

## From Flop to Flip: Individualizing the Elementary Latin Curriculum

In her 1976 book *Accent on Learning*, K. Patricia Cross remarked that “the speed of adoption of self-paced learning modules across the country looks more revolutionary than evolutionary” (75). While this revolution might not have happened as Cross and others envisioned, self-paced learning has become increasingly popular in curricula across the disciplines and across schooling levels (e.g. elementary, high school, collegiate). Instructors in the STEM fields, in particular, value a self-paced approach for its role in helping students increase both confidence and performance in traditionally challenging subjects as well as for the ways in which it fosters a student-centered, active, and peer-supported classroom environment.

What might a self-paced elementary Latin course look like, and why would anyone want to attempt such an experiment? This paper seeks to address these questions by discussing a university-level elementary Latin sequence with reference both to the nitty-gritty details and with an eye toward the expansion of the principles the courses embody. In addition to being self-paced, the courses require students to take a mastery-based approach to the material by earning a mark of 90% or higher on each assessment. We use an inductive text (*Lingua Latina*), which is supplemented by podcasts, related cultural content, and specific “tasks” for each chapter, bringing elements of the ‘flipped’ classroom into the mix. An end of semester composition project replaces the traditional final exam and connects to Latin writing that students create as part of their tasks, in class, and on their chapter assessments. Finally, students engage in ‘metacognitive moments’ in their tasks, in questions posed at the end of each week, and in a reflective essay at the end of the term.

Freed to work through the text at their own pace and required to show their mastery of the material, students better retain information; freed from the pressure to lecture each day, the

instructor can facilitate student learning by creating peer-to-peer learning opportunities, workshops, and collaborative activities for class. The academic and practical benefits of this blended model are complemented by the life skills that students hone in the courses, for example, to work alongside one another to solve problems, to evaluate their own learning, to see the lack of success as formative rather than disastrous, and to develop strategies for achievement. In closing, I argue that, should we wish to ensure that our students know the course material and emerge from our courses with an enhanced sense of self in a broad sense, we would do well to introduce the innovations that this model affords (and likewise creates) to our Latin classrooms.

#### Bibliography

Cross, K. Patricia. *Accent on Learning: Improving Instruction and Reshaping the Curriculum*.

San Francisco and London: Jossey-Bass, 1976.