

Cynthia Flax

Empire State College
Saratoga Springs, NY



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AATSP 9-12 Committee Representative
Spanish TA and Instructor, Empire State College
Flax Spanish Services

Statement

I have been part of the AATSP family for a number of years and it has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. I spent four years working with SHH council, five years reinstating our Upstate New York Chapter and three years as one of your three 9-12 Representatives on the AATSP Executive Board.

I am so excited about our 9-12 Committee work at the national level. Our committee has been busy analyzing the data gathered from the 2019 AATSP Survey and starting articulation efforts among member representatives spanning levels k-16. As first steps towards communication, we will be having our first Town Hall Meeting at our AATSP National Conference in Puerto Rico in July 2020. We have established a 9-12 forum space under the Resource tab at AATSP.org for all High School teacher to communicate with each other and their representatives.

In my continual search for excellence I came across AATSP when I attended an AATSP Regional Biennial Conference in Rhode Island years ago. The enthusiasm, professionalism and information on materials and programs available through AATSP was just what I needed to reach the next level once I moved to the High School. I joined in 1999 and in 2000 started our first SHH chapter in my High School.

Our SHH students then reached out to the local Elementary schools to provide an after school Spanish immersion program; helped collect supplies for children in Guatemala; and performed cultural dances at our High School Marathon. They also published in Albricias; some of them took the NSE while others applied for SHH scholarship. All in all, these activities helped create a sense of community and pride in learning Spanish and sharing it through language and cultural events.

I discovered my passion for teaching Spanish by chance! First trained in Elementary, later in Bilingual and ESL and finally specifically in Spanish Education and working with Middle, High School, College and adult students.

I came to Upstate New York back in 1987, just in time to join the dozens of new Spanish teachers being hired at the Middle School level due to the new state of New York credit requirement for graduation. Years later, I moved to the High School where I became an adjunct professor at SUNY Albany by offering college credit for the upper level courses through their University in the High School Program. At about that same time, I taught Online Spanish courses directly for Empire State College and now I continue to work with adult learners.

Throughout my Spanish career, I always looked to create opportunities for our students, mostly in partnerships with other teachers, fostering a sense of inclusion and pride in our Spanish program. I remember while in Middle School creating work projects with a Social Studies teacher where we followed an archeological expedition and tracked the experience. We learned about the local indigenous cultures and the impact of the Spanish civilization in each community. I also remember our yearly International museum experience opened to the whole school and the community. In this amazing project, every teacher was invited to share a few of their personal artifacts collected throughout their travels. This always provided for a wonderful museum with teacher guides and with over five hundred items, for a one-day enriching experience for all our students in the building and the community at large. Needless to say, our Spanish program became front and center an integral part of our student's experience. Every year as my career blossomed, I realized how much of my identity was tied directly to my roots with the Spanish language. All by chance and with purpose, I was home! Home in my Spanish classroom with AATSP!

Biography

Ethnically Nicaraguan

AATSP 9-12 Committee Representative 2017-2019

Spanish TA and Instructor, Empire State College 2003-Present

Spanish Teacher, Flax Spanish Services, 2015-Present

Spanish Teacher Retired, South Glens Falls Senior High School 1987-2015

Education:

M.A. Spanish, State University at Albany

B.A. Elementary Education, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida.

Special Awards and Distinctions:

1990 New York State Multicultural Education Award Recipient. Teacher Summer Studies, Salamanca, Spain

1990 and 1995 Presenter at the Annual Conference of New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers. Kamisha Lake, N.Y.

1993 Regional Conference Co-coordinator. New York State Foreign Association of Foreign Language Teachers.

1994-1995 President of the Capital Organization of Language Teachers for the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers

1995 The National Endowment for the Humanities Project Pluma Award recipient. The Institute for Urban and Minority Education. Teachers College, Columbia University. Summer at Columbia University and in Mexico

2003-2019 Spanish Adjunct Professor, Center for Distance Learning, Empire State College
2000 to 2015 Spanish Adjunct Professor, University in the High School Program at the State University of New York at Albany
2010-2014 Regional Director for Zone 1 for Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica, organization part of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.
2013-2015 LOTE Instructional Teacher Leader, South Glens Falls Central Schools.
2015- 2016 President of the Upstate New York Chapter of American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP).
2017-2019 AATSP 9-12 Representative, AATSP Executive Board