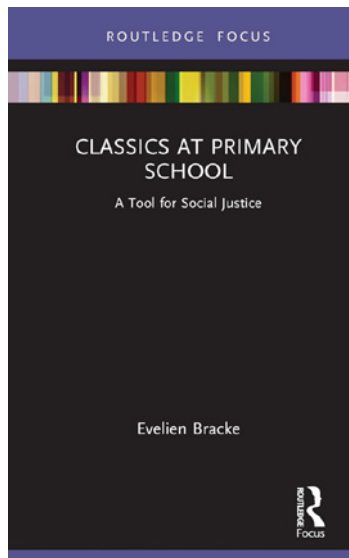


Classics at Primary School: A Tool for Social Justice

Bracke (E.), Pp. 148, New York: Routledge, 2022. Hardback, £35.99. ISBN: 978-1032135359

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Classics can often be seen as an elitist and exclusionary subject; however, this book aims to tackle this by presenting a toolkit to teach Greek in a primary school context as a method to empower students who might not normally have access to a classical education. The author provides practical steps based on pedagogical research and self-reflection to transform the teaching of Classics at primary school into one that promotes social justice.

With justice being added to the same conversation as equality, diversity and

inclusion, *Classics at Primary School: A Tool for Social Justice* provides a very convincing argument as to how and why the study and teaching of Classics can be employed to further social justice and equity. With a reflection on deprivation in education starting off the book, it provides a helpful background for readers. This also states the effect that that deprivation can have on students' aspirations. The approaches discussed are research- and community-based, and the author spends much of the book discussing how Classics can provide learning experiences that engage effectively with students and the wider local communities in which they are situated.

Self-reflection is at the heart of this book, which is in itself important for effective teaching practice. This book emphasises how much it is at the heart of social justice education, which is evident by the author's reflection on her own practice, and what lessons can be learnt more widely with the goal of improving teaching and widening the perspectives of those who teach. Each chapter helpfully ends with a useful reflective tool, providing the reader with practical steps to implement in their pedagogy.

This book is particularly helpful to any stakeholders within primary education who are currently teaching Classics in some way, and for those who are interested in introducing the subject to their primary school classes. While the focus of the book is on primary school education, there are strategies that can be relevant for those who are teaching Classics in Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14).

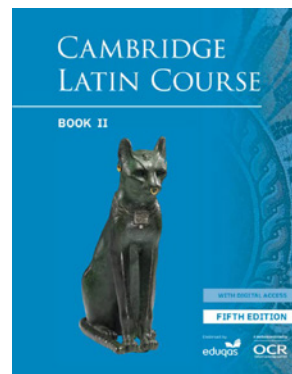
doi: 10.1017/S2058631024000023

Cambridge Latin Course: Book II (UK Fifth Edition)

Cambridge School Classics Project, Pp. viii + 254, colour ills, colour maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Paper, £19.95. ISBN: 978-1-00-916268-5.

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How to teach Latin? The debate continues to excite and polarise viewpoints. The perpetual tug of war between grammar-translate aficionados and supporters of the reading method and of almost – but not quite – comprehensible input, has been joined by the passionate swell of those espousing teaching Latin in much the same style as a modern foreign language.

The *Cambridge Latin Course* (CLC), first published in 1970 draws

on a 'familiar' vocabulary of derivatives, largely incomprehensible now to the average comprehensive pupil that makes up my classes. For many of them, reading a book is a dull task forced on them irregularly by school. The textbook provides passages in English which the modern-day year 7 or 8 often struggles to read. It is a yardstick to measure the shift in educational priorities. Having said that, it could be argued that all too few pupils were, in the 1970s, even offered Latin. So, to some extent the *Cambridge Latin Course* offered a hope of something more democratic.

Book II has always been controversial. I know many teachers who have abandoned the CLC after Book I, citing the hugely off-putting length of passages – far beyond the requirements of GCSE, the unengaging story, etc. They have moved to *de Romanis*, toyed with the *Oxford Latin Course*, explored the new and defiantly plebian-based *Suburani* or created their own courses. I myself have stayed with CLC Book II, but have always adapted the material – creating easy exercises using Stage 1 and 2 vocabulary to consolidate grammar, including the ablative along with the genitive when it can no longer really be ignored in Stage 17, and so on.

Consequently, I was intrigued by the UK fifth edition of CLC Book II and wondered to what extent these aspects had been addressed.

Like the UK 5th edition of Book I, the book now takes a broader interest in the lives of the women and others oppressed by the Romans, even in the first set of 'Model sentences'. There have been significant changes to the texts. In Stage 13, for example, the very long 'Bregans' text has, mercifully, been split into two sections. 'tres servi' has been replaced by a story providing the background to Salvius' 'coniuratio'. The omission of 'tres servi' means of course, that should you wish to show the video, you may need to supplement it with a worksheet giving the original text.

Disturbingly for those of us who have well established resources for learning vocabulary for each stage, there have been significant changes to the vocabulary checklists and about a third of the words