

**Roman medical ability: how pupils perceive medicine
in the ancient world**

(197/200)

A piece of action research identifying the sources (aside from beliefs, attitudes, emotions and personal issues) that pupils believe have influenced their preconceptions of the Romans' technological capabilities as primitive. It considers the effectiveness of addressing these misconceptions using the language, civilisation and eLearning elements found in Stage 20 of the Cambridge Latin Course, focusing on the topic of medicine and to a lesser degree science.

Evidence was gathered through questionnaires delivered before and after completing study of the Stage, was supplemented by observation of a class of 19 Year 9 pupils and an interview with their class teacher, and the research took place in a selective independent girls' school in the West Midlands during the Spring term after GCSE options had been selected.

The findings indicate that the pupils' preconceptions about Roman medical ability were largely inaccurate and based on confused comparisons with other periods in history. Pupils rarely sought additional information independently and did not seem to view fiction-based media as potential sources of information for their preconceptions. Of the approaches, the Classical Civilisation eLearning elements corrected misconceptions most effectively, although pupils did not readily recognise their value, favouring instead factual elements from the textbook.