Third Language Acquisition: Spanish-Speaking Students in the Latin Classroom

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Abstract

In ten years of teaching Latin at the junior high, high school, community college, and university levels, I have had mixed success teaching Latin to Hispanophone[1] students. Coming from Texas and now teaching in California, where in both states the number of Latino students is higher than it is in many other parts of the country, I found this a surprising trend, and I began the research for this paper by wondering how I could improve both my teaching and the success rate of Hispanophone students. This paper details several field-tested approaches for the improvement of Latin language acquisition among native Spanish-speaking students. First, I discuss the identification and assessment of potential problems and/or difficulties. Then, I share my approach to communication between instructor and student. Finally, I delineate strategies for improved learning for the ESL student. Although this paper's discussion about *third language acquisition* (L3) will primarily use examples drawn from working with Hispanophone students, it may apply to students who are speakers of other Romance languages.

Keywords: L3, third language acquisition, bilingualism, language acquisition, Latin, teaching

Mine is a tale of two cultures that generally inhabit the same space in places like Southern California, my birth-state of Texas, and many other states in the South and Southwest. In both states, the Latino population is growing exponentially.[2] The Census Bureau's national demographic tally from the 2010 Census indicates that the U.S. Latino population increased by 43% since the previous census, rising to 50.5 million in 2010 from 35.3 million in 2000. This population now constitutes 16% of the nation's total population of 308.7 million (www.census.gov). As a result, our schools—private and public, secondary and collegiate—are rapidly filling with this so-called minority: the Pew Hispanic Center reports that in 2006, Latinos made up 1 in 5 students in the nation's public schools, up from 1 in 8 in 1990 (http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=92). Given these numbers, we must adjust our methods of teaching and increase our own cultural understanding in order to be effective teachers in this new age of multiculturalism. As Andrew Laird writes, "Once the multivalent connections between the Roman tradition and the ethnically complex Hispanic American tradition are better understood, classical studies may have a new part to play in today's curricula" (5). Likewise, I would suggest, the commonalities between the Latin language and Spanish ought to be celebrated and ways of teaching Latin to bilingual Latinos further explored.

1 Hispanophone is used here to refer to students who are bilingual in Spanish and English, with Spanish as a first or familial language and English as a second language. The term *Latino* is used to refer more broadly to individuals from Latin America or with Latin American roots.
2 According to the 2009 U.S. Census Bureau findings, New Mexico at 45%, California at 37% , and Texas at 36.9% lead the nation in the percentage of Latinos living in each state.

Over the course of my ten years of teaching at multiple levels, I came to realize that the failure rate for my Hispanophone students was far higher than the general failure rate for all students. By "failure" I mean that the students literally fail out of the course before its completion. Though my own sample is quite small, I would say that at least 85% of my Hispanophone students make a poor enough grade to either drop the course or simply fail at the course's end. Although it is true that my sample size may be too small for generalization, considering I have only my own experience to gauge at this point, I hope to continue monitoring this trend in the coming years and perhaps to recruit other teachers to monitor it as well. After seeing this pattern of high failure rate combined with low comprehension of reading, grammar, and even (surprisingly) vocabulary, I began to question why this had occurred and simultaneously to attempt to work out a strategy (or series of strategies) for aiding these particular students.

This paper details a pair of field-tested approaches for the improvement of Latin language acquisition among native Spanish-speaking students whose second language is English. In the two exploratory case studies illustrated here, I delineate three parts to the "experiment." First, I discuss the identification and assessment of potential problems and/or difficulties. Next, I share my approach for effective communication between instructor and student. Finally, I describe strategies for improved learning for the L3 student. Before I begin with the case studies, however, a brief discussion on the relevant points of L3 research is in order.

Research on Third Language Acquisition

Although there is some good, recent research done on L3 in general (that is, on the acquisition of language rather than on pedagogic strategies), I have found no research on L3 in languages which are primarily *not* spoken as a mode of instruction in the classroom, such as Latin, Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Sanskrit, *et aliae*.[3] Although we all make it a point to be sure our students can pronounce the language properly, rarely is it used as *the primary* instructional language. The use of spoken Latin in the classroom I address below. What follows is some information from existing literature on L3, but let me be clear that this article will only in a very limited way follow the lead of previous L3 literature, because my intent is to focus on how a student's L2 or even L1 can *help* rather than confound his/her L3 acquisition.

Recent L3 research seems to focus on four main factors: *proficiency, typological similarity, recency of use*, and the closely related *recency of acquisition* or *foreign language effect*. De Angelis has found that the proficiency of the third language learner is dependent upon a working vocabulary and proficiency in the second language (133). In other words, the ability of the student to learn a third (or any additional) language is highly dependent upon the student's grasp of the second language. Proficiency in a language seems to be defined, at least in part, by whether or not the subject learned the L2 in a formal setting (such as in classes at school). Maria Eisenstein found that those who had learned their L2 formally showed a greater ability for learning subsequent languages than those who had become bilingual at home (see also Klein).

Another important factor in third language acquisition is the similarity of the L1 or the L2 to the L3. Hammarberg calls this "typological similarity" ("Roles of L1 and L2" 22; *Processes* 127-53); it may also be referred to as language or linguistic distance (Cenoz, Hufeisen and Jessner, Chapter 1). As Hammarberg clarifies, "influence from L2 is favoured [sic] if L2 is typologically

3 The research itself also indicates that there is little work that has been done specifically on the pedagogic—versus the other side which is normally reported, namely the *learning*—aspects of learning a third language in bi- or trilingual schools (Cenoz, Hufeisen, and Jessner; Jessner).

close to L3, especially if L1 is more distant" (22). In my case, since L2 (English) is not as typologically close to L3 (Latin) as is L1 (Spanish), then the influence shifts. In other words, since the typology of Spanish (L1) is more similar to Latin (L3) than English (L2), the influence of Spanish rather than English should be favored in the acquisition of the Latin language.

There is, however, another crucial factor to consider, namely *recency of use*. This concept takes into account whether or not the subject has used the L2 more recently than the L1. The recency of the language's use seems to have an effect on how the learner acquires the L3 (Williams and Hammarberg). A good example of how this works is as follows: I learned very rudimentary Spanish in high school. When I first went to Italy, I had a difficult time speaking Italian, because I often confused it with Spanish. Today, however, with more years between me and my high school Spanish than I would like to admit, my recency of use for Italian is far closer than for my Spanish, so I find speaking Italian much easier than speaking Spanish.

Very similar to the recency of *use* is the recency of *acquisition*, or the so-called *foreign language effect*. As Jessner (32) states, the foreign language effect occurs when an L3 learner chooses (whether consciously or unconsciously) to activate the first foreign language (in our cases here, English) instead of the first language (here, Spanish), where there might be more typological similarities. It is almost as if the student's mind concludes that his/her native language cannot possibly be foreign enough to compare to the target language, so the comparison between L2 and L3 must be made instead of comparing L1 to L3. There seems to be a desire to "suppress L1 in the belief that this is inherently 'non-foreign' and thus that using a non-L1 and hence 'foreign' language would be a better strategy in acquiring another 'foreign' language" (Williams & Hammarberg 323). Stated slightly differently, if a child grows up in a household that only speaks Spanish from birth until school-age at which time s/he begins learning English, the recency of English acquisition may influence the way the child learns a third language.[4] In the case of many bilinguals, this may not seem relevant, but I believe it is, as I will attempt to show in my case studies.

A Problem Like Maria

My first and perhaps best case study is a young woman whom I will call Maria.[5] The course—Intensive Elementary Latin, wherein we covered an entire college year's worth of grammar in twelve summer weeks—was not for the faint of heart. Maria was certainly not timid, but her language skills were a hindrance to her. Struggling to keep her D in Latin 1 that summer, she came to me to find out what she could do to become better at Latin. She was spending many hours studying, but to no avail. Her unique situation deserves a study in and of itself, but, essentially, Maria is the child of Mexican migrant workers who shuttled her back and forth across the border all throughout her grammar school years. In this case, the L1, Spanish—in which theoretically she should have been proficient—was not at all solidified. Neither her Spanish nor her English grammar was in any way proficient. This in itself throws off the data and suppositions of a great deal of the L3 research, because most L3 research presupposes a level of linguistic aptitude in at least one

4 I say "child" for this example, but I am, of course, working with adult learners for the most part in the community college and university setting. As was noted by one of my reviewers, the age of the language learners is not considered in my article, but clearly the younger the language learner, the quicker the acquisition. The body of scholarship for age and language acquisition is extensive, so I will merely cite a few examples here: Krashen, Long, and Scarcella; Singleton and Ryan. On the neurochemical analysis of age-related language acquisition: Daniela Parani, et al. Additionally, however, there is some suggestion that though the younger learner may acquire certain parts of language quicker, the more mature learner acquires it more universally; see Dekeyser et al.

5 Both names of my case-studies have been changed in the interest of their privacy.

language. According to Murphy (and others), however, low L3 proficiency can be "the result of a lack of linguistic awareness due to limited formal education and subsequent low literacy" (Murphy 13). How could Maria learn a third language when she has no strong foundation, no proficiency, in either Spanish or English?

Although Maria's lack of much formal language training may have left her Spanish grammar weak, overall her native language, Spanish, was more solidified than her English. Hammarberg states that "…studies that directly focused on L3 acquisition provide ample evidence that prior L2s actually have a greater role to play than has usually been assumed" ("Roles of L1 and L2" 22). On the basis of the *recency of acquisition* concept, one might think that English would play a greater role than Spanish. If, however, this L2—English in this case—is not stabilized, then the greater role of the L2 is a *hindrance* rather than a boon.[6] In this case we should flee to L1, based on Maria's greater fluency in Spanish and the greater typological similarities between Spanish and Latin, since the problem was not necessarily the target language, Latin, but English. This is what I did.

Part of the solution to this challenge was admittedly purely self-interested. I wanted to refresh my Spanish and maybe learn a few new terms along the way. In addition to working with Maria in Spanish before or after class, I allowed Maria to translate her Latin homework into Spanish (after all, the target language is *Latin*, not *English*). Based on the typological similarities that Maria began to notice between Spanish vocabulary and Latin vocabulary, this simple change was a large part of the solution. As we worked through her Spanish translation of her Latin homework, she would ask questions about Latin vocabulary items, which were similar to Spanish, almost as if she were afraid to accept the fact that often the cognate word in Latin has the same basic meaning in Spanish. Maria began to gain confidence.

Along the way, however, I noticed that her understanding of *Spanish* grammar was weak as well. This was no surprise after finding out that she never spent more than a year at any one grammar school, whether in Mexico or in California, during her childhood. Therefore, the other part of my remedy came in the form of a rather innocuous book by Edith and C. Frederick Farrell, *Side by Side Spanish & English Grammar* (2004). I gave her this book, and within a couple of weeks she absolutely began to thrive: her confidence rose, her participation in class increased, and she began completing her homework and quizzes. She utilized the book's short introduction on the parts of speech (10-11) and read carefully each section as she needed it. For example, when our lesson in Latin class was on relative pronouns, after looking at how *Wheelock's Latin* presents them (Chapter 17), she then would turn to *Side by Side*, page 36, to view the chart on the left side for English relative pronouns and on the right for the Spanish equivalent. Maria was self-motivated enough not to need me to tell her which sections of the book were relevant; she independently looked them up in the index. For secondary school teachers, however, a more structured course of action might be in order, namely devising a mini-lesson plan for the student in question, focusing his/her study in a particular chapter or chapter sections of the Farrells' book. Clearly the use of the *Side-by-Side* grammar book helped raise Maria's Spanish proficiency enough for her to begin to view the typological similarities between her native tongue and the target language, thus making her acquisition of her L3 a bit easier.

Having Maria complete her homework in Spanish and participate in tutorial sessions with me did improve her grade from a low D to a C, but I think the *Side by Side* grammar pushed her

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6 This was indeed the case in Cenoz's (2001) study on students whose L1 and L2 were either Spanish or Basque who were trying to acquire English as their L3.

from a C to a B. Soon Maria was not only translating her Latin homework into English, but our tutorial sessions (still held primarily in Spanish or mixed "Spanglish") were getting better as well. She began to understand the assignments better and complete the tasks with more confidence. When she did not understand, clearing up questions became simpler as we began to work with an increasingly familiar shared grammatical vocabulary. What I mean by a "shared grammatical vocabulary" is that Maria began to learn and understand the complex terminology that Latin grammar uses, and she did this through better understanding the grammar of both Spanish and English. Maria finished the summer with a B average and went on to Intermediate Latin in the fall. She struggled, most likely because of her inability to have Spanish tutorial sessions, but nevertheless successfully finished her language requirement in the winter.

The Success with Alicia

My next case study involves a young woman I will call Alicia. She, too, was in my Intensive Elementary Latin class, but in the subsequent year. Her background was not nearly as challenging as Maria's, but she too was struggling with Latin as L3. Also from an immigrant family, Alicia had been out of her parents' home longer and therefore was not speaking Spanish at home. This information is quite relevant, since one thread of L3 research credits so-called *passive bilingualism* with enhanced L3 learning, mostly due to instances of positive transfer (i.e., the correct identification of, for example, cognate words).[7] An older student (she was in her mid-20s just beginning her undergraduate education), Alicia had been in the working world before returning to higher education, and hence her proficiency in both English and Spanish was higher than Maria's. In a way, her passive bilingualism aided her proficiency in English, making her more likely to rely upon her knowledge of her L2 rather than her L1 to identify typological consistencies between Latin and English rather than Latin and Spanish. In other words, Alicia was more consciously aware of the connections between English and Latin than the helpful connections which could be made between Spanish and Latin. Unlike in Maria's case, where the typological similarities between Latin and Spanish were the driving force behind my pedagogical strategies to help her learn Latin, in Alicia's case recency of use and her proficiency with English were two paths to guide Alicia upon to aid her in learning Latin.

Her problem, as with many of my monolingual or non-Hispanophone students, was not with the target language (L3) but rather with English (L2) grammar. Not only did she not know grammatical terms but she did not seem comfortable with the usage of many formal English elements of grammar. I suggested Norma Goldman's *English Grammar for Students of Latin* to Alicia, which she read faithfully, also working through some of the exercises in the book with me in tutorial sessions. I also suggested the *Side-by-Side* book, and though she looked at it, she found the bridge that Goldman creates more relevant to her situation than Maria did, probably because Alicia was more proficient in English (L2) than in Spanish (L1). She did not opt to take advantage of my suggestion that she complete her homework in Spanish, as she seemed more comfortable in English than Maria was. Though not struggling nearly as much as Maria had at the beginning, Alicia's performance did indeed improve from one term to the next from a B- to a solid A as we

7 Alicia is what linguists would call a *passive bilingual*, since she knows her L1 but uses her L2 at home with American roommates and in her daily life at school. Murphy states, "Mägiste (1984) holds a more constrained view, pointing out that evidence shows that while L3 learners do show instances of negative transfer such as lexical interference and slower rate of acquisition particularly when they are active bilinguals, passive bilingualism facilitates L3 acquisition because the learners are able to maximize the positive transfer effects while reducing the potential for negative transfer" (11).

continued to collaborate and work through some of the exercises from Goldman's text. In the summer of 2009, Alicia graduated with a BA in Classics, and she was accepted to the University of Vermont's MA program in Classics.

Teaching Strategies

In the following section, I discuss what worked, what did not, and what I would try next in the classroom. I present this information in a problem-solution format under four different headings which represent four different parts of the learning experience, namely tutorials (outside of class-time that the student spends one-on-one with me), homework, classroom time, and next-step pedagogical strategies. This is by no means an exhaustive account, nor is it meant to suggest that these are the only strategies that might work for helping the Hispanophone student to succeed in a Latin classroom. Certainly these methods, as all good methods of pedagogy, are constantly evolving, and should carry the caveat that what works for one student may not work for another. Trial and error is quite possibly the best key to success; as long as we, as teachers, consistently are creative and willing to step outside the usual bounds of teaching, we can create successful students, no matter their previous background.

Tutorials

Problem: Using only *English as a language of instruction.*

My personal experiences with struggling Hispanophone students showed me that I could not simply use the L2 (English) as the only language of instruction. Although it is certainly easy to become complacent in our duties to struggling students—especially when we have countless other responsibilities both in and out of the classroom—we must be proactive and flexible with our language of instruction. The hardest part is, of course, overcoming these obstacles and spending time working with the student one-on-one both in the target language and in the L1 (Spanish, in our case here). Truly we are all capable of learning a bit of Spanish, if we do not already know some already (see note 9 for some good places to start). Most Latin teachers have a degree in Classics or in Latin, which, through its rigorous study, probably has at least introduced the teacher to Italian, French, and/or Spanish. By using the knowledge we already have and being willing to make some mistakes, we can help our students more.

Solution: Set aside time with the student for a tutorial at least partially in Spanish.

Setting aside tutorial time, no matter how much the teacher's proficiency in Spanish is lacking, will help. It allows the student to enter a comfort zone with the instructor, as mentioned earlier, and by showing a potential weakness on the teacher's part, it also allows the student to learn by teaching the *teacher*. This situation is empowering both to the student and the teacher, as both are simultaneously in control and handing over control. This creates a more collaborative and interactive learning environment. In addition to this added boon to our students, we learn something new, and by actually displaying our own weaknesses to our students, the students can let down their guard. As a result, both teacher and student feel comfortable making mistakes and therefore learning together.

Homework

Problem: Allowing only *English as the student's language of translation on homework.*

Another method that did not work with these students was requiring only the L2 as acceptable homework assignment language. Sometimes it is difficult to recall that as valuable a lesson as learning Latin is also to learning (or solidifying the knowledge of) English grammar, English is not the target language but rather Latin. If this is the case, and the student feels stronger in his own native language, he should be allowed to translate the exercises into Spanish.

Solution: Permit students to translate homework into Spanish instead of English.

Again, I urge teachers to get a bit out of their comfort zones by purchasing an English-Spanish dictionary or investing in language CDs. Latin teachers can grade their Spanish-speaking students' homework with some ease; it only takes a little bit of up-front effort. As with learning any new language, it gets easier with practice. This is what we ask of our students, and perhaps they should expect no less of us. If, however, a teacher feels very insecure about this prospect, I suggest that the teacher ask the student to take time during their tutorial session together to translate their Spanish answers into English orally together. This way the teacher is better prepared to receive more homework in Spanish, and the student gains a better knowledge of (and perhaps even more comfort with) English.

In the Classroom

Problem: Building vocabulary based on cognates and derivatives and combatting the "foreign language effect."

I found that emphasizing English cognates or derivatives over and above Spanish ones for the whole class was not the best method of teaching etymology and vocabulary—to any of my students. Indeed we all teach Latin not only for the purpose of reading Latin texts but also to help our students perform better on the SAT/ACT and otherwise build vocabulary. By no means should teachers stop making English-Latin cognate and/or derivative worksheets; I am merely suggesting that we add some Spanish-Latin cognates and derivatives as well. If we point out these similarities, then students like Maria, who may have been experiencing what I mentioned earlier, namely the "foreign language effect," will be introduced to a whole different way of considering language. In other words, Maria may not have been equating her native language as a "foreign language" and therefore not allowing herself to see the similarities between her L1 and Latin (the "foreign" L3); she was equating the "foreignness" of English to Latin. She had difficulty trusting her knowledge of Spanish since perhaps it did not seem "foreign" enough to her. This combined with the "last language effect" (wherein the last language learned usually has more influence in learning the L3 than the native language) may have blinded her (unnecessarily) to the similarity between Spanish and Latin.[8]

Solution: Try exercises with English, Spanish, AND Latin cognates and derivatives.

Another strategy that certainly worked in my experience was bringing together points of comparison between not just L3 (Latin) and L2 (English) but *L1* (Spanish) and L3 (Latin). My solution to this problem, i.e. the student's inability to recognize similarities between Spanish and Latin, is simple: use *Wheelock's Latin*, even if it is not your textbook. At the end of some of the chapters in the newer editions, several useful charts help the student to visualize the points of contact between Latin and Italian, Spanish, and French that can be used in the classroom with all

8 This *last language effect,* as first discussed by Shanon (1991) and clarified by Williams & Hammarberg (1998), Cenoz (2001), Hammarberg (2001), basically shows that in L3 learners, the language of most recent use (e.g., an L2) influences L3 acquisition more strongly, even if there are elements in the L1 that might have more bearing on the L3. See also Murphy 2 and de Angelis 132 ("Language distance affects crosslinguistic influence in multilinguals").

students (not just students with L2 difficulties) or in a one-on-one study session between teacher and student.[9] Not only does it help the Spanish-speaking students, but it shows the relevance of Latin to learning other modern languages and making our society a more multilingual (and hence more globally savvy) one.

What to Try Next

While I tried many different teaching strategies to help my Hispanophone students, I encountered varying levels of success and failure. This prompted me to consider additional approaches, which may be helpful for the next time I have a student struggling with L3.

As I mentioned before, one idea is to employ more cognate exercises. These exercises, applicable to everyone, help Spanish-speaking students to learn more English and English-speaking students to learn more Spanish, French, or Italian. In the same vein, I would consider incorporating more in-class cognate comparisons in many of my lessons. This way, the instructor does not necessarily single out Hispanophone students but instead introduces material relevant to other students with perhaps some experience with Spanish. Recently I tutored a high school girl in Latin who was concurrently enrolled in Spanish. She was an advanced student of Latin while an elementary learner of Spanish. The more we read Latin together, the more I pointed out not only English cognates and derivatives but also Spanish ones as well. Her grades in both classes have risen, due to more time spent reflecting on cognate words and vocabulary and making connections between Latin and Spanish.[10] I imagine more focused lessons concerning Spanish-Latin cross-over would be even more helpful.

I also suggest that making Latin a more spoken language and creating a more extensive oral part of the class may help solidify the similarities between Spanish and Latin.[11] This emphasis on oral Latin may be uncomfortable to many Latin teachers, but it is well worth the effort for *all* students in the class, not just for native Spanish speakers. All of the research done on L2 and L3 acquisition refers to modern and therefore mostly spoken and conversational languages; as most Latin teachers know, this is why a great deal of language instructional pedagogy does not truly apply to our situation. Why not, however, try adapting some of the methods of instruction from our Modern Languages colleagues? It might bring to the forefront more similarities than differences between Spanish and Latin. Also, making students more comfortable with an oral format can activate a different aspect of their language processing capacity; students who are adept at listening and speaking may make more connections between sound, form, and meaning, thus helping them to use the language more actively and fluently and thereby increasing vocabulary and reading comprehension.[12]

Finally, if I could create a perfect storm of elements designed to help Hispanophone students and their classmates understand not only Latin, but also Spanish and their place in a larger

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9 *Wheelock's Latin*, 7th edition, pages 30, 62, 78, 95, 121, 130, 175, 217, 243, 331, 340. There are also a lot of great websites out there for teaching Spanish and Latin etymology. See, for example, Vogt; Williams; Williams and Hadley.

10 If we can get our students to think more *of* and *about* words, as Kelley, et al. state, I believe that not only Spanish-speaking students but also English-speaking students will benefit. I owe the reference to this fascinating article to one of my anonymous reviewers.

11 This could lead to more so-called "code-switching," however. Code-switching is where the student confuses (either lexically, or syntactically, or both) one language for another. Since all of the L3 literature deals with *spoken* languages, this terminology is safely removed from the Latin classroom…until speaking Latin becomes more common in the class.

12 I must thank the editors for helping me clarify this point about orality and different learning styles.

world, it would be to invite more team-taught classes between Spanish and Latin. I would try this in part because a colleague of mine participated in a team-taught class, which was wildly successful. For his part, he presented a mini-lesson on Roman Spain through architecture, art, and especially language. Through pointing out similarities between Latin and Spanish, the Latin students in the class were surprised at how much Spanish they already knew, and the Spanish students likewise realized the debt owed to the classical language. Much as dual language programs in some K-12 schools use both Spanish and English as languages of instruction for both Hispanophone and non-Hispanophone students, this approach uses instead a common language of instruction (namely English) but dual languages of expression. Even though students in the Spanish class may not believe they know a single Latin word, they will realize they do when confronted with a comparative chart of numerals in both languages, for instance. The same would be true the other way around. In this vein of mutual learning, I would suggest using the final assessment (at the end of the team-taught class) to bring out what the student knows, whether it be on the Latin or the Spanish side. I would encourage students to "cross the aisle" between Latin and Spanish. See the Appendix for a sample assessment of a cross-curricular unit on Roman Spain.

Conclusion

Hispanophone students *can* be successful in the Latin classroom. Teachers must be flexible and willing to take a few extra steps to help push these talented students in the right direction. By using research on L3 and L2 and my own classroom experience, I have attempted to offer the initial elements of an approach that will help Hispanophone students succeed in American classrooms. Most of the current research in the field of L3 is conducted in Europe, where many people are bilingual, if not trilingual. In addition, all of the research done on L2 and L3 acquisition refers to *spoken* languages. This suggests that some if not most of the instruction time in the classroom is spent using the L2 or L3 instead of the L1.[13] This line of research regarding Latin or other classical languages as proper L3s, therefore, is important. We need to conduct our own research on L3—both as Americans and as teachers of classical languages—in order to grapple with specifically American scenarios. In conducting *American* research on a unique topic of a non-spoken L3, while also working towards a method (or methods) to help Hispanophone students become more successful students of Latin, we can create a "win-win" situation. In short, as regards L3 research and praxis, we as teachers have an opportunity to do something new in terms of L3 Latin acquisition, both in research and in the formulation and implementation of practical teaching strategies. I hope that this paper is an initial step in this direction.[14]

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13 The actual numbers on this are interesting, and I have one of my anonymous reviewers to thank for pointing me to the following survey by Rhodes and Pufahl: www.cal.org/flsurvey . A look at the data suggests that perhaps even modern, spoken languages would benefit from more oral language time.

14 For those readers who would like more information about teaching foreign languages, including links to more critical and less anecdotal studies, view the following links:
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages:
http://actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1
Vivian Cook's page, which is a clearinghouse for all things SLA (Second Language Acquisition):
http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/
The Center for Applied Linguistics:
http://www.cal.org/
The University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA):
http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/resources/websites.html

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Appendix

An example of a successful assessment in such a team-taught class is reproduced here with the kind permission of Christopher Wood. Should you like to use this assessment in your class, please email the author for permission (christopher.wood007@gmail.com) and give proper credit.

Cross-Curricular Learning: Roman Spain

1. What do you know about the Spanish/Latin language? ______________________________

2. What do you know about the history of Roman Spain? ______________________________

3. Write down the Spanish/Latin words for the following English terms:

son _____________ to say ___________ we ______________ cat ______________

father ___________ to see ___________ you _____________ water ___________

brother _________ cold _____________ god _____________ day _____________

mother _________ house ___________ street ___________ hot _____________

4. What did you learn about Spanish history today? __________________________________

____

____

____

5. How did the Phoenicians, Greeks, Celts, or Romans affect the development of Spain? ___

____

____

____

6. Why is the study of language important to history, and conversely, why is the study of history conducive to language? ____

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