

SPEAK & THE WORLD WILL UNDERSTAND



World Language Faculty

Back Row: Tom Evison, Teri Andrés, Cary Powers, Florent Agier, Valerie Díaz Leroy
Seated: Sue Samuel, Melanie Jarvis, World Languages Chair Jackie Carnes, Julie Pfursich, Kam O'Horo
Kneeling: Bethsabé Bockman-Pedersen, Kris Grant, Carmen Pollack

Listen closely
as you walk through campus,
and you'll hear three-year-olds
and college-bound seniors
brushing up on the skills that
will let them take their place
on a world stage –
thanks to language teachers
who share a passion for
broadening students' horizons
in a fun and relevant way.

TOM EVISON

Tom Evison, Upper Division Latin teacher and varsity girls head basketball coach, was a sports-loving kid who envisioned a career as a news anchor on Sports Center. He didn't picture himself as a Latin teacher who actually suggests that students call him Caesar. But after taking Latin at the University of Florida, he switched his major from sports journalism and decided to become "a full-on classicist."

The ideal job presented itself soon after he finished graduate school at Tulane.

"I was looking for a way to combine both of my passions and teach Latin while coaching basketball. I lucked out when Shorecrest had an opening for both."

In Latin 1, 2 and 3, Evison puts a focus on grammar that hones students' writing ability, a skill that benefits them in all areas.

"In other languages, you learn how to speak it. With Latin, you dissect it and learn the ins and outs of grammar, and why it is the way it is. It makes your writing so much better."

As students progress, Evison models his approach on his own teachers who used humor and made the study of Latin relevant to students' lives.

"You have to make it interesting and current. My high school teacher taught me that even with a 'dead language,' it's possible to infuse it with current events. The kids start to see that 90% of things started with the Romans and the Greeks, and every ancient drama has been recycled. They start to understand the mythologies and the political views and start to think out of the box."



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

BY MARY ELLEN COLLINS



He cites the story of Aeneas and Dido, in which Aeneas leaves Dido because Mercury tells him he needs to fulfill the journey he was on before meeting and falling in love with her.

"I ask them to write 3-4 pages on whether Aeneas was a good boyfriend. They read it in Latin, and analyze and write it in English. It's really rewarding for me to take chunks of famous epics and turn them into living, breathing stories that students can think about and relate to."

Evison appreciates the opportunity to lay a foundation that might prompt other would-be classicists to follow in his footsteps.

"By the time they get to Latin 4 and AP, they're standing up and walking and I'm happy to get them ready for college. I've had three kids graduate from AP, and I think one if not two of them are planning to take Latin in college – which would warm Caesar's (aka Mr. Evison's) heart."



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KAM O'HORO

Kam planned to pursue a business career incorporating her interest in international relations or diplomacy. Instead, she's found fulfillment in exploring the world with students in French, AP Human Geography and Global Perspectives through International Film.

Although she "caught the teaching bug" as a teaching assistant at Bowling Green State University, she stuck with her initial plan and worked for a French travel insurance company in Washington D.C. after graduate school.

"The routine life in a cubicle just wasn't for me," she says. "My husband-to-be was at Ohio State, and I decided it was a good time to do the coursework I needed to be a teacher." She then taught French at Kent State University, a public high school, and an Ohio boarding school before moving to Clearwater, where she taught for a year in Tarpon Springs before coming to Shorecrest.

O'Horo's Upper Division students benefit from Shorecrest's hands-on approach to language education. They communicate with students at Shorecrest's sister school in France via email, Skype and Facebook; and they work with Worldwide Schools, an organization through which Peace Corps volunteers link students together. This year, they'll connect with French-speaking students in Senegal.

"Teaching differs because now we focus on speaking, and when I was in high school it was reading and writing. Now, by the time students get to AP, they're very proficient speakers. We watch the news. We focus more on real life situations. Everything is authentic – it's all real life to help students learn."

O'Horo is also involved with a new effort in which faculty mentors will guide sophomores and juniors who have been chosen to work toward a Global Studies endorsement on their diploma. And in her spare time, she is a consultant to the College Board and offers workshops for AP French teachers. She says she has no regrets about not following her initial career plan.

"The students are so fresh and curious, and among my colleagues – nothing's stale. Everyone's always learning. At the job in DC, I didn't have an opportunity to better myself professionally. Here, I'm always reading, constantly learning. And especially with the opportunities the administration has given me to teach a Global Perspective through International Film and AP Human Geography, I'm doing what I wanted to do. I love going to work. And when people ask me why I want to commute from Clearwater, I say, "I'd rather commute 40 minutes to a place I love than have a 5-minute commute to a place I don't want to be."

BETHSABÉ BOCKMAN-PEDERSEN

"I put my parenting skills and creativity to work teaching my native language" says Bethsabé Bockman-Pedersen, an integral part of Lower Division language education for 13 years.

"My children were at Shorecrest and I volunteered a lot and I was told they needed a Spanish teacher for kindergarten and first grade," she explains. "I was just going to be there for a year until they found someone."

"They didn't have a lot of teaching tools back then. I would make my own signs and flash cards and bring Spanish music and a little Fisher Price cassette player from home," she says laughing. "I just found ways to engage the kids since it was about 'Having fun with Spanish.' I have graduates who say they remember the crazy little poems and songs I taught them."

She returned every year for six years before taking a break to focus on her residential and commercial lighting design business. When the K-2nd grade teacher Sandra Leon-Cone moved to Nevada late in July 2008, Shorecrest asked Señora Bockman-Pedersen if she could come back and teach. She will be starting her 4th year back as the school adjusts the language education curriculum to focus on conversational Spanish. Kindergarten students are now going to learn Spanish through music (see below); and third and fourth graders will have Spanish three times a week instead of two.

Even the youngest students are exposed to the globalization of society daily, and they don't question the importance of knowing how to speak another language.

"They see signs in Spanish in Tampa. They go to Disney World and hear it there. They know they need to be able



to communicate with other people," Bockman-Pedersen explains. "Sometimes 3rd grade teacher Mrs. LaDuke comes into my classroom and speaks to me in Italian, while I speak to her in Spanish, then we try to figure what we are each saying. We try to show the kids the similarities in the languages, and the fact that we can still communicate with little understanding of the language."

Bockman-Pedersen brings Spanish to life for young students with fun and laughter. "This would not be possible without the support of parents, and my co-workers, who every day help me make learning Spanish an integral part of the student's daily routine" she says.

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VALERIE DIÁZ LEROY

The Sound of Music

Music class in kindergarten will sound a little different this year, as Valerie Díaz Leroy implements a new model of using "the universal language" to teach Spanish.

"When Lisa Bianco came to me and told me about a Spanish through Music program that worked well in New York City, my eyes lit up and I thought, 'This is great!'" says Díaz Leroy, who has taught music at Shorecrest for ten years. Using the arts to teach language makes perfect sense to her, as she already combines visual arts with music education through activities like having students make album covers to go along

with songs they've written.

"Five-year-olds learn through play, and learn through doing. I get them comfortable by doing lots of singing, movement, and storytelling, and now I will teach the same concepts with more of a focus on Spanish language and stories from Latin America and Spain."

The multi-talented Díaz Leroy sings and plays the piano and the guitar, and just learned how to play the banjo in a summer workshop. "Every year I introduce something new, and it's nice for the students to see that learning doesn't have to stop once you're the teacher."

Although the kindergarten music curriculum won't change, the new international aspect promises to be fun for the teacher, as well as the students.

"I'm really excited to do something new and embrace the Latina side of me that I don't always express through teaching," says Díaz Leroy. "I tell the kids that music is another language – they pick it up easily if they're enjoying it. Music is repetitive – you find a favorite song and sing it over and over again. To add new Spanish vocabulary through music is going to seem very natural to them."

