo et scribendo et legendo docuerunt, ab antiquitate usque ad saeculum vicesimum. Primum instituta est in lyceis et universitatibus studiorum Europae medio saeculi duodecimi, et omnino perseverata est per Renascentiam, at tum solum in seminariis Catholicis adhibita est ad medium saeculi vicesimi. Etiam his temporibus nos hanc traditionem velut exemplum vel normam linguae Latinae docendae sequamur. Quamquam lingua Latina nemini fuit sermo patrius medio aevo, ut ita dicam, nec in Renascentia, usus activus inter homines doctos viguit, praecipue quod lingua Latina fuit lingua rebus et ecclesiasticis, et scholasticis, et legalibus propria. Pedagogia enim illius gregis nomine Societatis Iesu, condita saeculo decimo sexto, quae est systema sive formula docendi quae remansit sine multis mutationibus usque ad saeculum duodecimimum, usum linguae Latinae activum requisivit. Quia sumus quasi consortio quae sapientiam a praeteritis extrahere cupit, nos sapientiam non modo ab antiquis sed etiam ab exemplo milium annorum praeteritorum, cum doctrina classica fuit tam optima, considerare oportet. Illam traditionem quae diu erat consuetudo in Europa, quae tam optimos Renascenciae antiquarios prodidit, quae hodie ‘modum traditionalem’ docendi revera multo praevenit, temporibus nostris restituere debemus.

Multi enim discipuli Latine loqui cupiunt et a magistris requirunt, quod iucundum eis est, et studium excitat, atque eorum interest. Colloquia habere Latina est aliud instrumentum utile quod discipulos melius in scholis discere iuvat. Multi discipuli linguae Latinae Latine cum condiscipulis loquendo fruuntur, ut discipuli modernarum linguarum. Discipulus enim cuiuslibet linguae consuetudinem cum

lingua habere debet ut lingua nova cum eo communicet, ac ut is nova lingua comunicare possit.

2) Puto nos omnes consentire ultimam causam eis qui usu linguae Latinae activo in scholis utuntur non esse solum ut optimum linguae intellectum habeant. Nam plerique qui Latine loquuntur discendi causa, hanc maiorem finem cupiunt: id est, discipuli linguam Latinam et Latine loquendo, et audiendo, et scribendo, et legendo discunt, ut vera opera Latina legant, atque ut ingenium Latinitatis intelligent. Potius tales homines servare studium litterarum antiquarum cupiunt, ut sapientiam et consilia ex his optimis operibus sententiisque lingua principale legendo ac tractando trahant. Nemo miratur discipulos altioris Latinitatis qui loqui sciant bene scribere, quique bene scribant, bene legere.

Latine loqui est methodus utilis in principio linguae Latinae discendae, praecepue cum pueris; sed usus linguae Latinae activus etiam utilis et efficax est in schoulis altioribus, cum discipuli difficilioribus rebus grammaticis student, ac cum potestas vera opera Latina legendi crescit. Cum discipuli hunc locum attingunt, agnoscere atque intellegere formas intricatas, eis bene uti, discereque multa vocabula, debent, ut melius atque citius legant. In hoc loco studendi, usus linguae Latinae activus in scribendo atque magis in loquendo (quod multo difficilius est si locutor rectissime loqui conatur) summum auxilium est.

Bene recordor enim, quod in anno tertio meo apud universitatem studiorum, iter Latinum in montibus feci cum aliis discipulis ac magistris linguae Latinae, quo tantum Latine locuti sumus. Haud bene Latine loqui potui, sed hoc adhuc recordor: post sex dies, ego collocuta sum cum magistro meo, de nescioqua re, et ille me rogavit, “polliceris?”. Et ego statim respondi, “polliceor.” Hoc dixi quasi inscia; tempus responsum seligendi mihi non fuit. Me mente non rogavi, “quae est terminatio primae personae singularis verbi deponentis temporis praesentis secundae coniugationis modi indicativi?”, ut antea facere opus erat. Quod tam multa colloquia Latina auscultavi atque habui, formas creare extemporaliter incipere potui. Illi enim qui lingua Latina colloqui possunt accuratius legunt quod melius intellegunt quid significetur, verbis quae subintellegantur deficientibus. Similiter fit ut discipuli arte loquendi eruditи verba cotidiana neverint quae alii discipuli nesciunt, sicut cum discipuli fabulas scaenicas aut colloquia et dialogos legere cupiunt, consuetudo colloquendi eis in interpretando emolumentum est. Loqui atque scribere Latine profundiorem facundioremque idiomatis Latini scientiam ferre potest, quod multum iuvat

in libris Latinis intellegendis. In scholis, igitur, Latine loqui est modus vel via quae alumnos citius ad profundam linguae eiusdemque litterarum medullam fert.

3) Tertia causa cur quidam Latine loquuntur ad unitatem pertinet. Quidam exstant homines qui usum linguae Latinae activum colunt ut linguam unicam et communem habeant, inter antiquarios, vel inter omnes scholasticos, aut per totam orbem terrarum. Illi enim putant opera ac sententias nobis Latine traditas posse quasi ancoram, quasi fontem esse unitatis in mundo moderno. Sicut Pontifex Maximus Iohannes eiusdem nominis Vicesimus Tertius olim scripsit, “Suae enim sponte naturae lingua Latina ad provehendum apud populos quoslibet omnem humanitatis cultum est peraccommodata: cum invidiam non commoveat, singulis gentibus se aequabilem praestet, nullius partibus faveat, omnibus postremo sit grata et amica.”² Lingua Latina non iam est lingua cuiusdam terrae propria, sed ea modus communis communicandi inter eos qui operibus Latinis student, atque inter homines aliarum disciplinarum, sicut tempore Erasmi fuit, exempli gratia, dici potest. Unum exemplum huius sententiae eminens est illud periodicum nomine *Vox Latina*, conditum anno millesimo nongentesimo sexagesimo quinto, quod dicit se “ad communicacionem internationalem” spectare.³ Hac dictione qualis sit huius periodici Latinitatis patet: stilos enim adhibetur quae quam maxime ad linguis modernas appropinquat.

4) Alius finis Latine loquendi ad Catholicos et homines quorum studium Catholicorum excitat refert. Lingua Latina, scilicet, est lingua Ecclesiae Catholicae. Multa instrumenta a Papis patribusque Ecclesiae, per pleraque saecula Ecclesiae historiae, Latine scripta sunt. Nefas sit, mea quidem sententia, hunc linguae Latinae usum apud Catholicos contemnere. Licet autem nunc rarius adhibeatur, non oportet nos hanc in desuetudinem devenire gaudere. Catholicos fideles et huius persuasionis academias exhortemur ut usum adhibeant linguae quae, rebus gestis et notis peculiaribus, haud immerito Catholica dicatur. At, pro dolor, Catholici pedetemptim magis ab alienati suis traditionibus fiunt. Nam pauciores apud eos linguam discunt—sed, omnes qui volunt, quoque Latine loqui debent, quo penitus mores traditos participant.

5) Ceterum, ad quaestionem maiorem respondeam: attamen sane aliae sunt viae, alii modi, quibus ad eosdem fines discipuli pervenire possunt; debentne igitur omnes discipuli linguae Latinae Latine loqui? Causa tandem ultima, maxima,

2 *Veterum Sapientia*, Ioannis PP. XXIII, 3. [[Encyclical Letter on the Promotion of the Study of Latin](#)]. Apostolic Constitution, 1962. Web. 18 Mar. 2015.

3 “[Descriptio](#).” *Vox Latina*. Saarbrücken: Societas Latina. 1 Mar. 2015..

elatissima suadeat: quis non velit eisdem verbis quibus tam multi huius cultus doctores hesperii ex annis iam plusquam duo millia uti sunt tam facunde ac perargute colloqui? Atque, enim, si nemo vivens linguam Latinam satis sciret ut eā colloquatur, lingua ipsa re vera non viveret. In initio studiorum valde esse iucundum Latine verba facere quis neget? Multi hoc gaudium discipulis facilius lingua Latina impertiri putant, lingua quae est omnibus utentibus propria, quam nemo possidet, cui omnes conformatio[n]es verborum leporem habent, quo usus cuiusdam verbi aut phrasis quodam modo memoratae suavitatem agnoscendi fert. Quidam huius persuasionis illud gaudium hoc modo describit: est sicut iocus bonus. Quandocumque iocum audimus, nexus subitum et necopinatum mente sentimus, quae aliquomodo deliciarum scintillam creat. Latine loqui similiter hoc facit, ut qui Latine loquuntur novos nexus cum verbis Latinis quae didicerunt in scholis atque aliis colloquiis Latinis sentiant. Licet raro agnoscat[ur] ac tractetur, lepor qui hoc modo creatur ab omnibus Latine loquentibus intellegitur. Idcirco hactenus discipulos linguae nostrae omnes, qui linguam perdiscere penitusque intellegere volunt, Latine loqui non modo decet, immo, oportet.

A Podcasting Approach to Greek and Latin Orality

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ABSTRACT

Podcasting helps to bring Latin and Greek off the page through oral performance, and also creatively recuperates aspects of ancient Roman and Greek practices of poetic performance and rhetoric. Even more importantly, it provides an audience other than the teacher. Students take on the role of public scholars, which can positively affect the learning process. A sample assignment is described, deriving from college intermediate level Greek and Latin poetry classes, and examples of student work are given. The assignment involves the creation of a 6–8 minute audio recordings, including discussion (in English) of a poem or short passage, translation, and recitation in the original language. The technical process of creating podcasts is not overly demanding in itself, but the writing and editing of the script is time consuming and must be executed carefully to obtain good results. While this particular assignment is aligned with learning goals not exclusively focused on second-language acquisition, the benefits of podcasting can be aligned with various types of learning goals.¹

KEYWORDS

podcasting, oral Latin, oral Greek, poetry, translation, interpretation, pedagogy, class projects, rubric

PODCASTING

The delivery of series of audio recordings via the internet emerged as a popular medium around 2006, in tandem with the rise of portable .mp3 players (Salmon and Nie). Since then podcasting has come to occupy a vibrant sector of the media landscape in entertainment, news, and education. Many individuals listen to their favorite series via the main purveyor, [iTunes](#), and other outlets. News organizations such as [NPR](#) and educational institutions such as [Oxford University](#) produce an

1 This essay is based, with much revision, on a talk delivered on Jan. 4, 2014 at the meetings of the American Philological Association, as part of a panel organized by the Society for the Oral Reading of Greek and Latin Literature. I would like to thank the organizers of that panel (“Talking Back to Teacher: Orality and Prosody in the Secondary and University Classroom”), Chris Ann Matteo and Andrew Becker. I would also like to thank two anonymous reviewers for *TCL*, and John Gruber-Miller, for their detailed critique and suggestions.

abundance of informational podcasts on a variety of subjects. A growing scholarly literature deals with the use of podcasting in educational settings, including in foreign language instruction. The purpose of this essay is to describe and discuss an assignment in which Latin and Greek students at the intermediate level produce their own podcasts, and the instructor posts them on the internet.

There are various possible uses of podcasting in educational settings (Salmson and Edirisingha). Published research about podcasts in language instruction have so far dealt largely with efforts by modern language teachers to introduce authentic materials via podcast as supplements to traditional textbooks (Facer and Abdous). While not the focus here, such an approach could be applied to Latin as well. The Latin audio courses produced by [Evan Der Milner](#), though designed primarily for autodidacts, form an extensive archive. A series of 39 recordings of the [neo-Latin Colloquia](#) by various Renaissance humanists is also available on iTunes.

Another important area of podcasting is the effort to replace in-class lecture with recorded lectures delivered as podcasts, a technique sometimes known as “profcasting.” Launched in 2007, [iTunesU](#) is a subset of Apple’s media store that delivers college lectures. This kind of podcasting can be used in the context of a “flipped” class or “blended” approach (also not my focus here). Other educationally-oriented podcasts are produced by academics casually, without a distinct classroom use in mind. Podcasts on ancient history and archaeology are available from several universities, such as [The University of Cincinnati](#) and [The University of Warwick](#). The present article is informed by the author’s own forays into producing an occasional series, [Latin Poetry Podcast](#), from 2006 to 2010.

Very little attention in the scholarly literature has been paid to the idea of getting students to actually *produce* podcasts, rather than simply listening to them for homework, though this is certainly being done in many fields. The Smithsonian American Art Museum, for example, posts student podcasts, and has a [guide to creating podcasts](#) with students. But evidently no published discussion has dealt with the uses of podcasting in the Latin and Greek classroom in any form. This essay makes a modest attempt to put something into that gap, based on the author’s five years’ experience helping students to produce podcasts about Latin and Greek poetry. The assignment (see Appendix for the full text) derives from fourth-semester Greek and Latin poetry classes in a liberal arts college setting. Students create 6–8 minute recordings in which the student first discusses (in English) a short poem or passage, then gives his or her own literary translation, and finally recites it in the

original language. The success of the project has been such that it has been adopted by others, and my hope in discussing it here is that those with different learning goals and different circumstances may nonetheless benefit from considering the potential of the podcast medium.

PODCASTING AND LEARNING GOALS

Published research into the effectiveness of podcasting in language instruction has centered around the model of student as consumer, guided to authentic materials by the teacher, and asked to listen as part of homework. The evidence for its effectiveness is somewhat inconclusive, according to the one study done on this topic (Abdousa, Facer, and Yen). But the enthusiasm of some dedicated teachers suggests that it can be made to work well (Schmidt).

The model of student-as-producer, rather than consumer, is a different phenomenon, and no research has been done into its effectiveness. It is the “least common use reported in the literature,” as Oliver McGarr points out in a 2009 review of the podcasting pedagogical literature (McGarr). There are obvious disadvantages: it is time consuming, both for students and instructors. Time spent mastering necessary software is actually negligible. Rather, the time comes (for the students) in drafting and re-drafting the script, making, polishing, and editing the recording; and (for the instructor) in preparing for, explaining and discussing the assignment, in one-on-one meetings between student and instructor (highly recommended for creating quality work), and in posting the recordings on the internet. That time might be profitably spent doing many other things. No one should consider student podcasting unless a compelling rationale can be found in the learning goals of the class.

The benefits (again not backed up by any kind of broad-based controlled studies), are in many respects not different from those of any creative assignment that encourages the students to tap into prior knowledge and interests, and helps them to “own” a poem or topic. In my own case, the main goals of the classes in question are as follows:

- read Latin (Greek) poets of moderate difficulty with appropriate assistance
- relate the Latin (Greek) poetry to its historical and literary contexts
- identify and appreciate literary and stylistic features of Latin (Greek) poetry

Since the assignment involves translation, there is some work on the first goal, but that is normally dealt with primarily by other means, especially [sight reading](#) with comprehension questions, and prepared in-class oral translation. The podcast assignment hits the other two goals directly, contextualization and appreciation, since in discussing the poem or section students are asked to deal with historical context and tell what is interesting or distinctive about the poem in their view. Another important goal is helping the students read aloud effectively—both correctly and with expression—and podcasting is an excellent way to teach and assess that skill.

An article by a group of authors from the University of Iowa published in 2010 in this journal (Lindgren et al.) makes the case for such creative and performative projects eloquently. The authors argue that their project—having students create and perform a literary, poetic translation of a short poem or passage—helps the students toward a deeper literary understanding, aids in forming a personal connection with a poet and a poem, gives experience of poetry as performance, and helps the students to think more deeply about the process of translation itself and its limitations. Such a creative project “encourages students to approach Latin poetry as literature, as something that has meaning, context, and beauty in its own right.” (Lindgren et al. 119).

The project I describe here is similar, and has many of the same benefits. The added element is the recording of the result as an .mp3 file and the distribution of that file over the internet. But why go to this added trouble? Not because social media is fashionable, or because students are particularly technically savvy (often they are not). The central benefit of a wider distribution is the changed sense of audience. Open sharing of a podcast puts the student in the role of the public scholar: one with specialist knowledge and a responsibility to convey that knowledge effectively as well as explain why it is interesting or important.

The introduction of the non-specialist audience fundamentally changes the relationship between student and instructor. In a traditional research paper, or even an in-class report, the primary audience is always the teacher, and the student’s goal is too often to impress with mastery of technical jargon, or, worse, to camouflage a lack of interest or understanding in windy verbiage. When the audience is an untutored public, the teacher becomes more guide than judge, more coach than censor. And in a way the public, with its short attention span, is a sterner judge than any teacher. In my experience students become far readier to take advice, to revise writing wholesale, and even to pitch entire drafts, when that unseen third partner is

in the room. Whatever the leaning goals, the value of this reorientation cannot be overestimated.

That audience, though doubtless small, is real. My students' podcasts occasionally see comments on the WordPress blogs where they are posted, and are often at or near the top of downloads on Dickinson's iTunesU channel. Particularly popular for a time in 2012 was a podcast by Dan Plekhov on [chariot tactics in Homer](#). A 2009 podcast by Elizabeth Parker on the [prayer of Chryses](#) in *Iliad* 1 drew this comment from a teacher: "In my many years of teaching Latin and Greek I have never heard such a wonderful discussion of this particular section of the *Iliad*. I am going to share this with my Greek club next week! Thanks for sharing." A podcast by archaeology major Karl Smith on [boar's tusk helmets](#) in Homer garnered an anonymous reply, "Wow! I am doing a project on whether Troy exists or not at the moment, and this has been very helpful!" A [discussion of *venustas*](#) and sexiness in Catullus 35 by Katy Purington prompted the admiring comment, "After that reading, I have to say, I find you very *venusta*." A 2012 podcast by Alexis Kuzma, "[The 'In' Crowd \(Catullus 12\)](#)" got a comment from an interested listener—her mother: "so proud of you." I usually also make a point of commenting myself, so my feedback is public, as in the example just mentioned. (See Figure 1.)

[Permalink](#)

2 Comments »

latin-poetry-podcast Said,

May 17, 2012 @ 2:06 pm

Nice, catchy introduction, Alexis. Excellent use of secondary scholarship to craft a subtle and persuasive interpretation of your own. The sound effects are very funny, and the Latin sounds fantastic. Brava!

Joan E Kuzma Said,

May 17, 2012 @ 6:27 pm

So proud of you!

[RSS feed for comments on this post](#) · [TrackBack URI](#)

Leave a Comment

Figure 1: Screen shot of comments on a student podcast (the first is mine).

The key advantage of podcasting—the expanded sense of audience—is in principle entirely goal-independent. Whenever a student is trying to explain something and make it interesting to somebody who is not the teacher, the same benefits potentially accrue. A desire to reach such an audience accounts for my direction that the discussion in English and the English translation come first in the recording, before the recitation. But even those whose goal is to have as much as possible done in the target language might benefit from, say, recording some more *Colloquia* or other texts in Latin for the use of those who wish to gain fluency by listening to authentic Latin texts. At the very introductory level one can imagine podcast projects that explain grammatical concepts, or propound the student's own patented mnemonic devices for the benefit of future Latin learners.

Depending on the actual content of the work, a podcast assignment might meet many of the goals articulated by the *Standards for Classical Language Learn-*

ing published by the American Classical League and the American Philological Association. But the one most suited to the medium is probably Goal 5 (“Communities”). Standard 5.1 reads “Students use their knowledge of Latin or Greek in a multilingual world.” One of the sample progress indicators reads, “Students present and exchange information about their language experience to others in the school and in the community.” Meeting that standard can be difficult, and podcasting offers an effective way to do so—one that can work powerfully with, rather than distract from, the other goals.

Another benefit, though not one typically thought of in the context of the modern Latin class, is that the assignment helps work on effective public speaking, or, to use the ancient term, rhetoric. In some ways podcasting is a recuperation of Roman traditions of rhetorical education, a point stressed by the entirely classicist-free group of authors of the 2012 book *Digital Humanities* (Burdick et al. 11):

In the era of pervasive personal broadcasting, the art of oratory must be rediscovered. This is because digital networks and media have brought orality back into the mainstream of argumentation after a half-millennium in which it was mostly cast in a supporting role vis-à-vis print. You Tube lectures, podcasts, audio books, and the ubiquity of what is sometimes referred to as “demo culture” in the Digital Humanities all contribute to the resurgence of voice, of gesture, of extemporaneous speaking, of embodied performances of argument. (emphasis in the original)

Again rhetorical training is hardly unique to podcasting, but is a welcome side benefit, one useful well beyond the Latin or Greek classroom. Nor does the assignment forgo the traditional and important academic pursuits of writing, research, and footnotes.

THE SCRIPT

The assignment itself begins by stating the goals (mentioned above), which deliberately echo the learning goals stated on the syllabus for the course as a whole, and which we assess as a department as part of our collegiate accreditation process. In class we prepare throughout the semester with kindred activities: pronunciation,

reading aloud, work on metrics, comparison of published translations, discussion of historical context, and observation of stylistic matters: word choice, word order, figurative language, persona, etc.

The assignment has two parts: the drafting of the script and the recording of the audio. The script is in effect a normal academic paper, in that it entails research and writing and the citation of that research (I provide some bibliography). I stipulate a limit of about 525 words, based on a target time for the whole recording of 6–8 minutes. While initially appealing to the students, the word limit soon becomes a real challenge. I provide various questions that the students might want to use as starting points. It is good to emphasize that not every, and perhaps not any, of these questions *must* be addressed. The only requirement is to interpret, translate, and perform the poem. At the same time I require that they *not* spend any time on basic, general information about the author, such as dates of birth and death. If that seems necessary I can add it either in a brief introduction to all the podcasts, or in a sentence or two on the blog where I post them.

It is helpful to mention in advance that while the same kind of research is required, the style of writing for a podcast is different from that of most academic writing that they are used to. Listening to successful podcasts helps to make this point. It is best not to employ the familiar five-paragraph essay structure, but instead to start with the “[inverted pyramid](#)” structure that is a mainstay of journalistic and media writing. The essential idea should be up front, not languishing at the end of the first paragraph. The style should be vivid, direct, and clear. I suggest that they write with a friend or family member in mind. Still, the first drafts of the scripts are often redolent of the five paragraph essay with its fulsome, stilted introductions, its formulaic paragraph structures and transitions. The most common comments I make on the initial drafts are directed at encouraging writing that is less academic, more comprehensible and interesting:

- find an angle, a particular aspect of the poem that intrigues you; start with a grabber;
- don’t use technical terms (*poetae novi*, Ennian, choliambic), or else explain them so ordinary people can understand them;
- say what you think, what you like or don’t like about the piece; help the listener to appreciate it;
- subordinate research to your own ideas.

The subordination of research to one's own ideas is a perennial problem in all kinds of academic writing. Students are often loathe to "throw away" any morsel of research that they have found. But the twin discipline of the audience and the word limit helps a great deal in overcoming this reluctance, and encouraging students to state their own view as formed by their research, rather than parroting the view of another scholar.

One effective type of beginning is that taken by Chris Striker in this 2011 podcast about [Catullus 63](#), in which he asks the listener to imagine himself in the situation of the poem. A reference to something universal, like superstitions surrounding sneezing, can also be effective, as in this 2008 podcast about [Catullus 45](#) by Erica Pitcairn. One can begin with a vivid or striking quotation, as does Christina Errico in her podcast about [Patroclus' death in the *Iliad*](#) from 2014.

THE TRANSLATION

As is the case with the script itself, where ingrained academic habits can sometimes hinder the creation of an effective podcast, translation for a non-teacher audience involves a certain reorientation. The most common advice I give on the translations is "don't translate too literally; use good English." The article from *TCL* cited above (Lindgren et al.) contains an excellent discussion of how to help students to a more sophisticated understanding of the various modes of literary translation. One of the benefits of such assignments is that it forces students to confront the real dilemmas of a translator who wants to communicate the meaning and to give some sense of the style of a poem in a different language. As Lindgren et al. state, it is a good idea to ask the students for a literal translation first, to make sure the words are correctly understood, and then move on to the question of how to represent this meaning effectively to a contemporary audience.

THE RECITATION

Students of course have various levels of comfort when it comes to reading Latin and Greek aloud. In addition to working on pronunciation and metrics in class throughout the semester, I have a one-on-one meeting close to the due date of the recording. This I view as crucial for obtaining good results in the recordings. I ask the students to come in having previously scanned and practiced reading the poem or passage aloud. In the meeting I check the scansion. But the burden of the discussion usually has little to do with metrics. The advice that I typically give is as follows:

- read as if you understand what you are saying;
- emphasize the most important words;
- pause when appropriate to convey the sense, and for emphasis;
- convey emotion. “Sell it.”

I urge students to use natural word accent, and not to worry over-much about conveying the structure of the meter in the act of recitation. I use the example of Shakespearean verse, where the iambic pentameter has a structure, of course, but no one would want to listen to an actor who emphasized that structure to the exclusion of natural sense and dramatic flair. Once the meter is internalized, and the words are pronounced correctly, there is no need to harp on the meter. The other area of difficulty is elision. Students have varying abilities to recognize and deliver elisions well. Again, I urge them to try, and demonstrate myself how it can be done. But I urge them to be more concerned with conveying understanding, emphasis, and emotion, and say that if an elision or two falls by the wayside, I will certainly not penalize them. I also mention that there is some disagreement among scholars as to whether the elided vowels disappeared completely, or were included as semivowels, a fact which can set their minds at ease (See Brooks 40–42; Allen 78–82).

THE RECORDING

The technical requirements to make a podcast are as follows:

- A computer with an audio recording software installed, such as [Audacity](#) or [GarageBand](#). Audacity is free, and platform independent. GarageBand typically comes on Macs. The programs allow you to record and edit sound, add effects and music if desired, and to export the result as .mp3 or other sound file format. Various tutorials in their use are available on the internet, but if you can find an experienced person to help, so much the better.
- A headset or other microphone. These can be had cheaply at electronics stores, or in many schools’ media centers. Use of built in microphones on computers or other devices is not recommended, and will not produce good results.
- A quiet place to record.

I prefer to use Audacity, since it is free and platform independent. I spend one class period in a computer lab on training in the use of Audacity, discussing the podcast

medium, and giving advice on how to create an effective podcast. While recording and editing audio in Audacity itself is fairly straightforward, the exporting files in .mp3 format is a little tricky and requires the downloading of [a patch](#). Another quirk of Audacity is that each project prior to export as an .mp3 actually consists of two things, the project itself and a folder full of each of the individual recorded elements that are combined to make the project. These are identically titled but have different file extensions, and must be kept together in the same folder on one's computer prior to export as an .mp3.

One key to making a good podcast recording is to speak as naturally as possible, and to vary the tone of voice. A useful trick is to smile while speaking—while very unnatural, it can improve the quality a great deal. A natural, varied tone of voice can go a long way toward winning over the listener. Lucy's McInerney discussion of the dog [Argos in the *Odyssey*](#) provides a good example of a tone that is relaxed without being overly informal. Chris Holmes' 2013 podcast on [Ovid *Amores* 1.5](#) is a good example of a more informal style. He addresses the audience directly and thanks them for listening before proceeding. Likewise, pacing can have a big impact on the listenability of a podcast. Too fast, the listener cannot follow; too slow, and boredom swiftly ensues.

Editing and post-production might take the form of adding a musical introduction or sound effects. Copyright restricts the music that can be used. Students should not simply import a clip of their favorite song. Rather, they should be pointed toward the many sources of free and open-licensed background music and sound effects available on the internet for just these kinds of purposes, such as [CC Mixter](#) for music and [Freesound](#) for sound effects. Many students opt to begin with some appropriately atmospheric music, as in Elizabeth Schultz's 2013 podcast on [Catullus 5](#). Dinner party background noise is a natural lead-in for discussing [Catullus 12](#).

POSTING THE RESULTS

Once the .mp3 files have been created and delivered to the instructor, it is essential for the success of the project to find a way to publicly post them. There are public sites such as [Soundcloud](#) where anyone can upload audio. Some schools may have a corner of their websites available. But it is better, if possible, to establish a separate site using [WordPress](#) or another blogging platform. Blogging the podcasts makes it possible to

- collect, find, and save the podcasts over several years;
- include illustrations, texts, and links;
- display the podcasts chronologically, or organize them by topic or tag;
- provide space for comments from the public;
- style the site as desired by the owner of the blog.

Wordpress accounts can be had for free, but the free accounts will come with ads. Paying a subscription fee removes the ads and allows for more flexibility in styling. If your institution supports the use of Wordpress, it is best to take advantage of that support.

When posting a podcast I begin with a small written introduction at the head of the blog entry, intended to convey the essence of the content in an appealing manner and give credit to the student, for example, “Obscenity was not at all out of place in Roman poetry, argues John O’Connor, as he reads, translates and discusses a prime example, Catullus 32.” I also add a catchy title, preferably drawn from the podcast itself, and including a reference to the specific text under discussion, such as “Yolo, mea Lesbia (Catullus 5),” or “The Scream of Achilles (*Iliad* 18.217-238),” or “The Sacks on Our Backs (Catullus 22).” These are meant to draw interest and give a clear indication of topic. I also include in the blog entry the text of the student’s translation, and the original Latin or Greek text. That way listeners can follow along during the discussion. If possible I add an image, for similar reasons. Sometimes an illustration is essential, as in the case of Dan Plekhov’s discussion of chariot tactics in Homer, which draws on various bits of [material evidence](#) to make its case. (See Figure 2.)

Homer's Iliad
Selected passages discussed, translated, and read aloud in Greek

Chariot tactics in Homer (Iliad 4.297-309)
May 16, 2012

AUDIO MP3

Chariots appear frequently in the *Iliad*, but Homer notoriously seems to have little idea of how they would actually be used in combat. Dan Plekhov points out the exception, a passage that does seem to describe realistic chariot tactics, and argues that it reflects memories of Mycenaean culture, not the experience of contemporary societies of Homer's own day. *Iliad* 4.297-309, read, translated and discussed by Dan Plekhov.

ἵππηας μὲν πρῶτα σὺν ὑποισιν καὶ ὄχεσφι,
πεζοὺς δ' ἔξοπιθε στῆσεν πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλούς
ἔρκος ἔμεν πολέμοιο· κακούς δ' ἐξ μέσσον ἐλασσεν,
ὅφρα καὶ οὐκ ἔθέλων τις ἀναγκαιή πολεμίζοι. (300)
ἵππεῦσιν μὲν πρῶτ' ἐπετέλλετο· τούς γάρ ἀνώγει
σφινός ὑπονοῦς ἔχειν μηδὲ ικλούεσθαι ὅμιλον
μηδὲ τις ὑποσύνη τε καὶ ἡνορέψι πεποιθώς
οῖς πρόσθ' ἀλλων μεμάτω Τρύεσσι μάχεσθαι,
μηδ' ἀναχωρείτω ἀλαπαδνότεροι γάρ ἔσεσθε. (305)
ὅς δέ κ' ἀνήρ ἀπὸ ὕπου ὥργων ἐτερ' ἄρμαθ' ἵκηται
ἔγχει ὄρεξάσθω, ἐπεὶ η πολὺ φέρτερον οὕτω.
ῶδε καὶ οἱ πρότεροι πόλεας καὶ τείχε' ἐπόρθεον
τόνδε νόσον καὶ θυμόν ἐνι στήθεσσιν ἔχοντες






*Ancient Greek Funerary Krater
From the Dipylon*

Figure 2: screen shot of Wordpress blog containing a student podcast, with illustrations

In other instances the illustration is more ornamental, but important nonetheless in creating a pleasing package for the podcast. It is important again not to use copyrighted photographs, and to give full information about the image and its source wherever possible. I view my role as creating as attractive a presentation as possible, and finding ways to draw traffic to the site. To that end I promote the recordings via social media when they are posted.

Various models of grading rubrics for podcasts are available on the internet (e.g., Bell), and can be adapted to individual goals and made available to the students in advance. Some account should be taken of delivery and technical production.

CONCLUSION

Student reaction to this assignment, as seen in course evaluations, has been generally positive. Every year there is a student or two who finds the technology bothersome and would prefer to write a traditional paper. Another complaint, especially early on, was that more guidance was needed in how to do the writing. But most students seem to feel satisfaction and pride in the results. I have also gotten comments from other classes taught simultaneously.

ously wondering why they too did not have a chance to do a podcast. I too feel a sense of pride in the work, and it is a pleasure to be able to share it. But it would be unfair not to admit that podcasting takes considerable effort, and that it necessarily subtracts from the time available for other things. I persist because of the way it improves the writing process, gets Latin and Greek off the page, brings home the fact that Greek and Latin poetry was a performance art, and because of the creativity it evokes from the students. Podcasting can be an example of the use of technology that, rather than detracting from the core pursuits of the humanities, enacts some of its most important values: quality oral and written communication, close attention to language and meaning, and the analysis and comparison of cultural objects. At the same time it cultivates technological competencies that will be useful beyond the Latin and Greek classroom.

Getting good results depends on carefully explaining the rationale behind the assignment, on giving students sufficient time to complete drafts, on careful critiquing of drafts, and on one-on-one coaching sessions just prior to recording. It is also important to listen to professional podcasts, and to ask students to listen to both professional and student podcasts. As always, seek out colleagues who have done similar assignments, and take them to lunch. There is at the moment a lamentable dearth of spoken Greek and Latin on the internet, and I hope some version of the assignment I have discussed may inspire you to add your own and your students' recordings to the common store.

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APPENDIX: A PODCASTING ASSIGNMENT AND RUBRIC

Catullus: A Podcast

Purpose:

- practice literary translation
- relate a Latin poem to its historical and cultural contexts
- identify and appreciate literary and stylistic features of a Latin poem
(or a 10–20 line section of a longer piece)

Method:

- create an audio recording of a poem by Catullus
- including your own introduction and translation

The finished piece will be posted on the college blog (<http://blog.dickinson.edu>) and on iTunesU.

The assignment has two parts:

- I. A script for the introduction and translation, with full bibliographic information on the sources you used.
- II. A recording of you delivering your introduction, your translation, and reading the Latin, turned in as an mp3.

I. Write the script.

1. Research your poem in the standard commentaries on Catullus (in addition to Garrison's textbook) and any other books on Catullus that might be helpful (see list below). Take careful notes on what you read, including the bibliographic information of the books or articles you look at, and the exact pages of any quotable quotes. Commentaries and articles on classical texts often use abbreviations. Let me know if there are any you cannot figure out.

2. Here are some questions you may want to ask as you investigate your poem. Time is short, so you may not be able to include all of this in your podcast:

- a. What is known about the people mentioned, if any?
- b. Is there any indication of the exact date of the poem?
- c. What is the structure?
- d. Are there any Roman customs knowledge of which might help make the

- poem clearer?
- e. Are there any notable images? Why are they there?
 - f. What is the tone?
 - g. What is the poem “about”?
 - h. How effective is it?
 - i. Are there any problems or obscurities in it?
 - j. Do **not** include any general information about Catullus (“Catullus was a Roman poet who lived from 85 to 55 BC” . . .). I will put that into a brief series intro., which will precede your recording. Assume your listener knows who he was.
 - k. Length: the introduction portion should be no more than three minutes or so, shoot for about 525 words.
3. Write a translation of the poem. Remember this is for an audience who does not know Latin, so make sure the translation is faithful, but not too literal. Try to communicate the essence of the poem in good, clear English.

Tips and advice for creating an engaging podcast:

- a. Be creative! Make it enjoyable and entertaining.
- b. Think of a catchy lead to grab the listener’s attention right away.
- c. Interesting factoids or quotations about the poem can color the intro. Don’t just give a stuffy, dull description.
- d. Say what you like about the poem; give the listener a reason to want to hear it.
- e. Use metaphors and colorful language, as appropriate.
- f. Pay attention to the quality of the audio.
- g. Go online and listen to some podcasts to get a feeling for what works and what does not.
- h. Write for a general audience. Avoid using too many technical terms.

Recommended sources:

The commentaries of Quinn, Fordyce, and Thomson. Thomson has lists of articles on each poem. These are also good books on Catullus, and are on reserve:

Julia Haig Gaisser, *Catullus*. Chichester, UK: Blackwell, 2009. PA6276 .G348 2009

Marilyn B. Skinner, *A Companion to Catullus*. Malden, MA: Blackwell,

2007. PA6276 .C66 2007

Amanda Kolson Hurley, *Catullus*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2004.
PA6276 .H87 2004

David Wray, *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood*. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2001. PA6276 .W73 2001

II. Record your intro., translation, and Latin reading, then hand it in to me as an .mp3.

Practice reading the poem in Latin until it sounds smooth and convincing.

Learn the meter and scan the poem. Meet with me to work on pronunciation. Most importantly, say it with inflections that suggest you understand what you are reading. Emphasize key words. Pause between clauses, as appropriate, to make the sense clearer. Sounding like you know what you are saying is more important than having perfect pronunciation. Put some emotion into it.

SAMPLE RUBRIC (BASED ON THE [PODCAST RUBRIC](#) OF ANN BELL):

| CATEGORY | Exemplary | Proficient | Partially Proficient | Incomplete | POINTS |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--------|
| Introduction | 5-6 points Catchy and clever introduction. Provides relevant information and establishes a clear purpose engaging the listener immediately. | 3-4 points Describes the topic and engages the audience as the introduction proceeds. | 2 points Somewhat engaging (covers well-known topic), and provides a vague purpose. | 0-1 point Irrelevant or inappropriate topic that minimally engages listener. Does not include an introduction or the purpose is vague and unclear. | |
| Content | 8-10 points Creativity and original content enhance the purpose of the podcast in an innovative way. | 4-7 points Accurate information is provided succinctly. | 3-4 points Some information is inaccurate or long-winded. | 0-3 points Information is inaccurate. | |
| Delivery | 5-6 points Well-rehearsed, smooth delivery in a conversational style. Highly effective enunciation and presenter's speech is clear and intelligible. Correct grammar is used throughout the podcast. | 3-4 points Rehearsed, smooth delivery. Enunciation, expression, pacing are effective throughout the podcast. Correct grammar is used during the podcast. | 2 points Appears unrehearsed with uneven delivery. Enunciation, expression, rhythm are sometimes distracting during the podcast. Occasionally incorrect grammar is used during the podcast. | 0-1 point Delivery is hesitant and choppy and sounds like the presenter is reading. Enunciation of spoken word is distant and muddled and not clear. Poor grammar is used throughout the podcast. | |
| Graphic and Music Enhancements | 5-6 points The graphics/artwork used (if any) creates an effective presentation and enhance the podcast. Music enhances the mood, | 3-4 points The graphics/artwork (if used) relates to the audio and reinforces content and demonstrates functionality. Music provides supportive | 2 points The graphics/artwork (if used) sometimes enhances the quality and understanding of the presentation. Music provides somewhat | 0-1 point The graphics are unrelated to the podcast. Artwork is inappropriate to podcast. Music is distracting to | |

| Technical Production | | quality, and understanding of the presentation. All graphic and music enhancements are owned by the creator of the podcast or copyright cleared. | background to the podcast. Graphic and music enhancements are owned by the creator of the podcast or copyright cleared. | distracting background to the podcast. Use of copyrighted works is questionable. |
|----------------------|------------|---|--|---|
| 5-6 points | 3-4 points | 2 points | 0-1 point | Copyright infringement is obvious. |
| | | | | Presentation is recorded in a semi-quiet environment with some background noise and distractions. |
| | | | | Transitions are uneven with inconsistent spacing; ambient noise is present. |
| | | | | Podcast length is somewhat long or somewhat short to keep audience engaged. |
| | | | | Transitions are abrupt and background noise needs to be filtered. |
| | | | | Podcast is either too long or too short to keep the audience engaged |
| | | | | TOTAL POINTS |

The Biduum Experience: Speaking Latin to Learn

**Ginny Lindzey
Dripping Springs High School**

ABSTRACT

This article presents detailed snapshots of a two-day SALVI Latin immersion workshop in order to broaden awareness of immersion workshops and their benefits, to remove misconceptions, and to alleviate fears of what being in an immersion environment is really like. A range of techniques is employed for instruction and illustrated through photos and videoclips, including but not limited to Total Physical Response (TPR), Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS), Comprehensible Input (CI), and Where Are Your Keys? (WAYK). Specific attention is given to the first time immersion participants, including addressing performance anxiety and fear of making mistakes. Students participate in micrologues (orally/aurally) and dictation, build word webs that are used to compose short compositions, write and perform dialogues, engage and activate Latin through oral substitution and transformation drills, read and discuss Latin passages from Caesar and Vergil in Latin, and play a variety of vocabulary building games with white boards. Incorporating these techniques into your own classroom is also discussed.

KEYWORDS

oral Latin, Latin immersion, TPR, TPRS, CI, WAYK, Latin pedagogy

The extraordinary experience of a SALVI¹ immersion program should not be underestimated. Unfortunately many people do not avail themselves of these wonderful programs for several reasons. First, many people believe that conversational Latin is a relatively meaningless diversion from the true study of the language, which is to read Latin. Second, those who may be interested are intimidated by the somewhat frightening idea of having to speak continuously in Latin. Latin teachers and professors are used to being the smartest people in the room; nothing can be more humbling than the process of “activating” the language, but it is a necessary

¹ SALVI stands for *Septentrionāle Americānum Latinitātis Vīvae Īnstitūtum* – North American Institute for Living Latin Studies. Its mission is to propagate communicative approaches to Latin language acquisition, making the entire Classical tradition of Western culture more available to—and enjoyable for—students, teachers, and the general public. For a list of other immersion workshops, please go to the [SALVI website](#) (“Community”).

step in developing true fluency with the language, including reading fluency. Third, even those who can imagine the fun of immersing oneself in speaking Latin can be skeptical about the practical benefits for themselves and their classrooms. However, if our goal as teachers and students is to read Latin fluently, then finding ways to develop that fluency is our utmost concern (see Rasmussen).

In the summer of 2013, I served as a *repetitor* (assistant) at a *Biduum* at Austin College in Sherman, Texas². For the four previous summers I had attended *Rusticātō Virginiāna* as a participant, and I have gradually begun to work some of these techniques into my own classes. Thus I have an understanding of what it is like being a participant as well as being an assistant, plus some of the challenges and the excitement of incorporating what I have learned into my own classroom. In this paper, I will describe and demonstrate via photos and video clips what takes place at one of SALVI's immersion programs, and how these activities tie into what we can carry back to our own classrooms, not to mention to our own lives.

The following topics do not follow the order in which participants experienced them. After explaining how the immersion process begins, I have tried to sort and group activities according to pedagogical innovations that are far from what is typical of a traditional Latin class, with emphasis on different ways to approach passages of Latin text besides simply translating into English. Reinforcement activities and review games which consolidate learning then follow. Many of the approaches and activities are based on the Rassias Method, TPR (Total Physical Response), TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling), CI (Comprehensible Input) and the works of Stephen Krashen, and WAYK (Where Are Your Keys?), a language hunting system developed by Evan Gardner (see Appendix 1 for further explanation of each approach).

2 I want to offer a very special thanks to Austin College in Sherman, Texas, and the Richardson Summer Language Institute for hosting this first Texas *Biduum*. The Richardson Summer Language Institute has been very generous to Texas foreign language teachers over the years and this was a particularly wonderful event. The ability to use the Jordan Family Language House (we occupied the Japanese corner which included dorm rooms and a commons room, plus we had access to a full kitchen and computer labs) allowed us to be isolated from those speaking English on the rest of the Austin College campus, thus allowing us to have our immersion experience. The participants, most of whom are pictured throughout this paper, included Deborah Baptiste, Philip Bennett, Sarah Buhidma, Suzanne DePedro, Frank Kelland, Emmie Osburn, Michala Perreault, Shelly Sable, and Kenneth Toliver. Also present were Jim Johnson, Professor Emeritus, Austin College, and our host, Bob Cape, Professor of Classics & Director of the Center for Liberal Arts Teaching and Scholarship, Austin College.

How WE BEGIN

Ideally, to benefit from an immersion experience, students need to be totally engaged in the activities involving them, not taking notes. Of course, as teachers, we are keen to take notes so that we don't forget any aspect of what we are learning. For this reason, while the *magistra*³ instructs and engages the participants from the front of the room, a *repetitor* is placed somewhere to the side with a large paper easel and markers in order to write down virtually everything the *magistra* is saying in Latin. If explanations or definitions are needed, they are also written in Latin or illustrated with pictures. (There is no English!) Once a sheet is filled, it is posted on the wall for all to see. Some pages will have odd inclusions that come from side discussions about weather or other tangential topics. During breaks, participants can either copy down notes or take pictures of these sheets for their own use.

The *magistra* begins by announcing and discussing three basic principles that create a framework for communicating and learning in a safe, non-threatening environment (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Nancy Llewellyn discussing her three rules for a successful immersion experience.

³ The magistra for this *Biduum* was the amazing Nancy Llewellyn who founded SALVI in 1997. Since 1998 she has conducted weekend and summer immersion seminars around the country and occasionally abroad. She has taught Latin at UCLA and Loyola Marymount University, and currently serves as Associate Professor of Latin at Wyoming Catholic College, whose innovative, immersion-based Latin program she created in 2007. She holds a BA from Bryn Mawr College, a Licenza from the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome (where she also studied at the Gregorian University with Father Reginald Foster), and a PhD in Classics from UCLA. It is her vision that breathes life into SALVI and inspires so many of us to strive to broaden ourselves in our own understanding of Latin and how we can teach it to the next generation of eager learners.

1. *servā pātientiam!* (If you can't be patient with yourself, you will become too frustrated to learn! It's not a race; it's an adventure.)
2. *quod nōndum dīcere scīs, id praetermitte!* (In other words, say what you can to communicate and don't worry about the rest. It will come. Save the hard stuff for later.)
3. *mēmentō tē inter amīcōs versār!* (Friends help and support one another. It's not a competition nor a performance. We are all here to learn.)

This is followed by the introduction of some gestures or WAYK techniques that participants will use to signal various things to the instructor, shaving time off of learning and making it possible for participants to get their learning needs met without leaving the target language (see Appendix 2). For instance, if someone accidentally speaks in English, everyone throws their hands up in the air and shouts “*mīrābile!*” in a good-natured way, instead of blame being cast. If someone is lost or confused, he or she can pound his/her fist in his/her hand to signify *dēsiste (Stop!)*. If one person does this, then everyone must do the same until the *magistra* realizes that there is a need to stop and repeat or simplify instructions. Additional signs can communicate the need to slow down, speak louder, respond altogether, repeat, and more. While some might see the use of signs to be unnecessary (especially if one is an experienced speaker), in practice it allows slower or more reticent students or those who simply do not want to interrupt or draw attention to themselves to communicate their needs.⁴ This is especially useful for *tīrōnēs* or first-timers.

Every care is taken to insure that the learning level stays within a certain comfort zone—yes, participants are constantly stretched and challenged, but periodically there is a “full check” (*Satis!*) to make sure that no one feels overwhelmed by the activities. New signs are gradually added whenever needed. For example, in a discussion about mealtimes, the *magistra* demonstrates signs that she uses to indicate certain tenses. By using these signs, she is able to easily indicate to participants the tenses she wants them to review orally. [Click here for a demonstration video.](#)

4 If one is skeptical of the usefulness of using these techniques or gestures, consider this: the use of the “stop” gesture spread on the Wyoming Catholic College campus because of its utility. Students in science classes apparently taught the technique to professors, thus enabling students to indicate lack of comprehension without interrupting the flow of the professor’s lecture. Could the student have raised his or her hand? Yes, but consider how many speakers would prefer questions be saved until the end. However, if it is communicated that it is not a question but a lack of comprehension, this is very different and should be addressed immediately.

Throughout the day breaks are taken from instruction (though participants must continue to speak in Latin). Sometimes instruction is simply paused for physical stretching, which reduces fatigue. Even this stretching is learning time—participants stretch and learn a stream of new vocabulary for body parts (Figure 2), not to mention review of such things as the imperative of deponent verbs, e.g. *pandiculāmī* (*Stretch out!*). It is a simple TPR activity that helps to engage the groggy mind, involve more of the senses, and lower stress levels. The physical and visual nature of this immersion experience thus imprints the language on participants' brains through a multisensory approach.

MORE THAN JUST TELLING TIME

Fairly early in the first day the *magistra* introduces the subject of telling time in Latin (Figure 3). One might think that this is something not directly practical for “serious” classroom work, but consider how time dominates our life, especially as teachers. In the course of learning about telling time, participants discover it is possible to apply correct Latin to our modern worldwide system of hours, minutes and seconds, using ordinal numbers, locatives of cities in different parts of the world, and

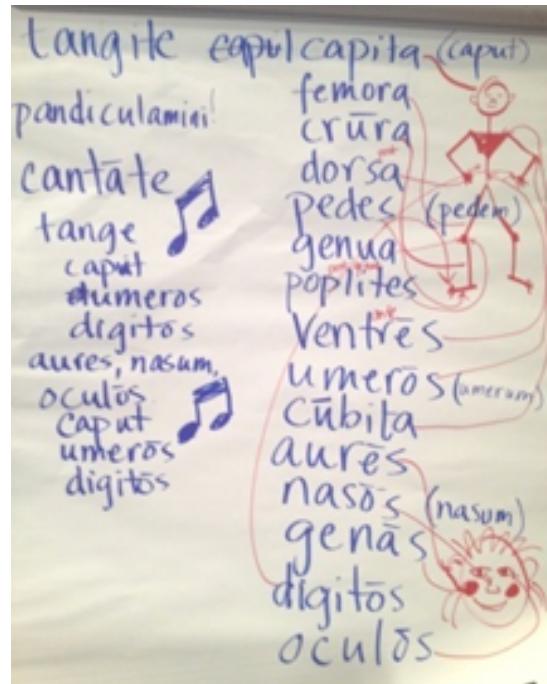


Figure 2. Stretching, parts of body, and a version of “Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.”

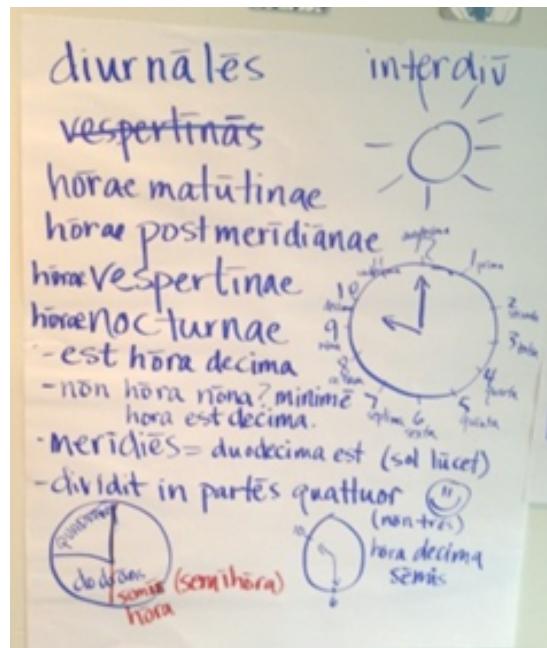


Figure 3. Telling time in Latin, divisions of the day and night, divisions of the clock.

vocabulary items such as *soleō*—a word our students never remember! The *magistra* fluidly teaches these concepts by employing circling techniques—a statement followed by a “yes” question, then an either/or question, then a “no” question, etc. (See Figure 4 to follow the pattern and variations in the circling techniques.) Indeed, throughout the *Biduum* the *magistra* circles back to telling time when working on other concepts, incorporating the new vocabulary (such as *ientāre*, *prandēre*, and *cēnāre*) or other aspects of grammar. This circling supports and strengthens recently gained knowledge.

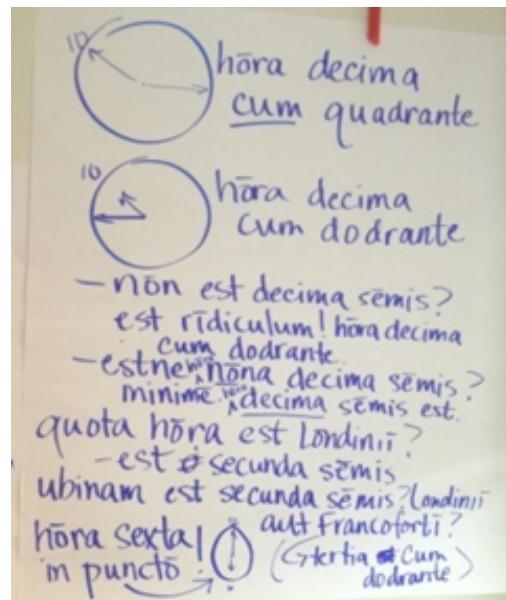


Figure 4. More on telling time, the kinds of questioning employed, use of locatives of modern cities.

FĀBELLA: NĀRRĀTIŌ/DICTĀTIŌ, INTERROGĀTIŌ, PRAELECTIŌ, NĀRRĀTIŌ ALTERA

The *magistra* is a master of a particular activity called a micrologue (*fābella*). A micrologue requires a story that can be reduced to 4-6 sentences and can be easily understood and repeated with visual prompts. This is sometimes called an “embedded” reading (see Appendix 1). In our case, a simplified version of *DBG* 1.3 was used, and could be used the same way with students to preview the subject matter of the original passage by Caesar. Most important for the purposes of the micrologue is the ability to use it orally/aurally. Earlier in the conference before the immersion weekend, participants were reading AP passages. Therefore the *magistra* took a passage from Caesar’s *Dē Bellō Gallicō* (1.3)⁵ and modified it to be a suitable *fābella* so that participants could see possible uses with our own classroom texts and curricula (Figure 5).

Before beginning, the *magistra* requests one volunteer and asks each participant to gather *arma scholastica*: a *tabella* (a white, dry erase board), *calamus* (white

⁵ Hīs rēbus adductī et auctōritāte Orgetorīgis permōtī cōstituērunt ea quae ad profiscendum pertinērent comparāre, iūmentōrum et carrōrum quam maximum numerum coemere, sēmentēs quam maximās facere, ut in itinere cōpia frūmentī suppeteret, cum proximīs cīvitātibus pācem et amīcitiam cōfirmāre. (*DBG* 1.3)

board marker), and *spongia* (eraser) (Figure 6). She then explains that she is going to tell a brief story (*fābella*) four times (*nārrātiō*), using simple (often comical) hand-drawn illustrations. These illustrations (Figure 7) have been created in advance and are visible the whole time. The *fābella* is also written out in advance but kept out of sight until needed for the *praelectiō* (Figure 8).



Figure 5. Participant Michala Perreault listens to the instructions for the micrologue.

1. *Narratio/Dictatio*. The first time through the *nārrātiō*, everyone is to listen actively without writing. The second through fourth times all but the volunteer are to take dictation (*dictātiō*) on their white boards. The volunteer is trying to learn the story verbatim, using the pictures as memory prompts, so that in the end she can retell the story to the class using only the pictures.
2. *Interrogatio*. After the fourth time, the *magistra* asks the volunteer leading “yes” (*nōnne*) questions (*interrogātiō*), the proper reply being an affirmative statement which repeats exactly the sentence that is embedded in the question. [Click here for a demonstration video.](#)

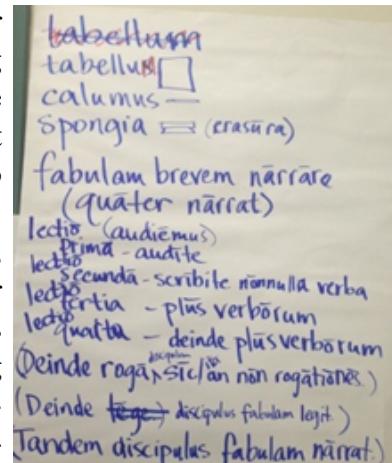


Figure 6. Arma scholastica plus instructions for *nārrātiō* (micrologue).

3. *Praelectio*. After the *narratiō/dictatiō* part of the micrologue, the *magistra* shows the text of the story to the volunteer to read aloud (*praelectiō*), while everyone else corrects their dictation. Attention to macrons, as indicators of vowel length and thus proper pronunciation, is part of writing the *dictatiō* and indeed part of the *praelectiō* as well as speaking the *narratiō altera*. (More on spelling and the Latin alphabet below.)

4. *Narratio altera*. Finally, the volunteer tells the story to the rest of the participants (*narratiō altera*) relying on the pictures alone, with no written text visible.

The process of the micrologue involves developing a more focused listening skill, connecting Latin directly with images and not with English, improving comprehension, and modeling storytelling for the one volunteer. For the rest of the class, the process is also developing more focused listening skills, building attention to spelling and accent (and thus vowel length), and improving comprehension. The steps are constructed to build success and confidence, with plenty of support. The use of white boards for dictation (*dictatiō*) facilitates easy corrections of mistakes while listening and the end product is not full of scratch-outs and squished words. That is, the focus becomes not what mistakes were made from the beginning but what you are able to accomplish by the end, reinforcing the positive. The use of questioning (*interrogatiō*) phrased in such a way that the answer repeats the question helps to build confidence in telling the story before officially telling the story on one's own. Including a *praelectiō*, or prereading, before the final narration, enables the volunteer to correct any misunderstandings in



Figure 7. The five-part illustration to accompany the micrologue.

*Helvētiī ē fñibus
suis ext̄re volvērunt.
Mutta iūmenta sibi
emērunt. Multum
frumentum sibi compārā-
vērunt. Multos carrōs
sibi collēgērunt.
Sciēbant sē iter longum et
difficile factūos esse.*

Figure 8. The *fābella* or embedded story used for the micrologue.

comprehension of the story while engaging the remaining students in correcting any mistakes in their dictation.

COMBINING A *FĀBELLA* WITH OTHER POST-READING ACTIVITIES:

Substitution and Transformation Drills

The *fābella* does not stand in isolation as an activity but if constructed well can lead to productive oral drills targeting grammatical features, such as subject/verb agreement in indirect statements. Although it can be seen as a post-reading activity, it also provides a seamless transition into a grammar practice, targeting a structure that was incorporated in the *fābella* and thus is already familiar to the participants/students. In this case, the *magistra* used the following:

sciēbant sē iter factūrōs esse.

The *magistra* begins by having everyone repeat the sentence several times, often building from the end of the sentence. That is, having participants repeat *factūrōs esse* a couple of times, then *iter factūrōs esse*, then *sciēbant sē iter factūrōs esse*. It is critical for the participants to be comfortable with the sentence, having it pretty firmly placed in the mind before beginning the substitutions and transformations. Then the *magistra* models what she wants: she says “*ego*,” takes a beat to think about the transformation, then she snaps her fingers to signal readiness, and points—first to herself because she is modeling—and transforms the sentence to agree with the new subject:

ego > sciēbam mē iter factūram esse. (**factūrum* for male speakers)

There are three transformations here, and the last one is dependent upon the gender of the speaker. Having thus modeled the transformation, she begins calling on participants around the room. Everyone has a turn with *ego*. If someone makes a mistake, the *magistra* calls on another person (thus soliciting a model of the right answer from a participant rather than giving the correction herself) and then returns to the person who made the mistake, so that he/she has another chance to get it right. After *ego*, the *magistra* uses *tū*, pointing at one person to do the drill, and pointing toward another person that the pronoun is referring to for gender purposes. The same for *nōs*, *vōs*, and then returning to “they” by pointing at one person but saying the

names of two other people. All substitution and transformation drills return to the original sentence for closure. [Click here for a demonstration video.](#)

Oral Comprehension Questions

On the second day of the *Biduum* the *magistra* returns to the micrologue activity (Figure 9), this time with a passage from Vergil. However, instead of immediately flowing from the *narratiō* and *dictatiō* to transformation drills, participants are asked comprehension questions that require full answers. For reference, here is the text of the *fābella*:

*Aenēās Hectōrem rogāvit cūr
sibi appāruisset. Hector iussit
eum fugere. Dīxit hostem mūrōs
iam habēre, Trōiamque eī sacra
suōsque penātēs commendāre.
Aenēās rēspondit sē eī pāritūrum
esse.*

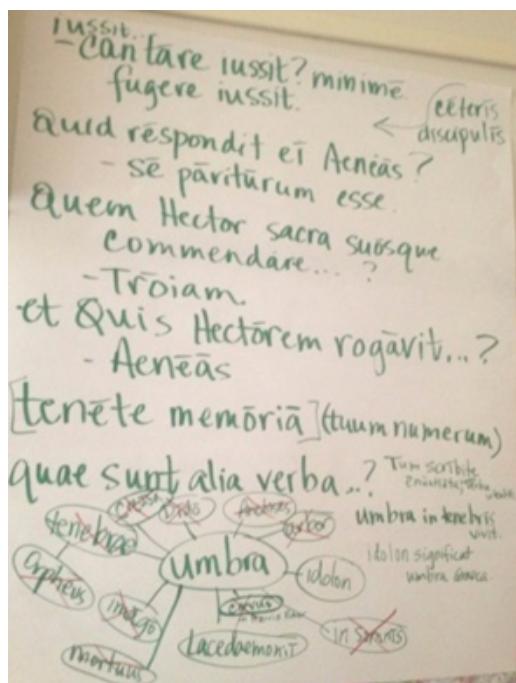


Figure 10. Reading comprehension questions on the micrologue, followed by a word web.



Figure 9. The Vergil *fābella*, with Nancy dramatically telling the story.

Aeneas asked Hector why he had appeared to him. Hector ordered him to flee. He said that the enemy already had the walls, and Troy entrusted the sacred things and its own Penates to him. Aeneas replied that he would obey him. (Based on *Aeneid* 2.289-295; see Appendix 3 for the original text.)

Figure 10 shows some of the comprehension questions with sample answers.

Word Webs

After the comprehension questions, the *magistra* introduces a vocabulary building activity called a word web (Figure 10). The main word, provided by the *magistra*, (in this case *umbra*) is written in the center of a *tabella* and circled. Then around the circled word the *magistra* adds related words—such as *tenebrae*, *Orpheus*, *Creūsa*, *Dīdō*, *imāgō*, *mortuus*, *īdōlon*—that are suggested by participants, building and expanding upon relationships between words. After the sample is completed together, the *magistra* divides participants into groups, assigning each group a key word. Brainstorming together, each group constructs a word web (Figures 11-12) around its key word, based on the readings and discussions of the *Biduum* as well as any other prior knowledge. Next, each group erases the key word in the middle of the *tabella* – leaving the surrounding words untouched – and all the *tabellae* are exchanged among the groups. Each group must now guess what the key word was, based on the surrounding related vocabulary. After guessing the key word, each group member

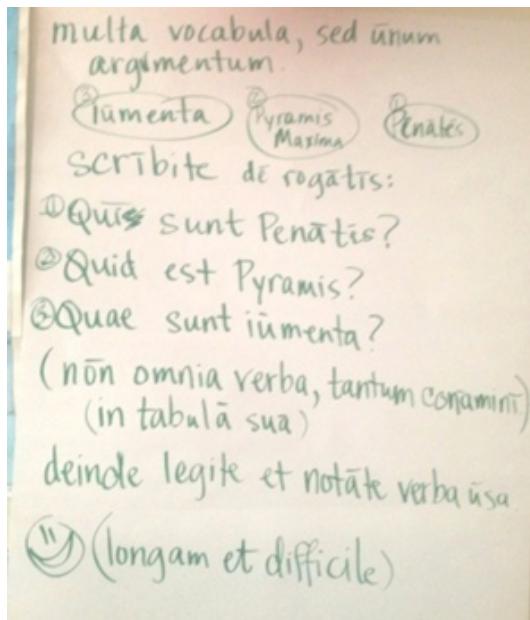


Figure 11. Topics assigned to groups for word webs, plus additional writing assignment.



Figure 12. Participants Suzanne DePedro, Shelly Sable, and Frank Kelland work on their word web.

then writes a definition of that key word using as many of the words from the word web (Figure 13) as possible. Finally one person from each group presents the definition to the class while another marks off the words from the web that are used. It is a creative yet focused activity, related to the Vergil *fābella*, but calling on prior knowledge as well to build and strengthen active vocabulary.

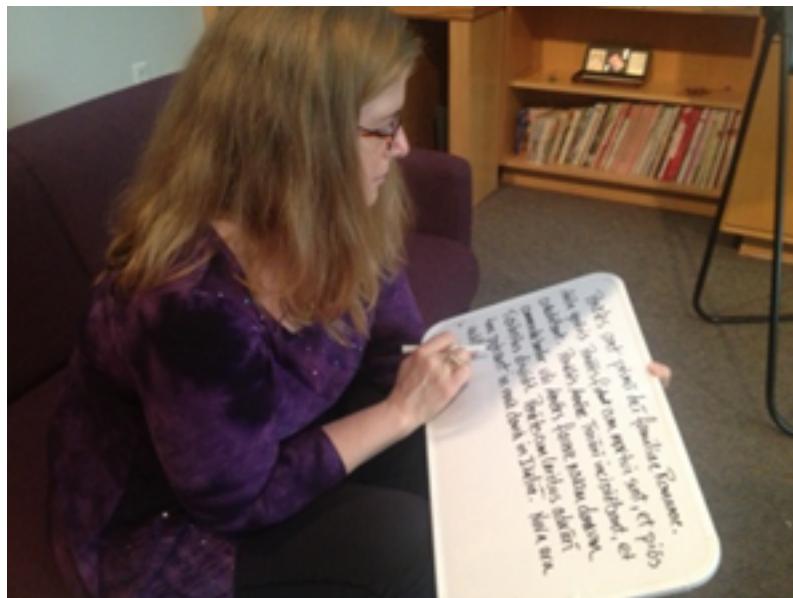


Figure 13. Participant Michala Perreault acts as a scribe for her group, composing their definition using as many of the words written on their word web.

LECTIŌ, ĖNÖDÄTIŌ, EXPLICÄTIŌ

Discussing a passage of Latin with students doesn't have to happen in English but can, as the *magistra* demonstrates, be done entirely in Latin using a four-step process:

1. *lectiō* – the first reading of the original text
2. *ēnōdātiō* – the unknotting of the text (for difficult word order)
3. *explicātiō* – explaining the meaning while staying in Latin
4. *lectiō altera* – the second reading of the original text

The *magistra* begins by reading the following passage from the *Aeneid* to us. This, of course, is the passage from which she created the embedded text used in the *fābella*, and thus participants are primed to read the original.

“heu fuge, nāte deā, tēque hīs” ait “ēripe flammīs.
hostis habet mūrōs; ruit altō ā culmine Trōia.
sat patriae Priamōque datum: sī Pergama dextrā
dēfendī possent, etiam hāc dēfēnsa fuissent.

*sacra suōsque tibi commendat Trōia Penātēs;
hōs cape fātōrum comitēs, hīs moenia quaere
magna pererrātō statuēs quae dēnique pontō.”*
(*Aeneid* 2.289-295)

Then she takes it line by line as follows:

lectiō: “heu fuge, nāte deā, tēque hīs” ait “ēripe flammīs.”

ēnōdātiō: heu, nāte deā, fuge, ēripe tē hīs flammīs

explicātiō: heu = audī, ō!

nāte = filī

fuge = curre! festīnā!

ēripe tē = cape tē, servā tē ipsum

hīs flammīs = ab igne / ab incendiō

Therefore, *explicātiō* = Audī, ō filī! Curre! Servā te ipsum ab incendiō!

She continues in a similar fashion line by line. (See Appendix 3 for the full *ēnōdātiō*.) Before returning to the whole passage in the original, the *magistra* sums it up as follows:

explicātiō totūs locī ab initio:

curre filī Veneris.

fuge ab incendiō.

urbs cadit.

fēcistī omnia agenda.

sī Trōia servārī posset,

ego Hector Trōiam meō gladiō servāvissem.

Trōia tibi deōs suōs dat.

aedificā novam urbem post iter longum et difficile.

And finally in unison everyone reads Vergil’s original text one last time—
sine ūsū Anglīci sermōnis!

MORE POST-READING ACTIVITIES:

Brevis dialogus

With a more straightforward passage, such as the following selection by Caesar, there is perhaps less need for *ēnōdātiō* and *explicātiō*, but still room for discussion and active use of Latin.

*Atque nostrīs mīlitibus cūnctantibus, maximē prop-
ter altitūdinem maris, quī decimae legiōnis aquilam
gerēbat, obtestātus deōs, ut ea rēs legiōnī fēlīciter
ēvenīret, “dēsilīte,” inquit, “mīlitēs, nisi vultis aqui-
lam hostibus prōdere; ego certē meum reī pūblicae
atque imperātōrī officium praestiterō.” (DBG 4.25)*

The *magistra* begins by reading the passage and providing a crude sketch of the timid (and perhaps seasick) soldiers and the bold *aquilifer* on board two boats on a whiteboard. Then a discussion ensues on the question of what the timid soldiers were thinking (Figure 14). Next participants are assigned to compose a brief dialogue of what the *audāx aquilifer* and the *timidulī* possibly could have said to each other. Here is one group's example:

- T: *quam altum est!* – How deep it is!
A: *dēsilīte!* – Jump down!
T: *est īnsānus!* – He's insane!
A: *dī immortālēs! favēte nōbīs!* – Immortal gods, favor us!
T: *iam moritūrī sumus!* – Now we're going to die!
A: *memōrēs estō dē officiō vestrō!* – Be mindful about your duty!

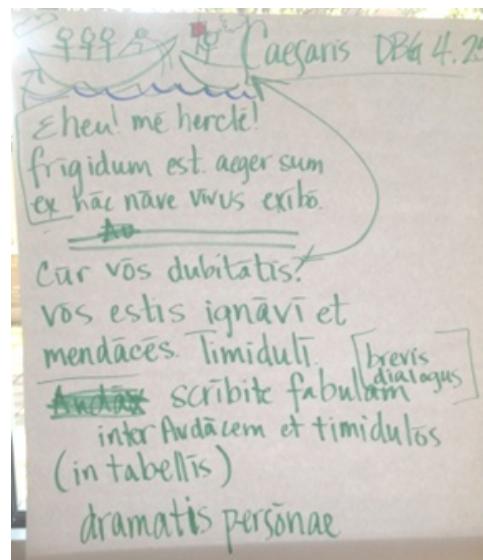


Figure 14. Our discussion of Caesar's *DBG* 4.25, including the possibility of seasick sailors.

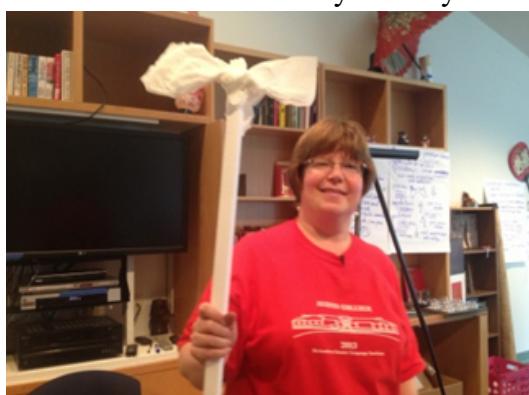


Figure 15. Nancy fashions an *aquila* out of rolled up paper and napkins.

- T: *mōnstrā nōbīs viam!* – Show us the way!
A: *Ecce aquilam!* – Look, the eagle!
nārrātor: sed mare valdē altum erat. – but the sea was really deep.
T: *Ecce! aquila natat!* – Look! the eagle is swimming!

Finally, participants act out their dialogues (Figure 15).

Student Sentences Used in Substitution and Transformation Drills

After the fun of performing, the *magistra* runs participants through drills based on sentences written in the dialogues, beginning with the following simple substitution drills. Note well that substitution and transformation drill work best if you start and end on the same word being substituted:

floccī nōn faciō aquilam. (accusative substitution)

- *Iūlīum Caesarem*
- *signum nostrum*
- *victōriam*
- *aquilam Rōmānam*

iam moritūrī sumus. (future active participle substitution)

- *locūtūrī*
- *discessūrī*
- *aquilam latūrī*
- *pugnātūrī*
- *hostēs necātūrī*
- *vomitātūrī*
- *moritūrī*

These relatively easy substitutions were followed by a rather tricky set of transformations which involved changing the *understood* subject, thus producing changes in the predicate nominative, both verbs as well as the reflexive pronoun in the accusative:

sumus mīlitēs Rōmānī et nōs facile servābimus.

- *ego – sum mīles Rōmānus et mē facile servābō.*
- *tū – es mīles Rōmānus et tē facile servābis.*
- *Robertus – Robertus est mīles Rōmānus et sē facile servābit.*
- *Robertus et Alfrēdus – Robertus et Alfrēdus sunt mīlitēs Rōmānī et sē facile servābunt.*
- *vōs – estis mīlitēs Rōmānī et vōs facile servābitis.*
- *nōs – sumus mīlitēs Rōmānī et nōs facile servābimus.*

From personal experience, I can state that participants feel a great sense of ownership and investment in the class's activities (not to mention a simple sense of delight and pride) when participant/student sentences are used and valued in this way by the instructor.

Partes Oratiōnis & Mad Libs

Following the above transformation drills, the *magistra* turns the conversation to parts of speech (see Traupman, Ch. 25). After reviewing the names and natures of the 8 parts of speech in Latin—*nōmen*, *prōnōmen*, *adiectīvum*, *verbum*, *adverbium*, *praepositiō*, *coniunctiō*, *interiectiō*—she explains to participants that it's time to do a “Mad Lib” and models proper phrasing:

- *date mihi, quaesō, aliud nōmen cāsū genitīvō.*
- *date mihi, quaesō, numerum ordinālem.*
- *date mihi, quaesō, participium perfectum.*
- *date mihi, quaesō, adverbium.*
- *date mihi, quaesō, verbum temporāle, numerō plūrāle, modō imperātīvō.*

The *magistra* then surprises the group by revealing that the Mad Lib is actually the same passage of Caesar that they began with, thus reviewing the original text one last time:

Atque nostrīs mīlitibus CANIBUS cūnctantibus, maximē propter altitūdinem maris PUELLAE, quī decimae QUAE TERTIAE legiōnis aquilam gerēbat, obtestātus AMPLEXA deōs, ut ea rēs legiōni feliciter LAETISSIMĒ ēvenīret, “dēsilitē AMĀTE,” inquit, “mīlītēs, nisi vultis aquilam ROBERTUM hosti- bus ANNULAE prōdere; ego certē meum reī pūblicae atque imperātōrī of- ficiūm praestiterō.”

And while our dogs were delaying, very greatly on account of the height of the girl, she who was bearing the eagle of the third legion, having hugged the gods in order that the matter for the legion might turn out very happily, “Love,” she said, “soldiers, unless you want to surrender Bob to Nancy; I certainly will have carried out my duty to the republic and the general.”

INTERROGĀTA, VINCŌ, & ORĀTIŌ OBLIQUA

At the very beginning of the *Biduum* before we switch into Latin only, the *magistra* asks participants to provide in writing—in English—one “fun fact” each about themselves. She turns these bits of information into Latin overnight, writes these statements on the board (e.g., *aliquis nostrum octopodem comēdit*), and sets up an interview game. First, participants help transform each statement into a question. Then they write the questions in a Bingo-style grid, in our case only 3 x 3 like tic-tac-toe (since there were only 9 questions), on white boards. Next they are taught

appropriate phrasing for approaching someone with a question: *velim aliquid tē interrogāre*. Then they circulate and interview others until someone makes a straight line on his/her board and yells out *VINCŌ*. The *magistra* wraps up this segment by leading a Latin version of the well-known children's song "Bingo." [*Habēbat canem rusticus/et nōmen eius "Vincō."* *V-I-N-C-Ō*, etc.]

The *magistra* follows this fun activity with a more serious review of direct speech (*ēnuntiātum dēclarātīvum, interrogātum, et mandātum*) and indirect speech (*ōrātiō oblīquā*) (Figure 16). She then models shifting from direct to indirect speech, drawing upon all the recently learned vocabulary and topics in her examples, from telling time to body parts to which participant had seen the Great Pyramid. For example,

- direct question: *tūne in Turceiā unquam versāta es?* Have you spent time in Turkey?
- declarative sentence: *versāta sum.* I have spent time.
- indirect question: *rogō num in Turceiā unquam versāta sīs.* I am asking whether you have spent time in Turkey.
- indirect statement: *dīcō mē in Turceiā versātam esse.* I say that I have spent time in Turkey.

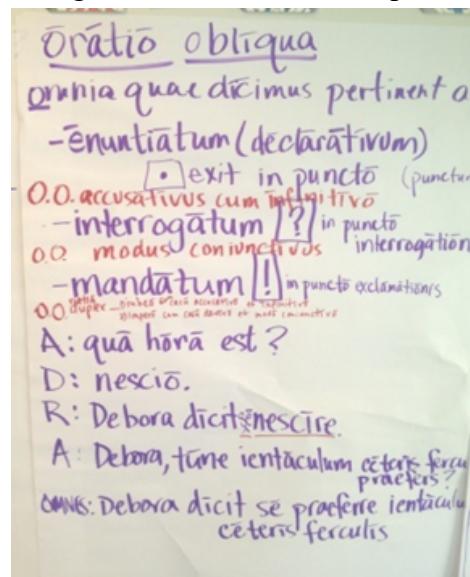


Figure 16. Discussing direct and indirect speech in Latin.

She also presents the two different ways of doing indirect commands:

- direct command: *Iacōbe, dīc litterās ābēcēdāri!* Recite the letters of the alphabet.
- indirect command using *iubeō* and an infinitive: *Iacōbum iubeō litterās ābēcēdāriī dīcere.* I order Jim to recite the letters of the alphabet.
- indirect command using *imperō* and *ut* plus the subjunctive mood: *ego Iacōbō imperō ut litterās ābēcēdāriī dīcat.* I order Jim to recite the letters of the alphabet.

After discussing and modeling the various constructions, the *magistra* leads participants through more substitution and transformation drills for reinforcement.

REVIEWING VOCABULARY WITH GAMES

One thing that make a *Biduum* or *Rusticātō* so enjoyable is the variety of activities used for consolidating information. One favorite game involves dividing the group into two teams. Each team has a representative sitting in a chair (side by side), facing the audience. All audience members have white boards and markers. The *magistra* stands behind the two representatives, holding up a white board with a Latin phrase on it (something we recently learned) and the audience members draw illustrations of that phrase. The first team representative to guess what is written in Latin on the *magistra*'s white board wins a point (Figures 17 and 18).

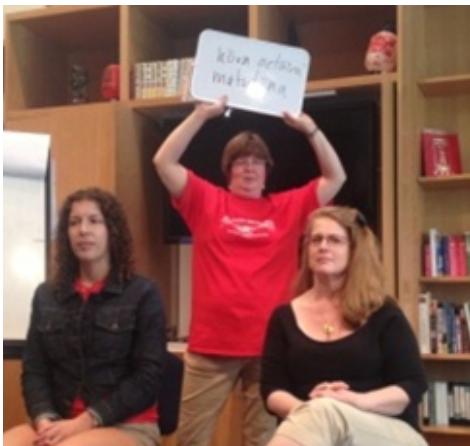


Figure 17. Participants were divided into two teams. Leaders of each side (Sarah Buhidma and Michala Perreault) sat with their backs to Nancy, who showed a word or phrases to the teams. (See Figure 18.) On the white board Nancy is holding it says *hōra octāva matutīna* (8:00 a.m.).



Figure 18. The teams drew pictures of the vocabulary item Nancy was holding up. The first leader to guess the vocabulary item won a point for their team. Most of the white boards shown simply have a picture of a clock signifying 8:00.

Hangman (*Pātibulum*) is also a favorite game to fill the last 5 minutes or so of a class. Before playing, participants first must learn the Latin names of the letters of the alphabet⁶ and how to express long (*prōducta*) and short (*correpta*) vowels. Then the *magistra* can ask

habēsne bonum verbum? Do you have a good word?

⁶ a = ā, b = bē, c = cē, d = dē, e = ē, f = ef, g = gē, h = hā, i = ī, k = cā, l = el, m = em, n = en, o = ō, p = pē, q = cū, r = er, s = es, t = tē, v = ū, x = ix, y = ypsīlon, z = zēta (Ørberg 135).

quot litterās habet? How many letters does it have?

quomodo scribitur? How is it written?

A third vocabulary game involves picking a letter (F, in this case), brainstorming words that begin with F, and then doing a group composition using those words. This actually made for a fairly quick, and yet creative, filler at the end of class (Figures 19 and 20).

EATING AND COOKING TOGETHER IN LATIN

Participants at a *Biduum* (well, most of them!) take all meals together and (may) cook at least one meal together, while almost all of the meals at *Rusticātiō* are cooked and served in common. Participants first learn critical vocabulary about meals, e.g. just as *cēna* has a related verb, *cēnāre*, so too does *iēntāculum* (*iēntāre*) and *prandium* (*prandēre*). Incorporated in learning these new vocabulary are useful phrases and idioms. To ask what is a person's favorite meal, *praeferre* is employed. Idioms such as *floccī nōn faciō* and *susque dēque* are taught for expressing that you have no favorite (Figure 21). (*Praeferre* was also used to ask participants what their favorite letter was for one of the vocabulary games; *floccī nōn faciō* was also used in a substitution drill.) Of course we have to learn the proper names for eating utensils: *fūscīnula*, *cochlear*, and *cūlter* (Figure 22). For cooking, we need a broader vocabulary. This is actually one of the joys of *Rusticātiō*—helping when it's your turn in the kitchen—because it broadens your

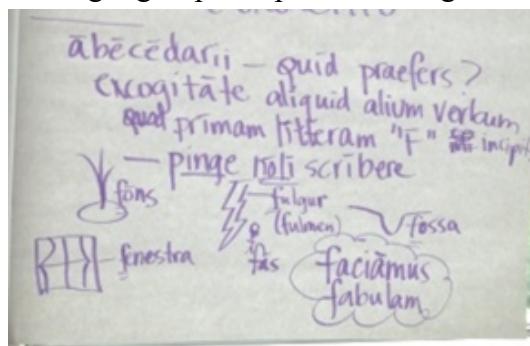


Figure 19. We picked a letter and then thought up our favorite words beginning with that letter in Latin.

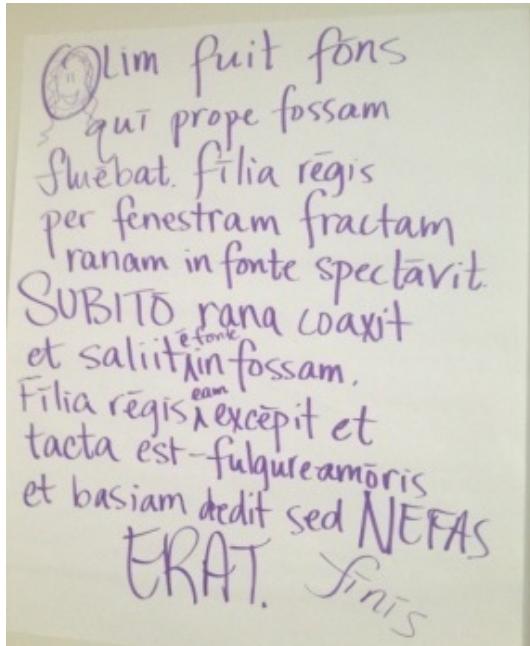


Figure 20. A *fābula* written together using all of the words beginning with F which we thought up (see Figure 19).

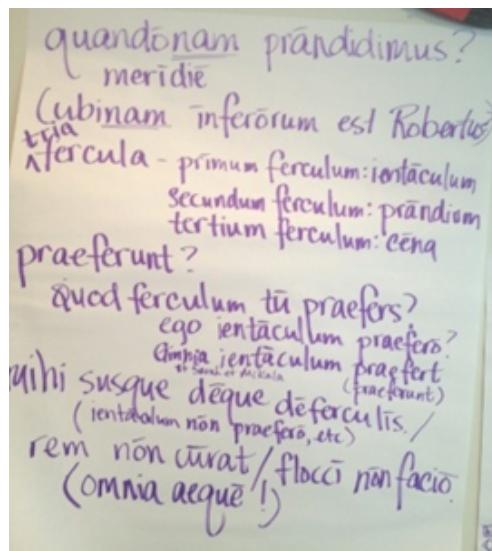


Figure 21. The three meals (*tria fercula*) of the day plus using *praeferre* and other expressions.

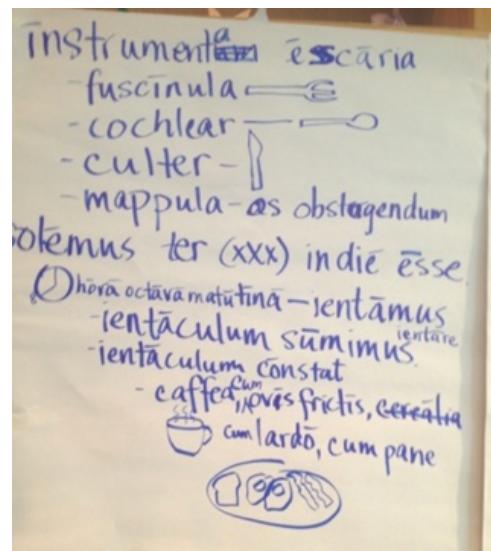


Figure 22. *Instrumenta ēscaria* (eating utensils) and a discussion about breakfast.

vocabulary tremendously, not just with food items but also basic kitchen terminology. For the *Biduum* I had a friend from *Rusticātiō* (2013) send me what was posted in the kitchen, and ended up with a massive list of useful verbs and adjectives to describe kitchen activities (see Appendix 4). Preparing a meal is a great communal learning experience and nothing seems quite as joyful as sitting down to a delightful meal that everyone has had a share in preparing (Figure 23). And the baklava (Bob Cape's family recipe!) was delicious.



Figure 23. Sarah Buhidma, Bob Cape, and Michala Perreault putting together the baklava.

FROM IMMERSION TO CLASSROOM

What I have described above is the experience for the teacher as student in the immersion environment. But what happens when you return home?

I teach at a public high school in a rural community that is becoming a suburb of Austin, Texas. There are two Latin teachers at our school and thus I no longer teach level 1. My current load includes regular Latin 2, pre-AP Latin 2, pre-AP Latin 3, and Latin 4 AP. We have a seven period day of roughly 50 minutes per class. I have long been a devotee of the *Cambridge Latin Course (CLC)* and a reading-based approach. The majority of the papers I have presented in the past at CAMWS and elsewhere expressly described many of the techniques I employ to develop true left-to-right readers (as opposed to decoders) of Latin among my students. And while I feel successful with these techniques, I have always felt that something was lacking. Speaking/reading aloud has always been a part of my teaching repertoire, with an emphasis on accurate pronunciation and phrasing. But I was still limited in what I was doing.

My exposure to SALVI immersion events such as this one has broadened my view of possibilities for my classes. Admittedly, I do not teach in full-immersion nor incorporate everything I have been exposed to. But there are techniques mentioned above that are immediately useful that I have adopted. I have used micrologues to preview a story via an “embedded” or simplified version of the story. My first two attempts were for Latin 2 and 3 respectively at the beginning of last year (and I used them again this year) (Figure 24). In the first one, for the opening of the story called “Aristō”⁷ at the beginning of Stage 19 in *CLC* (which is the first stage I teach in Latin 2), I learned that it was important to give very clear instructions in advance in English with regards to the dictation and what was expected of the volunteer, especially since this was the first

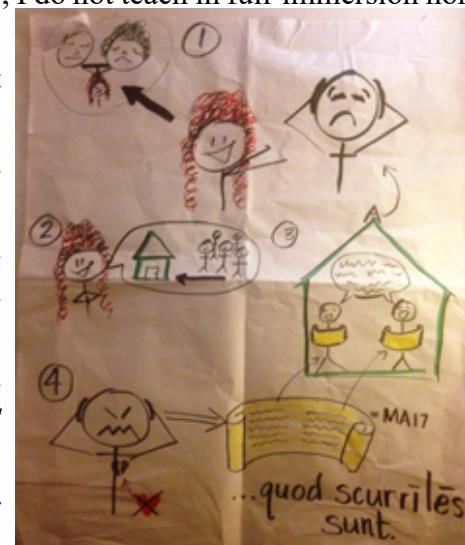


Figure 24. Drawings for my first micrologue for the story “Aristō” in Stage 19 of the *Cambridge Latin Course (CLC)*. (Apologies for the poor photo quality.)

⁷ “Helena quoque, filia Aristōnis et Galatēae, patrem vexat. multōs iuvenēs ad vīllam patris invītāt. amīcī Helenae sunt poētae. in vīllā Aristōnis poētae versūs suōs recitant. Aristō hōs versūs nōn amat, quod scurrilēs sunt. saepe hī poētae inter sē pugnant” (“Aristō,” *CLC*: Unit 2, 140).

time we ever did this activity. Also, it is critical that you can consistently tell your version of the story! As you can see from the pictures of the text, I realized the first time I used this story with students that I had told it differently from what I had written. (Note also that the last line of the *fābella* is always given in the pictures; I cannot fully give the reason for this but it does make the micrologue a more doable activity because of the secure “landing” at the end.) After the *dictatio* and *interrogatio*, the text of the *praelectio* went as follows:

Helena, filia Aristōnis et Galatēae, patrem vexat. Helena multōs iuvenēs ad vīllam invītat. in vīllā Aristōnis iuvenēs versūs suōs recitant. Aristō nōn amat hōs versūs quod scurrīlēs sunt.

Helena, the daughter of Aristo and Galatea, annoys her father. Helena invites many young men to the house. In the house of Aristo the young men recite their verses. Aristo doesn’t like these verses because they are obscene.

For Latin 3, my first micrologue was for the story “*adventus*”⁸ from Stage 31 (Figure 25). (I also use the original passages from *CLC*—not these *fābella*—for oral recitations and other activities because they target particular grammar features for that stage in the book.) Here is the text of the *praelectio* for Stage 31:

diē illūcēscente, ingēns multitūdo viās complēbat. pauperēs aquam ē fontibus trahēbant. senātōrēs ad forum lectīcīs vehēbantur. in rīpā flūminis frūmentum ā saccāriīs expōnēbātur.

While the day was growing light, a huge crowd was filling the streets. Poor people were drawing water from the fountains. Senators were being carried in sedan chairs to the forum.

On the bank of the river grain was being unloaded by dock workers.

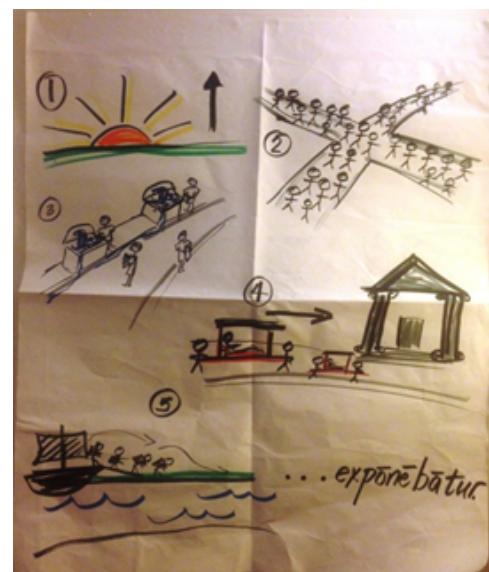


Figure 25. Drawings for the micrologue of the story “*adventus*” from Stage 31 of the *CLC*.

⁸ “*die illūcēscente, ingēns Rōmānōrum multitūdō viās urbīs complēbat. pauperēs ex īsulīs exībānt ut aquam ē fontibus pūblicīs traherent. senātōrēs ad forum lectīcīs vehēbantur. in rīpīs flūminis Tiberis, ubi multa horrea sita erant, frūmentum ē nāvibus ā saccāriīs expōnēbātur*” (“*adventus*,” *CLC*: Unit 3, 214).

I created a more recent micrologue for “*īnsidiae*”⁹ from Stage 34, though perhaps it was slightly too complex. The students still enjoyed the activity (Figure 26). Truly the only real problem I have with doing micrologues, now that I have a decent feel for them, are the time constraints of our class schedule and the pacing of our curriculum.

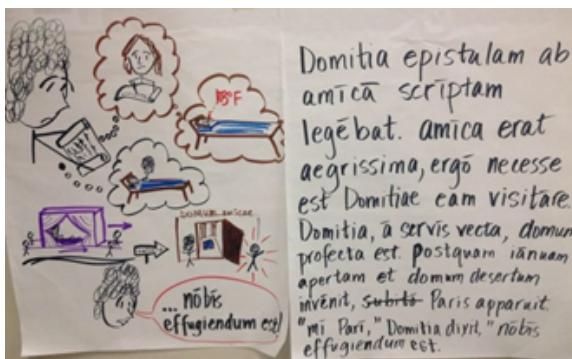


Figure 26. Drawings and *fābella* for the story “*īnsidiae*” in Stage 34 of *CLC*.

I find the substitution/transformation drills useful and fun when there is time. For me it is necessary to prepare index cards in advance as prompts to make sure I have thought of plenty of words to use in the drills because my mind will go blank. And there is an art to doing these well orally and keeping the class with you. You must keep it light, you must keep it fun while mistakes are being made under pressure or you will lose students. This takes practice to do well. Students truly enjoy using “*mīrābile!*” when someone accidentally speaks in English or if I make a mistake, and I keep them laughing and up-beat by bounding around the room. I also find that with classes larger than the intimate number at the *Biduum*, I have to have a subtle pattern for calling on students that seems unpredictable to them but that aides me in covering all the students evenly, fairly, and most importantly quickly (for packing). Sometimes I have been known to write the base sentence on the board so that students can focus entirely on the substitution or transformation, especially if it is the first or second time we are doing such drills. As always, this depends upon your class, and your judgment of what will work for them and for you.

Often when there are only a few minutes left in class we play *Pātibulum* (“Hangman”) entirely in Latin. Although I do not expressly take time out of our full curriculum to teach the alphabet thoroughly, I do have a “phone valet” (a hanging door organizer for shoes that students put their phones in during quizzes and tests) that are labeled with the letters of the alphabet. Inside of each pocket is a card (this is the valet ticket) that has the pronunciation of the letter on that pocket. When we are about to play *Pātibulum*, I will preface it by singing the alphabet in Latin to my students (to the tune of Barney the Dinosaur’s “I Love You, You Love Me”) while
 9 “tum Chionē, ē cubiculō dominae ēgressa, iussit lectīcam parārī et lectīcāriōs arcessī. medicum quoque nōmine Asclēpiadēn quaesīvit quī medicāmenta quaedam Vitelliae parāret. inde Domitia lectīcā vecta, comitantibus servīs, domum Haterī profecta est” (“*īnsidiae*,” *CLC*: Unit 3, 276).

pointing at the alphabet on the phone valet. When we are playing the game, I will simply correct their pronunciation of letters as needed as we go along, keeping it light. I teach *prōducta* (long) versus *correpta* (short) with regards to the vowels at the moment someone calls out a vowel, thus indirectly reinforcing that vowel length is important to learn and internalize. (I encourage students to internalize vowel length/sound when learning a new word and to use macrons, but I do not grade for such—that is just too nitpicky and time-consuming.)

Like many teachers, I am often held back by other considerations from doing entirely what I want or may dare to do. For instance, I confess to not having conducted an AP class using the *ēnōdātiō* technique in order read a passage and stay in Latin, nor have I used micrologues with them even though I could steal the two perfectly good ones from the *Biduum*. Why? Time. The quantity of lines on the AP syllabus for Latin that we must get through prevents me from this far more meaningful and useful exploration of Latin in Latin. Therefore I am currently brainstorming a new style of Latin 4 to replace AP (or perhaps push AP Latin to year five if we ever get a middle school Latin program), one that will consolidate and internalize all that we have learned. Reading will still be at the heart of it, but the choice of literature will be broader and not limited to the classical period alone. I want my students to have a chance to have a deeper learning experience with the language, to not be rushed at a furious pace through Caesar's *Gallic Wars* or Vergil's *Aeneid*. I want to have more time to speak and write in Latin, to create and be engaged with it and internalize it—instead of “doing Latin,” to incorporate uses of the language in ways that I now see possible. Because in the end, even if we get our students “through” AP Latin, not enough of them continue to read Latin afterwards. SAT scores alone do not measure the value of learning Latin, but interacting with material that spans not only the classical period but beyond even the millennium that followed.

THE NEXT STEP

To serve as the *repetitor* (technically, *repetitrīx*) and to be able to provide notes and support for the participants was a great opportunity for me (Figure 27). I hope to have shown you that a *Biduum* (or any immersion work-



Figure 27. Team work – Ginny Lindzey and Nancy Llewellyn at the end of a great workshop.

shop) can be an extraordinary and unique learning experience. While you may not be able to apply everything you learn at such a workshop at first, you will find that it furthers your own enjoyment of the Latin language and opens up a vista of possibilities of what you could be doing with your classes. The next step is up to you: sign up for a *Biduum* or other SALVI workshop, or any immersion workshop in your area. Dare yourself to step outside your comfort zone to broaden your own abilities both with the Latin language and with teaching Latin. You will not be disappointed.

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APPENDIX 1. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SOME COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES AND METHODOLOGIES

Circling is a “scaffolding technique that involves asking systematic questions that progress from low level to higher level questions” (Gaab). For example, it may begin with a statement followed by a “yes” question, then an either/or question, then a “no” question, etc. Circling is useful when introducing new vocabulary. This is a feature of the Personalized Questions and Answers (PQA) used in TPRS in order to engage students and teach vocabulary through repetition and use in an enjoyable way.

Comprehensible Input claims for its hypothesis “that grammatical competence and vocabulary knowledge are the result of listening and reading, and that writing style and much of spelling competence is a result of reading.” Thus CI does not delay gratification until after skills are mastered but “claims that we can enjoy real language use right away; we can listen to stories, read books, and engage in interesting conversations as soon as they are comprehensible” (Krashen). For more on the works of Stephen Krashen, visit his [website](#).

An **embedded reading** or **micrologue** is a scaffolded version of the same story. In TPRS circles, a series of embedded readings are used, starting with a simplified version, then to progressively more complex versions, and ending with the original version (Toda).

The **Rassias Method**, also known as the Dartmouth Intensive Language Model, developed by John Rassias at Dartmouth College, aims to “make the participant feel comfortable and natural with the language in a short period of time” and involves “teaching procedures and dramatic techniques which seek to eliminate inhibitions and create an atmosphere of free expression from the very first day of class” (“The Method”).

Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS), developed by Blaine Ray and Contee Seely, consists of telling or asking a story with a limited focus on new structures which can be vocabulary or grammatical structures. (Patrick “TPRS”). The emphasis is on the instruction being “highly comprehensible, personalized and contextualized” in order for it to be engaging to the student. Instructors use Personalized Questions and Answers (PQA) to shape the story, elicit engagement, and circle vocabulary providing necessary repeti-

tions for acquisition without resorting to memorized lists of vocabulary (Gaab).

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by James Asher that expressly incorporates language and physical movement to demonstrate comprehension and acquisition. After all, as Asher states: “Babies don’t learn by memorizing lists; why should children and adults?” TPR is a useful tool for developing listening comprehension, which naturally precedes developing skills in speaking, reading, and writing. (Asher)

WAYK (Where Are Your Keys?) is a language hunting system developed by Evan Gardner that consist of “techniques for accelerated learning, community building, and language revitalization.” It is a “collection of techniques used for rapidly reaching proficiency,” thus it is more than just a single method, it is a system for using any method that works. “The WAYK system allows learners to construct carefully designed games in an environment of focused, addictive play which drives the acquisition process.” As the website says, it is difficult to explain but easy to show via their videos. Although originally developed to aid in rescuing languages in danger of extinction (like many Native American languages), Evan himself has demonstrated at several *Rusticatio* events that it can be used effectively to “activate” a dead language like Latin. (“What is WAYK?”)

APPENDIX 2. WAYK? SIGNS USED AT THE BIDUUM

Only a small handful of WAYK gestures or “techniques” (TQs) are used at the *Biduum*. Many are based on American Sign Language with slight changes or adaptations. WAYK players (called thus because WAYK users consider this playing a game) use TQs in a variety of ways including “to control the flow of information, modify the learning environment, decrease risk, anxiety, and distraction, increase comfort, speed, and enjoyment, and, perhaps most importantly, train learners to be teachers” (“Technique Glossary”). For more information and even video clips of how to perform many of them, refer to the “Technique Glossary” link at the Where Are Your Keys? Blog.

[Click here for a video that demonstrates teaching of tenses.](#)

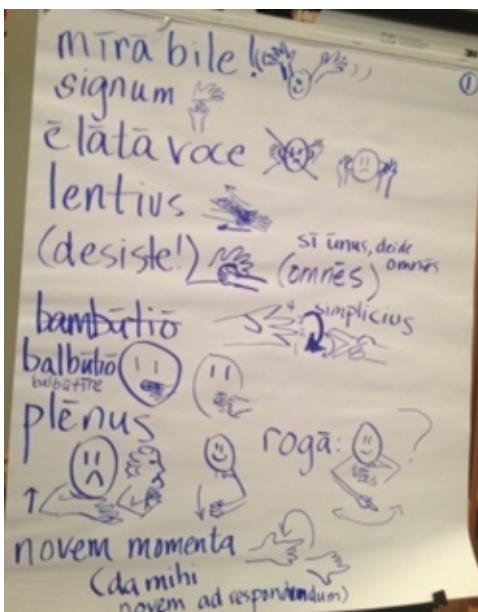


Figure 28. Notes of signs or gestures used to speed communication.

Figure 28 Transcript

mīrābile! – wonderful! strange!
(Throw your hands in the air over your head and swing backward. This is said when mistakes are made, or English is accidentally uttered. Instead of allowing ourselves to become smaller and more defensive as we make mistakes, we instead open ourselves up and laugh, and celebrate all aspects of the learning process.)

lentius – slower (The opened right hand is put on top of the left, both face down, and the right is then moved slowly up the left.)

dēsiste! – stop (The right fist is pounded into the palm of the left hand.)

simplicius – more simply – to indicate

that what was said was too complex and needs to be simplified for you to understand. (Hold the four fingers of your left hand out with your thumb tucked toward the palm, then using your index and middle finger of your right hand, move in sort of a bouncing fashion from the middle finger of the left to the little finger. The four fingers of the left indicate levels of speech, or a highly simplified version of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines, known in WAYK terms as Travels with Charlie: the little finger is Novice (Sesame Street), the ring finger is Intermediate (Dora the

Explorer), the middle finger is Advanced (Larry King Live), and the index finger is Superior (Charlie Rose).

balbūtiō – I'm stammering, saying it incorrectly--to show that you are aware that you are saying something that's not exactly right and perhaps are asking for help in saying it right. This is mainly useful for new speakers. (Put index finger on closed lips and move up and down.)

plēnus/satis – full – to indicate that you are mentally and emotionally full and can't take in any more information at that time (Hold your right hand open, palm down, under the chin to indicate that you are full.)

novem mōmenta – nine moments – that is, give me a little time to say what I have to say because I am functioning more slowly (Make a gun with your right hand, index finger pointing straight forward and thumb up, and then turn the hand upside down so that the thumb is pointing down.)

signum – sign – This is to indicate the teaching of a new sign. (The left hand is open and sticking out and away from the body horizontally and the right hand is placed vertically beneath it, also open, with the middle fingers touching the outer edge of the palm.)

ēlātā vōce – with loud/carrying voice (Hands are put behind ears to indicate that you couldn't hear.)

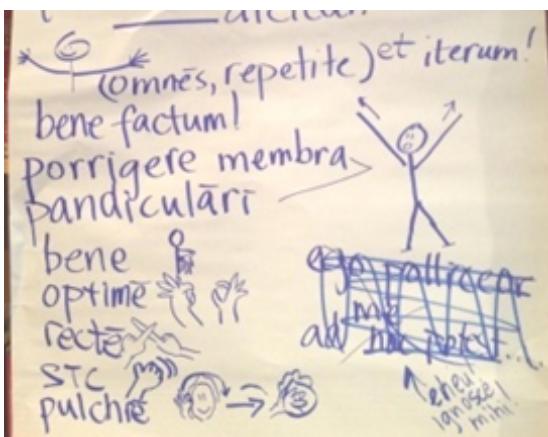


Figure 29. More notes of signs or gestures used to speed communication, mixed in with other conversation or instructions.

Figure 29 Transcript

omnēs, repetite! – everyone repeat (Open arms wide to indicate that everyone should participate, not just one individual.)

porrigere membra = pandiculārī
– to stretch

bene – well done! (Open your right hand wide and touch just your thumb to the middle of your chest.)

optimē – very well done! (Make the OK sign with both hands/thumb and index finger forming an O and the remaining fingers sticking out.)

optimē – very well done! (Make the OK sign with both hands/thumb and index finger forming an O and the remaining fingers sticking out.)

rectē – (you've answered) correctly (Cross the index finger of the left hand with that of the right hand while keeping the rest of the fingers tucked into the palms.)

sīc – yes (Make a fist with your right hand and act like you are knocking on a door.)

pulchrē - beautifully done! (Put the fingertips of your right hand together and hold them next to the right side of your face. Then move your hand in a counterclockwise motion up to your forehead and then to the left side of your face, while making your fingers explode.)

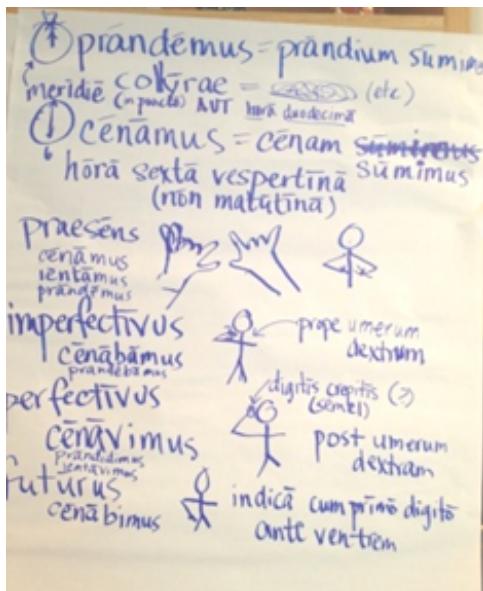


Figure 30. (Lower half) Signs/gestures for indicating tenses.

Figure 30 Transcript

praesēns – present tense (Make a fist with both hands but leave your thumb and little finger sticking out, sort of like horns. With your palms toward you, make a motion of pulling down toward the waist.)

imperfectivus – imperfect tense (With your right hand, pat the air just above your shoulder a few times to indicate ongoing action.)

perfectivus – perfect tense (With your right hand, snap directly over and just behind your right shoulder once and point.)

futurus – future tense (With the index finger of your right hand, point outwards in front of your stomach.)

APPENDIX 3. ENODATIO OF VERGIL, AENEID 2.289-95

*“heu fuge, nāte deā, tēque hīs” ait “ēripe flammīs.
 hostis habet mūrōs; ruit altō ā culmine Trōia.
 sat patriae Priamōque datum: sī Pergama dextrā
 dēfendī possent, etiam hāc dēfēnsa fuissent.
 sacra suōsque tibi commendat Trōia Penātēs;
 hōs cape fātōrum comitēs, hīs moenia quaere
 magna pererrātō statuēs quae dēnique pontō.” (Aeneid 2.289-295)*

lectiō: “heu fuge, nāte deā, tēque hīs” ait “ēripe flammīs.”

ēnōdātiō: heu, nāte deā, fuge, ēripe tē hīs flammīs

explicātiō: heu = audī, o!

nāte = filī

fuge = curre! festīnā!

ēripe tē = cape tē, servā tē ipsum

hīs flammīs = ab igne / ab incendiō

Therefore, *explicātiō* = Audī, o filī! Curre! Servā te ipsum ab incendiō!

lectiō: “ruit altō ā culmine Trōia.”

ēnōdātiō: Trōia ruit ā culmine altō.

explicātiō: Trōia cecidit.

Trōia cadit ad solum / usque ad solum.

Trōia dēlētur.

Therefore, *explicātiō* = Trōia cadit ūsque ad solum et dēlētur.

lectiō: “sat patriae Priamōque datum.”

ēnōdātiō: sat datum est patriae Priamōque

explicātiō: fēcistī omnia quae dēbuistī

satis! exī!

omnia quae potuistī patriae et rēgī / prō patriā et

prō rēge

Therefore, *explicātiō* = Fēcistī omnia quae potuistī prō patriā et prō rēge.

lectiō: “sī Pergama dextrā / dēfendī possent, etiam hāc dēfēnsa fuissent.”

ēnōdātiō: (not needed)

explicātiō: Pergama = Trōia

dextrā = manū dexterā in quā gladius tenētur.

hāc dextrā = dextrā meā (Hectoris)

Therefore, *explicātiō* = Sī Trōia ūllā manū dexterā dēfendī possent, meā dextrā dēfēnsa fuissent.

lectiō: “*sacra suōsque tibi commendat Trōia Penātēs.*”

ēnōdātiō: *Trōia commendat tibi sacra et suōs Penātēs.*

explicātiō: *Trōia tibi dat deōs suōs.*

lectiō: “*hōs cape fātōrum comitēs.*”

ēnōdātiō: *cape hōs comitēs fātōrum.*

explicātiō: *hōs = deōs Trōiae*

comitēs = sociī

sociōs fortūnae tuae

(iter longum et difficile!)

Therefore, *explicātiō* = *Cape deōs Trōiae ut sociōs fortūnae tuae.*

lectiō: “*hīs moenia quaere / magna pererrātō statuēs quae dēnique pontō.*”

ēnōdātiō: *quaere moenia magna hīs quae dēnique statuēs pererrātō pontō.*

explicātiō: *pete locum novum aut domum novam / aedificā novum*

statuēs = pōnēs / faciēs /aedificābis

dēnique = tandem / post multōs annōs

*pererrātō pontō = et nāvigāveris et nāvigāveris,
multa per aequora vectus*

Therefore, *explicātiō* = *pete locum novum hīs deīs; illīs domum novam post
multōs annōs et multa per aequora vectus tandem aedificābis.*

APPENDIX 4. KITCHEN TERMINOLOGY.

Although not part of the actual instruction, this terminology was posted in the kitchen as a point of reference for when the cooking began.

Verbs

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>accendō, accendere, accendī, accēnsum</i> | to kindle anything above so that it may burn downwards, to light; to light up |
| <i>succendō, succendere, succendī, succēnsum</i> | to kindle underneath, so that it may burn upwards |
| <i>extinguō, extingue, extinxī, extinctum</i> | to put out (what is burning), to extinguish |
| | |
| <i>coquō, coquere, coxī, coctum</i> | to cook; to bake, boil, roast, heat |
| <i>assō, assāre, assāvī, assūm</i> | to roast, broil |
| <i>frīgō, frīgere, frīxī, frīctum</i> | to fry |
| <i>torreō, torrēre, torruī, tostum</i> | to dry up, roast, bake, toast |
| | |
| <i>secō, secāre, secuī, sectum</i> | to cut, cut off, cut up, carve |
| <i>scindō, scindere, scidī, scissum</i> | to cut, tear, split, cleave, divide |
| <i>terō, terere, trīvī, trītum</i> | to rub, grind; to tread out, thresh |
| <i>dēglūbō, dēglūbere, deglupsī, dēglūptum</i> | to peel off; to shell, to husk |
| | |
| <i>agitō, agitāre, agitāvī, agitātum</i> | to put a thing in motion, shake; to beat |
| <i>misceō, miscēre, miscuī, mixtum</i> | to mix, blend (with ablative) |
| <i>sternō, sternere, strāvī, strātum</i> | to spread out, to smooth, to level, stretch out, extend, strew, scatter; to cover, cover over (by spreading something out) |
| | |
| <i>spargō, spargere, sparsī, sparsum</i> | to scatter, sprinkle; to spatter, wet, moisten |
| <i>depsō, depserē, depsuī, depstum</i> | to knead |
| | |
| <i>addō, addere, addidī, additum</i> | to put to, place upon, lay on, join, attach, add (a thing to another) |
| <i>afferō, afferre, attulī, allātum</i> | to bring, take, carry, or convey a thing to a place; to bring near (with <i>ad</i> or dative) |
| <i>īferō, īferre, intulī, illātum</i> (with <i>in</i> or <i>ad</i> + acc, or dative) | to carry, bring, put, or throw into or upon a place; to serve up |

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>impōnō, impōnere, imposuī, impositum</i> | to place, put, set, or lay into or upon (with <i>in</i> + acc or dative) |
| <i>aufērō, auferre, abstulī, ablātum</i> | to take away, withdraw, remove (with <i>ā/ab, dē</i> , or <i>ex</i>) |
| <i>dēprōmō, dēprōmere, dēprompsī/dēpromsī, dēpromptum/dēpromptum</i> | to draw out, draw forth; to bring out, fetch from anywhere (with <i>ex</i> or <i>dē</i> of things, with <i>ā/ab</i> of persons) |
| <i>removeō, removēre, remōvī, remōtum</i> | to move back; to take away, set aside, remove |
| <i>recondō, recondere, recondidī, reconditum</i> | to put up again; to stow away |
| <i>repōnō, repōnere, reposuī, repositum</i> | to lay, place, put, or set back |
| <i>aperiō, aperīre, aperiū, apertum</i> | to open; to uncover |
| <i>operiō, operīre, operiū, opertum</i> | to cover, cover over |
| <i>tegō, tegere, texī, tectum</i> | to cover, cover over |
| <i>dētegō, dētegere, dētexī, dētectum</i> | to uncover, expose; to take off, remove |
| <i>fundō, fundere, fūdī, fūsum</i> | to pour, pour out |
| <i>impleteō, implēre, implēvī, implētum</i> | to fill, fill up, make full; to fill with food, satisfy |
| <i>lavō, lavāre, lāvī, lātum/lavātum/lōtum (supine is always <i>lavātum</i>)</i> | to wash, bathe; to wash away |
| <i>purgō, purgāre, purgāvī, purgātum</i> | to clean, make clean, purify |
| <i>dētergeō, dētergere, detersī, dētersum</i> | to wipe away, wipe off; to cleanse by wiping, to clean out; to take away, remove |
| <i>abluō, abluere, abluī, ablūtum</i> | to wash off or away; to wash, cleanse, purify |
| <i>comedō, comedere/comēsse, comēdī, comēsum</i> | to eat up, consume |
| <i>consūmō, consūmēre, consumpsī, consumptum</i> | to eat, to consume |
| <i>bibō, bibere, bibī</i> | to drink |
| <i>pōtō, pōtāre, pōtāvī, pōtātum</i> | to drink |
| <i>gustō, gustāre, gustāvī, gustātum</i> | to taste, to take a little of |
| <i>sapiō, sapere, sapīvī/sapuī</i> | to taste, savor; to have a sense of taste |
| <i>caleō, calēre, caluī</i> | to be warm or hot |
| <i>frīgeō, frīgēre</i> | to be cold, feel cold |

Adjectives

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>culinārius, -a, -um</i> | pertaining to the kitchen, culinary |
| <i>escārius, -a, -um</i> | pertaining to food, eating |
| <i>ligneus, -a, -um</i> | of wood, wooden |
| <i>metallicus, -a, -um</i> | of metal, metallic |
| <i>plasticus, -a, -um</i> | plastic |
| <i>perforātus, -a, -um</i> | perforated, pierced through |
| <i>vitreus, -a, -um</i> | glass |
| <i>fictilis, -is, -e</i> | made of clay, earthen |
| <i>dūrus, -a, -um</i> | hard |
| <i>mātūrus, -a, -um</i> | ripe, mature |
| <i>lentus, -a, um</i> | pliant, flexible, sticky, viscous |
| <i>recēns, -tis</i> | fresh |
| <i>calidus, -a, -um</i> | hot |
| <i>frīgidus, -a, -um</i> | cold |
| <i>tepidus, -a, -um</i> | warm |
| <i>siccus, -a, -um</i> | dry |
| <i>madidus, -a, -um</i> | wet |
| <i>dulcis, -is, -e</i> | sweet |
| <i>blandus, -a, -um</i> | bland |
| <i>salsus, -a, -um</i> | salty; salted; salted with humor, witty |
| <i>amārus, -a, -um</i> | bitter in taste, pungent; (of wine) dry, tart |
| <i>acerbus, -a, -um</i> | having a sour flavor, acid, bitter; (of fruit) unripe |
| <i>condītus, -a, -um</i> | seasoned, flavored; (neuter plural) seasoned food |
| <i>suavis, -is, -e</i> | delicious, agreeable (in taste); free from saltiness, bitterness, acidity; agreeable to the nose, fragrant |
| <i>dēlectābilis, -is, -e</i> | enjoyable, delightful; delicious (in taste) |

Making Sense of Comprehensible Input in the Latin Classroom

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ABSTRACT

In the last decade, what once seemed a huge gulf between modern and classical language teachers has begun to look more like a practical bridge between helpful neighbors. This paper attempts to illustrate how that professional sharing is engaging Latin and other teachers of classical languages in teaching practices grounded in the theory Comprehensible Input. The considerations include summaries of the theory of Comprehensible Input first articulated as five hypotheses by Stephen Krashen and subsequently supported by other researchers such as Lee and VanPatten. Illustrations of the practice of CI come from the author's work in his secondary school Latin program via written and video examples of the work, shared lessons, assessments, and commentary on them. The paper considers a range of approaches from core practices to strategies for reading, writing, and assessing.

KEYWORDS

comprehensible input, pedagogy, reading, writing, equity, accessible Latin, SLA

In a recent article, Stephen Krashen described characteristics of the language teacher in a way that may be instructive to Latin teachers who are considering changes in their approach to our art and craft.

First, it needs to be pointed out that very few people are like us, interested in language for its own sake. Very few people take the pleasure that we do in understanding and using another language, let alone the pleasure of successfully monitoring a consciously-learned rule. We are, I suspect, a fringe group. (Krashen, 2014).

Classical language teachers are not the average kind of learner. We love things about our languages not often shared by the average person. When we limit

our classes to those who share our interests we enhance the false notion that Latin cannot be learned by the average person. This practice has kept our programs small. The Modern Language Association has just published a new report showing a decline in the study of all languages in our universities, but among them Latin (16.2 percent) and Ancient Greek (35.5 percent) show by far the deepest losses. These are the deepest declines since 1968 (Goldberg et al. 28). The report acknowledges unknown causes of the drop, but speculates that it may be the proximity to our recent recession. Yet Latin and other classical languages in western cultures have much to offer in self-understanding and historical perspective for our students. I know that I share this value of classical languages with my fellow teachers.

I am motivated by three things in the work that I do: love of the Latin language itself; the belief that every student in our schools, public or private, has a right to access Latin and its connections; and the desire to create Latin programs that are strong and sustainable. In this paper, I aim to demonstrate current attempts to integrate the teaching of Latin with the principles and evolving practices of an overarching approach called Comprehensible Input. I will begin with a summary of the theory of CI followed by written and video examples of the classroom work as we do it in our public high school program. These samples and examples include a sample lesson for a Latin 1 class, an extended unit in Latin 4, how to personalize daily work, making reading Latin texts accessible, and specific practices of assessment and grammar instruction within the theory of CI. The paper includes Appendix 1 with a compilation of working CI principles as they pertain to Latin, and Appendix 2 with shared materials for the Latin 4 unit. These materials may be copied, used and improved by the reader with due credit given for their public use.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT?

Comprehensible Input begins with the hypotheses and research of Stephen Krashen in Second Language Acquisition. Since his initial work in the 1980's both researchers (Lee and VanPatten, chapters 1-3) and practitioners (Asher, 2009; Ray and Seely, 2008; Adair-Hauck and Donato) have contributed to understanding and articulating the principles and evolving practices for use with second language learners. The theory lies in the five hypotheses of Krashen (*Principles and Practice* 9-32), each of which builds on the other:

1. The **Acquisition-Learning Distinction**. One *acquires* language unconsciously through meaningful engagement with the language while one *learns about* the language via direct instruction of rules and usage.
2. The **Monitor Hypothesis**. The human mind sets up an internal monitor around language rules, and the monitor will interfere with acquisition when it is called upon. The monitor is useful once language is acquired but interferes if called upon too early. The monitor is of greatest service when formally editing one's written work or preparing formal speech.
3. The **Natural Order Hypothesis**. Building on the work of many researchers in SLA prior to him, Krashen observed that in each language some structures are acquired early and others later. No research exists which delineates the order for a particular language. Krashen furthermore noted that one cannot force a structure to be acquired earlier than its natural order in a language.
4. The **Input Hypothesis**. Perhaps the core of these hypotheses, then, is that all language is acquired by human beings when they receive understandable and compelling messages in the language. A significant part of this fourth hypothesis is that output (speaking and writing) is the product of input. If more output is desired, more input is required.
5. The **Affective Filter Hypothesis**. Finally, Krashen noted that as stress increases for the language learner, acquisition decreases. The implications are broader than language learning, but in a second language classroom, the aim is to reduce stress as much as possible (Krashen pp. 10-30). Each of these hypotheses has been demonstrated repeatedly enough that we might refer to them as CI theory.¹ Likewise, each has implications for classroom practices.

¹ For a deeper discussion of CI theory and its dependability, [this discussion by Chris Stoltz](#) is very useful. Despite the three decades since Krashen's earliest work on the hypotheses, various voices in linguistics and the L2 teaching field continue to either dismiss them as unprovable or passe because they are so old. Stoltz addresses the former in his blog discussion, and I will observe that, regarding the latter, hypotheses require time and testing before they go into the field. We are now in that rich period where the hypotheses-become-theory are moving into dynamic practice.

The last two decades have produced what has become a dynamic, collaborative, experimental, often times passionate, and always evolving set of practices among teachers of many languages who are attempting to teach their languages with Comprehensible Input theory and practices.² Latin teachers as a whole who are working with CI theory focus on and include dozens of approaches in which:

1. The teacher consistently is delivering understandable messages in Latin. That is, the teacher speaks and offers readings that are most readily understood, in Latin, by the students. Among CI teachers, it has become a recognized practice, for example, that any reading in which 90 percent or more of the words are not known by the student is unreadable. When the teacher is speaking in Latin, there should be various ways of checking comprehension and to give students the ability to indicate loss of comprehension.
2. The teacher uses material that is interesting to students. This requires the teacher to know his/her audience, and to work to find and create Latin materials that hold student interest.
3. Latin teachers will teach in ways that reduce stress in the room. The reality is that average students find language learning stressful. To do this, CI teachers across languages insist on “teaching to the eyes” as a literal way of taking the barometric pressure in the room. Humor, stories, personalization and creating personal connections with students bring the stress level down in the room.

Recent research validates that not only language acquisition but knowledge of the structure and grammar of a language happens largely unconsciously to the learner (Morgan-Short et al.). Their study shows that the students given “immersive”³ approaches rather than direct grammar instruction showed brain responses similar to native speakers and, when tested six months after instruction, retained the acquired language with brain patterns that continued to develop as those of native speak-

2 Today, the blogosphere offers rich fare in the daily practices of CI work. Among the best are [Ben Slavic](#), [Jason Fritze](#), [Susan Gross](#), [Karen Rowan](#), [Laurie Clarcq](#), [Keith Toda](#), and [Rachel Ash and Miriam Patrick](#).

3 This is Morgan-Short’s term. In the CI community distinction is made between CI approaches and immersion methods. In a true immersion approach, L1 is never used. In CI, L1 is used whenever it is needed to make L2 comprehensible. See example below.

ers. When a CI teacher delivers understandable messages in Latin about topics that students are interested in, and the teacher keeps the stress in the room low, students forget that this is a language class. They leave having acquired a great deal that day without thinking about it. “Language is acquired through comprehensible input. It is an unconscious process that happens when the learner is focused on the message rather than the language itself” (Krashen, personal correspondence).

Most Latin teachers already engage in CI to some degree even if they do not know the term, the theories, or the body of work amassing around it. For example, most teachers of any language introduce the vocabulary that will be new to that unit. The teacher shows students a list of vocabulary, pronouncing the new words and giving the English meaning. This is, in its most rudimentary form, delivering an understandable message in the target language. “Class, *puer* means girl.” The teacher proceeds through the list, the students follow, more or less. What routinely happens, then, departs from CI into what teachers tend to deem more important: explaining the new grammar for the unit. By taking this traditional turn, otherwise good and well-intending teachers shift away from the thing that all students can make progress in—understandable messages in Latin—to what no human being adequately retains for very long—grammar.⁴ Teachers love grammar, and teachers spend constant time with it (a requirement if one is to retain any of it). Average learners have little interest in it.⁵ This is a crucial intersection between what the teacher finds interesting and believes to be crucial to language learning and what will actually work for average students.

A Sample Lesson Using CI

What would it look like to continue doing CI with that new unit rather than turn immediately to grammar? Imagine the teacher taking four words from that list that would ordinarily be introduced as described above. Let’s imagine that this is a Latin 1 class and the four words are *puer*, *puella*, *ambulare*, and *videre*. The teacher must choose four words that can provide some interesting discussion for the class as well as help build needed vocabulary for the unit in question. The choice of four words is based on a class period of between 45 minutes and an hour. The teacher

⁴ For a summary of the research on retention of grammar through direct grammar instruction, cf. Krashen, “[Teaching Grammar: Why Bother?](#)”

⁵ I will return to this issue of grammar and what to do with it below within the discussion on assessment in a CI classroom. For the time, let me state clearly: we teach grammar in a CI classroom, but we do it, and assess it very differently from a traditional approach.

writes those four words on the board with their English equivalent next to it. Typical dictionary formatting is not necessary. The teacher, as above, walks through the four, pronounces, names the English meaning, and asks the class if there are any questions. The teacher then asks everyone to remove all items from their desks and give full attention to the discussion they are about to have completely in Latin. This discussion presumes that other vocabulary is already known by the students from previous activities like this. The expansion of CI from simply introducing the English meaning of the words might go something like the following.

Teacher: *Discipuli, olim erat puella* (pauses, walks to the board, points to the word *puella*).

At this point the **students** offer what they have been trained to do. They all respond with a chorus of oohs and ahs, as if the teacher has just revealed the mysteries of the universe.⁶

Teacher: *Discipuli, quod nomen ei erat?*

Students then call out a variety of names. The teacher pauses over each and considers as if waiting for the perfect name which is finally identified. Why bother with this? We bother with this sort of thing because it creates interest in what is unfolding. It makes the process more compelling.

Teacher: *Ah, ita vero. Puellae erat nomen “Cassandra.” Cassandra erat puella, et olim, Cassandra, puella nostra, ambulabat* (teacher pauses and walks over to the board and points to the word *ambulare* on the board)...*ubi? Discipuli, ubi puella, nomine Cassandra?*

⁶ This will seem silly and unnecessary to many teachers and to some students. It certainly did to me, at first. Introducing this element of play—of pretending to be astonished and awed by every new fact—however simple—creates the atmosphere that allows the class to very quickly move into a compelling engagement of the language that becomes less self-conscious—the place where acquisition happens routinely and permanently. A teacher cannot, however, introduce this element half-heartedly. Students will sniff out the lack of commitment and refuse to play the game. Playing the game is essential. Magistro duce, ludamus!

dra, ambulabat? Puella in silva ambulabat? Puella in urbe, Atlanta, ambulabat? Puella in oppido, Lilburnia [Lilburn, Georgia], ambulabat? Puella in Mall of Georgia ambulabat? The teacher walks through this series of questions and awaits for a *minime* or *certe* from the students. The affirmative is almost a roar when the teacher mentions that the girl was walking in the Mall of Georgia.

Teacher: *Ita vero. Sine dubio, discipuli, puella nostra nomine Cassandra in Mall of Georgia ambulabat.*

In this scenario, the teacher is assuring that every student in the room will learn these four words, today, and never forget them by delivering 45 minutes to an hour of understandable messages in Latin. They will not have to study, do drills or homework to remember *puella*, *puer*, *ambulare* and *videre* because the teacher has kept them engaged in a story about a girl walking in the Mall of Georgia where she (you can imagine how the rest of it unfolds) sees a boy named Apollo. They walk through the mall, and Apollo gives her a special gift. The story remains simple, and without their realizing it, all the students have learned four new words in Latin. The teacher can give them a pass-out-of class quiz on the four words that day, or the next or at the end of the week, but all the students will know these four words. Just in the example above, the word *puella* was used ten times. By the end of an hour session conducted like this, delivering understandable messages in Latin, the students will have heard each of the four words many times. Finding ways to reiterate the targeted vocabulary is a device called “circling,” and circling can be used in every kind of activity in the classroom beyond simply introducing new vocabulary. At some point in this imagined class above, the teacher might ask for volunteers to be Cassandra and Apollo walking at the mall so that as the story unfolds, they act out what is happening. The teacher might also stop and interview Cassandra and/or Apollo about what they want to do next, what they see, what they hear, etc. This type of circling is an example of Personal Questions and Answers (hereafter, PQA). These added dimensions allow for more repetitions of targeted vocabulary, increase student engagement, and assure that the learning is happening without the learner being aware of that. We often refer to this experience of “becoming lost in the flow” of the second language, and this is where language acquisition, including grammar, happens

most effectively. Language acquisition is unconscious. That's why silly works. I should point out that I have used these methods at middle school, high school, and university level courses, and I have demonstrated them in both Latin and classical Greek classes. They work with every student, all the time. Via the CI theory stated by Krashen and supported by Lee and VanPatten, we come to understand that this is how all language is acquired, whether first or subsequent languages. Even the 22-year old who is approaching Latin as a subsequent language can actually acquire ability to understand the language, spoken or read, if invited to acquire it this way. Our traditional programs do not allow the average 22-year old to make progress in Latin, and as a result, we insure that people think that Latin is harder than other languages, that only some people can learn Latin, and that our Latin programs will remain small and elusive for average human beings.

Given the imagined setting above, Latin teachers will begin to do the math.⁷ “If I spend an entire hour on just four words, I will never be able to cover everything I want to/must cover.” That statement is true, and it deserves the most serious soul searching and consideration of Latin teachers at every level, especially the University level, for it is at the University level where future teachers of Latin and Greek gain their degrees and “learn to teach” whether the Classics Department thinks of itself as teaching teachers to teach or not. Graduates will simply, by default, go and do what was done to them. We all do, and this locks us into the vicious cycle which I am describing: Latin is harder than other languages; not everyone can learn Latin; Latin programs will always be small.

If we teach with CI approaches, it does require us to let go of what may be sacred domains for us in our curricula, not the least of which is grammar. At a workshop several years ago, a Latin teacher appeared to me to be distraught about half way through a three day workshop. Upon inquiry, she told me that she realized that if she taught with CI she would no longer be able to teach grammar and culture, and that she was a “really, really good grammar teacher.” She was on the verge of

⁷ Let me be more explicit about “the math.” I teach in a public school with 180 required school days for students. My Latin classes meet 5 times a week for almost an hour each. I have found that I cannot introduce 4 new words every day of the week or year. What is more reasonable given interruptions to the school day, including massive testing requirements by State and Federal governments is that I can introduce new words 3 days a week. This equates to about 200 words per semester, about 400 words a year. Some students will acquire more, and some less. If a CI approach is used for four years, those students will have acquired about 1600 vocabulary words which places them in a mid to high intermediate proficiency range. The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* indicate that that is an appropriate expectation for four years of high school language work for the average learner.

tears. She had only made it halfway through the insight. Indeed, she would no longer be able to spend hours teaching about Latin grammar if she took up CI. What she had not come to see, yet, was that, more than ever, she needed to be the grammar, history, and culture expert in the room. At every turn in a CI classroom, the Latin teacher must make choices about which vocabulary to focus on, which grammatical structures to use, how to shape a story that introduces cultural, historical and literary themes all the while keeping the work in the room in Latin engaging and understandable. CI teaching is intense, demanding, and exciting work. It not only allows, but demands, that the Latin teacher be the expert in all things pertaining to Latin,⁸ and it requires the teacher to use those things in rather non-traditional ways. The teacher at that workshop has gone on to be a fabulous CI teacher who knows that her love for grammar is not being wasted.

Ten years ago when I replaced the retiring teacher in the school, she had 130 students in four levels of Latin. Her retention rate from Latin 1 through Latin 4 was .2 percent, that percentage represented by the one and only Latin 4 student. That year she was relegated to independent study in the corner of the Latin 3 class. I began that year converting that traditional program to a CI approach. A decade later, Latin has moved from 4th of 4 languages in my school to 2nd of 4 languages. We have 592 students registered in five levels of Latin and four of us preparing to teach Latin full or extended time beginning August 2015. Our retention rate this past year was 62 percent. The special education department in our school is delighted to place students in Latin for foreign language. As they tell us, they know that their students will be successful. At the year's end last year, the three of us teaching Latin at 5 levels, including AP, had no failures at all. We require all of our Latin students to take the National Latin Exam, and routinely 60+ percent score high enough for an award on some level. We have been giving the ALIRA Reading Proficiency exam for the last two years.⁹ Our goal is to give it at the end of Latin 1 to all students and then again when students exit our program at the fourth year. Over the next five years, our aim is to identify what are the average gains that students in our CI Latin program can

8 To balance this statement, let me add that it is enough to be the teacher who is always becoming more expert. None of us is the ultimate expert in a field as wide and deep as classical languages. Some critics of this approach have ascertained that unless Latin teachers speak perfect Latin (however defined) then they lead students astray by teaching Latin this way. I find that to be a purist approach at a time and in a field when we can no longer wait for or even expect every teacher to become a perfect speaker of Latin. Despite our mistakes (which we become very aware of and continue to repair), students of all kinds make good progress in Latin when we teach with CI.

9 See this [ACTFL website](#) for additional information on the ALIRA Latin Reading Proficiency test.

be expected to make. Thus far, 54 percent of our Latin 1 students score in the low intermediate reading proficiency range using the ACTFL proficiency guides.¹⁰ This early finding has surprised us, as our expectation was that they would score in the mid to high novice range. The remaining 46 percent did largely fall in the Novice high range. We are pleased that our Latin 1 students thus far taught only with CI approaches are scoring so well in reading proficiency.

Our latest efforts have been to create a smoother transition from our CI program to the AP Latin course. We have done this in part by being very clear that AP Latin is not the capstone course in our program. Latin 4 is the capstone and continues the CI approach. In the 2014-15 school year, we began using embedded readings created for every segment of the AP Latin exam. This approach is still too experimental for me to cite any data or results other than to say that all of those AP students reported that they felt prepared for the AP Latin exam after taking it. This kind of turn around and strengthening of the program is not unique to my school. Latin teachers using CI report both this same kind of strengthening of their program as well as a significant struggle in making the transition. CI work turns our teaching world upside down in several ways.

HOW DOES COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT WORK?

Let me describe a sequence of CI activities that I used recently in a Latin 4 class with some brief video clips as examples. I had devoted most of the semester to a theme simply called *Ludi* (cf. Appendix 2 for a list of linked documents used in this unit from initial planning, building vocabulary and comprehension and final assessments). I spent a week introducing and circling vocabulary required for reading Seneca's description of his room over the baths (cf. *Epistulae Morales* 56.1-2, 14b-15). If you recall above, circling the vocabulary means that on any given day, I had chosen four new words that students would encounter in Seneca's writing, and I engaged students in conversation and/or stories using those four words. I also used the process of a *dictatio* to introduce much of that new vocabulary. I did this until we had enough vocabulary to proceed to Seneca. I prepared two embedded (simplified) versions of that Letter for them so that after circling the new vocabulary, they were

10 "At the Intermediate Low sublevel, readers are able to understand some information from the simplest connected texts dealing with a limited number of personal and social needs, although there may be frequent misunderstandings. Readers at this level will be challenged to derive meaning from connected texts of any length." (*ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* 23)

able to read, with ease, embedded version 1, embedded version 2 and then Seneca's letter itself (see Appendix 2).

With my embedded versions of Seneca's letter, there was no translation. We simply read and discussed the letter in Latin. I asked questions in Latin, and they gave answers in Latin. They asked me, in Latin, for help in understanding difficult spots, and I rephrased, paraphrased, and explained, in Latin.¹¹ One of the noted annoying sounds for Seneca was the voice of the *pilicrepus*, the referee of the *Trigon* game¹² who—when he arrives—just rather finishes off endurance of noise for Seneca—*actum est*. That was my segue into teaching the vocabulary for games in general and eventually the rules for *Trigon* in particular. Here are some clips from that day, discussing by way of circling and PQA about [what games](#) my students like to play, [where they are played](#), and [how many players are involved](#). On the following day, I explained the rules of *Trigon*, and we went outside to our school's tennis courts and played games of *Trigon*. The “deal” was that we could stay out playing as long as all of the conversation was held in Latin. Each game required three *lusores* and a *pilicrepus*. Not only did they stay in Latin for two days of playing, but they began to extract from me (*Doctor! Quomodo dicitur...*) the language they needed for cheer, cajoling and otherwise enjoying the games. I assessed their speaking while they were not noticing. At the end of that week after a [discussion reviewing Seneca's letter](#) and *Trigon*'s rules, they each wrote a two paragraph writing assessment on their experience of *Trigon*, its rules, and how they would respond to Quintilian's observation that *apud infantes, mores detegi inter ludendum* (paraphrased from Quint. *Instit.* 1.3.12; in English, “among children, that values are discovered in their playing”).

In these video segments, we are seeing students who have been in a CI Latin program from the beginning, for four years. They have learned to do some things that are core to the process. They have learned to extract language from the teacher. From the very beginning, they have been taught how to ask for the language they don't have, in Latin—*quomodo dicitur...* They have come to expect discussions, ac-

11 Adair-Hauck, Donato, and Cumo (95) identify this as stressing natural discourse and encourages students to comprehend meaningful and longer stretches of discourse from the very beginning of the lesson.

12 In the work of this unit, I taught the classes how to play *Trigon* and did so completely in Latin. I taught the rules of the game as if it were a story, circling new terms and involving students in PQA conversations. When it seemed to me that the students understood, I had them take turns explaining the rules of the game in Latin. See Appendix 2 for documents pertaining to these activities. There are [modern compilations](#) of how to play *Trigon* and other Roman games. We took these and adapted, e.g. games played to 7 instead of 21 to facilitate more games within a class period.

tivities, readings and discussions, drawings and discussion, that take place in Latin where, again, they are encouraged to stop the process when they don't understand. Such signals can be hand gestures, questions or simply a puzzled look on the face to which the teacher responds with a more understandable message in Latin. The entire focus of teaching with CI is on delivering understandable messages in Latin. The teacher must be prepared to do a great deal of speaking in Latin (something most of us have to work on, all the time), in repetitive yet engaging ways. Remember, silly works. While input is the focus, it is not the result.

The next sequence of the unit was to introduce the general idea of *aleae* and in particular the *tali* made originally of sheep's ankle bones. I drew on material from the [Latin version of Wikipedia](#) and created a slide show (see Appendix 2) showing pictures of the *tali*, holding the entire discussion in Latin.¹³ The following day, we cleared the room and [played a game of Tali](#) in groups of 4 or 5, three *lusores* and one *pilicrepus* to keep score. Again, their job was to have fun and remain in Latin. The other teachers in my school are doing similar things with Latin 1-3 students as well. What the reader observes here could not have happened without a significant amount of input prior to "gambling day." Because I was building an entire unit around the idea of "games" what we acquired in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures with one game often added strength to the next game. In other words, the long and dense unit on games with added readings in Seneca, discussions around Quintilian and the introduction of fifteen Roman virtues (see Appendix 2 for the list of virtues and related materials) into the mix created a groundswell of vocabulary and grammatical structures which they understood.

Every game that my Latin 4 students played during the semester had a *pilicrepus* of some sort, and they were asked to think about the *mores* that were displayed or lacking in each game. The partial quotation from Quintilian and the list of fifteen virtues extracted from Latin literature were in front of them, constantly. They read excerpts (sentences and small paragraphs) of Seneca, Quintilian, Cicero and other authors even while they are not capable of reading those authors *in toto*.

Personalization

One of the most successful activities in a CI classroom is actually a combination of two things called Personal Questions and Answers (PQA) and One Word

¹³ For easy reference, we bought multiple sets of *Tali* from [the American Classical League resource center](#) and I converted the rules supplied with it, both the game version and the divination form, to Latin for our use.

Pictures. I want to briefly demonstrate how I begin with a one word picture and immediately move into a PQA moment. This combination can be used at any level from Beginner to Advanced proficiency levels. [In this clip](#), I am introducing the word *collis* to a Latin 3 class and interchange between that as a one word picture and interviewing students about whether they live on a *collis* or not. We were preparing to read Livy's description of the founding of Rome with Romulus and Remus taking the augurs on the Palatine and Aventine hills.

As I tried to illustrate above with the imaginary class, in this actual class, I had chosen targeted vocabulary and thought, ahead of time, about how I could turn that word *collis* into something that is compelling. Asking students about where they live makes the connection immediately personal, and anything personal becomes compelling. One of the game changers for this kind of teaching is that it constantly requires the teacher to engage his/her own imagination about delivering understandable messages as well as knowing the particular audience of students that will come into the classroom at a given hour. We have become well aware in our program that even a teacher teaching one prep (all Latin 1 all day, for example) 5 or 6 times a day cannot assume that what worked during one class will necessarily work exactly that way in the next class. With CI where the conversations must be compelling, the CI Latin teacher must adapt to that ever changing reality.

Making Reading More Accessible

With limited space here, I want to illustrate the power of creating and using embedded readings. This is a topic worthy of attention by itself, but with three short examples I can suggest to you what we are doing with them and how helpful they are to students. This is the place, by the way, where CI approaches begin to have some positive effect even on the AP Latin curriculum which is largely a philological exercise rather than language acquisition. To create embedded readings with extant material, one works backwards:

1. Start with the target text that you want students to read and understand.
2. Identify words that you know they will have difficulty with.
3. Re-write the text using synonyms for those difficult words or leaving them out altogether to begin with so that you have a somewhat modified text.

4. Re-write the text one more time including ONLY words that you know they will know—perhaps a short summary of the total text.
5. Work with them in reverse order like these created from the *Aeneid* 1.1-4.

Embedded version 1

*Ego, Vergilius, fabulam cano.
Fabula est de armis et viro.
Vir iter fecit. Vir iactatus est in mari et terris.
Vir per multa horribilia laboravit quod Iuno erat
iratissima.*

This first version ensures that every student reading this will be able to understand, in Latin, the content of 1.1-4 of *The Aeneid*. A general rule for reading is that if the reader understands more than 90 percent of the words in a text, then it is comprehensible. Less than that, even 88 percent, and the text will become so burdensome for average readers that they will abandon the effort. This fact drawn from CI work indicates that our traditional aim to have students know 80 percent of the vocabulary in classical texts so that they can read them is an aim that fails to deliver for average students.

Embedded version 2

*Cano de armis et viro qui Troia Lavinium venit.
Aeneas iactatus est in mari et terris
et multa passus est (endured),
ob (= quod) iram Iunonis saevae.*

If the first version has been entirely readable, then students will be able to endure the new words in the second version long enough to incorporate them without abandoning them. Depending on the text and the students involved, a third version between the second and the original may be necessary. The 90 percent rule always dictates the practice of text and a particular audience of readers.

Original Version

*Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit*

*litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram.*

Assessments

A working principle of CI is that all output (speaking and writing) is the result of input (listening and reading). At some point from the middle of the first year onward, Latin students taught with CI (where the teacher has only one objective—to deliver understandable messages in Latin, every day) begin to speak in Latin, themselves. They also can be asked to write in Latin. The speaking and writing in Latin will be exactly what you would expect from small children learning to speak a language—it will be comprised of one to three word responses, contain what we know to be grammatical errors, and it will also communicate. Teachers new to CI often want to know how they can move their students on to more complex sentences with better control of grammar. There is only one way to do that—by giving them more understandable messages in Latin through storytelling, reading and discussion in Latin. If we want their speaking and writing to be better, we must give them understandable messages via listening and readings much more frequently.

Some, if not most, Latin teachers will say that all they really want is for their students to be able to read Latin whether they ever speak or write it or not. That is an excellent goal and a primary one for most of us regardless of one's pedagogical approach. Many Latin teachers, unfortunately, have not learned how to read Latin themselves. Instead, they have become speed-translators and have very little experience of reading a Latin text that they fully understand in Latin without having to turn it into English. Students who learn Latin via CI methods do learn to read Latin as Latin at an appropriate level without having to translate. Let us be clear: translating any text of any language into one's native language in order to understand is not reading in that second language. Considering all the possible language goals, understanding, reading, speaking and writing, the only way human beings make progress in a language is through understandable messages in that language. When, in the clip above, I quietly move around and assess my students based on their playing of the game *Trigon* and staying in Latin, what I am really assessing is whether or not I provided them with enough comprehensible input in order to do what they are doing. When they are able to do what I set before them, I know that I have done what I needed to do, and I can give them all a good grade for what I see and hear. This would be an example of a daily grade or a formative assessment. I turn my ob-

servations into a mark in my gradebook. When they are not able to do what I have asked, it is for one reason: I have not provided them enough CI in Latin for that task. I must return to the classroom with more input. When my observations tell me that I have not provided enough CI, I give no marks in my gradebook, but plan for more CI before I do that. With all assessments, my plan is never to give an assessment until I deem that everyone in the room is ready to show progress. Students will demonstrate progress in differentiated ways, but to assess formally when it is clear that they are not ready to show progress is my error. All output is the result of input, and giving understandable input is my primary job.¹⁴

One of the most frequently asked questions at CI workshops is “what do your tests look like.” My practice of assessment is constantly evolving. When I learn of a way of assessing that promises to do a better job of allowing me to report a student’s progress accurately, I make changes. At this writing, I can describe, in addition to my comments below on writing, what typical formative and summative assessments in my classroom look like. Formative assessments are often just a list of recently acquired vocabulary, including idiomatic or chunked phrases (e.g. *huc et illuc, consilium capit, ad epistulam scribendam*). Next to each item is a blank for the student to give an English meaning. On this kind of assessment, I am looking to confirm that all students understand at least 80 percent of these words and phrases. I am not correcting for grammar, but basic meaning of the word or phrase. If a student writes “he got an idea” for *consilium capit*, I am not concerned that the student put it in past time. I am only interested that the student understands the basic meaning. I allow all the variety of possibilities that a word or expression might offer, as well. In this, I am following what is called the 80/80 rule. If 80 percent of the students score 80 percent or higher on the assessment, then I am confident that they are making progress, and I record those scores. If the numbers are less, then the assessment only serves to tell me that I have not given enough input. I don’t record those scores. Summative assessments always have the readings that we have done most recently, and they have comprehensions questions on them. I want to know if they understand what we have been reading. I no longer give unseen readings on summative assessments, and deem them inappropriate for those just learning the second language.

14 There is a fairly famous scholarly debate over the value of comprehensible input and comprehensible output that took place between Krashen and Swain. Ultimately, Swain acknowledges that input is a necessary precursor to the value of what she calls comprehensible output, and her observations about what happens inside the mind of the student around output can be helpful. Krashen (“Comprehensible Output”) summarizes the conversation [here](#).

My goal in every assessment is to document progress, not special ability to navigate something tricky. Those students who can navigate tricky passages will be given opportunities to do so, and they always do well on every assessment. Assessing in this way does not preclude offering enriching opportunities to the few who want and enjoy them. In the past, I created tests for the special who could handle tricks, and the remainder of the class performed poorly on them. By reversing my focus to the average learner and being willing to differentiate learning opportunities, everyone in the class makes progress, and my gradebook reports that.

Remembering that all output is a product of input, and given my conclusion that I will no longer assess grammar directly, what does a CI teacher do with student writing in Latin? Over several years, in our program we have developed what we call a “timed write portfolio” which we use with all levels of students. After we have spent time reading a story thoroughly at any level, we ask students to do a “timed write.” The TW gives students a set amount of time to write in Latin all that they can about the story. We urge them to write continuously, even if they have to repeat something. We tell them that we are only interested in what they can write about this story that we have just finished reading and discussing. For beginners, the TW might be only 5 minutes. By the fourth year, that may be 30 minutes or longer and include more than summarizing by asking students to do some comparison and contrast or other higher level thinking about the text in question. They will complain when they don’t have enough time to write, and the teacher can make adjustments to length of time. When they are finished with a TW, we ask them to count their words—all the words. They write that number at the top of the page and circle it. They have also written the date and the title of the story about which they are writing. They place these in a folder which we keep in the room. At the end of the semester, we give them a set of analytical questions, in English, to use to assess what they see in their portfolio. These include which writings are best and worst, what characteristics they think make for the best and the worst. We ask them to tell us whether the portfolio shows evidence of progress in Latin, and to cite evidence for their answer. We then ask them to give themselves a numeric grade and to explain the grade. Teachers then read each set of analytical remarks, consider the contents of the portfolio, and then either agree with the student’s grade, or give another one with written explanation for the change. The self-analysis is done in English.

This approach to output allows for differentiation. The student is being measured against his/her own success and capabilities. Students engage in metacogni-

tion as they explore what they have actually been able to do in the semester (and eventually over the years as these portfolios follow them through all courses). They are all always surprised at how much they have become able to do. The teacher is also being assessed, though this is our quiet little secret. If all output is a product of input, then what a student mines about his/her progress is also a report on how well the teacher delivered understandable messages in Latin. While we never ask them a single question in the analysis sheet about grammar, almost every student manages to comment at length about his/her growing strengths and remaining weaknesses in grammar. They are largely correct in their reports.

By contrast, in a major analysis of studies conducted on “the effect of error correction on the learners’ ability to write accurately,” Truscott concludes that error correction is a clear and dramatic failure. The performance of corrected groups of students as compared with those who were not corrected was so poor, in fact, that the question could be changed to “how harmful is error correction” (Truscott, 2007). By never correcting a student’s writing but then asking them to look at their own collected writing output over time, our students emerge each semester with renewed confidence that they not only can learn Latin, but with evidence that they are making progress. In fact, talking about their growing confidence in Latin shows up almost as often as their unsolicited comments on their use of grammar. Maleah’s increase from 23 words to 127 words may garner for her high marks just like Miguel’s increases from 75 words to 258 words in the same semester. They are being measured against themselves and can each identify how their Latin is improving with evidence from their portfolio.

While error corrections overwhelmingly produced negative, even harmful, results, the studies also show that students do benefit from content feedback. I have found that this can have two forms. First, if student writing is bad enough that I am not sure what it means, I can simply hand it back to a student and say: “could you look at this section and try and make it a little clearer to me?” Students routinely re-write with just that kind of content feedback and make their writing clearer. The other type of content feedback that I have given usually moves along a student who is stuck in simple structures. I might say: “you know, you do a good job of telling me who the characters in the story are. Can you add some detail about them?” Invariably, such a student steps up his/her writing game and begins to add interesting details.

I have offered here how I am applying best practices in assessment to the specific work of Comprehensible Input that we are using in our Latin program. I must reiterate that my own assessment practices are constantly evolving. I offer one final example. For nearly two decades, I have tried to write summative assessments focused on comprehension of Latin texts by writing the questions themselves in Latin. I was eager to demonstrate that Latin can be used at every corner to do the work we need to do in class in the target language. This continues to be true in my classes while we are reading and discussing a story or text. I most often ask questions and conduct those discussions in Latin but with a strong focus on keeping it all understandable. Every step of the way has safety nets which allow students to signal to me when they do not understand. It is my primary job to deliver understandable messages. What I have changed most recently is the language of the questions on summative assessments. I am now asking those questions in English about the Latin text. When I ask questions in English, therefore, the answer may be in English or Latin unless specifically identified. For example, what is the English equivalent of “*ad epistulam scribendam*” in line 4? Or, which Latin words indicate noises that occurred in the bath? Or, give a definition of *frugalitas* (which could be in English or Latin). I am doing this to ensure that when a student responds inaccurately it is because he/she does not understand the text and not because he/she does not understand the question. On a summative assessment, I am now convinced that questions in the target language obscure what a test result, especially a poor one, communicates. Up until that summative assessment, however, our classroom reading and discussions, questions and answers about a text are *Latine tantum*.

REALISTIC PROFICIENCIES

I will offer a little insight into what these fourth year students can and cannot do. These students, taught only this way for four years, can sit and write an assigned theme for 30-60 minutes in Latin. In that writing, they are capable of using gerundive purpose expressions, active and passive verbs, cum clauses and some conditional clauses with the subjunctive. Some use case endings more correctly than others. Some have, for example, recently begun to use the genitive very well for possession, and most use the accusative for direct objects. My conclusion is that case endings are much farther down the natural order of acquisition (cf. Krashen's Five Hypotheses) than we would like to think. Students who can chant the case endings perfectly still use them incorrectly. The issue is not about knowing the endings or

even what they mean. It is, rather, how cases communicate. These students experience the ability to write about various things in Latin as a positive, enjoyable experience, and they are most often surprised at how much they write and how “immersed in Latin” they become as they do so. They most often report difficulty returning to English for their next class. On the other hand, some of these students do not know what “temporal clause” means. Some would be puzzled at talk of an ablative absolute, a gerundive purpose expression, a future less vivid conditional clause, and the future perfect indicative while others would not. They all read Latin with these structures in them without much difficulty at all. They speak and write with many of them with varying degrees of accuracy. Their variety of ability when it comes to speaking and writing (output) is an example of how CI naturally differentiates on a daily basis. I assess a student’s output against no one but him/herself. Has this student made progress in speaking and writing based on how he/she did a week ago, a month ago, a semester ago? How has that progress been aided (or not) by my input? When I speak using these structures, they understand. If they do not, they signal to me. Their lack of understanding is my problem because my nearly singular job in the classroom is to deliver understandable messages in the language. They do not all know the grammatical terms even though they understand the language they hear from me and read with me. At this level, they ask for and appreciate grammar discussion days, but not more than about 2-3 times per month.

A NOTE ABOUT GRAMMAR

I do discuss all of these grammatical structures with my Latin students. Here is how Comprehensible Input has re-shaped how I teach and assess grammar. I never explicitly talk about grammar with beginners unless they ask about it. When they do ask, I engage what is called “pop-up” grammar. That is, when a beginning student asks why *puella* has now become *puellam* I offer an explanation that takes less than 10 seconds: When it is *puella* she is the one doing the action in the sentence. She’s the subject, but when it is *puellam* she has become the object of something—either the verb, or a particular preposition. Does that make sense? The student almost always nods in agreement, and I go back to our Latin story, etc.

When students are consistently asking for more grammar, and in my experience that is somewhere toward the end of the first year or beginning of the second, I begin to do focused explicit grammar lessons. These lessons have some very specific aspects.

1. They come at regular intervals which are less often for second year (maybe once a month) and more often in third and fourth years (twice a month or once a week).
2. They are focused on one area: e.g. nouns, or verb tenses, or prepositions.
3. They are formatted in a slide show which can be shared with students after the session.
4. Students are assured that their notes will be allowed during all relaxed and extended writing assignments. In other words, they are creating their own little grammars, and they can use those grammars when grammars are supposed to be used—while editing one’s own work.
5. While I am always designing my teaching through CI as the grammar expert in the room, I no longer test grammar explicitly for the following reasons: No one retains grammar rules without constant study, and average human beings don’t do that. If we insist on assessing explicit grammar and grammar rules, we will prohibit average human beings from choosing or remaining in our programs. We largely have done that over the last century. If student retention and inclusion is important to us, we must reconsider what we do with and how we assess grammar. The program at our high school is now filled with average learners as well as special learners at both ends of the spectrum.
6. Grammar must serve understanding. If a student understands a cum-clause or a condition contrary to fact, does it matter whether he/she knows what to call it? To respond to the objections that I know will arise over this point, I am not arguing for a “dumbing down” of Latin instruction. I am pointing out that our most commonly stated goal—that of reading Latin—does not require being conversant in grammar categories. It requires understanding. Understanding comes through much understandable input. Explicit grammar instruction does not increase understanding of itself, and it only aids those who wish or need to edit their own work. If public speeches in Latin or published writings in Latin are not our goal for our students, asking them to pass tests on what to call a structure is a misguided requirement.
7. If we assess for understanding, we will also know whether the grammar we have taught is serving understanding or not.

CONCLUSION

Comprehensible Input as a theory with dozens of applications hold great hope for Latin programs for the present and the future. CI does place its demands on teachers who very likely did not learn Latin in this way. We have learned to speed translate and we have survived grammar-translation programs where most of our peers fell by the wayside. We are inclined to teach as we were taught. That presents a challenge. I am convinced by my experience with comprehensible input that we can learn to deliver understandable messages in Latin to any student who enrolls in our courses. Likewise, we can convince all the others in our institutions who have been helping us screen out the “incapable” that those rules no longer apply, that our classrooms are open for every kind of learner. These kinds of positive changes are happening in numerous programs, and the difficulties, challenges, successes and surprises are becoming, almost daily, a new school for all of us doing this work.

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APPENDIX 1. WORKING PRINCIPLES OF COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT FOR THE LATIN TEACHER

The group of Latin teachers from across the country that I have been working with have developed a set of guidelines that remind us of how we do this work.

1. It is impossible to prepare all kinds of students to read classical literature in 3-4 years. But it is possible to give them basic reading facility AND an enjoyable experience of reading Latin, which may encourage them to continue study, in school or on their own.
2. Every student has a right to experience being in a second (or third or fourth) language.
3. Latin teachers are not average learners and Latin is not different from other languages with its degree of inflection.
4. Students only make progress acquiring ability in ANY language, including Latin, when they receive regular and constant understandable messages in the target language.
5. One of the quickest ways to deliver an understandable message in Latin is to give an English equivalent for a new word or phrase and then continue delivering messages in Latin.
6. Language acquisition, including the assimilation and understanding of grammar, according to the latest brain research, happens unconsciously. Direct instruction involving grammar explanations and drills do not help students acquire Latin. While they may be useful in advanced stages of acquisition to develop editing skills, they really interfere with beginning and intermediate level students.
7. In particular, error correction does not have any significant influence on acquisition, but tends to put students on the defensive. Moreover, it encourages students to focus on the form (grammar) of the Latin and not the message, thereby inhibiting acquisition (Krashen, 2009 internet version, p. 116).
8. Vocabulary must be sheltered (limited) while grammar structures must not. (e.g. from the beginning, teachers can use nouns of any declension, verbs of any tense, mood, etc as long as they are delivering UNDERSTANDABLE messages with limited vocabulary).¹⁵
9. “Four percenters,” both students and teachers, those whom

¹⁵ Keith Toda gives an excellent explanation of what limiting vocabulary looks like in a Latin classroom [here](#).

Krashen calls the “fringe” who love all things about language study, will interfere with their own language acquisition by their desire to focus on grammar study, translation, and language control. We have an obligation to help them (and ourselves) stay focused on principles of acquisition, namely, receiving understandable messages in Latin.

10. Reading Latin is to be distinguished from translating Latin or speed translating. In true reading, the student acquires the ability to understand the written Latin without the interference or help of English. This most often develops in stages. The experience is likened to ‘seeing squiggles on the page and seeing a movie in one’s head.’
11. Reading Latin advances acquisition only when it is interesting and just barely above the student’s current ability. No textbook currently in use in the US provides those kinds of readings, and so teachers are obligated to create and edit readings to fulfill this requirement.
12. A text is readable when students know 90+ percent of the words on the page.
13. Production, of any kind, does not advance acquisition. The only thing that advances acquisition is the daily, consistent delivery of understandable messages in Latin by the only expert in the room: the teacher. Production (speaking or writing in Latin) is always the result of input. If we want students to understand, read, speak or write more, we must give them more understandable input in Latin.
14. The fastest avenue of acquisition of a language happens through reading texts that are readable (cf #12) and compelling to the reader.

APPENDIX 2. *LUDI* UNIT MATERIALS

Listed here as links to google docs, you will find various pieces of the *Ludi* units I created for Latin 4 students. While this is not a full lesson plan by any means, it gives a look into the materials that I describe in use in the paper. The first Unit focused on gaming, *Trigon* and Seneca's description of life over the baths. The second unit focused on dice, *tali*, gambling and divination. Both incorporated a quotation from Quintilian and a concern for values that were mediated through gaming. The entire Google Docs folder may be accessed [here](#).

- [Seneca Passage](#) Excerpt includes *Epistula Lucilio* 56.1-2, 14b-15. This document includes all the sentences I prepared for dictations (fast track vocab acquisition) and two tiers of embedded readings. Scroll through document to see all of those items.
- [Dictatio Slides Presentation of Vocabulary for Seneca text](#) This dictation activity introduces the vocabulary students will need to approach the Seneca text with understanding.
- [Vocabulary list for game playing](#) This includes a link to the Wikipedia page on Roman games. I gleaned vocabulary from that page and made some decisions about which games I would be including in this unit. I developed a basic vocabulary list for game playing, included here.
- [Circling Vocabulary for game playing and the rules of Trigon](#) These were my notes for introducing the language of playing games in general and for teaching the rules of *Trigon*, the Roman ball game, in Latin.
- [Video short to use for circling and deepening grasp of gaming vocabulary](#) Includes link to YouTube video short I used and list of vocabulary I circled with this video.
- [Quintilian quotation](#) This statement from Quintilian is what I use to link game playing to what became a year long conversation about Roman virtues.
- [Dictation for learning the rules of Trigon plus writing assignment](#) This is a follow up to the circling activity above and ends with a writing assignment in which they ought to be able to reiterate the rules of the game for themselves.
- [Seneca Assessment](#) This free response assessment focuses on targeted vocabulary and comprehensions of the text in general.
- [Writing Assessment with Rubric](#) This was the last assessment of

the *Trigon*/Seneca unit. Full instructions and grading rubric are included.

- [Slide Show introducing Roman Gambling and Divination](#) Helps introduce vocabulary and understandable discussion about dice, knucklebones, gambling and divination.
- [Notes on Aleae from Vicipaedia Latina](#) Materials and images I used to build vocabulary for the slide show and our subsequent discussions about dice, *tali* and divination.
- [Four Day Lesson Plan](#) Materials gathered here were used over 4-5 days helping students acquire vocabulary, practice conditional clauses in a meaningful conversation, and practice divination on celebrities. See slide presentation below.
- [The Oracle of Limyra](#) My Latin translation of an English version of the Oracle of Limyra used with *Tali* so that we could do this form of divination and remain in Latin. The English are from <https://web.eecs.utk.edu/~mcclennan/BA/GAO.html>.
- [Practice Divination](#) Students identified famous people with troubles. We spent two days compiling their stories in Latin, and then on the third day, using the instructions on the last slide and with an Oracle of Limyra in hand, they cast their divinations in small groups, took notes and turned them in to me. I then collated the divinations for each person. On the fourth day, we discussed, in Latin, which divinations seemed to be most appropriate for each person's troubles.
- [Formative Assessment on Culture](#) I gave this mid unit to make sure that everyone was understanding the cultural aspects of divination as we had been discussing in Latin. It is perfectly within the bounds of CI practice to do comprehension checks in English.
- [Summative Assessment on Aleae, Tali and Divination](#) This was not a long assessment, but it served to let me check their comprehension of the unit.

The following documents represent what I consider to be the surprising strength and the Achilles heel of this unit. The surprise is that I had not intended to work with virtues, but stumbling on the quotation from Quintilian about learning *mores* while playing inspired the idea and my own memory of working with and enjoying indices of virtues while in graduate school. The strength is that the discussion of virtues threaded itself through the entire year of Latin 4 from game playing to divination to Harry Potter. The weakness is that I compiled this material on the fly

and can only plead much subjective judgment on which virtues to include. I chose fifteen from multiple lists that I quickly searched out on the internet, fifteen because it seemed a workable number. I chose the ones that showed up most often and which I recognized from literature. My next project is to do a much better job researching which virtues I want to work with, establish some rationale for that, and rework this material. In the meantime, I did workout some interesting and useful approaches to “virtues work.”

- [Virtues List with English notes](#)
- [Sample Script for Circling with Virtues](#)
- [Slide Show: *Exemplares Virtutum*](#)
- [Slide Show of the 15 Virtues](#) Includes the virtue, a simple explanation of it and most often a quotation or paraphrase from Cicero or other authors who write about the virtue.