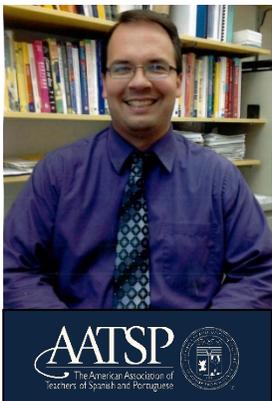


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*“Mit jeder Sprache, die du kannst, bist du ein Mensch mehr.”
‘For every language that you know, you are one more person.’*

It is hard to believe that I taught my first language class over fifteen years ago. Growing up outside of a small town in southern Idaho would not typically bring to mind a person who would be exposed to a broad range of peoples and cultures, but such was my case. The area where I was raised functioned and continues to function as a refugee center for many immigrants from all over the world. In addition, this region has a large Hispanic population that varies from Spanish immigrants from the Basque region of Spain who have been there for decades to migrant workers who come and go depending on the season of the year. I grew up going to school and playing soccer with Laotians, Romanians, Cambodians, and Hispanics from around the globe, just to name a few. This initial exposure to diversity created in me a desire to learn more about people and the world. Also, as a young man, my mother decided to return to school to finish her degree and become an elementary school teacher. Seeing her joy as a teacher inspired in me an early interest in pursuing a career in education. Living in Spain for two years during my early 20’s solidified my desire to become a language teacher, and since then I have never looked back. Addressing the quote at the top of the page, I believe in helping students learn a language so that they can avoid the pitfalls of ethnocentrism and broaden their *Weltanschauung* (‘worldview’). I am personally grateful that, due to my language studies, I am now able to communicate with almost half a billion Spanish-speakers with whom in-depth interactions previously would have been impossible. I feel that I have become another person because of this ability to relate with many people with whom I would never have been able to communicate. My teaching reflects my desire to help my students progress in their language abilities to the point where they too can have the rewarding interpersonal experiences I have had. The love that I have not only for languages but also for teaching can be seen as I interact with students both in and out of the classroom. My goal is to help students so that the Spanish-speaking world can become part of their reality.



Gregory L. Thompson received his PhD from the University of Arizona in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (SLAT). He works as an Associate Professor of Spanish Pedagogy at Brigham Young University. He also serves on the Editorial Board of *Albricias*, the high school student journal of the AATSP. His research interests include heritage language pedagogy, service-learning, assessment, and developing oral and aural proficiency. His publications have appeared in *Hispania*, *Foreign Language Annals*, and other journals. He has also published two books titled *Intersection of Service and Learning: Research and Practice in the Second Language Classroom* and *Spanish in Bilingual and Multilingual Settings around the World*.