

CarPe Latinam III

When remembering our SANDALS—Spectate, Audite Nunc Dicite Agite Legite Scribite—it is important to consider using as much oral Latin in our classroom as possible. Many teachers shy away from oral Latin for a variety of reasons, including that they never received direct instruction on pronunciation. You can, however, find a basic pronunciation guide, including where to place accents on words, at the beginning of any dictionary. For those who would like a more detailed explanation of hidden quantities, vowel shifts, nasalization, etc, Hale and Buck's *A Latin Grammar* has an excellent section on phonology. And as always, Allen's *Vox Latina* is a text no Latin teacher should be without.

The question then becomes one of how best to integrate more oral Latin into the classroom without detracting from the curriculum. But where to begin?

Start by purchasing a couple of handy books. The first is the 3rd edition of John Traupman's *Conversational Latin for Oral Proficiency*. This 3rd edition includes an expanded vocabulary covering more modern items or items that can't be found in an average dictionary. The second book is Carl Meissner's *Latin Phrasebook*, which will provide you with classical idiomatic expressions for a wide variety of topics. Many textbooks will also provide you with a handy list of expressions for directing basic classroom activities. For example, I will regularly say things such as, *deponite libros et libellos* (put away your books and folders) or *aperite libros ad paginam undecimam* (open your books to page 11). (And yes, I do keep a cheat sheet of ordinal numbers near the front of the room since the proper way to express what page to turn to is with ordinal numbers.)

To help teachers and students increase the amount of oral Latin in the classroom, CAMWS's Committee for the Promotion of Latin offers free posters called "Colloquamur/Let's Talk" that can be downloaded and printed on glossy photo paper and posted in your classroom. (Look for them at www.camwscpl.org on the "For Educators" page). There are currently 17 posters covering the following topics: *urbanitas* (manners), *licentia* (permission), *responsa* (responses), *grammatica* (grammar), and *in conclavi* (in the classroom). These will give you a starting place.

Here are some activities you can do:

- Have Latin for any of the usual phrases used in English in class (clear off desks, open your books to page #, hand in your homework, etc.). Start small, add as you go. Don't be afraid to use English as well, especially if the students are slow to comprehend. As the year continues you will be able to drop the English.
- Discuss vocabulary in Latin, including questions about conjugations and declensions. For instance, when a new noun is met, we often ask students what declension this noun is in. Why not do so in Latin? *quotae declinationis est?* Students will be shy if not terrified at first (as perhaps will you). Practice modeling the answers. Ask the question in Latin and then, say, provide two choices (*primae aut secundae?*).
- Have oral recitation assignments. Choose a short passage for students to read. Practice a few times and then have them leave it on your voicemail to grade when it's convenient for you.

- Have a different student each day read/announce the date in Latin, including the day of the week.

These are just a few ideas on how to begin.

One caveat, though: if your pronunciation isn't consistent, admit it and decide that it's time to address your inconsistencies. One of the key benefits to using more oral Latin in the classroom is that students begin to understand the difference in vowel length and the importance of being accurate in one's pronunciation—to steal from a colleague, it's the difference between cap and cape, sheep and ship, sheet and sh**. Students need to hear the difference between venit and vEnit, videt and vIdit.

Use your summer break to consider how you could incorporate more Latin into your classes. Practice the phrases until they roll easily off of your tongue. Best of all, use practicing together as an excuse to meet with colleagues.

--Ginny Lindzey, Chair, Committee for the Promotion of Latin