Designing Online Latin for Student Success

Now in my third year of developing a sequence of beginning & intermediate Latin courses that is 100 percent online at a large regional public university in the rural south-east, I've developed a few strategies to engage students & motivate them to succeed in learning Latin in a challenging, rewarding & extremely flexible course they can complete on their own time in a 15-week semester. I hope to share these ideas with others who may be developing online courses in case they are any help.

To begin the presentation, I'll briefly contextualize the courses by characterizing the student population and summarizing the major goals for each course in the sequence. Using an example module from the first course in the sequence, I'll show the typical progression through a week's content. I will focus on specific elements of the courses I've designed with respect to how they address challenges inherent to the online format.

Some of the immediate challenges of a completely online course that has no face-to-face requirement include helping students feel at ease in the course, and helping them understand they are not alone as they navigate a language unlike anything most of them have encountered before. Semester-long challenges include helping students remain motivated to work on their own schedules and creating meaningful & engaging assignments that allow them to practice skills and think critically about what they are learning.

Strategies I'll discuss include setting recommended deadlines; using short repeatable quizzes with a variety of question types using robust banks of questions to practice skills; encouraging questions & responding to them quickly; interactive or guided activities to prompt comprehension & critical thinking; and other methods to foster student success like having wide

availability throughout the day & week, monitoring students' activity in the course, maintaining frequent communication, and supporting students as they encounter impediments to their progress in the course.

My presentation will conclude with a brief explanation of why my elementary sequence has seen a 100 percent increase in enrollment in the 2022-2023 academic year (spoiler: it's not just because I've created such an amazing experience for Latin students), and observations on the limits of a fully online method of instruction.

I hope to leave attendees with strategies they can adopt or adapt as they develop digital courses, and to gather feedback from attendees for improving the design of my courses; specifically, I'd like ideas for developing an effective method for assessing student learning without testing, and increasing interaction in online courses.