

- **Meet a Teacher: Thomas Powers** By [Jay Oza](#)
- February 29, 2012 Thomas is a Spanish teacher at Andover High School.



Credit Thomas Powers

Meet a Teacher is a column that features a teacher that teaches right here in Andover. Today we're featuring **Thomas Powers**, a teacher at Andover High School.

Where do you teach and how long have you taught there?

I currently teach Spanish at [Andover High School](#). I have been here since October, 2002.

Briefly describe your education and past experience.

I am a graduate of the [Andover Public Schools](#), K-12, in 1983. I graduated from [Colgate University](#) in 1987 with a degree in Russian Studies and Political Science. I spent two semesters in Russia during the 1980's. I moved to Mexico City in 1988 and spent 13 of the next 15 years teaching social studies first in the American School, and later at Greengates School, the British International School.

I have a Master's in International Education from [Endicott College](#) (2001) and a Master of Arts degree in Spanish from [Middlebury College](#) (2008). I also taught Spanish at [Brookline High School](#) from 1991-1993.

What is the best part about teaching in Andover?

The best parts about teaching in Andover are the students and the teachers. The students are generally enthusiastic, curious and eager to learn. The teachers are creative, knowledgeable and professional in their tasks. This has been a great place to learn and to work. The economic climate has had a profound impact on the classroom as class sizes have increased and teaching staff has been reduced. I remain optimistic that these circumstances will improve.

Are there any certain teaching strategies or procedures you like to employ in the classroom?

As a life-long language learner, I try to offer native speaker opportunities in the classroom. I speak Spanish exclusively, we listen to music daily, we read the popular media and we watch films in the target language. What is more, I prescribe an hour of immersion at home: 30 minutes of television in Spanish, 20 minutes of reading online, and listening to a song a day for a week, while adding a new song each week. All of this is what native speakers do, so we should, too!

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I was inspired by many people to become a teacher. My mother is a retired college professor, while my father was Director of Administration at [Harvard University](#). Dr. William Kolbe, my Spanish teacher at Andover was a huge inspiration, as was former guidance counselor Mike Wartman. My educational experience was so wonderful in Andover that I would have to credit all of my teachers for inspiring me to give back what was so freely given to me!

