



The Latin-Centered Curriculum: A Homeschooler's Guide to a Classical Education

Andrew A. Campbell

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Andrew Campbell's new book, *The Latin Centered Curriculum*, gives teachers and parents an interesting and easy to read guide explaining classical education, how it came about, and who its major exponents are. In addition to a useful scope and sequence for how a Latin-centered classical education can be accomplished in a home or private school, Campbell explains why the central principle behind classical education is the study of Latin and Greek.

Campbell provides a short history of the modern classical movement, examines the predominant role of Latin in a classical education, and explains how the other pieces of the classical curriculum fit together. He provides the practical application to Tracy Lee Simmons' statement that a "Classical education is a curriculum grounded upon Greek, Latin, and the study of civilization from which the arose."

In addition to chapters on Latin, Greek, and logic, Campbell covers the various content areas of classical education, such as English studies, classical studies, Christian and modern studies, with sections on arithmetic, science, and mathematics.

But this is far from a purely theoretical book. In a chapter entitled, "Scope and Sequence," he gives a practical overview of what a Latin-based classical curriculum looks like from Kindergarten to 12th grade. With helpful charts and explanations, this book constitutes a manual for the Christian educator who wants a complete understanding of what is involved in a classical education.

The most important section in the book, may well be the chapter titled "Multum non Multa." This is the principle sometimes expressed by the maxim, "Less is more." It is the idea that, rather than throwing multiple subjects at students and burying them under a mountain of unconnected disciplines, educators should instead employ an integrated focus on a few important core disciplines and related subject areas.

The best education, Campbell points out, is simple but deep.

The Latin-Centered Curriculum: A Homeschooler's Guide to a Classical Education Details

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Melanie says

He didn't *quite* convince me that my children should be able to read the classics in the original languages, but maybe Climbing Parnassus will better do that. This book did make me think about doing less in our homeschool, but going deeper, and it definitely made me re-think my priorities as a homeschooler and how we might do things differently this coming year.

Sarah Bringhurst says

Campbell has written a how-to guide for those who aspire to the lofty educational vision of Climbing Parnassus. I really wanted to love this book, and in fact I did love this book. It presents an excellent and ambitious curriculum plan focusing heavily on ancient Greece and Rome (one year for each). I am just not quite sold on the "multum non multa" idea of focusing on a few key areas and going deeply into them. I don't feel like you have to give up "wide" for "deep." I've incorporated some aspects of this curriculum into mine, notably the serious focus on classical languages. I also subscribe to the associated email list, and find it very enlightening.

Melanie says

I've read so many books on homeschooling in search of the perfect way to make the most amazing kids :) but have found there really isn't one way. This one is a good start, and definitely makes you think outside the box of modern education.

Michelle says

The Well-Trained Mind was a good start towards a neo-classical education; this book puts it all into perspective and explains how to practically implement a *genuine* classical education. If I could start homeschooling all over again, I would use this book as my guide. I have used some of the curricula recommendations and can heartily endorse them.

Amy says

I re-read this book every year. It's short, and helps me to remember that education is "lighting a fire, not filling a bucket" (can't remember who said that, but it's true).

This book focuses on simplicity - both in the curriculum/book choices and the schedule. I prefer the first edition, as it relies more on living books. I love how the author includes music in the daily schedule, and the

1 hour of family reading, plus 30-60 minutes of silent reading for each child. But the best part of the book is its calming influence when I am overwhelmed by all the possibilities for homeschoolers. I need to be reminded "quality, not quantity", and that I don't have to teach *everything* formally.

Joseph Wetterling says

I'm impressed by this second edition of The Latin-Centered Curriculum. In this book, Andrew Campbell has provided a good introduction to the classical education model and proposed a well-detailed curriculum. It's thoroughness and level of detail is comparable to Laura Berquist's The Well Trained Mind, without following the "neoclassical" stages-of-learning model. Instead, Campbell is doggedly faithful to the principle of "not many but much" (or quality over quantity), encouraging many informal educational activities around a tight formal core of grammar (incl lit and history), math and copywork/composition.

He puts together an ecumenical curriculum, providing a solid religious education plan with higher-level options in both Catholic and Protestant readings. He's less clear when it comes to middle ages and modern history, where modern Protestant materials can lean anti-Catholic (and, perhaps, vice versa), though he at least implies that care is needed.

I was impressed by his inclusion of (and appreciation for) the Ignatian method of education. Perhaps because of this, he repeatedly references Kolbe Academy course guides and other materials. (I appreciate the many references, but, then, I'm biased as a currently-enrolled Kolbe parent.) He has a close relationship with Memoria Press and refers to their materials often, as well.

Also impressive was a fair-handed treatment of the well-known Dorothy Sayers speech on "The Lost Tools of Learning". Campbell neither fawns nor throws the baby out with the bathwater.

Mystie Winckler says

Own. This one goes into my "favorite" category for education books. Its motto is multum non multa: not quantity, but quality. He explains his philosophy with brevity and clarity, then outlines materials and schedules with grace and flexibility. His premise is that we should study a few great things deeply, rather than study many things. His curriculum section then explains his pared-down approach. Yes, Latin and classical studies are his unifying force, and he actually does what Dorothy Sayers suggests, which is teach English grammar through Latin.

This is a book I will be returning to again and again as I plan out our years.

Alicia says

I read the first edition. Campbell's argument effectively fleshed out why I would NOT follow this pedagogy. I've been long convinced of the value of studying the Latin and Greek roots of English and the merits of being familiar with the great philosophers and the Greco-Roman contribution to Western Culture. But I cannot venerate it to the exclusion of math and science, nonwestern culture, and modern classic literature.

Latin can stretch the mind, but so does math and physics.

I appreciate the mantra "multum non multa"--not many things, but much. Ironically, Campbell's plan would complicate our homeschool, and frankly, drain the joy from it.

Stefani says

I assumed there would be some overlap in recommendations between this book and The Well-Trained Mind (and there were), but there was plenty of new insight in this little book. It looks like I've already been applying some of his recommendations without knowing it, too!

Trace says

I really enjoyed this book...I've been reading and rereading it over the last 2 months! Its given me fresh inspiration for a classical education...and I have started to implement some of its suggestions in our curriculum.

If there is one area that I can't get on board with, its in the area of science. I can't get behind the notion of focusing mainly on nature studies for science until Grade 9! In this day and environment, I truly believe that a lack of STEM focused studies would be a great disservice.

Why can't we have all of the benefits of a classical education but ALSO integrate STEM a bit (or a lot) more??

Leila says

Andrew Campbell's second edition is now available, and it is FABULOUS. Not to be missed by any LCC home educators. He has completely reworked the schedules and some curricular recommendations (though the scope and sequence is essentially the same), but really, the first few chapters are reason enough to buy the book. Campbell lays out the principles of a LCC, the history behind LCC, and the holistic benefits of the approach. I especially appreciated the beefed up section on great Christians of old and their approach to pagan literature. They were not afraid of ideas!

Keegan says

This book was exactly what I needed. Basically just a year-by-year, blow-for-blow account of a Latin and Greek centered classical homeschooling experience.

Awesome. I could do without the bible studies, but I expect that shit from homeschoolers, so I forgive them.

Kelsy says

This book presents one view of a traditional classical education. The proposed selections and underlying philosophy ("multum non multa") have de-stressed (somewhat!) my own approach to classical home education. I also appreciate the many religious/Christian selections.

Anne says

If you are looking for a book to help design a Latin-centered curriculum, this could be a helpful addition to your bookshelf. I think I was expecting it to be more of an argument for or justification of the study of Latin, so it really wasn't what I was looking for.

Catherine Gillespie says

Education is one of my main interests, and over time I've read a vast number of books and articles about various philosophies and methods of education and developed my own sense of how I'd like to pursue it in my family. Because I tend to be a strategic/big picture sort of person, I have a vision for how the parts of various philosophies and methods can work together into a great education for my kids, but I have long struggled with how to begin. If I want my child taking Latin AP exams in high school, how do I get there from here? If I want my high schoolers studying humanities (history, government, literature, art, etc) in an integrated and in-depth way, what do I teach them in kindergarten?

That is why *The Latin-Centered Curriculum* was such a revelation for me, has catapulted into the top spot as my new favorite book on education, and will be one of my top picks for 2011. This book is enormously helpful and useful, containing not only the reasons for a language-based classical curriculum, but concrete, year-by-year suggestions for scope and sequence, goals, and age-appropriate curricula in various subjects.

As with many other books on classical education, this one begins with an explanation of what the author means by classical (if you have read much in the genre you've probably realized that people mean a zillion different things when they say "classical education") and why you would want that for your child. The Latin-Centered Curriculum focuses on the importance of laying a strong foundation in classical languages and implementing the concept of *Multum non Multa*, which means "not many things, but much" or, in other words, pursuing a depth of knowledge rather than a large amount of superficial knowledge.

The book provides answers to common objections for Latin and classical study, and offers reasons for pursuing it from a utilitarian, cultural, and formative perspective. If you're not sure about the reasoning behind studying ancient languages, this section would be helpful for you and I think it's more persuasively and simply laid out than similar sections in other books. You should know that the classical education discussed in this book is not the "Learn some Latin so you understand the roots of English words and read a lot of Great Books" version espoused by some other classical proponents. The author takes no issue with the Great Books style of neo-classical education, he just thinks that the best foundation for that is laid with studying Latin and Greek for the sake of developing intellectual capacity, reasoning skills, and ability to use language.

The most valuable part of the book, however, is the age-specific discussions of how to implement a classical

curriculum beginning in kindergarten. Most of the books I've read are good at imparting vision, but fairly weak on how to implement it. The Latin-Centered Curriculum, however, covers year by year practical suggestions for English Studies (in primary years that encompasses phonics, nursery rhymes and tales, copywork, and recitation), Latin, Classical Studies, Christian Studies, Modern Studies, Arithmetic, and Science. I loved seeing the progression of how you could study manageable amounts of things year by year and get to fantastic proficiency by the end of high school.

This book really helped me to crystallize my plan for language study in the primary years and gave me confidence. I haven't found another book that tracks so closely with my own ideas about education – including rigorous language study, interacting with ideas deeply rather than just superficial facts, using Charlotte Mason type ideas about short lessons and narration, and studying humanities in a fully integrated way.

Since everyone has their own approach to education, I'm sure The Latin Centered Curriculum would be more helpful to some people than others, but I would highly recommend it.

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