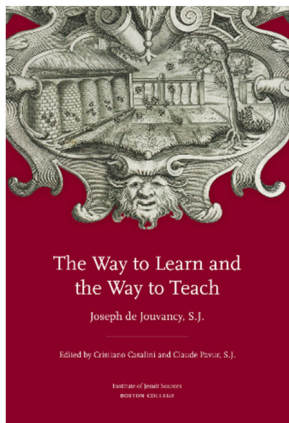


The Way to Learn and the Way to Teach

de Jouvancy, Joseph, S.J. Eds. Cristiano Casalini and Claude Pavur. 2020. Boston: Boston College Institute of Jesuit Sources. Pages: 270. ISBN: 978-1-947617-04-9. \$39.95

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The Boston College Institute of Jesuit Sources has published a new side-by-side English-Latin edition of the 1703 classic of Jesuit education, the *De discendi et docendi ratione* (*On the Way to Learn and the Way to Teach*), by the 17th century classical humanist and pedagogue Joseph de Jouvancy, S.J. For reasons I shall outline here, this is a most welcome development not only for scholars of Jesuit and Church educational history, but for Classics teachers as well. More than a

fascinating historical document, the book is brimming with valuable pedagogical reflections and practices for the Latin and Greek teacher. Most important, the book reminds teachers of the importance of inspiration and encouraging the heart in educating students, in keeping with the Jesuit value of *cura personalis* (care of the whole person) in teaching.

Jouvancy's *De discendi et docendi ratione* (hereafter, *De ratione*) is, in important respects, a follow-up to the monumental 1599 *Ratio studiorum*, the foundational charter for Jesuit education which established a dual mode of education for Jesuit trainees—a curriculum for both *litterae et devotio* (classical letters and spiritual devotion). Ignatius of Loyola's focus on a 'learned piety' (*docta pietas*) and introduction of a hybrid scholastic-humanist curriculum in his *Constitutions* for the Order in 1547 evidence this dual commitment from the start. Jouvancy's *De ratione* thus fits in to an old Jesuit tradition even by the time of his writing in 1703.

It also finds its composition in a tender moment for Jesuit colleges in Europe. It became clear that the 1599 *Ratio* was producing both students and teachers lacking in one or both of *litterae* or *devotio*. Jouvancy's *De ratione* aims to reinvigorate learning among the teachers in the Jesuit colleges for both the benefit of themselves and their students, and to refresh teachers' pedagogy by giving them a clear, workable teaching model.

The result is a teaching document that is lively and relevant (indeed, as Jouvancy says, the reader will partake of his lessons as one dines on 'the dishes of a banquet' - *tamquam in convivio dapes*). It is divided into two parts: the first concerns the proper way to learn (*ratio discendi*) and the second the proper way to teach (*ratio docendi*).

The first part lays out the curriculum for a fresh teacher of 'letters': daily practice in Greek and Latin, the stylistic virtues of both, and proper study of the humane disciplines, namely, rhetoric,

poetry, tragedy, comedy, history, chronology, geography, philosophy, philology. The breadth and depth of the above curriculum will be of interest to historians and classicists alike.

The latter portions of the first part, i.e. the way of learning, in particular, the 'helps' for learning, will be of particular interest to teachers of the classics and scholars of education today. Jouvancy, keenly aware of the realities that teachers and their students face, shows himself a humane and understanding educator. In his 'helps', Jouvancy emphasises the importance of rigorous, orderly note-taking for lifelong learners of literature and languages (good learning advice in any age), and suggests that every teacher keep lists of excerpts for the inculcation of good morals from ancient writers. He then provides a weekly guide for meeting the expectations of the Jesuit curriculum for new instructors. He also addresses common pitfalls for new instructors: many work too hard, not enjoying their lives and balancing study and a healthy social life, resulting in burn out; others lack focus, 'running off the track' so that they 'never cross the finish line'; many procrastinate, seeing their studies as best kept for the late evening, but rarely finding joy in them.

The second part of the *De ratione*, the way of teaching, is of particular interest to contemporary classicists and scholars of education, as it contains a pedagogical framework for teaching humane letters that is strikingly progressive for its time.

First, Jouvancy stresses that students must *want* to learn. Accordingly, a teacher of humane letters must first motivate students and activate their curiosity if they are to make any meaningful progress.

Second, and most important, teachers must model for students the virtues of learning and character that they wish to see in their students. Students must see their teacher partake in learning and character growth as joyful, life-affirming practices. Students, as Jouvancy says, learn first through *exempla*, not through *praecepta*. This, more than anything else, Jouvancy says, is the foundation for instilling *devotio*—inward spiritual and moral devotion and growth—in young people.

Drawing on these basic precepts, Jouvancy builds a surprisingly modern, student-centred, practical teaching and learning model for young teachers. He stresses working in pairs, encourages frequent practice, effusive, clear praise, relevant readings, emphasises that plays and dances should be staged to enliven the ancient authors, that discipline should be infrequent, never inflicted on a class at large, and never corporal, that student enthusiasm should be cherished and nourished, and not seen as a distraction from the lesson.

Assured of the purpose of the craft of teaching, Jouvancy assures young Jesuit teachers that their efforts to educate the young in knowledge and in character are not in vain. He quotes Daniel: 'The ones who educate many to justice will shine like stars unto lasting eternities. *Qui ad iustitiam erudiunt multos, fulgebunt sicut stellae in perpetuas aeternitates.*' (12:3)

In sum, the publication of this book is a most welcome event. In its pages are contained a celebration of the teaching craft and an inspiration to commit oneself to a continual, lifelong pursuit of learning and the cultivation of character (not to mention a fine scholarly introduction and notes). Its lessons are relevant for teachers of any age group. But, given that Jesuit colleges in the early modern period served students (generally) between the ages of 10 and 20, much of what is said in the *De ratione* is particularly relevant to both high school and college educators today. And at a very reasonable price of \$40 US, this book may very well influence young teachers of Latin, Greek, and Classics in the field sooner rather than later.

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