

2021 SWCOLT
REGIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE



Heather Sweetser
2021 Teacher of the Year
NEW MEXICO

The University of New Mexico's Lecturer of the Year for 2019-2020, Heather Sweetser received her B.A. in Arabic, International Studies, and Islamic Studies at Ohio State in 2008 and her M.A. in Arabic at Ohio State in 2012. Originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, she joined the Army in 1998 and learned Arabic at DLI, becoming an Arabic interpreter. Experiences with languages in the U.S. Government inspired her to become a language instructor focusing on intercultural competence as a core part of language fluency. Currently Heather teaches beginning through advanced Arabic at UNM, as well as courses on The Arabian Nights and Movies of the Middle East. She is also the Lead Instructor for the federally funded summer STARTALK program in Albuquerque, NM, teaching Arabic to middle and high school students. Heather has led multiple presentations and workshops on language teaching and learning, including a 3-day workshop about teaching languages online for Albuquerque Academy. One of the co-creators of the wecanlearnarabic.com website, Heather's approaches to integrating culture with language leads students towards quick, meaningful gains in Arabic. She is currently a member of AATA, MESA, and ACTFL.