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Classics Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: Technology


[Andrew Reinhard](#)

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[Andrew Reinhard](#)

From: [Classical World](#)
 Volume 106, Number 1,
 Fall 2012
 pp. 121-124 |
[10.1353/clw.2013.0023](#)




Technology and teaching is nothing new, even for classics, but there has yet to be any standardized approach to teaching the teachers what technology to use and how to use it. It is still very much every-teacher-for-himself-or-herself when it comes to selecting what technology to deploy in a classroom setting. For those readers actively teaching Latin and/or Greek at any level, this paper will serve as an introduction to free technologies that are actively used by your colleagues, and to online networks of peers who have already incorporated digital resources in class. It will also define strategies as you adopt one or more of these for your own courses. For readers currently enrolled in graduate programs for teaching Classical languages, this paper will show what is available digitally for teaching while encouraging both creativity and discretion in implementing these tools and games for the first time.

As you consider using technology in your classes, you should evaluate your students' (and your own) technology IQ prior to introducing technology into lessons. Find common ground and a shared comfort level in what you think will work, be it something as simple as using PowerPoint slides to recording Latin pronunciation to share on your course management system, to creating and sharing Latin questions on spaces like Quia.com. Having a shared level of technical vocabulary will prevent technology from getting in the way of teaching and learning; technology can facilitate it. Make absolutely sure you know how something works before rolling it out in class; the last thing you need is to waste precious class minutes dealing with technical issues instead of actively using technology in class. Exploring technology during the course of Latin teacher training will help prevent these kinds of missteps from happening, or at least will prepare teachers for what to do in the event of a technical glitch.

Once you have determined your own level of technical literacy and that of your students, you can begin to suggest and implement technology in your courses to reach different kinds of learners, or to work different sets of language "muscles." Different students respond differently to modes of Latin instruction ranging from reading/translating

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It is perhaps of foremost importance to understand that, even though the media have changed (and will keep changing), the Latin language remains the same, and the goals of teaching the language remain largely unchanged. Students still enjoy competitive board-work, games, and creative composition, being able to inject some fun into review while attempting to attain a level of proficiency with the language. Now teachers are able to use technology for these tasks as their students employ everything from YouTube to Skype to computer games to augment their traditional Latin education.

Because of the increased daily presence of technology in the lives of students (and many of their teachers), it is important for instructors to keep current with technological literacy. One needs to know what is being used by students between classes—for education and for entertainment—in order to create a menu of choices to offer students for studying, reading, and practice both on- and off-line. Open up these avenues for student projects to give the students space for creativity and flexibility within a rubric that you create. This technological openness should be mandatory for any teacher at any level, and by incorporating technology into the Latin classroom, it helps to hold students' (and teachers') interest, and keeps Latin competitive with “modern” languages, helping to improve enrollment and retention numbers.

For teachers new to modern technology, especially in the current era of do-it-yourself (DIY) entertainment (self-created music and movies posted online), it is conceivably daunting and discouraging to try to gain a quick understanding of how students can merge pop culture, technology, and Latin together for a rewarding educational experience. The best thing to do is to reach out to those teachers...



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to teach this subject matter to undergraduates or at the secondary-school level. Teachers can further ask students to investigate what materials are available from which they can choose textbooks and ancillaries, and to explain what factors went into their choices. If I had been asked to conduct such an investigation and to write this kind of critique, I would likely have made better choices when I ordered books for my own first classes.

BOLCHAZY-CARDUCCI PUBLISHERS
Laurie@bolchazy.com

Classics Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: Technology

ANDREW REINHARD

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