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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Latin is a language to be understood, not a code to be decoded. Every lesson in my classroom is built on comprehensible input: students acquire Latin the way they acquired their first language, by encountering real messages they can follow, not by memorizing paradigms in advance of using them. Grammar is something we notice inside language we already understand — never a wall students must climb before the reading begins.

Four Principles

Storytelling & drama. Students act out Roman myths and historical events instead of translating them line by line. A story understood and felt sticks; a sentence parsed and forgotten does not.

Comprehensible input. Language is acquired through understanding real messages, at a level pitched just past a student's current comfort — not through memorizing rules before ever using them.

Neurodiversity-friendly practice. Movement, games, and multiple entry points welcome every kind of learner. I teach the way I would have wanted to be taught, including as a neurodivergent learner myself.

A caring, low-anxiety community. Stress is the enemy of acquisition. Frequent, low-stakes checks for understanding replace high-pressure tests, and every student's comfort and progress matter here.

In Practice

A typical class opens with a short spoken-Latin exchange so students' ears tune in before we read. Most of class is spent reading stories aloud, asking questions, and acting out what happens — not translating sentence by sentence into English. Students close with free-reading time in books at their level, and frequent low-stakes checks tell me what to reteach, rather than testing memorized forms under time pressure. The goal every day is the same: students leave knowing they understood real Latin, not that they survived it.

“Audentes fortuna iuvat — fortune favors the bold. Choose Latin, and be bold.”

— a line I share with every new class

This approach is grounded in second-language acquisition research and two decades in the classroom, and it travels with me into every professional-development session, conference talk, and curriculum I build for other Latin and world-language programs.