

## Is Latin Really a Language – or Just a Code to be Cracked?

As we and our beginner students struggle with declensions, conjugations, and vocabulary acquisition, it is easy to lose sight of the wood for the trees, to forget that the goal is to read, appreciate, and enjoy what Latin authors wrote. We can become so fixated on the difficulties that we forget that our students have already successfully mastered at least one language: their own! This paper seeks to elucidate ways that we can harness what our students already know about language to enable them to approach Latin as a *language*, and not as an elaborate – and probably meaningless – puzzle.

In fact, second language acquisition, no matter what language, is challenging, and we have more in common with our modern language colleagues than we sometimes think. A publication from the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) offers helpful material on research on language acquisition in their publication, [Research within Reach II: Research Guided Responses to the Concerns of Foreign Language Teachers](#). We will look at some ideas presented here, and offer an assessment of their value for the Latin classroom.