

LATIN'S LINGERING LUSTER: INTEGRATING LATIN INTO THE GRAMMAR CLASSROOM

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THE BEAUTY OF INTEGRATION

On those rainy or stormy days when there's not a chance of an outside recess, I'll bet the *last* thing on your mind is, "How can I use this divinely foreordained atmospheric providence in such a way as to enhance the learning experience of my students through the use of integration?" Are you kidding me? I think we'd all vote for sending the kiddos out *somewhere!!!*

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines integration as the combining and coordinating of separate parts or elements into a unified whole. That's actually the **medical** definition, but it is an apt description of what we do each day in our classrooms. God Almighty is sovereign over all the details of life, and because of that, there is a complex fitting together of all that we teach. It's all part of HIS story. The little image bearers we call students are abundantly blessed when we help them begin to see that.

There is a peculiar beauty in the workings of integration. As you teach your lessons, drawing in

your students, integration of subject matter helps them learn to look beyond the surface—beyond the obvious answer. It fires up your students' love for learning!!!

You may be *the* Latin teacher in your school. You may be a classroom teacher whose well-earned planning period comes while your students are in Latin class. You may, in fact, fill both roles—and anything else that's needed. Whatever the case, I plan to share some ideas to help you make integrating Latin a more natural part of your day. The neat thing about integrating Latin with the other subjects you teach is that the opportunities abound. Latin is already there; you just have to retrieve it.

LOOK FORWARD WITH INTEGRATION

THEMES

There are many different Latin curriculums in use in our schools. Regardless of what Latin materials your school uses, word lists are frequently organized according

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to themes. Students can more easily master vocabulary that way. As teachers, you, too, can utilize those same themes to your advantage. They can be used to help you integrate Latin throughout your teaching on a daily basis.

LESSON PLANS

Look at the table of contents of the Latin material being used with your students. Try to familiarize yourself with the course in general. I'd encourage you, in fact, to make a copy of the table of contents and keep it handy when you are working on your lesson plans.

"How in the world can that help me?" you may ask. "That sounds like just one more thing to do!" *I know* how demanding it is to be a teacher—there are never enough hours in a day! Please hear me out. This idea may actually be a simple way to ease into integrating Latin in your daily lessons.

When you look over your goals and objectives for the quarter—and your week to week lesson plans—you already have an idea of what is coming next. If you've been teaching for any amount of time, this overview provides a framework for how you order your days and weeks. New teachers, just look at the goals and objectives your administration already has in place for your overview.

Now, with that overview or framework in mind, take a look at the themes or topics covered in your grade level Latin. You are simply looking for *correlating topics*. For example, I know that in my third grade history curriculum, I will be covering the exploration of the New World during the first quarter. I know the explorers sailed across the ocean in order to find gold, riches, (and that elusive sea route to China) for their native lands. Without getting any more specific than that, I can turn to the Latin list and look for vocabulary themes that would include words related to exploring, sailing, the ocean, and treasure.

Next, select several words you would like to use,

and jot them down in your lesson plans—in Latin *and* English! In my case, I might select *navis* (a noun which means ship), *mare* (a noun meaning sea), *nauta* (a noun which means sailor), and *navigo* (which is a verb meaning I sail).

I could do the same thing for our first quarter study of the rain forest or our review of the five senses, selecting a few correlating words. You can begin this "mining expedition" on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or even on a "once-in-a-while" basis depending on your particular scheduling demands.

Let me interject here that it is *not important* when these words will be introduced in Latin class. The framework of the Latin course may never match exactly the other material you are teaching your students. Integrating these Latin words into your other subjects, however, will often provide "Aha!" or "Victory!" moments in Latin class when that particular word list is introduced.

Back to my four words: I am going to weave these words into my lesson as seamlessly, as frequently, and as correctly (grammar-wise) as I can. What does that mean? If the students don't know how to make a Latin noun plural, I must use it in its singular form. If they don't know how to conjugate a verb, then I will need to shape my usage of that verb so that it remains in first person singular form—the way it came.

In my history lesson, for example, I may tell my students, "Third graders, the Latin word for ship is *navis*. Let me write that on the board. Who can tell me which *navis* on Columbus's first voyage was the smallest? Only one *navis* out of the five that set out with Magellan to circumnavigate the world actually completed the journey. According to our reading, which *navis* was successful?" I could continue weaving Latin words into the lesson or the review of the lesson throughout the week. "Each *nauta* (sailor) on board the Victoria had been away from home for how long? Do you think it would have been easy or difficult to be a *nauta* during

the Age of Exploration? Why or why not?”

EVEN ART

I can even send my students off to art class with a challenge to come back and describe how the art teacher taught or demonstrated a color using the Latin name for that color. I can challenge them to listen for particular words the art teacher may use that come from Latin. Portrait, portfolio, and pigment are just a few. (You can enlist the art teacher’s help by asking him/her to include some of these “challenge words” in the art lesson! You can even invite the art teacher to join the fun by slipping him/her a note listing the Latin “challenge words” or derivatives.)

DERIVATIVES

The words you select can also impact your lessons as the origin of pertinent derivatives. Let’s talk about derivatives for a moment. What exactly are they? My Latin mentor, Joan Middleton, taught that derivatives are English words with Latin roots. She further explained the qualifications to be a derivative. The derivative must have a similar spelling and a related meaning to the original Latin word.

Derivative Song

I put all that information into a song to the tune of “The Ants Go Marching” to make it easier for students to remember. We march and move our arms when we sing it. The kinesthetic learners love it!

Derivative Song

(To the tune of “The Ants Go Marching”)

Derivatives are English words with Latin roots.

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They must have similar spellings
and related meanings, too.

Oh, we love to spot derivatives! It’s true!

Let’s go back to my history lesson and my four Latin words. (They were *navis*, *mare*, *nauta*, and *navigo*.) I can easily augment my lesson using words like navigate, navigation, navigator, nautical, marine, or maritime—all of which are derivatives of the four Latin words I chose.

Latin-English Derivative Dictionary

At this point, you may be wondering where in the world you would find these derivatives. They may be listed right in the Latin lesson where you originally found the words (in the teacher’s manual). You may already be familiar with them as commonly understood derivatives or you could use a *Latin-English Derivative Dictionary*, published by the American Classical League. It has Latin words listed alphabetically, with English derivatives following. I purchased mine at the ACCS conference several years ago from the Veritas Press table. Of course, there are also a variety of other resources available online.

Weave into the Day’s Lesson

The main idea for integrating Latin using derivatives is to weave those derivatives into your lesson as often as possible. Speak them conversationally to the class or on a one-to-one basis.

AN EARLY INTRODUCTION

Morning and Afternoon Salutations

It’s a good idea to introduce Latin integration early in the school year—even before the students have learned much Latin. I encourage you to incorporate Latin greetings in your classroom as you begin the new school year. Every morning I greet my students

in English and then Latin. We learn it the first day and practice it all year long. I say, “Salvete, discipuli!” and they respond with, “Salve, magistra!” I explain the difference in the greetings with a very simple answer: I am a female teacher and they comprise a group of however many students. I add that in Latin, there are rules about singulars and plurals. They will learn the specifics in Latin class at some point. *Our* goal is to respectfully greet one another. The reverse can be done at the close of the day with a simple switch to, “Valete, discipuli!” and, “Vale, magistra!”

Simple Classroom Commands

Here’s a question for you: How many instructions do you give your class during a typical day? It’s an incredible number! Why not spice it up by interspersing instructions in Latin? Our fourth and fifth grade Latin teacher at CCS, Diane Manchester, put together a list of commonly used classroom commands and instructions. Instead of repeating, “Raise your hand,” you could teach your students, “Manum tollite.” Tell them, “Sedete,” instead of “Take a seat.” When you first begin this form of integration, it may seem to be a delightful, new version of “Simon Says” to the students!

JINGLES FOR FUN

FAMILIAR TUNES

Jingles for Fun is an area where you can do a lot of integrating because grammar-aged students LOVE to sing. What student doesn’t love to celebrate his/her birthday? You can easily learn to sing “Happy Birthday” in Latin! Birthdays in my classroom involve singing in both languages. The birthday person gets to choose which comes first: English or Latin. The Latin teacher will be the recipient of the “Aha!” moment when the students are eventually introduced to the vocabulary used in the song.

Your students will already have been exposed to Christmas carols or hymns sung in Latin. Take “Adeste Fidelis,” for example. Ask your students if they have learned any of the Latin words used in the song. They may tell you they have learned vocabulary that is “similar.” Just remind them that in Latin there are rules for how a word is spelled based on how it’s being used.

Is your school song sung in Latin? If so, those in your class who are not brand new to the school have been singing in Latin already! This may be the year when they begin to “unpack” what those Latin words actually mean.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are crucial to operating an orderly classroom. Latin can be integrated in such a way as to make transition times more purposeful—with an added benefit of built-in review time. Grammar-aged students enjoy learning to count in different languages. Go ahead and include Latin in their repertoire! Regardless of when numbers will be introduced in Latin class, you can use them for your purposes. After giving a call-and-repeat introduction of the Latin numbers for one through ten, you will have a framework for any number of transition jingles. This is how integrating with numbers might look in your classroom. A call and repeat would be done orally just to keep it very simple. Teach the numbers. Hold up a pencil and teach *stylus*. Hold up several pencils and teach the plural, *styli*. Use the tune for “Ten Little Indians.” After this, I can say, “Let’s count sharpened pencils as my helper passes out papers.”

You can ask your class how to say “students” in Latin. They should remember from your morning greeting. Sing the same counting song for diligent students.

LATINE CANTEMUS

I have to admit that I learned a number of songs from my Latin mentor, but another resource I

purchased at an ACCS conference is a book entitled *Latine Cantemus*. It is translated and illustrated by Franz Schlosser and contains popular Latin songs, Christmas songs in Latin, and Gregorian chants! It's published by Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc. As I recall, I found this little gem at the Veritas Press table as well. I will point out that Mr. Schlosser has a different version of "Happy Birthday" in his collection.

LOOK BACK WITH INTEGRATION

NEW LATIN

If you make it a habit each week to check the Latin vocabulary and/or concepts your students will be introduced to, you will find "something" you are able to use. It could be the lack of article adjectives in Latin that you can mention during the grammar lesson. It could be the different tenses that you discuss in your writing lessons. Even if you find just one word or one concept, applying it in another lesson builds strong integration. Plugging in even the smallest increments of Latin vocabulary or derivatives will stir up your students' fire for learning.

You'll also want to see if any of the new Latin words can be used to help your class review. Think broadly, but don't get stuck in the minutia. You'll talk yourself out of the whole process if it becomes too burdensome. We *all* understand how demanding the role of a teacher is.

PREVIOUS MATERIAL

Macaronic Methodology

Macaronic methodology is a lot of fun for the students as they review any previously learned material. What does *macaronic* mean? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of macaronic is 1: *characterized by*

a mixture of vernacular words with Latin words or with non-Latin words having Latin endings, 2: characterized by a mixture of two languages.

So how would you integrate Latin this way? Simply put, you would print up (or do orally) sentences with purposeful blanks. In order to answer correctly, the students need to supply the missing words in Latin. For example: If I said, "Twinkle, twinkle, little _____," you would automatically think "star." In Latin, the word for star is "stella." "Stella" would be the correct answer. Here is another one I could do: "Columbus named one _____ the Nina, one _____ the Pinta, and one _____ the Santa Maria." What is the missing word? (*navis*)

Macaronics can be designed as simple sentences, paragraphs, or whole stories!

Building Blocks

As you begin to implement these integration strategies, it's helpful to think of building blocks. Start with just one, and then add another. Remember to move from the known to the unknown. You are moving your students from the known to the unknown—and you, yourself, are moving from the known to the unknown.

Derivatives Again

Incorporating derivatives is probably the easiest application of Latin integration for the non-Latin teacher. These are words you would use anyway. Once you have identified them, just be consistent in pointing them out. The difficulty (or challenge, rather) is in identifying them. If you do not personally teach Latin to your students, I encourage you to ask the Latin teacher to help you get started. Working together has multiple benefits.

MOVE FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN

THE BEAUTY OF PRECISION

I remind my students that our God is a God of detail. The description of how the Tabernacle was to be built and furnished is evidence of that! The LORD gave very precise instructions regarding every aspect of its construction. Scripture is full of illustrations of how important even the smallest details are to the LORD.

Latin is a very precise language. I tell my students that the ending of a Latin verb shows *who* is doing the action as well as *when* the action occurs. The ending on a Latin noun reveals its gender, what job the noun has, and whether it's singular or plural. The precision is demanding, but ever so helpful in attaining mastery. In the same way, your efforts to add Latin integration into your class instruction (and review)—although demanding—will bless your students. They will gain a broader and deeper mastery of what you teach.

INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENCE

By Subject

Latin integration is going to be “an interdisciplinary experience.” That is the nature of integration. Let me list some of the avenues and inroads you will find available as you seek to integrate more fully.

In addition to counting in *math*, you will find that measurements, money, months, and more can be linked to Latin. Math is a “derivative-strong” discipline!

During our bird unit in *science*, I have watched my students get really excited as they learn the **genus** and **species** of their assigned birds. There are peals of laughter in the room as they venture to pronounce their bird's classifications! The next thing that happens is they begin to look for Latin classifications elsewhere. You

can find many applicable derivatives in science as well.

You heard earlier how I have approached integrating Latin in *history* and *art*, but that is just the beginning! I have actually found more opportunities opening up for integration as I embraced the strategies I mentioned.

The *Latin Vulgate* is a real treasure. It's the Word of God in Latin. If your school does not have a copy, I would encourage you to put it on your “wish list.” There is something quite special about learning familiar Scripture passages in Latin. A technique I have used is called “Disappearing Words.” I write a portion of the passage on the board in Latin *and* in English. Using the call-and-repeat method, we learn to speak the Latin. We recite the passage in English as well. After identifying any familiar Latin words, I let a student choose a word to “disappear.” We then recite the Latin passage saying the missing word from memory. We do the same thing with the correlating word or phrase in English. After much repetition, the students will be looking at a completely blank board while they recite the Scripture passage in two languages! It's pretty amazing!

I will tell you that because the two languages do not match up exactly word-for-word (or phrase-to-phrase), you may want to review this activity with the Latin teacher before your “maiden voyage” in the classroom!

The Seven Laws

Integrating Latin in your grammar-level classroom beautifully portrays the *Seven Laws of Teaching*. Let me review them for you with just a quick comment for each.

Law of the Teacher. You need to be prepared to teach using integration. I will not mislead you—your preparation will require some effort.

Law of the Student. The students will need to be attentive, but you may find that they relish the “mystery” of how Latin seems to be *everywhere*!

Law of the Language. In all of Latin integration, you are helping your students build an *uncommonly strong*

common language.

Law of the Lesson. As I mentioned earlier, your students are moving from the known to the unknown. As you learn strategies to integrate Latin more completely, you are also moving from the known to the unknown.

Law of the Teaching Process. There are so many different ways of integrating Latin in your classroom that you will find you can reach both the eager, motivated students as well as the more reluctant learners.

Law of the Learning Process. Your students will probably get all fired up about derivatives, and you may receive teacher appreciation cards or pictures with Latin words! Aside from their obvious delight in showing off what they now know, you may see stronger standardized test results.

Law of Review. The different strategies I've mentioned offer a smorgasbord of ideas for review. Your students may be having so much fun that they don't even realize they are reviewing!

LATIN INTEGRATION IN ALL OF LIFE

ASSEMBLIES

Show it off! Whether you use Bible recitation, a song, a sound off, or any number of other ideas, be sure to include Latin in your class assemblies. Ask the Latin teacher (if that is not you) to help identify your students' strengths, and give them an opportunity to sparkle.

Lastly, I'd like to list just a few more ideas or integration strategies you might like to try. This list is certainly not exhaustive by any means. I call it "Just Plain Fun!"

JUST PLAIN FUN

- Jumping rope

- Around-the-world review games with Latin and derivatives
- Math drills/Sentences with numbers written in Latin
- Derivative detectives
- Latin literature lunches
- Prandium picks—use a Latin-English Dictionary
- I throw or I kick the ball in Latin
- More songs and even dances

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, integrating your classroom lessons and review times with Latin will give them a deeper, richer hue. You will help your students attain a stronger, more solid mastery of the material you teach. Your efforts at integrating Latin will challenge (and train) them to look beyond the obvious to the sublime. In the end, you will help equip the little image-bearers in your class to have eyes to see and ears to hear God's truth.

The LORD be with you. Thank you.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Rudolf F. Schaeffer, Ph.D., *Latin-English Derivative Dictionary* (Oxford, OH: American Classical League, 1960).
- Franz Schlosser, *Latine Cantemus* (Mundelin, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 1996).
- Dr. Seuss, *Cattus Petasatus: The Cat in the Hat in Latin*, trans. Jennifer Tunberg and Terence Tunberg (Mundelin, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2000).
- *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, trans. Robert Weber (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).
- *Cassell's Latin & English Dictionary*, ed. D.P. Simpson (Somerset, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 1977).