

*Laura Sánchez. President's Message: January 2010*

In this, my first message, I would like to thank you all for your vote of confidence in electing me as President of this prestigious organization. With humility and gratitude I begin my service in this position. I am indebted to AATSP for enriching my teaching experience throughout the years and allowing me to meet so many of you inspiring, wonderful teachers.

We, the members of AATSP come from different backgrounds and experiences- we are a very richly diverse group with a common love: learning and teaching a Foreign Language. We are laborers of love who are driven to instill in our students a love for the foreign language and culture we enjoy.

Speaking two or more languages allows us to communicate with a global community more easily. And as an added bonus we are gifted with friendships, conversations, and career opportunities that we might not otherwise have. In this respect we, the foreign language teachers, are an invaluable commodity to our society, not only because we ourselves speak more than one language but because we strive to teach others to do the same. We ourselves can attest that the knowledge of a foreign language adds a priceless dimension to an individual's life.

As teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, we enjoy the rewards of watching students double their potential as communicators in today's world. Every day some of us will be at the board, drawing a magnifying glass to encourage students in their quest as "detectives" for clues into the use of the subjunctive with conjunctions. Others will be passionately engaging students in the discussion of la cordera's role- the cow as the surrogate mother to Rosa and Pinín- in Leopoldo Alas's *"Adiós Cordera"*. In either case, whether we are teaching grammar or literature, we are planting seeds in our students.

Some of our students immediately flourish in the language they are learning and they use it to help their communities. The tree that has blossomed from daily work of conjugations and literary analysis may be immediately apparent for some students but, not for others. As Ella Wheeler Wilcox said: *"With every deed you are sowing a seed, though the harvest you may not see"*. However, when we least expect, students who did not seem to have an affinity for learning a foreign language, will visit us years later to tell us that they decided to major in Spanish in college. Sometimes, even a decade later, we receive letters from students or parents announcing that the students now live in a Spanish-speaking country and have immersed themselves in a new culture, thanks to the influence we had on them.



As we begin this new decade, I invite you all to be active participants of AATSP in order to keep our organization strong, solid and vibrant. As members of AATSP, let's continue instilling in our students the love for a Foreign Language, as a contribution to a world that needs multilingual individuals to connect the four corners of the world.

Best wishes to you all in the New Year. ¡Hasta la próxima!