

President's Message
March 2018
Bill VanPatten

I hope this message finds everyone well and in good health and spirits. We are all well underway in our spring academic terms, busy with our classes and busy with our own lives. I want to take this opportunity to suggest that we all stop and reflect on the 'T' of AATSP. Whether we are teachers of language, teachers of culture, teachers of literature and film, teachers of linguistics, teachers of language acquisition, or something else, what unites us all is that we are teachers. And we all strive to be good teachers. Often underpaid and overworked regardless of level we teach and where we teach, we are dedicated professionals who seek to have a meaningful influence in the lives of children, teenagers, and adults.

As part of our reflection, I want you to consider what the 'T' means in AATSP. What is a good teacher to you? What makes for good teaching? And as you think about this, I also ask you to consider what the AATSP can do to make the 'T' as meaningful to you as possible. Share with us any ideas you have about what your organization does well for the 'T', what it can do differently or what it can do better. And remember to always share your ideas about teaching with each other. Teaching ought to be a collaborative effort. We are all better when we work together.

As I write, the program for the summer meeting is being finalized. A record number of submissions have been reviewed and I am excited about the quantity and quality of papers devoted to the 'T' of AATSP. I am especially happy about the number of submissions regarding heritage language and heritage language instruction. During a time when speakers of languages other than English are demonized by some sectors of our society, it is up to us to recognize heritage languages and to encourage their maintenance. I have particular concern for Spanish, as the recent political assault on immigration has grown stronger than ever. So as part of the 'T' in AATSP, I am hoping that everyone makes the greatest effort possible to include content on Latinos and Spanish-speakers in the United States into their curricula. Although it is both important and necessary for us to focus on the cultures and speakers outside the borders of this country, nothing removes the status of "Other" and "Foreign" of what we do more than documenting the fundamental presence of Spanish and Spanish speakers in the United States, a presence that has existed since the inception of this country. As I personally reflect on the 'T' of AATSP, part of good teaching is to be an agent of change. I believe we can be part of change by ensuring that Spanish in the United States and Spanish speakers in the United States are moved from the margins to the center of what we do, from the "Foreign" to the "Natural." After all, just how foreign is Spanish to many of us?

Sending you all good thoughts for the rest of the semester, and hoping to see you in Salamanca . . .

Bill VanPatten