If Not AP, Then What?A New Option for Secondary Teachers

Recently, as members of both the foreign language department and upper level administration were debating the value of Advanced Placement courses and whether or not the Advanced Placement curriculum was the best fit for all of our students, we were left with one huge consideration. What if? What if we were to offer another path? What if we could offer an alternative to the Advanced Placement Language courses that might keep students interested in languages? What sorts of classes would we offer? Could we design curricula that as challenging, more engaging, and better adapted to our students' needs and interests?

For over two years I researched and I inquired as to what types of courses other schools offer. I polled students, parents, and peers -both within and beyond my school community- as to what types of courses would be of interest to them. I have even reviewed course catalogues for a few universities, colleges, and community colleges, in order to begin to consider what types of courses would be good connectors to a variety of college majors. My solution was a single-semester Latin course designed to encourage Latin students to see the Classics as more than just "Grammar and Translation".

At the start of the 2015-16 academic year, I took the plunge. For the first time, our upper school offered two advanced electives: A Survey of the Origins of Medicine (Greek and Roman), and The Connection Between Magic, Mystery, and Spirituality: Occultism in the Ancient World. For the following academic year, we offered two more advanced electives: Roman Law and Politics During the Republican Era, and A Study of Roman Architecture and City Planning.

As the proverbial "guinea pigs" for our Foreign Language Department, these four courses have served as an experiment for all of us. These courses have been vastly different than the Advanced Placement curriculum, and happily, both student engagement and fulfillment have

tremendous. Students in these courses were required to complete more research, a significant quantity of independent work that required them to fully *use* the target language, and much more individualized assessments. Most importantly, the level of challenge has equaled that of the Advanced Placement curriculum.

In preparation for these courses, not only did I completely outline the curriculum for each course, but I also read a few books about new techniques for second language instruction and assessment. More importantly, however, I developed tools, including performance rubrics and skill assessments, which enabled the students to pursue Latin in a different way. In addition, I have surveyed both populations (those students enrolled in AP Latin and those enrolled in my Advanced Electives) and I discovered some striking information.

In the end, my goal has been to offer interesting, engaging, and valuable Latin courses, which encourage students to continue their Latin studies beyond Latin III. Realizing that the AP Curriculum doesn't inspire everyone, I sought out topics that might be of interest to students interested in STEM, Political Science, and even Religion.

Goals for the Workshop

The ultimate goal for this workshop is to share other Classical reading selections (i.e. Galen's *Problemata Phleobotomica,* Vitruvius' *De Arichitecturā,* and Tertullian's *De Coronā Militis,* et. al.) and the ways by which these selections, which lay far outside of the standard cannon of Latin literature of most Latin curricula, can inspire students to continue their study of Latin beyond just three years. I will provide reading selections, translation scoring rubrics, ideas for research and projects, and I will bring samples of interesting work completed by my students.

Attendees to this workshop will have the opportunity to complete up to complete a variety of activities from participating in a mock trial or a simulation of the Roman Republican government; building a Roman crane; or deciphering popular medical conditions and treatments based upon analysis of their scientific names.