

Georgia Sams 1C Abstract

How do pupils respond to the use of self-made picture cards to help them with the retention of Latin vocabulary? An investigation of a Year 9 Latin class in a co-educational independent school.

Background: It is widely accepted that, in the early stages of learning Latin, a sound grasp of vocabulary is vital. The method researched was designed to aid direct learning and retention of vocabulary. Pupils drew illustrations of given words on pieces of card, writing the Latin near the drawing and the meaning on the other side. They were then tested on these words. The twelve year 9 pupils had been learning Latin for six months, were of mixed ability and attended a large, co-educational, independent boarding school. The research focussed on: (i) how they performed in vocabulary tests before, during, and after use of the picture cards, (ii) what they said about their responses to the method, and (iii) what sort of illustrations they drew.

Results: The class average scores remained constant; some individuals' scores improved while others' worsened. All pupils felt the method helped them retain vocabulary for longer. Sometimes translations offered by pupils were incorrect, but semantically close in meaning to the correct translation.

Conclusions: The method is helpful to some pupils and should be offered as a strategy for learning vocabulary. It may help pupils consider the semantic range of vocabulary. Due to the time and materials needed, it should be reserved for high-frequency vocabulary items.