

American Classical League Institute

Minneapolis MN 2011

I considered it a good omen to discover that one of my colleagues from a local Toronto school was on my flight to Minneapolis. I was very excited to attend and also to present at the ACL Institute. I had only ever read about the conference. During my stay at the university, which was unfortunately undergoing major renovations at the time of the conference, I was able to attend several interesting sessions.

Suzanne Henrich created a presentation about the use of music in the Latin classroom. Her session was entitled "Using Music to Enliven the Latin Literature Classroom". She introduced different musical activities, musical resources, and songs that can be matched with different Roman authors. The information was clearly presented and her modelling of the teaching techniques along with a wide range of music kept her audience entertained. shenrich@ascaniusyci.org

Another session that proved invaluable was the presentation made by Lee Butterman who is the creator of the website www.nodictionaries.com. I can only use superlatives when describing this tool. This website enables students and teachers alike to enter any Latin text and the site will provide interlinear vocabulary. Also, on the site, there is a list of authors and students can copy and paste selections into the program, and then determine how many much of the vocabulary they will be able to see while reading. If you log in, the program makes and saves a list of all the words you look up, so you can view or print the list of words that you need to study. This is not a translation tool, but a tool to help Latin students read without hunting for words in the dictionary, which really takes away from the reading experience. The teachers and professors attending the conference were silent as Lee explained his website. Anyone can access this site, and it is free to use. Here is another link that will help you with this website: <http://bestlatin.blogspot.com/2009/06/nodictionariescom.html>.

On the second day of the conference I learned about a website devoted to the medieval world. Bartholomew's World <http://bartholomew.stanford.edu/preface.html> is a database to help students learn about medieval Latin and culture via texts and classroom

activities. The founders of this website Rega Wood, Eva St. Clair and Courtney Roby, from Stanford University are very enthusiastic about their work. They planned energetic lighthearted activities for all of the teachers and professors who attended their session. They also handed out a plethora of teacher resources including a DVD that includes sample lesson plans.

After seeing the size of the conference rooms and the number of conference attendees in earlier presentations, I realized that I needed to make more copies for my session because the conference organizers could not tell me how many teachers and professors might be in the room. Fortunately there was a printing store across from the hotel in which the conference was being held. Since it was an interactive session, it would not be possible for people to share resources in some situations. There were between 30 and 50 educators in my room. After completing a short teambuilding exercise (Human Bingo), and explaining what I taught four different cooperative structures that could be used for teaching Latin. These were Think-Pair-Share, Inside-Outside Circle, Jigsaw, and Coaching Pairs. Each structure involved dividing the participants into partners or groups, handing out materials, explaining the instructions, and monitoring the exercises. I found the participants enthusiastic and I felt that I was providing informative and relevant material.

In Toronto, I am part of a small group of teachers who meet once or twice a year to share teaching ideas. When we have our next meeting, I am hoping to be able to share some of the cooperative teaching structures that I presented at the ACL. I have already shared some of the materials that I received at the 2011 ACL Institute. Thank you for providing the funds that made it possible for me to attend this worthwhile conference.

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