

The Time-Travel Passport: Promoting Spoken Latin in a Reading-Based Classroom

{Slide 1a}

There has been a shift {Slide 1b} in national language standards via the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (or ACTFL) to a focus on proficiency based learning.

{slide 2} In my home state, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (or TEKS) were revised in 2014 and put in to effect in 2017. In the TEKS it states that “[s]tudents of classical languages such as Latin and Greek read and comprehend proficiency-level appropriate texts. The communicative skills of listening, speaking, and writing are used *to enhance the interpretive communication mode of reading.*”

{Slide 3a} Proficiency levels at the end of Latin 1 range {Slide 3b} from novice mid to intermediate low. {Slide 3c} Specifically it says that “at the end of Level 1, students of classical languages should reach a

- Novice High to Intermediate Low proficiency level in **reading**,
- A Novice Low to Novice Mid proficiency level in **listening**,
- A Novice Low to Novice Mid proficiency level in **speaking**, and
- A Novice Mid proficiency level in **writing.**”

In fact, even by level 4, student proficiency in speaking does not rise above the Novice level. Yet it is this speaking proficiency in particular that has some Latin teachers concerned on how best to address it while maintaining their focus on developing reading skills which students will need for AP Latin as well as university level studies.

{Slide 4} For me, it was and is important to find a way to incorporate these new proficiencies, {Slide 4a} in particular speaking, with my own long-held core beliefs about Latin:

- {Slide 4b} Latin was and is meant to be read aloud.
- {Slide 4c} Vocabulary is best acquired in context.
- {Slide 4d} Accurate pronunciation is key to vocabulary acquisition in context in order to fix the sound of that word immediately in one's head.
- {Slide 4e} Reading in word order and training the brain to accept Latin word order is a critical component in developing reading fluency at an accelerated pace.

{Slide 5} And of course we haven't discussed the 5 C's: Communities, Communication, Cultures, Connections, and Comparisons, or even Project Based Learning.

{Slide 6} My own passion for (and, indeed, creativity with) Latin is only contagious up to a certain level. {Slide 7} How can I get my students to see the ancient world as I do? How can I transport my students to a Pompeii that is accessible? After all, students come to us who have failed or struggled in Spanish or German and who want a language that does not have a speaking component. And yet, I need to get them to buy into speaking Latin conversationally, to use it to acquire information, and to communicate desires. If only we could travel back in time like Donna and Doctor Who did in the episode entitled "The Fires of Pompeii"!

Before I explain my Time Travel Passport Project, I should explain that up until recently the majority of oral Latin in my classroom was really nothing more than developing an ability to read aloud with proper pronunciation and syllabification, as well as – if I were lucky – expressiveness. Nevertheless, since every little bit counts, I would like to review these activities quickly.

{Slide 8} First, students do oral recitations of passages from each stage of the *Cambridge Latin Course*, selected for form and function (that is, grammar). We practice reading the

passages chorally for a couple of classes and then students must record and post a recitation via the app Seesaw. {8 VIDEO}

{Slide 9} Second, students can't leave the room unless they ask for permission in Latin. I designed these signs for my door as a reminder.

{Slide 10a} Next, I encourage whichever class I have 2nd period, when the pledges are officially said, to say them in Latin. Currently my Latin 4s do this with gusto. {Slide 10b} And, yes, Texas has a pledge. (This is my own translation.)

{Slide 11} I have students write their birthdays on a calendar so that we can sing and celebrate each person, plus practice the vocative case.

{Slide 12} We play Patibulum (that is, Hangman) if there is time free at the end of class. It is a fun way to work on pronunciation as well as to heighten awareness of long versus short vowels.

{Slide 13a, b, c} At the beginning of class, four students perform the four rotating jobs or *mūnera*: 1) reading the agenda, which is mainly written up in Latin with some English; 2) reading the date, which includes naming yesterday, today, and tomorrow as well as doing neo-Latin dating (all in Latin); reading the weather; and reading the news which, after the initial Latin greeting, is mainly in English and about activities around school. {Slide 13d} Last year I added more conversational text to each job, targeting either current grammar or seasonal information. {Slide 14} This first video is from the beginning of this year, where students learn how to do the jobs via the "big whisper." {14a VIDEO} The second is the last portion of a student doing the weather from last year. {14b VIDEO}

{Slide 15} Musical Pairs (which also goes by other names) is a simple activity which uses a dialogue (usually something I have written based on a story students will be reading in

full). While music plays, students move around. As soon as it stops, students pair up and read. I aim for at least three rounds.

{Slide 16a, b} Simple questions of *quis, quem, quid facit, ubi, and quō* are easy enough with a story in front of students, but it can become dull and repetitive for the brightest students, and confusing for those who struggle. {Slide 16c} Offer students a choice between two answers using *an* to help students focus. Increase engagement by including ridiculous choices (which may take some advance scripting, which I personally put on note cards).

{Slide 17a} Although doing a micrologue is more of a listening/dictation activity for the majority of the class, one student is actively trying to learn how to tell the story on his or her own entirely in Latin using only the pictures. {Slide 17b} I use micrologues to preview a story that students will read, {Slide 17c} the last one pictured here I did for a story in Stage 3– can you guess which one?

{Slide 18} This is one of the four times that I will tell the story for the volunteer to learn and for everyone else to do dictation. (At the left edge of the screen you can see the volunteer who is listening and learning how to tell the story.) {18 VIDEO}

{Slide 19} To motivate students to invest in truly communicating in Latin, I created an overarching project, one that would include the 5 Cs of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The goal would be to develop skills needed to get a time travel passport, to earn money by speaking Latin, to become a Pompeian business person, to run for political office, and beyond.

{Slide 20} The first step was the Familia Mea project where students would make a picture sheet of family members and pets to use in a “Speed Meet & Greet.” {Slide 21} I learned last year that students enjoyed this more with questions on the back of their sheets as a reference.

Because I focus more on using the language to learn as opposed to learning the language to use, I have no problem with this. {21 VIDEO}

{Slide 22} In preparation for filling out passports, students used a simple questionnaire to survey their fellow classmates. In this way, they were not only using Latin to explore their own community but also get in the repetitions needed for newly acquired information.

{Slide 23a} Passports (or *Diplōmae Commeātūs Per Tempus*) were created using Bitmoji's for pictures and with basic information: *nōmen, nōmen Rōmānūm, ubi habitās, quandō est diēs nātālis, quot annōs tē habēs.* {Slide 23b} Once completed, it was now time to earn money through speaking!

{Slide 24} The passports, which I kept in the classroom, were retrieved daily and left open on desktops. When students were doing warm-ups, I would query, “*scrībisne?*” to which they could reply “*scrībō*” or “*nōn scrībō*” to receive a coin stamp—double if they also said *tibi grātiās agō* after the first coin. Suddenly students were loudly participating in doing the pledge in Latin, they were happy when it was their turn to do the jobs, and even showed up to Latin club to play Go Fish in Latin (a favorite activity). {Slide 25} Students were rewarded for their participation in *Rassias* drills and other Latin activities as well. {25 VIDEO}

{Slide 26a} For the creation of their shop, students researched small Roman artifacts that might make a good birthday present. Their shop was a miniature trifold (small enough to fit in a back pack) and had to have specific things on each panel:

- {Slide 26b} a slogan using a superlative.
- {Slide 26c} Starting price.
- {Slide 26d} Shop name, with owner's name in the genitive.
- {Slide 26e} (*nōmen*) *mē fēcit.*

- {Slide 26f} Research of real artifact with citations.
- {Slide 26g} 1 product (handmade preferably) to show & pictures to represent the product for a sale.

{Slide 27a} Students bargained for balls, {Slide 27b} shoes (yes, that's brown duct tape), {Slide 27c} dice (lots of dice), {Slide 27d} wax tablets (some good, some not), {Slide 27e} swords, {Slide 27f} jewelry, {Slide 27g} children's pull toys, {Slide 27h} slings, {Slide 27i} and even wreaths.

{Slide 28} On Market Day the class was split into two groups. Each group then spent half the class being the shoppers, the other half being the merchants. {Slide 29} The shoppers had to travel in pairs so one could video the bargaining between merchant and shopper. I was the banker, summoned at the end to approve the transfer of coinage from one passport to the other. {29 VIDEO}

{Slide 30} Many students amassed great riches from the Market Day and asked whether we would continue to use our passports. On the fly I declared that the top 4 wealthiest students from each class had to run for the office of aedile as their duty to serve their community (more or less). These candidates then had to purchase wall space to post Pompeian style dipinti. Admittedly, all activities from this point onward were poorly planned because I had not imagined that students would so enjoy the whole time-travel passport process. This coming year, electioneering will come with polls taken by students before and after the elections, incorporating and reinforcing current grammatical constructions in the textbook. Perhaps we will even write postcards "home" from Roman Britain.

{Slide 31a} At the end of the year after students completed their final exam, I had them fill out a Customs Declaration Form to reflect on the year's activities as well as to earn a passport

stamp back into Dripping Springs. {Slide 31b} The last item on the form was the following question: “What is your favorite memory from class this year?” Here are the replies:

- {Slide 31c} One person wrote, “There are so many (this is honestly a super fun class) but I’d say my favorite memory was the market day. Everyone had original and creative products and had worked so hard and it was fun to walk around.”
- {Slide 31d} Another wrote, “Doing the market day and the family activity which almost felt real.”
- {Slide 31e} And likewise this person wrote, “I loved the games we played and the market day project was fun too.”

{Slide 31f} Unquestionably this is a project—perhaps better viewed as a *mindset*—that injected more life into our classroom Latin as well as complemented the stories and grammar in our textbook. The one enhanced the other, not to mention strengthened student investment in Latin.

{Slide 32} As a penultimate note, many of the materials which are depicted in this presentation—the PDF files of bathroom signs and the Google Slides for birthdays, pledges, etc—can be found on my teacher website. Please feel free to use them with my blessing and encouragement.

{Slide 33} And finally, the QR code provided here is a link to this set of Google Slides, which will allow you to watch the videos at your leisure, as well as to have direct links to my two shops: *Anima Altera: Latin T-Shirts, Mugs & More* at Cafepress, and my newest endeavor, *Latin Classroom Stamps*, where you can find the two coins, the passport stamps to Pompeii & Britain, plus a whole lot more. Thank you.