

## **Elian Mota -- Middle School Language Arts**

We are happy to announce that Elian Mota is joining the faculty to teach Middle School language arts. Elian just completed his master's degree in creative writing and poetry translation at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. He holds a bachelor's degree in English from Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey.

During his graduate studies at the U of A, Elian taught undergraduate classes in the Department of Rhetoric and Composition. He was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Fellowship from the graduate school, the Lily Peter Fellowship Award in Translation (poetry) and the Walton Family Fellowship Award in Translation (poetry).

Elian is unabashed in his enthusiasm for language. "The most important thing I have to offer the students of Topeka Collegiate is my all-consuming love of and excitement over language," he says. "Even with my years of study of grammar and style, rhetoric, ethnography, creative writing, and literary translation, I still get worked up about how we as a species have come so far largely because of our ability to communicate our thoughts, ideas, and experiences by coordinating the collisions of meat and bones and air inside our skulls. I get even more worked up about how we've somehow managed to devise a whole system of little squiggles to represent those collisions, allowing them to travel across oceans, over mountains, and through time itself. It is through this excitement that I will excite your children about the wondrous skills they already possess, and in turn help them hone those skills and become more effective writers and well-rounded world citizens. I'm so happy and honored to have been given the opportunity to do so."

Elian is a citizen of the world who brings an expansive breadth of knowledge and experience to TCS. He is a bilingual, non-native English speaker who was born in the Dominican Republic, moved with his family to New York, then lived in Spain and New Jersey before heading to Arkansas for college. He is fluent in Spanish, has what he calls a reading knowledge of Portuguese (sufficient to translate poetry), knows Italian and has some knowledge of German.