



CAMPERDOWN CONNECTION

FEBRUARY 2016

Teaching Grammar **SDRAWK CAB**

BACKWARDS

Try explaining a “participle” to an 11 year-old dyslexic. The subsequent blank stare means the child not only fails to grasp the definition, but will completely fail in attempts to write or identify one. Camperdown Academy Dean of Academics, Stephen Cook, was not satisfied with blank stares. He revamped middle school ELA classes to reduce the fear of writing by recognizing that dyslexics learn grammar best in reverse order. It’s a verbalize first, label later sort of approach. “A key part of this curriculum is the concept of mastering **how** to use language before you define **what** part of grammar you are using” says Cook.

Equally important? Making writing fun. Classmates are encouraged to practice by first verbalizing sentences in a stress-free environment until a new pattern is grasped, often leading to lots of laughter and fun. Cook may offer up to the class: “Swimming awkwardly, John...” and then ask students to complete the sentence. The more silly the sentence, the more memorable the pattern. Only after students are comfortable with the participle, subject/verb pattern, does Cook even introduce the term participle.

Once students grasp a pattern, they have to utilize it in every subsequent writing assignment they produce.



It’s a building blocks program. “You’re taking things students have learned and adding one new challenge weekly. Some students are ready for a new challenge each week, some may take several weeks to master a concept. The pace is individualized,” says Cook. Even the grading allows students to learn without discouragement. Rather than grading a composition on the quality of a single written piece developed over the course of a month, students receive credit for correctly using the mastered grammatical concept within the context of weekly creative writing assignments. This

new curriculum complements the Orton-Gillingham approach which emphasizes lots of review with concepts introduced in a systematic and sequential manner.

Teachers report drastic differences in the quality of writing and parents are taking note also. As one M Grouper remarked recently, “Now when I go to ELA class I am excited to be there!” Cook is pleased with the results so far. “Sometimes people confuse dyslexia with ‘reading backwards,’ but this is one time when approaching a challenge backwards actually leads to more competency, creativity, and confidence.”

STUDENT SUCCESS



MANDY UPTON
Mandy is a creative, upbeat, and thoughtful young lady. She has excelled in expanded paragraph writing this year. She has mastered brainstorming and outlining in preparation for writing. She writes complete detailed sentences that include adjectives and adverbs. Also, she has been a supportive and helpful tutorial partner!

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ALUMNI PRIDE

🍏 SAVANNA LACHICA, '10

Savanna stopped by the school recently to say hello! She is currently studying marketing at Spartanburg Community College.

🍏 TREY ATCHISON, '95

Trey is a Spartanburg Methodist graduate who is employed as a Property Manager for Atchison Transportation. He visited with teacher Jimmi-Ann Muse recently, who reminded him about the time that he asked to get a doughnut from the teachers lounge. She told him that when he came to her with a piece of paper saying he had graduated from college that he could have doughnuts with the teachers. She reminded him that he came running into her room a few minutes later waving a piece of paper on which he had dutifully written: "I graduated from college." Yes, he got to eat a doughnut!

🍏 GIVENS STEWART, '89

Givens graduated from Belmont Abbey having studied Sociology and English. He is a principal partner at commercial real estate firm, Colliers International.

Note from Mr. Dan



Dear Friends,

I had the pleasure of having lunch a few weeks ago with several Camperdown alum who attended here in the late eighties and early nineties. It was really encouraging to hear about the success they are experiencing and how they relate that back to their time spent at Camperdown. Every single one of them had a fond memory of a teacher who took extra time with them; someone who made a difference in the paths they pursued or how they chose to view opportunities

and obstacles. I firmly believe that it is the student-teacher relationship that is shaping our current generation as well.

It's a good feeling to walk through the hallway here and see teachers engaged not only in the classroom, but also the one-on-one that takes place at recess, before school, and even homework help on the phone at night!

Many of you have been active in contacting your legislators to let them know how the Educational



Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) has impacted your child. I know there are many families who would not be with us at Camperdown were it not for Scholarship Funding Organizations like Palmetto Kids First. Receiving appropriate help for a child's dyslexia should not be a financial burden for families, and I am grateful that the ECENC Proviso has helped. I am fortunate to have a seat on the ECENC Advisory Committee, which is charged with playing a liaison role between various interested groups. I want to let you know that we are actively advocating for a change in wording that would raise the cap on available funding to 25 million dollars and change the timeline so that funds are available prior to the start of a school year. If you have any questions about the ECENC, I'd be happy to talk with you.

Spotlight on Staff: Heidi Bishop

Heidi is in her 25th year of teaching at Camperdown and her 30th year of teaching and working with dyslexics. She is currently the president of the South Carolina Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. Heidi is very active in promoting dyslexia awareness at the state and national levels and has served on task forces and advisory groups as a result of her knowledge and expertise. Fun fact! Heidi's husband of 23 years, Tim, actually proposed to her in the front lobby of Camperdown!





UPCOMING EVENTS

A Peek Inside

Mrs. Sara Fisher's C Group is learning about the 50 states. As a class, the students research the state bird, state nickname, state flower, and even find a recipe for a popular state food. When they have finished researching each state, the class works together to create a collage that represents all that they have learned.

Potlatch began many years ago as a way to highlight the special qualities of each member of the Camperdown family. The idea of a Potlatch was borrowed from the Native Americans of the Northwest. The process utilizes the skills associated with observation, creativity, organization,

written expression, and oral presentation. Everyone draws a student name from a hat and then secretly observes their partner in order to create some form of written expression about them. This can take the form of a name poem, story, bio-poem, cinquain, or sensory poem. At the Potlatch ceremony, the student body gathers together in the big room and one-by-one each person presents their written gift to their secret potlatch partner.



Math class plus candy equals a big donation to troops overseas! AM, Star, and D Group math students collected leftover Halloween candy and turned it into a lesson on sorting, measuring, and weighing. The students then boxed up all of the math lesson goodies to ship them overseas in support of Operation Gratitude, an organization that supplies service men and women with care packages. The end result netted 72

pounds of chocolate and 61 pounds of non-chocolate candy! The students also collected toothbrushes and toothpaste to add to the shipment as well as handwritten thank you cards.



LEARNING FAIR

Y Group students become teachers for a day and share their personal learning style through interactive lessons with the younger students.



ANNUAL AUCTION

It's Tinseltown, Tunes, and Top Hats for the annual auction this year. Join us at the Poinsett Club to celebrate Camperdown's 30th birthday.



TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

We love our Camperdown teachers! Please take a moment to tell them thank you for all they do.

For all events, please visit www.camperdown.org for more information

Because of You...

Some student's love numbers, some love words... so the math department is combining the best of both with a new program called Math Reads. Your support of the student-led "Have A Ball" fundraiser raised almost \$11,000 which was made available in the form of mini-grants to teachers who had classroom or curriculum needs. The math department was granted a portion of that funding to purchase 25 different sets of stories that are being used to supplement the math curriculum. Storybooks are a fun way to kick-off the introduction of a new math concept or wrap-up a unit of learning. Each book comes with a hands-on lesson that activates the language triangle of auditory, visual, and tactile-kinesthetic learning. In each book, a math concept translates to real world application through the storyline. When children hear a story that mentions going to the grocery store and weighing produce, it reinforces the idea that what they are learning in math is necessary and useful.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW? *We love to brag about former students, but we have lost track of some!*
If you can help, please contact Kate Franch at kfranch@camperdown.org or 864-244-8899.

Ben Eastman
Kim Elmore
Nathan Forrester
Elliot Fowler-Farr

Robert Gilchrist
Ian Goodloe
Will Hammond
Trevor Hudson

Lee Johnson
Justin Kuharsky
Joshua Lamunyon
David Lefferty

Will Leineweber
Timothy Lilley
Joel Longenecker
John Paul Macaluso

Robert McDannald
Davis McDuffie
Heather McKenzie Morgan
Keith McNamara

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honor of Neill Bickerstaff

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