How Do You Say "MOO" in Latin? Assessing Student Learning and Motivation in Beginning Latin

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Abstract

In this article, we assess the value of VRoma for Latin language learning. In particular, we discuss three exercises that we developed which combine Latin language and Roman culture in order to help students reinforce their Latin skills and gain a more in-depth understanding of ancient Roman society. Daily journals and evaluations of the assignments provided an assessment of student motivation and gave us information concerning students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of working in the VRoma MOO. Transcripts and e-mail responses, both composed in Latin, allowed us to assess both the quality of students' interaction in the target language and their understanding of cultural and linguistic structures. Our studies have shown that by combining visual arts and cultural data with the capacity for real time communication in Latin, VRoma provides a unique opportunity for students to be immersed in language and culture simultaneously. Such an opportunity is not only useful for developing students' language skills but also for giving them a more sophisticated understanding of the ways that language and culture are integrated.