

BEFORE RECORDING:

1. KC: Hi Mr. Woodward, thank you so much for doing this, I truly appreciate it. Before I begin recording, do I have your permission to record this interview and upload it to the UD Digital Commons to be seen by other UD students and by the staff of the University of Dallas.
2. TW: Yes, that's fine
3. KC: Would you like any names or information said in this interview to be redacted.
4. TW: No, I think I'll just try not to say any students' names.
5. KC: Great, so I am going to go ahead and start recording.

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1. So, with this interview I just know about you your education experience like where you went to school and talk about how you ended up at Cristo Rey
 2. like going through all your experience and then how you ended up at Cristo Rey teaching history. Um I asked my brother; I was like who is somebody super interesting and that students just love because high
 3. school is such a difficult age I think I'm an elementary school teacher, so you know high school I'm scared of high schoolers so teaching high school students you know I see my brother teaching high school students and it's a difficult age to work with so when I asked him i was like do you know anybody who just the students love like i like history you know I'm not super interested about it i don't know so much about teaching it so like is there a history teacher that student just love and Bryan was like Woodward Timothy Woodward i was like all right. Okay so um to begin would you like to introduce yourself.
 4. TW: Sure uh my name is Tim Woodward I work at Cristo Rey Dallas uh I'm part of the founding teachers I'm one of the founding teachers from Cristo Rey Dallas, so i think this is my sixth or seventh year there um i teach AP U.S. history this year and at Cristo Rey. I've also taught 9th grade literature 10th grade
 5. literature and 11th grade literature as well.
 6. KC: wow so how many years have we been teaching ap us history
 7. TW: um this is my fourth year
 8. KC: okay wow so um so you started as a uh a literature teacher and then moved to uh history
 9. TW: yes so i was part of the founding team where we only had a ninth grade class and so i taught uh yeah ninth grade literature and then i moved up with the same group of kids to tenth grade literature taught them again and then i moved up again and taught them in both uh 11th grade literature and ap us history so i taught some students four different times at Cristo Rey.
 10. KC: oh my gosh that must have been really fun
 11. TW: yeah having the same students over and over again yes
 12. KC: okay um so i just i you know i like when i get to know people i like to know how they ended up where they are and so to do that we kind of have to start at the very beginning so would you like to talk about like your elementary school experience like anything about that

13. TW: sure um yeah I i always loved school i was always pretty good at school um and so i remember always having positive experiences in the classroom um i mean i can think of specific teachers that i had like in fifth grade or in eighth grade that really helped me discover who i was and helped me discover what my strengths were and so i mean i think about them all the time when i'm in the classroom now of like am i doing what they did am I am i helping kids feel safe and welcome and loved like they made me feel and so i i really i really do think about them a lot when i am teaching in the classroom
14. KC: so your elementary school experience had like a really positive influence on you
15. TW: absolutely yes i was i was really lucky um i have two brothers and we're all pretty close in age and so it was always fun going to school with them and like being able to see them in the hallway and getting to know all of their friends and um yeah so it was fun having just like yeah knowing a lot of people in the school from my brothers as well
16. KC: awesome how how long ago is that no if you don't mind me asking
17. TW: um let's see i'm 32 this is my 10th year of being a teacher and so it was in the 90s man
18. KC: so definitely very different than what elementary schools are like
19. TW: absolutely absolutely
20. KC: wow okay i mean i was born in 99 so i couldn't i didn't grow up in the 90s um but you know my i listened to my brother you know um his i mean he was born in 93 so he gives a little different perspective um what kind of environment was your elementary school in did you did you grow up here or did you grow up
21. TW: no i grew up in kansas um let's see it was a public school k through five um and then the middle
22. school was another building next door um yeah i mean it was like at the end of our street and so my friends and my brothers and I would all walk to school and walk home every day um i don't know the community i i really felt like our teachers were good teachers i really felt like i had a good education i remember yeah like knowing i was being taught well most of the time um yeah and like looking back I definitely know that i was taught well and and that my teachers were working really really hard
23. KC: so growing up in kansas was it was like is it a big city or was it smaller or um
24. TW: it was a big city yeah, it's like a suburb of kansas city um and so yeah a nice school um yeah we were lucky that our school had lots of resources and yeah lots of open space to go and play outside and do recess and all of that
25. KC: do you remember um like the diversity of your school or
26. TW: It's a predominantly white school most of the staff was white too
27. KC: okay so then um from you you graduated your elementary school um so then middle school your middle school experience how was that
28. TW: it was it was good as well, um yeah i went to a public middle school um i don't know i mean i think that's really where i found like a teacher that i really connected with someone who challenged me in the classroom who pushed me to not be comfortable like i i always got pretty

good grades and so it was interesting when she would yeah give me a different assignment or or i don't know have me do something

29. extra or on or read something outside of class and then talk with her about it I always liked

30. that and i liked that she was giving me attention that that felt good as well

31. KC: so middle school students are like discovering their personalities you know they're developing their attitudes unfortunately what what kind of student were you so you were a good student but were you like did you have a group that you were with like cliques or anything um

32. TW: let's see i always my friends and I always said that like we were rebels with good grades which i guess like doesn't it we were rebellious in our minds and so like we would play around and be

33. funny and we would joke around a lot with the teachers and the teachers always

34. put up with our crap that we gave them because they knew we're the ones raising our hands we're

35. the ones participating we have our homework done and so they never were really like you need to be paying attention like no they would clown clown along with us um yeah which was fun i mean that yeah

36. that's really what i remember from like middle school in high school too is that yeah i i did the work to back up playing around every once in a while,

37. KC: and in middle school you know uh their kids are going to get to sports or anything were you in

38. extracurriculars or anything in middle school in elementary school

39. TW: not really not especially no i mean I would i went on like runs uh in my neighborhood after school when i was in middle school and then joined the cross country team when i was in high school

40. KC: oh wow yeah so I Bryan um you know he went to a public middle school as well and he would say

41. i care i don't care about school but I still get good grades so it's just it's so weird to me how I guess

42. it's a maybe it's a boy thing but we're just like we care about school but not enough to look so we can look

43. cool

44. TW: yeah no i definitely cared uh yeah i mean i don't know yeah i did my homework i studied all the time i

45. i loved to read i had lots of teachers that helped foster uh my love for reading uh and writing too and so i was yeah i definitely yeah i cared about school for sure for sure

46. KC: so were you going to school with the same students that um were in your elementary school like did you guys just go p

47. TW: pretty much yeah it was it's a big um it's a big elementary school and it's a big middle school and so um seeing some of the schools that like my students come from now it always makes me think like oh they think their class of like 40 kids is big or something and it's like i had like 300 or 300 maybe when i was in middle school um yeah so it was fairly big i think

48. KC: okay so now let's you know high school is i feel like it's a very integral part of who we become as he

49. as people so what was your high school experience like

50. TW: so when i going from eighth grade to ninth grade i went to a private catholic high school the one that my older brother went to and so that's uh yeah after going to school with some with many kids from k to eight only a handful of us went to this catholic school um and so that it was tough at first like to kind of find my footing and find my group of friends um it was nice because my older brother was at the school so i got to see him and hear his stories and kind of know how to navigate the school uh and then i also joined cross country and so that's really where i met a lot of my first friends in high school um and then
51. After yeah like the first few months of of high school that's really where i felt more comfortable and started joining more activities doing more things within the school
52. KC: so you transitioned to a cap like from a public to a catholic school and you know i had that same transition but back in middle school so it's it's a huge transition yeah so did you continue did you
53. graduate from that catholic high school as well
54. TW: yes uh-huh
55. KC: okay so is your is your family catholic or was there a
56. reason for transitioning
57. TW: yeah my family's catholic uh and my older brother went there too and so i don't i don't even really
58. remember having a choice um i mean i'm sure i could have chosen but i don't remember being a discussion really of like where do you want to go yeah as as most students yeah yeah absolutely and just like the students i teach for sure yeah
59. KC: so um so it was kind of just this this next step like natural next step for your parents to put you in a catholic school or was there was there like another reason like for example the public schools the high school public schools that were there
60. TW: uh the public schools in our area are great and lots of my friends went there um and had great experiences there um i think part of it was just a catholic education maybe a slightly smaller um school than the than the public high school that i would have gone to
61. KC: okay and so you did say that you found really more of like your friends and you were able to participate more being in a catholic school
62. TW: yes
63. KC: how how was your graduating class like how much was in your graduating class
64. TW: uh maybe like 300. O
65. KC: okay so that's not that small
66. TW: yeah i don't know yeah it it was slightly smaller than what the high school would have been than the
67. Public
68. KC: yeah you know i went to um catholic high school and my brother went to public high school so
69. it was really interesting like comparing our experiences so i'm sure you could you compared your experiences to your friends who were still going to public schools
70. TW: yeah

71. KC: um how do you feel about your education at a catholic school um for the most part
72. TW: I i really liked it um i think my school had a habit of hiring religion teachers that like weren't necessarily experts in their content and so i remember thinking like wow these classes are remind me of like the ccd classes that i went to growing up where it was just like i don't know color this picture of jesus
73. or whatever and so i don't know if i got necessarily the best catholic catholic education at this high school
74. um but besides that i i loved it i mean it was challenging we didn't have any ap classes at my high school and so you could take honors classes and so I took every honors class that I possibly could have um
75. yeah yeah i i feel like i had a wonderful education got a wonderful education there
76. KC: so um if you remember what was like the curriculum like at your school so did you because you said you had religion teachers like did you have like at Cristo Rey we have the theology teachers like was it like specifically theology classes that were offered to the students
77. TW: um yes everyone takes the same ones i feel like our school called them religion maybe we called it theology i don't I don't remember what we called it because it was like the easiest class possible as well
78. um yeah so those weren't especially rigorous
79. and then they they didn't offer like an honors religion or anything and so you're with kids from all you're with all kinds of kids and so the class can't get i don't know too advanced um yeah yeah so i remember not really enjoying those classes very much i liked my history classes i liked my English classes i loved my english classes for the most part um and and was fine with math and science but those just aren't my
80. favorite subjects
81. KC: do you remember um the diversity at your high school
82. TW: yeah it was slightly more diverse than my middle school um i mean it's probably like 80 percent white and then 20 to latino i would say
83. KC: wow that's you know um when i first started going into catholic schools it was very rare like for latinos to go to catholic school because most didn't think that it was um like possible so now like looking at Cristo Rey the population there it's like it's something that's so possible so it's really interesting so you went to high school in what years
84. TW: when did i go 2004 to 2007 maybe
85. KC: okay wow having a good amount of latinos there is something honestly it's very rare especially at that time
86. TW: yeah
87. KC: um so you graduated your high School um were you like graduated with like an
88. honor student or
89. TW: um yeah i i graduated with a high gpa our school didn't like rank uh her rank wasn't public i guess which was nice um but but i i know I was towards the top of my class for sure
90. KC: so um looking at your high school like curriculum were you guy were you guys able to choose any of the classes you took or you all years high school like you had to like you were required to take these
91. certain courses there was there was a lot of choice especially as you got older

92. TW: um yeah well like so you could choose for many classes do you want honors or college prep i guess um yeah we did like i said we didn't have ap classes at my high school um i don't know if they have them there now even i'm not sure and then you there were lots of electives i think it was like required
93. that you took electives so that was always a fun option um i mean pe class was really fun I remember liking that a lot uh yeah so lots of different choices in language you got to choose different language requirements and things like that
94. KC: uh what language did you choose
95. TW: i did latin my freshman year and then spanish the next three years
96. KC: so would you would you say you're you can speak spanish now
97. TW: yes i i mean i'm i'm like conversational i'm i'm definitely not fluent but i'm conversational
98. KC: awesome awesome does that help you any at all with your students that you have at Cristo Rey
99. TW: yes it helps a lot and so i took it in college and then i also studied abroad in santiago chile when i was uh i went to notre dame when i was in notre dame um and so yeah i've held conferences completely in spanish it's nice when uh like a student isn't there to translate for me uh i know enough where if a student translates for me to their parent i know i can tell is the student saying what I want them to say and are they saying the truth um and and it's nice too that like I mean lots of students have told me that that they don't uh talk behind my back in spanish or like say curse words or bad things in Spanish because they know that i know so i I have that working for me wow so that was definitely helpful
100. KC: um okay so you graduated high school and did you go straight to university or notre dame or
101. TW: yes
102. KC: okay that's very impressive so tell me Huh what made you choose go to notre dame
103. TW: um both my parents went to notre dame which uh yeah so it's something that i've known about since i was a little kid and we always visited once a year to go to a football game and so i remember it's like a long trip from Kansas sometimes we drove sometimes we flew we would always be on the go we would always be seeing uh like my parents friends so i didn't know super well um and then the campus was always packed like to the gills with with people with football um and so I remember like not especially enjoying those trips they were fine and they were fun with my family but like i don't know i didn't need them in my life and so i finally visited notre dame uh on a non-football weekend when i was a senior in high school maybe a junior senior in high school and i remember really liking it and how much they talked about family and community um and so then it was it was at that moment where i was like okay i can picture myself here my parents never pressured me to go there I especially i remember them saying like don't feel like you have to go there or anything like that um so it was nice not to have pressure from them they they and they supported me wherever i wanted to go they took me on lots of college visits which was really fun i liked those
104. KC: so you didn't feel like growing up around that university influenced your decision it was kind of you you were able to make that decision for your own
105. TW: right i had to enter into it on my own for sure the idea was there for sure but uh i had to choose it and i'm glad my parents gave me the space where i could do that

106. KC: so freshmen at college did you have an idea of what you wanted to do or were you kind of just doing the core and then just figuring it out after that
107. TW: um let's see at notre dame i think every freshman takes like core classes and so there's no real pressure to determine what your major is i think i wanted to be like an English major at first um just because i liked those classes the most when i was in high school and then i took an intro to psychology class um when i was a freshman and really really liked it and so then i decided to major double major in psychology and American studies which is like a combination of uh english and literature and political science and history and so i was just like all of my interests i can spend all day thinking about and writing about and watching movies about and uh yeah so it fit me very well i really liked my majors
108. KC: wow that is very impressive um so what was the environment like at notre dame so you were living on campus
109. TW: yeah so notre dame um all of the dorms there are single sex there's no greek life at notre dame and so your dorm kind of functions as your fraternity or sorority so everyone gets to know everyone really well m yeah the guys that i lived with were awesome and really nice respectful supportive guys um and so that was that's one of my favorite parts of notre dame is just like yeah everyone there was so nice and so helpful that if you needed anything people let you borrow their cars people that would walk with you to class people would go and run errands with you if you if you needed help um yeah a really really supportive group of people so i like that notre dame like fosters that um yeah and then at notre dame 2 you can be as religious as you want um and so i liked that aspect too like every dorm has a chapel in inside of it and so like on sunday nights i think it was like 10 p.m or 9 p.m we would have dorm mass with the priest who lived in your dorm too and so all the guys a lot of the guys would go um and so that was a really big community building event and so lots of guys who weren't catholic went just because it's like a big community moment um what else about community yeah i they notre dame does a very good job of helping to foster community
110. KC: yeah so a lot of a lot of students who choose to go to a catholic university you know they they go and then they kind of lose their identity as a catholic they they're just like i'll go to mass eventually and then they never go so you felt like notre dame really helped keep up your faith
111. TW: yes definitely uh yeah and it's not in your face i don't think it's not people that weren't super religious or weren't religious at all i don't think felt uncomfortable with anything our school did or especially like in our dorm um but it helped me see that like yeah religion is a huge community thing like i don't know if i ever really clung on to that in high school or knew that in high school it was just something like a boring class that i had to go to when i was in high school
112. KC: so um what was the so you had to take core classes at notre dame so was that like the first two years and then you move on to like your more major specific classes
113. TW: maybe it's just the first year i think most freshmen try to fulfill there's like a first year of studies curriculum or something that they call it
114. KC: do you remember what courses you are required to take in that first year
115. TW: yeah every freshman has to take a theology class a philosophy class um you have to take what's called a freshman seminar so like a small 15 person class where you read and discuss a lot and so i i took one that was awesome uh i think i took a math class yeah i took a calculus class and i took a science class my first semester
116. KC: awesome so did um your philosophy and theology so philosophy and theology are very

117. heavy classes to take in your like first year of college what did you how did you feel with those
118. classes
119. TW: that's a good question uh i did not enjoy my philosophy classes very much just having no prior
120. experience in them in high school and like yeah like i said our religion classes didn't have us read super
121. challenging texts or anything of like i don't know yeah challenging um and so reading those
122. kinds of things i don't know um hold on okay reading those kinds of things uh was really really tough for me so I remember going to office hours a lot um but i really enjoyed my theology classes i somehow got placed into a class with a a really really uh well-respected professor uh who teaches like older
123. students and theology majors and I remember being like oh man he teaches one section of a freshman class and i got into it and i was randomly placed into it uh so i felt really lucky he was cool approachable
124. um really really smart uh yeah so i liked i liked that just and being able to talk about these big deep questions uh with a class was fun
125. KC: so you you're a double major in psychology and american studies so when did you decide that that was what you wanted to do
126. TW: huh um i think i just kept taking more and more psychology classes and realized how
127. Fascinating they all were i don't know if i ever really thought i would be a psychologist um but i also like wasn't super worried about that at the time um and so i thought maybe I would want to do something like with writing or with journalism and so i knew that American studies would give me a good foundation
128. for that
129. KC: did your parents have anysourt of say or any any idea of what they
130. wanted you to do
131. TW: uh no they they let me do what i wanted to do which was really really nice i know i'm lucky in that aspect
132. KC: wow so you so when did you graduate notre dame
133. TW: 2011 in 2011
134. KC: and thenwhat did you do after when you graduated with your bachelor's
135. TW: so notre dame has a teaching program uh like a graduate teaching program called the alliance for catholic education are you familiar with it
136. KC: yeah Bryan actually applied for it um didn't end up going because it was far away yeah
137. TW: nice um and so yeah throughout my time at notre dame I was a an r.a in the dorm that i lived in
138. i worked at a summer camp for high schoolers um i tutored kids i did i helped with like a reading program and so throughout notre dame i was like oh man i think i want to do some sort of service for a year or two after college and I think i wanted to be in education um and then i got to know several people

139. from ace or some a lot of my friends went and did ace while i was still an undergrad and I heard their experiences and it sounded amazing and so i applied um and got in and so i was uh i was placed in oakland california for my two years of service
140. KC: wow okay so very different you know going to California and you were educated in kansas so that's you know that's a great different change so what was it like teaching in california
141. TW: it was awesome uh i loved it i would move back in a second um yeah so i taught at a k-8 catholic
142. School in oakland california where it was like 95 latino kids most of them from Mexico um uh i taught eighth grade literature social studies and religion um and i loved it yeah i mean it was really really different it's trial by fire a lot of it a lot of the time your first year uh but i was lucky to have a really really supportive um like mentor teacher and a really supportive principal who looked out for me uh yeah picked me up when i made a mistake or helped me learn from my mistakes uh and then had my back when when things went wrong so i was really really lucky because I know that's not how every ace school operates sometimes you're kind of on your own or you're the one that gets in trouble or like you're the one causing problems and i never ever felt that way even though I'm sure i did i'm sure i did some things incorrectly i'm sure I made others have more work but I i was really really lucky to be supportive supported there
143. KC: that's awesome so after um teaching at the school where did you go next
144. TW: so i ace is a two-year program so i stayed at my school my ace school for one year as like a real teacher after i got my master's in education through ace um and really liked it and then we got a new ace teacher so it was fun to mentor him for a while uh then after three years in oakland i realized i wanted to
145. become an even better and stronger teacher and so i had done a lot of reading about kipp schools are you familiar with those they're charters a network of charter schools throughout the country there's i don't know hundreds of them now um and there was one in dallas and so I called a lot of my friends that lived in dallas and they were like yes you should come and move here and live here and so i applied to this kipp school in dallas and went to work at this kipp school here um it was great i mean they have a really strong culture and it helped me become a better teacher but i don't i wasn't like the perfect fit for the
146. school it was really really tough it was uh with a lot of kids who have had really
147. tough uh childhoods and really tough education experiences um and i don't know i wasn't it didn't it didn't fit with me super super well and so then another one of my friends from the ace program
148. called me and was like hey we're gonna start this catholic school here in dallas and we want you to be one of the teachers at this school and so that's when i was like okay that that can be interesting that could be really fun and yeah the rest is history i signed on and i'm still there today
149. KC: wow so um jumping back a little bit to California so what made you choose to apply at this charter school at kipp why charter schools
150. TW: um because these these schools are really really known for having like rigorous teaching and helping teachers become very good teachers um and so i knew that i wanted to be a part of that they had awesome professional development they had a big network that um that i could work with and that i could
151. get ideas from like at my catholic school in California the network was like the sixth grade
152. teacher who yeah was who always said like oh you're a way better teacher than me even though
153. she had been teaching for 20 years and it's just like i i want advice from you like i'm
154. trusting you and you're not going to give it to me like come on um yeah so i knew that i wanted to grow as a teacher as an instructor

155. KC: so you felt like you weren't being challenged enough teaching at this eighth grade class
156. TW: yeah yeah i don't know if there was room for growth i yeah and i could have stayed there and and it would have been great but i i think I would have gotten a little bored maybe
157. KC: do you think it had maybe had to do like with the grade that you were teaching or or that you were teaching in a catholic school
158. TW: no i don't think it had anything to do with being in a catholic school um i think it's just working in like a smaller school too i mean this yeah the school was really small um and so i liked having more people to
159. connect with and network with and so KIPP was a good stepping stone for that
160. KC: so how is so i'm not very familiar with charter schools like i know we have it here in texas um but what was the curriculum like at a charter school and how's it different than what you've experienced as a teacher
161. TW:um it's it's really really similar to like traditional school i mean there's not a ton that uh is
162. different in terms of curriculum um i mean it's a lot stricter i would say and so like discipline is a
163. big part uh what i like about KIPP is that they're focused on college even in like elementary in the
164. elementary schools that they have and so in middle schools we did a lot of like college preparation and research and like i had to teach a college like a college preparedness class once a week um which i which i liked and which I think students gained a lot from um yeah so i don't know it's not super super different kids apply to go there and you you get in as part of a lottery and so it's uh a pretty in-demand place to go if you're a student
165. KC: so after KIPP you get you get called and or you make the call and you go to cristo rey and become one of the founding teachers what was it like that first year of you
166. know we've we've had so many other catholic schools in the area we have bishop lynch which is where i went to um we have jP2 bishop dunn and then the the um the we have what's it called uh ursuline which is girls only and then jesuit so what was it like that first year of being a brand new catholic school to was a
167. very competitive network of catholic schools that we have
168. TW: um there well there is no catholic school in like uh south east dallas where our school is
169. and so it was i think we did a good thing for the community of southeast dallas to kind of um fill the gap there um let's see it was kind of like working at a startup company where you do all kinds of work and you're on all kinds of committees and planning uh i mean it's crazy to think that there were maybe like 12 or 14 of us total uh at the school that first year uh and so we all taught in like one hallway of an old elementary school so you always knew what every single teacher was teaching every day because you could hear them um and then when there when there was only one class too like every resource of our school was devoted to them and so i know that group of kids and because i taught them for several years
170. but i know that group of kids more than any other group of kids that i've ever taught um just because we were able to focus exclusively on one grade for an entire year so i really liked that aspect um a Cristo Rey school requires that a student is involved in their education like they have to want to be there to some degree they also have to do the corporate work study program requirements um and their parents have to be committed as well and so i really love that about our school that we have such strong commitment from families um in their students in their child's education um yeah because everyone wants to succeed and everyone wants their child to succeed and and so kids work really really hard in our class we have long days we have a long school year and kids still work uh still do work in my classroom all the way up until the end of the year um if they're committed they know that it's important

171. KC: yeah i was listening to your staff meeting through my brother that you get out at june 10th like on
172. june 10th yeah which is way later than a lot of the schools in the area yeah um so do you feel like because Cristo Rey you know the it's so unique with the corporal um work program but do you feel like
173. that puts a little more pressure on the students and you as teachers that you know you have such a unique program that you have to keep up do you feel like you have to work extra to try to you know
174. make up for all that time
175. TW: hmm uh i think kids love it because it's a it's not a day off of school but it's a day when they are not in the classroom uh they obviously go to work and do work all day so it's not like they're sitting at home um uh but i i don't think i have to work harder i don't want to like push kids and make kids hate school or
176. make it feel like you need to do this because i say so I think i try to be creative instead and so like
177. is there a is there a faster way that we could cover this topic or a lot of the times it's like what is
178. the least important thing of this topic and that's what's going to be cut so that we can do x y and z instead
179. KC: so you you said you started off as the literature teacher not just ninth grade and so how many how many years did you teach literature
180. TW: uh i taught ninth grade literature one year and then moved up and taught 10th grade for one year and then taught 11th grade in english for one year along with ap us history and i taught that combination of both classes for a couple of years um this is my first year where i only teach ap u.s history and then i also have another job where I work with freshmen who are struggling with their grades and so we call that academic support
181. KC: so being a literature teacher um i you know I didn't really like reading in high school i just english is not my strong suit so how did you go about teaching literature to i mean high school students i feel like
182. they're not really interested they just want to like get out of high school they want to be done with school
183. so what did you do to keep the kids interested
184. TW: i think a big part of it is creating a space where students can see themselves and their stories reflected in whatever we are talking about or learning about um and so we i always tried to pick like
185. a a diverse set of texts uh that students could relate to or interact with um i certainly didn't shy away from like controversial books or books that had adult themes in them because i wanted to create a place where
186. students could have safe conversations and like practice talking about those things or practice evaluating those things for themselves before they encounter them in the real world where where like hits them and they're not prepared for it and so i liked um i think a lot of students did the work because of that um what else i mean i also frame it as like everyone else in your college is going to have read a lot of these books and have talked about a lot of these poets and and authors and things like that and so you want to be able to have your voice heard in the conversation too um and then a lot of it is giving students choice as well and so as students get older they're able to choose more of what they want to read and uh that's probably where students where the most students do the most reading is when they get to choose whatever book they want to read

187. KC: so um you know you know i'm so familiar with elementary school and elementary school we're all about formative assessment so as a literature teacher did you feel like you had to give a lot of text or quizzes where it's like read this chapter and then answer these questions or how did you try to avoid just having that basic format of assessment
188. TW: yeah um yeah i mean i did reading i did reading quizzes a lot that would take like less than five minutes just so that kids would do the reading or would uh know what we were going to talk about for the
189. day too uh sometimes i would frame it as like a discussion or a socratic seminar or something like that um but i think what the most effective uh assessments were were students taking the themes of those texts
190. and then applying them to their real lives like when we read a raisin in the sun which is about a black family moving into a white neighborhood and not being welcomed there we talked all about like
191. gentrification of dallas um we what else did we do we read a book about child soldiers in africa and so then we talked about like what is it like to be in the military here in the united states what is it like to
192. come back from um fighting abroad or fighting in the military and re-entering society and then we had
193. veterans come to uh our classroom and talk about their experience and my students had questions prepared for them so just the more real i can make an assessment or a discussion uh the more effective i know it's going to be
194. KC: so would you say that you were actively trying to create like an authentic culturally aware classroom for your
195. TW: absolutely yeah and so it's stuff like that it takes a lot of time to do and a lot of work and energy to do um but it pays off yeah tenfold when it's what students are talking about when students say oh i went home and asked my family what their thoughts were then then i know like this is a real assignment
196. that this is good yeah
197. KC: so did you try to um keep up with that when you started teaching history as well because you said you had to teach both classes for a period of time
198. TW: yeah so definitely i mean almost every everything we learn we bring back to how did that how
199. did this event that happened 100 years ago get us to this point today i always love teaching in an election year and so it's been fun to teach history in 2016 and 2020 um because students are vaguely familiar with like the systems and all of that but there's just so much context into why our country works the way it does
200. and so i love taking time out of like our our real ap curriculum and being like okay this is how voting works
201. this is how the electoral college works this is what you should be looking for in the debate tonight etc
202. KC: so did you start teaching apu's history or was it just normal u.s history
203. TW: i started teaching AP US history okay so um you know ap i never took ap classes in um high school
204. KC: so i know at the end of the semester you have to take the ap exam so did you feel like that um affected the way you could teach if you wanted to teach really authentically do you feel like having to teach the test um affected that

205. TW: absolutely yes i mean that's probably my biggest struggle um as a teacher today as someone with with 10 years of experience um yeah is making room for how do i balance like what students must know for the exam versus like yeah what actually applies to their real life and like what is a fun and exciting way
206. To to encounter the information or to to to learn the information um yeah so that's what i think keeps me
207. really interested now after teaching this class several years is how can I how can i balance all of those things at once yeah
208. KC: and would you say the kinds of the different kinds of students that you get in your classroom every year affect the way you teach that year
209. TW: yes yeah that's a great question and a great point yeah um and then with coronavirus too like making things virtual and having virtual days also is just another wrinkle to add into all of this so you should be glad that you're not a full-time teacher yet
210. KC: yeah i'm definitely counting down the days where i have to like face it and it's not exciting. Yeah so you know a lot of the students at Cristo Rey are Hispanic and you know we a lot of them are coming
211. from immigrant families and so they might have a biased view of the united states or they might have
212. a twisted view so do you think that has has affects the way you you're trying to portray the U.S. to your students
213. TW: um i think if anything it helps me to not shy away from uh the more challenging parts of American history or the more controversial or like the uglier parts i guess um like i'll never tell kids that like
214. america is perfect or our country is the best country or anything like that um i mean our country certainly tries to do that and i and i think does that very well a lot of the time but um yeah i mean students have lived experiences that directly contradict what our country tries to portray itself as um and so i definitely always allow space for kids to bring that up to kind of grapple with that and then to understand like why is it the way that it is too and so um yeah and and students also need to have like factual evidence to back up their opinions too and so yeah i mean anytime we talk about something political i'm always just like did you hear that on Tik Tok where did you hear that from don't show me the source and then i'll engage in this conversation but without the force i'm i'm not gonna bite
215. KC: how how has Tik Tok affected your classroom like realistically
216. TW: um it's a good studying tool i think um yeah kids kids send me
217. history Tik Toks all the time um and and they they make really creative ones and then it's funny when like the tik-tok memes they make a history one related to the memes and so yeah it's not it's not as it's not as bad as i thought it was i guess or I don't know the ones i look at are pretty funny so yeah
218. KC: so if you could um describe yourself as a teacher in one sentence what would you say
219. TW: i would say I'm a highly demanding and highly compassionate teacher and so students know that they're going to work from bell to bell with me and that will um do some pretty rigorous things and
220. That they'll be pushed but they'll also know that i see them and i know them and it's it's okay to take a risk in my class and that it will be met with with love and compassion and not penalization or uh like anything mocking or negative i mean i clown around with kids all the time and i like to roast kids um all the time too but like they know that it's done because i like them and

not like I'm picking on you uh yeah yeah so i really try to have to be highly demanding and high compassion I think that's the best kind of teacher

221. KC: what would your kids describe you

222. TW: um i think let's see I i coach cross country and i coach track and so i get to work with kids a lot a lot outside of the classroom and so I get to see them way more unfiltered um than than a lot of teachers do and so i think when when kids are talking about me or my class in front of other kids and when i'm there too they normally say like oh woodward doesn't mess around in class like oh i learned so much oh um and and i think kids know that they feel safe in my class i think kids know that i see them for who they are and that I ask questions about their lives and that i go to their soccer games and that I know who their parents are when when they're in our school and um yeah that i take the extra time to to work for them and to get to know them

223. KC: so looking back at all your life and your school experiences and working at um these different schools before getting to Cristo Rey what do you think was the most influential part of how you teach now

224. TW: i think getting out of college i thought that being a teacher was about like delivering content efficiently or maybe even in a fun way if if you were creative i guess uh and to some degree that it that is part of the job but working with my mentor teacher in oakland um he had such a natural gift of connecting with kids and and building relationships with them and their families um that then i when i would like literally just watch him talk to kids and and watch him have really tough conversations uh with kids and i just remember being like oh my gosh tim you have to soak this in like you you have to replicate this because he does it so well and so i think i've learned from him that teaching is all about relationships and about yeah helping students see that they're capable of doing hard work and that they deserve to be given opportunities to do hard work um yeah our our school in oakland was underfunded it was in a bad part of town um and like our kids did amazing things and so i feel similar to Cristo Rey where yeah kids from all over dallas with all kinds of different educational opportunities are given opportunities to work really really hard it's not like you're given an easy path through our school you're giving great opportunities

225. and so um that's that's possible because we have relationships with students so

226. KC: you you know you've been teacher for 10 years now so what do you think has been like the major

227. difference from teaching back then to teaching now

228. TW: um let's see teaching back then to teaching now there's just so many distractions i feel like outside of school and like when kids get home it's just so easy for them to get distracted by something and and maybe this is just like us all being cooped up with um the pandemic recently but yeah like kids motivation

229. to do school work is not not at its highest point right now and i think that will get better as our world returns to normal but um yeah there's there's a lot of

230. distractions and i'm definitely guilty of it as well yeah

231. KC: and so a lot of the students at Cristo Rey as especially hispanic students when

232. they get home you know they have responsibilities a lot of these students are working and they have to help at home they have younger siblings do you think this affects your students educations

233. TW: uh yes i mean both positively and negatively i think um like one it takes time away from like

234. being able to do homework in the way that you want to or like being able to sleep at the time you want to go to bed or whatever um but at the same time like having a job and making money and um having to take care of your siblings too helps you develop so many gifts and so

many strengths um that if a kid if a student of mine is ever like oh mister i didn't do the homework because i was helping my sibling like i'm never going i will never punish them for that i will never take a late grade if that's what they were really doing or if that's what they say they were doing yeah um because yeah they can't help

235. that and it's like only going to make them a better person to take care of their sibling yeah

236. KC: so look so thinking back to your elementary school experience um and going to high school what do you think has changed the most from when you were a high school student

237. TW: uh like technology obviously um let's see like and and having access to the internet when i was in elementary school like that's probably when the internet was becoming very popular um

238. and so it's crazy now that like if I don't know something in class i take my phone out and google it or tell a kid take your phone out and google that question yeah um and so that's that's nice uh kids I don't think are like super distracted by cell phones in class i don't think that's my biggest problem that i worry about um it kind of worries me that like during lunch and stuff all of them are on their phone i sound like an old man saying this all of them are on their phones um or like face timing with someone and it's just like there's all these people around you like don't you want to chat with your buddies and like go toss a football and something so yeah that's what i remember from elementary in middle school too it's just yeah like playing around at lunch and going to go play outside at recess or whatever but times have changed

239. KC: times have definitely changed so um just one final question before we wrap up

240. this interview so you know you've been a teacher for 10 years uh Bryan's only been a teacher for

241. i think four years now so what do you think has been the greatest lesson that you've learned being a teacher so far

242. TW: um i mean what comes to mind is like that all students want to be loved and the students that you struggle with the most want to be loved the most and so that's what i try to really think about like if a student um if i don't click with a student or if a student is having a pretty a tough day or is i don't know causing lots of problems for lots of teachers i'm always thinking like how how can i love this student better

243. Not who do i need to report him to or maybe it is reporting him to the counselor but like how do i get him in trouble or what consequences does he need but yeah like how can i show this kid love better whether it's asking about his hobbies or uh his family or whatever music he likes um just some and and usually like asking a non-academic question is the best thing um but like then he'll then he'll at least see that i'm trying and so that works a lot of times too is yeah just like try to enter in through uh yeah through relationship i mean that's always what it comes down to that's that's what it all comes down to


244. KC: awesome well it's been absolutely amazing talking to you uh getting to know you and you know Bryan was right Bryan is right you know i can definitely see why students love you you know um like you said it's just it's so important having a relationship with students you know I talk to Bryan about this all the time and i ask him like do you really care for your students he's like yeah oh yeah i do care for them i'm like you have to care for them you have to love them and you know I feel like as an elementary school

245. um going to be an elementary school teacher you know like you develop such a genuine care for these students and it's definitely something like i can tell you know um talking to you today and just like you have such a genuine care for your students and it's it's so wonderful especially you know I don't i'll never teach high school I will never teach high school but um it's something definitely that it's just great knowing that if I have that with my students that they'll eventually have that same relationship with their high school student with their high school teachers so it's been absolutely wonderful talking to you today thank you so much for doing this um i will send you a written transcript of this interview

246. and it's i mean i don't think i'll ever work at Cristo Rey but i will tell Bryan to say hi thank you so much for being here today


247. TW: all right see you later


248. KC: bye


 **Timothy Woodward** Tue, Apr 20, 8:22 PM (8 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to me ▾
Hi Kathleen,


It's great to hear from you. This project sounds interesting and I'm happy to help with it. I'm free from 1:30PM to 3PM on Friday, and I'm free almost all day on Monday since my students go to work that day. Do any of those times work for you?

Thanks,
Tim
⋮

 **kathleen castillo** <kcastillo1@udallas.edu> Wed, Apr 21, 8:00 AM (7 days ago) ★ ↶ ⋮
to Timothy ▾
Friday at 1:30 works great for me. Thank you so much again and I will send you the google meet link that day!
⋮

 **Timothy Woodward** Wed, Apr 21, 8:48 AM (7 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to me ▾
Great! We have a faculty meeting that ends at 1:15-- they sometimes go long, but it should definitely work. I'll let you know if I'm running a few minutes late!
⋮

 **kathleen castillo** <kcastillo1@udallas.edu> Fri, Apr 23, 1:00 PM (5 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to Timothy ▾
Good afternoon, here is the link to the Google Meeting! <https://meet.google.com/qfx-nufg-kbz>
⋮

 **kathleen castillo** <kcastillo1@udallas.edu> 📧 6:24 PM (1 hour ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to Timothy ▾
Hi Mr. Woodward, thank you so much for sitting down and talking with me. Here is the transcript of the interview as promised. It was great to listen to the perspective of a high school teacher (that was not my brother), as I begin my career in elementary school. As a teacher, I feel that it's very beneficial to be able to listen to other teacher's viewpoints and beliefs in education. Thank you so much again!
⋮

