

Susan Christensen – Middle School Spanish

Watching Susan Christensen with students, it's clear she's a natural. "It's so fun!" she says of teaching. "I am passionate about learning and I think that passion is contagious, particularly here at Collegiate where the students are excited and motivated to learn. I love to be creative and have students be creative."

How about students acting out three well-known fairy tales entirely in Spanish for the whole school? Hearing "The Three Little Pigs" or "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" in Spanish is not only educational but hilarious!

Yet another lesson takes advantage of Middle School students' fascination with selfies. Students take selfies expressing 16 different emotions. Their classmates identify which is which, in Spanish. It's a lesson in foreign language, but also in emotional intelligence.



Susan's path to teaching was not a straight one. She earned a degree in Spanish from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, with minors in gerontology and ESL (English as a Second Language). From there, she traveled to Peru to teach adults and children. She also spent time in Argentina and the Dominican Republic. The result of two years of total immersion is fluency in Spanish, but "with my own dialect," she laughs. Susan recently completed her master's degree in education at Emporia State University.

She loves teaching Middle School students because "every day is different," she says. "They have energy, they are passionate about learning, they expect a lot of themselves and they want to do a good job. It's really fun!"

Beyond that, Susan explains, "Spanish exposes students to another culture. They learn there are other ways of doing things. They get excited, want to learn more, study outside of class, make friends who speak Spanish. It helps them feel more connected, not so ethnocentric, like we're all one global village." If they continue to study foreign language in high school or college, even if they switch to another language, "I consider it a victory," Susan declares, "because thanks to what they've learned here, they have skills that will make it easier for them to learn another language."